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At page 51. the authoress
Linus Yale, draws a portrait in
for Mr. Stewart Perry of Newport
and at page 52. she gives her
of Mr. E. P. Hunt that then kin pose
her neighbor. Her objection to
Catter, seems to have been that
scorned Spiritualism & all
transcendentalism - in a word
inclined to matters of fact & the
sense. E. P. H.





Abbie Gott and other Knots.



**THE NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIFE**

**ASTOR, LENOX AND
TILDEN FOUNDATIONS**

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A B B I E N O T T

AND

Other Knots.

BY

“KATINKA.”

*Her name is the name
of a knot in the rope.*

“It's a' a muddle.”

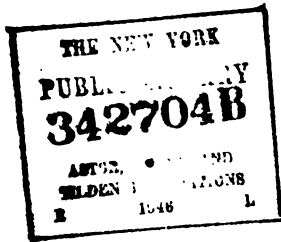
DICKENS.

PHILADELPHIA:

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1856.

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PREFACE.

“I do not trouble my spirit to vindicate itself or be understood;
I see that the elementary laws never apologize;
I reckon I behave no prouder than the level I plant my house by
after all.”

WALT WHITMAN.

source Jan. 15, 1946



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ABBIE NOTT.

CHAPTER I.

THE home consisted of four women, a man, little Abbie, and a dog. Mrs. Wind was inordinately fat; when she sat down she could just bring her hands before her in a friendly embrace, and she invariably, when not employed, clasped them, and twirled one thumb over the other in drowsy continuance.

Mr. Wind was very tall and thin, and wore such an immensely high shirt-collar that his little head seemed to swing around on it as on a pivot. He wore his hair combed formidably up from his forehead, which gave him an air of startled dignity quite amusing to behold. His two maiden sisters, Prudence and Axy, were calm, emotionless beings, whose sole errand in this world was to abuse it and its usages, and keep one little spot in it "*without spot or blemish.*" For them the seasons changed that they might do the appropriate work of the time. Spring, as they would have defined it, was a season to clean house in; the sun and grass were made to bleach linen; most of the buds and blossoms of trees, and the singing of birds, were a superfluity. Their perpetual round of monotonous labor, without any indi-

cations of common human impulses, was a puzzling wonder to any one not possessing such correct and clock-like mechanism.

The mother's sister was an antipode of all this. She exhibited all the different moods of a highly nervous and sensitive organization, from the extremely volatile to the most depressed, in almost every day's course. Amelia—"Milly," as she was called—was fond of excitement, took snuff, was a walking library of romance and fiction, fond of dress, was always bedizened with rings and bows, and was, in short, a grotesque combination of antique stateliness and juvenile sportiveness. Happily, her own yearly income made her independent of the opposing influences of the house, else she would have been more of a heroine than even her romance could have borne; she would have been driven from the hive.

Abbie was a little adventurer, an orphan, whom fortune had thrown out on charity, and again picked up in mercy, and given to Mrs. Wind as her adopted daughter. She was, in some sense, more of a menial than comported with the adoptive term, child—she had to scrub and dig interminably, after her illustrious teachers and models, and never, until her swollen hands and feet were bathed at night, never till she stole to her low bed under the garret roof, did she feel free to cry out her long-repressed feelings of childish enthusiasm and sentiment.

Her dress was always coarse and plain, excepting when enlivened by some stray piece of finery from Aunt Milly. The love of decoration, natural to children, led her into many embarrassments. I recollect

seeing her, on an occasion of juvenile entertainment, with the broken places in an old straw hat trimmed with bows of yellow ribbon which Aunt Milly had given her—her sweet, reflective, pensive face looking out of that pitiful medley of expedients, all wonderingly on the sneering faces that coarsely stared at her.

She had a native passion for music, and sung snatches of songs ever at her work, excepting when checked for her "so much noise" by her formidable aunts. Sometimes she gave vent to her desire to play on a piano, by drumming and fingering the table where she washed her dishes, in the most rapt enthusiasm, always ceasing in terror whenever any stony-gray eyes peered in upon her. Her oddities were combated, sometimes with raps over her ears, sometimes with ridicule, and a scrap of Latin (the only one the family could boast), and most prodigally assured was poor Abbie, that she was an "underling," a "non compos mentis."

Milly was somewhat friendly, although she was capricious and liked to be served, and for every commiserating word, had her price.

Abbie was sent to school, and was a good scholar, but her little scholarly triumphs seemed to pain her, by the mortifying exposure of her uncomely dress to observation. Malice itself could not have suggested more ingenious torture than the mere obtuseness and indifference of her family inflicted, by their awkward efforts to keep her cheaply clad.

She presented one time, at school, a very pleasing composition, and, as was their custom, the teachers

called on her to come forward while they commented upon it. She had on a coarse, sort of cotton habit, made after a fashion Aunt Pru had worn in her girlhood, thirty years before. It was colored by her own immaculate hands, and fashioned by her own maiden imagination.

Poor Abbie came forward, her neck choked into a high binding, a great frill sticking out behind at the bottom of her waist, and her red hands set off by a ruffle of this refractory cotton of vile yellowish brown. She seemed to contend heroically with blushes and heart-fluttering, until a suppressed titter ran around the room. Even the teachers wore a pitying, ludicrous expression, painful to behold. Little Abbie Nott, with the pending honor of intellectual distinction, was quite overcome by these material misfortunes, and burst into tears.

A noble lad, whom she had always called Cousin Fred (he was nephew to Mrs. Wind), came to her relief.

"May Cousin Abbie and I go home?" said he, and he threw his chivalric arm around her, and led her out.

From this time, Abbie had a friend in this generous, sympathetic boy, but, in a year or two, he was sent away to school, and she had to bear the dead monotony of her life alone. For such a susceptible nature as hers, how necessary was some variety of emotion, how necessary sometimes to laugh and even to weep; but, in the frozen atmosphere of Mr. Winds' house, with the two virgin northeasters, and the drowsy air of the fat Mrs. W., and Aunt Milly's

frisky and variable humors, there was little to warm into life and beauty the sweet heart-bud that lay shrinking in sorrow and loneliness. Mr. W. was Abbie's friend, but he could not aid her, for the only way he could maintain a comfortable position in his own house was by making constant oblations to his household divinities. He looked with dismay on the question of woman's rights, fearing, with great reason, that if they should be increased, all the propitiatory gifts in the universe would fail to procure for him a comfortable corner under his own roof. A man cannot be more completely and unconsciously shorn of his strength than by admitting into his home a few feminine relations, especially on the wife's side. The constant and frequent clippings he gets from their busy, sharp-edged scissors, lays the beautiful locks of his strength into Delilah's apron inevitably, and he totters about thenceforth a helpless, hopeless man.

CHAPTER II.

ONE fine September morning, Aunt Milly, partly for want of some change of scene, and partly in grateful consideration of Abbie, who had been her nurse in a recent sickness, proposed that a few young people should be invited in to tea. This was opposed severely at first, by the stiff northeasters, but finally through the eloquence of several hysteric spasms by Aunt Milly, the whole opposition thawed, and ran down into an unanimous consent. The preparations were made with tolerable comfort.

Abbie stole a moment to gather a bunch of her favorite autumn flowers, and with unusual delight, for the first time in her life, she filled the china vases that had always stood empty in the grand, unfrequented parlor. They gleamed out cheerfully on the shelf, the plumes of the golden-rod, the purple aster, the charming moonshine. Her soul was gratified to the highest degree in studying the arrangement of those flowers, which, to her simple nature, were so eloquent in their teaching, so infinite in their beauty. It was not enough to know they were shining there so gloriously in the dim room, Abbie must come in again and again to look at her little treasures; but what was her horror and mortification, on returning, after an hour's absence, to find them transferred from the pretty vases to a hideous, sprawlingly beflowered earthen pitcher!

Aunt Pru had been there; there was the unmistakable trail of her disenchanting hand. Black clouds of anger and grief rolled over this poor, solitary, beautiful soul. One lightning thought illumined the whole. She felt she was not at home, and that her nature was sacred, and must be respected. Then followed a resolve to leave without delay, and with the unbending resolution that follows conviction in keenly perceptive natures, Abbie began to get her scanty wardrobe together, and to pack it in a rude trunk.

She sat down, at length, exhausted, on a low bench, and wondered she could not weep. The sun was shining in upon her little bed, and the low roof that had hitherto sheltered her, looked cheerly in its

beams. But her hand had gathered the few garments, her little keepsakes, everything that she valued, and had shut them down under the lid of the trunk, and the sunny silence of the room seemed not to say stay, but farewell.

At this crisis one of the family came up, announcing the arrival of her guests. Here was a pretty to do, indeed! Abbie, in a fit of sulks, has packed up, and is sitting obstinately deaf to persuasion, commands, and threats. Aunt Milly is called up, and tries to galvanize her into obedience by several hysteric shocks. Aunt Pru denounces her as an ungrateful wretch; administers much general condemnation, enough to last her through this world, and some time into another. Mrs. Wind waddles round in despair, inquiring promiscuously, "if this is the way all their Christian charities to a poor little 'founderlin' that hadn't a rag to her back—if this was the way to reward them?" Axy had seen, for a long time, that "some folks had stuck-up notions;" that, for her part, she "wa'n't sorry to see 'em brought to light before they brought the whole family to rack and ruin."

Abbie knew the petty malice that had caused her grief was well understood; she therefore sat tearless and wordless, until all went down and informed the little company of her caprice. Then, in the wounded depths of her lonely soul, she wept; a tempest of sorrow and anxiety kept her tossing about sleeplessly until morning. Before the early frost had melted from her lily-bells and petunias, Abbie had said "good-by" to the wondering inmates of the house, had seen her trunk thrown on the stage, had kissed

a tear and some pearl powder from Aunt Milly's cheek, had given a farewell glance at Mr. W.'s shirt-collar, and the kind little head on it, heard a muttered "good-morning" from the remaining trio, and was inside the coach, and outside of home, rolling along on the great round world alone. But "wide, wide" as the world is, one can get over but a small portion of it with a light purse such as our little adventurer carried, not over fifty miles, as she found when she alighted at the little town of Alton, with a few shillings left for supper and lodging. The next day was clear and bright, and everybody seemed astir with life and happiness. Abbie was astir with misery and necessity. Ladies came out to sun their pretty faces and rich velvets; they brushed unheedingly by the anxious face that was not looking enviously after them, but yearningly, imploringly. "Give me a place in life, link me to the great social chain!" was the thrilling prayer of her heart. No magnetic ear was open to her imploration, so she was forced to open her lips and ask for work. She felt adequate to a teacher's duties as they were generally performed, and tried in that direction, but having no testimonials but a sweet and honest face to recommend her, and looking so young and poorly clad, it is not strange that night found her recounting her sad disappointments as she went faint and wearily back to her lodgings. At dusk, little Abbie stood at the counter in a pawnbroker's shop, dropping a tear on a simple ring Cousin Fred had given her, and which she was now forced to part with to procure a supper and another night's lodging.

Imagine a dreary, chill room, in a large hotel, with our orphan friend, its only occupant, trying, in the desolate confusion of her mind, to lay some plan for the morrow. The world that seems so full of fortunate chances to the inexperienced, grows suddenly barren to the needy soul that is praying that something may "turn up." And Abbie, after revolving every possible plan in her mind, was no clearer as to her prospects, and finally waded through real sorrows into feverish, grotesque dreams, and so spent the night. Morning opened her eyes to the fearful consciousness of her helpless condition.

As she descended to breakfast, servants and people seemed to look suspiciously on her, but she was too miserable to heed small impertinences. Once more she tied on her bonnet, and went out to beg for work. Who keeps the keys of God's earth, that one of his little children should so humbly beg for a foothold, and for bread?

It was a chill, rainy morning. Misfortune feels at home in such weather; there is dreary harmony in it. A laughing sunshine seems, sometimes, positively malicious to a heavy sorrow. This day, Abbie extended her list of accomplishments through all branches of domestic service; and with no better success than on the evening before. She returned to her hotel dejected, wet, tired, hungry, and very willing to die, could such an *opening* be granted her.

She sat down in the public parlor, buried her face in her handkerchief, and studied her fate.

A well-dressed lady was lounging in the recess of a window, and a happy group of children were play-

ing about the room. The fixed attitude of sorrow, the suppressed sobs of the little orphan at length arrested attention. A little pet of a girl, with the quick sympathy of childhood, approached timidly, and stood before Abbie, with her two little hands behind her, and her sweet lips open with wondering pity. Speaking from the small range of her own experience, she asked, in a little, tender voice: "Have you got a pain?" This was the first voice that had been addressed to Abbie's soul, and it caused her to look up, and, in the midst of her tears, to smile, at the comical pathos of the scene. "Yes, I have a pain, little bird, such a pain as you never had; and I have no mother to cure it."

At this moment, a kind, not tender voice addressed her. Mrs. Hyde took up the thread of her little Nettie's inquiries, looked into Abbie's condition, pitied it with discreet, conscientious philanthropy, and somewhat cautiously engaged Abbie as nurse to her children, in the temporary absence of their former one.

CHAPTER III.

MRS. HYDE, her daughter Lucie, a handsome girl of fifteen, two fine boys, charming Nettie, with their new little nurse, Abbie, proceeded on their journey toward home, in one of the western cities of New York. Abbie, in her inferior condition, and with numerous duties, was the happiest one of the party. Her perceptions were all awake, and the novelties of

travelling, her reflective habit, born of suffering and a glowing imagination, gave the events and scenes of the journey a charm which only a rich nature and poor fortune can appreciate.

A stately mansion, with the formal, cold appliances of wealth—the proprietor, husband, and father, a bland, smooth, superficial-looking man—was the home into which our party is at length harbored. Abbie looked around, and laid her iron purposes; she saw that Mrs. H. was a just, kind woman, not far-sighted, but clear, not magnetic, but equable; she respected and obeyed her. Lucie had her mother's haughtiness, and her father's slippery policy and selfishness. She was correct in manners and scholarship, but circumscribed, unimpulsive, unimpressible, with little intuition.

It was difficult for Abbie to know always what was right, occupying as she did that middle ground between servant and companion, for, in intellectual acquirements, she was Lucie's equal, if not superior; but she relied on simplicity, truth, and self-respect, and they sustained her.

At nightfall, it was her custom to lull little Nettie into dream-land, by singing songs of her own composing. Mrs. H. often came in, sat down silently, and seemed to listen with pleasure. Abbie frequently cried at her own pathos, but she was exceedingly surprised to see Mrs. H. in tears one evening, while she wrought, *impromptu*, a few simple cadences into a song she had picked up from Lucie's practice in an adjoining room.

"Abbie, you can, by economy, save enough of your

wages to take lessons in music, and I advise you to commence under Lucie's teacher."

Did Mrs. Hyde say this, or did Abbie dream? She said it, and Abbie counted out from her small gains with trembling delight, there and then, enough to pay a quarter's tuition in advance, and the next day commenced. She made good progress, and sustained her complicated relations with fidelity, pleased her employers, teacher, and herself—but not Lucie. She was annoyed by her practice, frequently intimidated Abbie, and retarded her progress by her impatience and ridicule. She was "so tired of that stupid thing, that horrid lesson," and criticized her voice mercilessly, so that, at length, Abbie could not sing before her. But she gave reins to her enthusiasm when alone, and, at such times, the character of her singing took the form of inspiration, and she often said to herself, "with these tones I could conquer the world." This was true in a degree, certainly, for it was verified in the following incident, although it was not quite the world that was conquered, but only an enthusiastic, musical young student, Ashton.

This was Lucie's friend, and in her diplomatic hand was made to seem her lover, when she had occasion, or her friend when there was a lover that suited her better. Like all generous men, he was beauty's tool, considering himself eminently favored to be a card in such fair, lovely hands, and to be shuffled according to her sweet caprice. But fortune shuffles her cards also, and she ordered things in this wise, that Lucie should go out on a certain propitious evening, just as Ashton had got an offer, well worded, in his

memory, and his white hand gloved that was to be offered to his, as he supposed, expectant, loving Lucie. Abbie was singing alone in the room where Lucie should be, when our hero arrives. He was vexed and disappointed, and glanced at her as an impertinence; but, although our little music-nurse was small, she had a "presence" that no one dared to despise or ignore. So, rather awkwardly, Ashton tries to make the best of the interval till Lucie's return, and proposes some music, not expecting anything but some rude attempts.

Abbie took his favorite song, that Lucie was in the habit of doing a great business with, always finding immense returns for the sentiments she sung, in opera-tickets, bouquets, gallantries, and love-passages generally, and sat calmly down, and commenced, in an unpretending manner, the song. Every nerve of her fingers seemed possessed of an independent intelligence, and her voice of appealing tones wrought of past pain, and glorified with hope; and over all this tempest of feeling she held a stern control, that sustained her to the end, heroically, triumphantly. She raised her eyes to Ashton at the closing word; a flood of intelligence and appreciative glances rolled over her hitherto desolate world, and his two dark eyes were hung over it as stars, to light her on to glory. At this critical moment, a little movement caused them both to look around. Lucie had entered and caught that scenic look, and she gave back one quite as dramatic, full of wonder, mortification, and hate.

"You steal my songs, do you, Abbie? Go and sing

them for lullabies; Mr. Ashton will excuse you from further entertainment; though, to be sure, don't you think we have quite a prodigy in that little servant, Ashton?"

"My dear Lucie, the genius of this pure soul will free her from the servile chains that bind her. You, I am sure, are too noble to give a blow to wound so sweet a nature, fettered only by misfortune."

"Quite fine sentiments; no doubt, only misapplied in this case, where impudence is the principal talent that has brought your heroine into notice, and rivets her, you see, to hear more flattery from you. Your 'brilliant genius' is needed in the nursery;" and she gave Abbie an imperious look, that could not be disregarded.

Abbie heard these insulting words with utter indifference. They seemed far off, and harmless, for other tones were wakening her to a new world. Not Lucie's malicious glances fell on her; looks of kinder eyes were still beaming on her, and she could say "good-evening" with untrembling, quiet accents, that seemed a mockery to Lucie's annoyed manner.

When she had left the room, Lucie, who was too discreet to risk the consequences of her ill-humor without apology, remarked that gentlemen of Mr. Ashton's generous nature were very much exposed to the artifices of designing girls, like Abbie. She did not like to expose her, but would only say, she was an unprincipled adventurer, that had been harbored by them from motives of Christian charity. Lucie added to this information, an unusual variety of graceful endearments; she was obliging, nay, even

confidential with Mr. A.; she was witty, musical; her little white hands were full of favors—an hour before this they would have been, not, as now, altogether in vain. No, Lucie, you may twirl your curls coquettishly over your jewelled finger; you may arch your neck prettily, knowing how white the dimpled shoulder slopes down into dim bosom-land; you may quote suggestive poetry, sing genially—you are too late, and your excellent policy, after all, has failed, and Abbie's genuine nature has triumphed. Ashton made a brief evening, drew on again the dainty kids, which he designed for his proffered hand, but he kept his intended offer pocketed, and went home, we may hope, a wiser man, although we will not anticipate, having some reason to distrust such precipitate conclusions.

This evening commenced a new era in the life of Abbie. After discharging her duties in the nursery, she went to her room, sat down on a low stool, in white wrapper and tiny crimson slippers, and braided her long, auburn hair for bed. In the mirror opposite, she could see the glow of recent pleasure lingering yet on her cheek, and in her eye, a light she had never seen before. She suddenly paused, her hair falling like a veil around her face; rested her hands like one suddenly stopping in doubt, to consider, and looking with a strange, magnetic eye out of soft hair clouds, she said, aloud, "I was made for something more than this."

"Were you?" said a voice; "my daughter thinks so, too;" and Mrs. Hyde, who had unintentionally heard that ejaculation, closed the noiseless door

behind her. "She thinks you were made for something more severe and laborious; she says our indulgence is spoiling you, that you presume on the favors I gave you connected with music; you intrude at unseasonable hours, and even aspire to entertain her company. I am much pained to hear of your improper conduct, for I have felt a sincere interest in you, and intended, eventually, when you became qualified, to raise you to the station of governess. Now, if you do not make very humble concessions to Lucie, I shall be compelled to discharge you."

Abbie never felt anything to be more timely. Her prophetic spirit saw that it was time for her to leave this cycle of her experience, and enter another, under a new set of circumstances. Where others would shrink with fear, she followed an interior conviction, which, to her, was law. She therefore thanked Mrs. Hyde, with becoming and sincere feeling, for her uniform kindness, assured her that she would make immediate efforts to secure a situation, and would leave as soon it was obtained. Her cool decision startled and distressed Mrs. H., but all proposals of adjustment failed to change her determination. As soon as she was left alone, she wrote the following note:—

"MR. ASHTON—

SIR: Can you advise me of any situation where my moderate qualifications as a teacher would procure me daily bread, and also some food to strengthen and enlarge my soul? Trusting in the light of your eyes, I have concluded to place my unfriended and

orphan condition before you, and solicit this great help.

Your friend of an hour,
ABBIE NOTT."

CHAPTER IV.

EVERY gentleman has a library in his house, and I presume, his own individual way of using it. Mr. Hyde appropriated his to profound investigations into business ethics; where and how to get the best advantages of weak, unfortified places in contracts, and in the circumstances of embarrassed men. It was a pleasant sight to see his smooth and polished figure sunk in the gold and brown brocade cushion of his easy chair; his neatly curled wig fitted to a nicety to his symmetrical head, his whiskers unexceptionably dyed, his false teeth regularly and immaculately white, his cold white hand unimpulsively hanging over the arm of the chair; ah! he was a perfect looking man. Mr. Hyde was correct, proper, harmonious, a politic, artificial man, a nice, moral mosaic, beautifully patched together; superficial observers, people that go by standards, respected, and bowed graciously, nay, deferentially, to Mr. Hyde.

Abbie had slept upon her resolution to leave, and found it in the morning unaltered. She dispatched her note to Mr. Ashton, and while waiting for the messenger to return, was summoned to the library, by Mr. Hyde.

He addressed her in his smooth way, was very

sorry she was to leave, he would confess he liked her, and had been pleased with her fidelity; whereupon, he not only paid her salary, but added a fifty dollar note, to her great astonishment. This generosity was beautiful, and was open to but one objection—it happened to be a fraction of some thousands “realized” the day before, from a young man just ruined, in an unlucky encounter with this always correct and oily gentleman.

“I beg your pardon, sir, but, if three years’ service in your family has merited your approbation, I am sufficiently rewarded, and cannot consent to receive anything but my stipulated wages;” and Abbie returned the note with a dignity that could not be parleyed with; so Mr. Hyde was disappointed in the little trumpet he expected would blow the sound of his generosity about, and pocketed the fee for another occasion.

In the mean time, the messenger arrived with an answer to Abbie’s note, as follows:—

“MY NEW LITTLE FRIEND—

Your hazardous venture upon a stranger’s interest is not, in this instance, misplaced. You may ‘trust in *my* eyes,’ while I believe in *your* voice. I can give you a situation in Clapperton Academy, where I have some influence as Professor of Logic! and you need not delay, as, by the time you arrive there, I shall have given them a recommendation that will secure you a welcome. The salary is a second consideration with you, I perceive, and the main

business in hand seems to be, to get away from your friends, the deserving Hydes!

Yours, for some time,

ASHTON."

About a week after this, Abbie was in the midst of a bevy of girls, in a large hall in Clapperton Academy, in all varieties of facial distortion, practising the scales, and scaling the roof, with their various ear-piercing notes. She became a great favorite in the boarding-house. The teachers loved her, and gave proof of their confidence by allowing her a great many opportunities to serve them in doing little matters of business, reconciling refractory pupils, getting up exhibitions and examinations, and writing notices of them; all in a patronizing way, which Abbie smiled at, and conformed to, submissively. The girls loved her, because she would listen to their love adventures, and help them out of their mischiefs, because she always had a little change (money) to lend, and would not refuse her best scarf and veil when they wanted to borrow them; and so appreciative were they of her good-nature, and good taste in dress, that she had the honor of seeing some choice article walking around on promiscuous shoulders most of the time.

But Abbie was progressing, and could not be unhappy; she studied character, and spent some time every day under the open sky; looked in brooks and laid her ear to the earth and listened to its voices. She sung also, and had frequently pleasead and encouraging audience in Ashton, an dother musical

friends. Her most anxious study was to have in use her best capacities. She honored her own highest impulses, and in this respect seemed to be a child of chance more than of reason. It was a remark of hers, that she had always found occasion to "respect her intuitions as much as her judgment," and they seemed certainly to lead her as correctly.

It was a beautiful afternoon in August, when the earth seems to lie near the heart of the sun, that Abbie and Ashton seated themselves on the tufted grass by a river's side. The tall trees swung lazily over them, and their shadows braided with light played over their faces and danced on the waves at their feet, thistle-down floated in the sunshine, and the fulness of life lulled everything into repose. Abbie had a way of talking her inmost thoughts on such occasions, without reference to effect—so she began without reflection, slowly—

“Dreams do come to me,
Sometimes in the air,
On insects' shining wings,
Sometimes in the midst of care,
If a bird or cricket sings,
Sometimes in my window seat,
When sorrowing drops of rain
Against the casement beat,
And dim the window pane;
Sometimes when the shadows fleet
Hie o'er the sunny plain,
To idle in the meadows sweet,
Or among the rippling grain;
But sweetest dreams are mine,
With deepest meanings fraught,
When I read a poet's line,
Or an artist's pencilled thought.”

This little poem, simple as it was, from its improvisation, and the unhesitating, deliberate way in which it was recited, produced a magnetic effect on Ashton, and he exclaimed impetuously—

“Abbie, what are you? you are not learned, not witty, nor brilliant; you are unobtrusive, and yet you contrive to be mistress of the occasion, of circumstances, and people, and hearts generally. You seem to work without means, although just now you had better turn your eyes away, or they will give the lie to my words—but I do not comprehend you.” Abbie was about to reply, when the scene was changed, by the approach of a tall thin figure, with a pale face and drooping shoulders. No sooner had his eye of mildest sunshine rested on Abbie than she exclaimed, “Cousin Fred!” and bounded into his arms. Verily, it was her old protecting schoolmate, and he threw his arm around her tumultuously beating heart, thinking only of the proud moment in his boyhood, when that heart fluttered with pain and wounded sensibility under Aunt Pru’s stubborn cotton, and how he gallantly protected the breastwork from the rude assaults of a horde of insulting children. When Abbie looked around, Ashton had left, so the two friends sat down together and reviewed the past.

Fred recounted his experience, which had not many adventures, but was made up mainly of virtuous and successful efforts to attain a high position in literature; he finished his history, and taking from his pocket a bit of paper dated five years before, he unfolded it, took a ring and placed it on Abbie’s finger, saying, “By this ring, which you parted with at

Alton, I have traced you through your misfortunes, never forgetting, never indifferent to you, and only deterred from coming to you by the hope that I could some time offer you something more than an honest hand and deep love. Now I add to these a name you may respect. Will you accept it?"

The river sung on and broke playfully over the rocks in its bed, the shadows lengthened, the birds flew homeward, and yet Abbie answered not. She sat silently on the bank; stars came out and looked down in the stream, the dew fell, and yet she had not spoken; her soul had travelled far, and was not recalled, until Fred raised her tenderly, and in mournful silence led her home.

Abbie had not answered, yet all that night Fred could see an everlasting *no* written on his destiny. "My love has been vain, my ambition has wasted my life, and I have not enough left to struggle with, and triumph over my disappointment." Thus ran his thoughts, while with slow and measured step he paced his room: in vain he questioned the midnight why he had been suffered to cherish a fruitless love, and give his life to a clinging vain shadow. No angel answered him. But with the dawning morning came a gleam of common practical sense, and poor Fred discovered he had been a dreamer, loving a phantom, which although beautifully embodied, and at length tangible as he found in that river-side embrace, had still never until now been aware of his love; and his ideal devotion, his abrupt avowal of it, shocked his already excited nerves, and seemed to him an unpardonable absurdity.

He therefore appeared before Abbie in the morning with a haggard face and nervous manner, which wrung her pitying soul with anguish. Burying her face in her hands, she exclaimed—

“Go, dear Fred, this entanglement of our souls is not for good. I know not why you have been suffered to love me too well; I will study for the solution of this problem in my misfortunes, my sorrows, of which, dear cousin, I see clearly I am to have a full share.”

“God sustain you, dear girl;” and taking both her hands in his, Fred looked in Abbie’s eyes a last, long look of hopeless love. It settled down in her soul and went out no more forever.

They parted—a new tone was born in Abbie’s voice; people wept when they heard it, but knew not why; they thought *study* and practice were making her a wonderful singer.

CHAPTER V.

It was a cold glittering night in mid-winter; suffering and want there might be in obscure and dark places, but who would suppose it to go into the magnificent rooms, brilliantly lighted, beautified by art, made luxurious by wealth, which were this evening crowded with the choicest fashion and talent of ——? Still more strange must it seem to you, dear reader, to find a group of noble persons surrounding a beautiful girl, arrayed in finest fabric, of misty softness, with pearls in her hair, and one rose-bud of faint sunset glow on her breast—to find, on looking again,

this is the orphan Abbie, and that she is consenting to sing. You are surprised, but still more was a haughty brilliant lady in the background, who exclaims to Mr. Ashton in astonishment, "Assuredly there is our little nurse!" and our old friend Lucie turned disdainfully away to a *cooler* recess.

Abbie sung. One delicate wrist was banded with a black velvet ribbon, which had its correspondence in a dirge-tone now and then ringing out suddenly amidst other festive notes with strange effect. Listeners felt a little spasm of the heart when they heard it, transient and soon soothed by luxurious floods of harmony—but they said, sometimes audibly, "strange." So also critical eyes thought that little band of black "strange."

Ashton caught the inquiry that murmured around the room, "Who is this charming young lady?" and he answered to himself, "Yes, she is charming; she has beauty, genius, and grace, and now a recognized position; she is in her proper sphere, I must lose no time."

Of course, when seated in the carriage by the side of Abbie, on their return home, it is to be expected that he would be tempted to take a little hand that was peeping out of a fur envelope, and declare it belonged to him. Abbie tried in vain to divert his dashing, bold, and witty protestations, with gay rejoinders; he became more earnest as she became facetious; and she was obliged at length to say in sincere earnestness—

"Must I lose another friend? Why must I, who have so much need of friends, seem ungrateful and

cold hearted? Let me entreat you, dear Ashton, kind friend to my former desolation, to respect this truthful conviction of my soul—any bonds but those of friendship between us would destroy our happiness and stifle our highest aspirations; we should spin our own silken shrouds, and die.”

“So I would like to do, Abbie, for I have not your cold ambition; but if I can’t die with you, I won’t spin any fine fancies alone, to strangle myself in, and you need not distrust my sincerity if I hide my disappointment under a gay exterior; so farewell: when we meet, would you know if I can be true and earnest, continue to look into my eyes.”

Abbie left the carriage cheerfully, for she well knew the brave and honorable heart of Ashton was not irrevocably committed; she entered her room, however, with a presentiment of ill, went directly to the table; there lay a letter; Abbie seated herself and opened it; it was the record of cousin Fred’s death:—“Tell her I loved her to the last, and never reproached her, and if spirits are permitted to give sweet, consoling assurances of their love to earthly friends, she will sometimes feel me near.” At this point, Abbie involuntarily raised her hand, laid aside her string of pearls, let the golden masses of hair fall, and closed her eyes—distinctly she felt a spirit-touch on her head, caressingly it passed again and again over it, touched her shoulder, it circled around the grief-band on her wrist. It presented to her mind the words, “It is well with us.” What infinite, what pure consolation flowed from this spirit-interview! It went with her into life, sublimated

her aspirations, elevated her above the reach of temporal annoyances—for a time.

At this time Abbie had attained a high point of musical excellence; she had become an artist in execution, and rendered her original conceptions with great effect. But constant nervous excitement wore upon her health, and she became morbidly sensitive; exercising a severe censorship over herself—distrusting her most strenuous efforts to live a self-sacrificing, pure, religious life. She devoted to charities much of her large income; she made personal inquiries, and gave sympathy and aid to all forms of distress.

All this was well had it ended well; but the Rev. Mr. Harder, a man of giant physical frame, and immense will-power, got his eye on this enthusiast, and partly from pure religious conscientiousness, and partly from a little "carnal" affection which he had unwittingly conceived, reined her up to the firm standard posts of orthodoxy. He impressed her that she needed the influences of severest church discipline—that her natural tendency to free-thinking was the sole preventive to her full and perfect acceptance to Divine Wisdom and communion with the "saints"—that the outward ceremonials of religion were more potent to salvation than any inward voice which she might listen to—in fact, that if she would consent to be his "weaker vessel" she would make an offering "holy and acceptable to the Lord."

Mr. Harder had a powerful mind in certain directions; he could sweep Abbie's best arguments to the wind with his honest, arrogant assumptions of

right; he would knock down her feeble, soul-prompted objections with any old fashioned club of orthodox denunciation with perfect ease and triumph.

Poor Abbie was at length brought to believe she must mortify and scourge herself into submission. She laid her refined tastes, her love of beauty, her faith in the inner natural light of the soul, all under this mighty Juggernaut, and gave what little remained of will or hope into Mr. Harder's iron fist, trusting at last to be brought into the high condition she aspired to. Mr. Harder talked abundantly of the aid of the Holy Spirit and the ministry of angels, but when Abbie made known to him her small experience in the intercourse of departed friends with those of earth, their enlightening, sustaining power, his vision was open at once to a huge devil wandering round, seeking whom he might devour, deceiving silly women with his illusive representations, deluding such men as Davis and all his followers with a lie, that they might be damned.

Up to this period Abbie had followed her interior light, and had found it a reliable guide; she was honest, true, simple and harmonious, but she turned from it, and substituted an artificial candle made up of man's fallibilities and carried by guides no wiser than herself. If her soul struggled sometimes with remonstrance, she crucified it afresh, for she was told to distrust it, that it was evil, and only evil, and she must look away to other sources. She stumbled sadly, and at last fell into the ditch, namely, a marriage with the Rev. Mr. Harder.

She was led to the sacrifice in black, Mr. Harder

thought it looked as if she had renounced all vanities; she wore a circlet of black around her golden hair, a white rose was all the bridal token, and that drooped sadly, at her ear, and finally its leaves fell, and lay scattered on her shoulder, and in the black folds of her dress; so was our sweet Abbie taken to the huge *chest* (heart) and home of Mr. Harder.

Do all things in nature revolve in a circle, or why was Abbie taken back to just such a deadening atmosphere (with a little more variety) as she first breathed in her orphanage at Mr. Winds'? Whether it be so or not, Abbie wrote in her Journal—

The universe is spherical,
 However chimerical
 The structures of fancy may be;
 All teachings clerical,
 Reason and miracle,
 Revolve in a circle,
 And widen and wimple,
 Like drops in the sea.

CHAPTER VI.

It is a rainy night in November, gusts of wind drive the cold showers against the window. Abbie sits in a quiet little parlor by the singing fire on the hearth. She is wearily reviewing the labors of the day. She has performed all the work in the kitchen, prepared dinner for the unexpected arrival of Mr. Abel Screw and his wife, who with their family of four children are circulating about lecturing on Abolition of Slavery, Woman's Rights, and the Dignity

of Labor. She has in the afternoon sewed in the Dorcas Society, and in the evening attended a conference meeting. By the flickering fire-light she is looking back upon the whole history of the past six months of her wedded life. She has been conscientiously devoted and loyal to her husband and all his interests. Her self abnegation was astonishing. It appeared to her in this clear hour, not like a virtue, but a reproach. To what had it led her? not to an extended, enlightened sphere of Christian love and charity; not to the increase of good deeds to real sufferers, to want and sorrow; not to the growth and healthy happiness of her own soul, or the development of its sacred gifts. No! honest and great in his integrity as was her husband, he had unintentionally enthralled a soul in its hour of weakness. Abbie saw that she was diseased in spirit when she threw herself on human creeds, and in human arms for counsel and protection. The sphere she was in was true in its elements, honest in feeling and endeavor; kind and good natures warmed and gave life to the restricted round of their duties—but she was not in harmony with them, nor could she receive or impart good, in this false position.

Now Abbie in this psychologically excited state was enabled to see the step truth and right pointed to as her only salvation.

“Because I was sick in spirit, and tottered, shall I not walk when I can? because I have been dizzy and blind, shall I not seek the true way when I see?” Abbie, in the strength of this sudden resolution,

went to the study where Mr. Harder was writing a sermon.

She stepped behind him and read:—

“The wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.”

“Mr. Harder, I have come to you in just the right time to appeal to this wisdom, for I am in great sorrow, and need your mercy.”

Abbie was trembling violently at the approaching conflict—but her husband, who had no womanly sensibilities to struggle with, looked honestly up saying—

“Well, what?”

“Do you think I am a proper wife for a clergyman of your faith?”

“Well, no, Abbie (sticking his pen behind his ear), I have wished you were not so much inclined to infidelity—I never saw so stubborn a case as yours; nothing but the grace of God can effectually break you down; you must wrestle often in prayer.”

“I have tried to be faithful in all my duties, but I perceive I am not true to myself and cannot be to you in my present circumstances; in fact, Mr. Harder, shocking as it may seem to you, I am resolved to be true, honest, and ‘without hypocrisy,’ and to this end, I must leave your church—and you—”

A long distressing silence followed this announcement. But Mr. Harder was a Christian, and in this hour of severest trial, whatever error was mingled

with his faith, it was surely founded on a rock, and stood fast.

He urged no remonstrance; angels seemed to be near to soften his severity, and incline him to mercy. Abbie, firm in her distress, explained to him fully her condition and convictions; she wept gratefully over his clemency, and just, conscientious warnings and advice. She entreated him to forgive whatever of unhappiness had grown out of this unequal union, and above all, the pain and mortification this present step would cause him; for herself, she had not a fear or a doubt.

The next day Mr. H. preached a sermon from the text, "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers," the moving pathos of which was afterward explained by Abbie's public renunciation of the creed of the church, and her excommunication.

Mr. H. resolved to go on a foreign mission; he had always desired to occupy such a field, and he was eminently fitted for it; real objective difficulties, his strong will and unflinching virtue could meet and conquer; he was great in moral courage and honesty, and clung to his creeds with the unquestioning faith and simplicity of a child. He felt the want of this in Abbie, and although he could not reproach her sincere efforts, he deplored her natural skepticism. This in a great measure prepared him for, and reconciled him to, the course she had taken.

Mr. Harder was to sail for Burmah in a month. Abbie with many tears, but not with misgivings, employed herself in filling his trunks with every comfort her kind heart could devise; she stitched a

great many prayers, and fervent wishes for his happiness into his collars and bosoms, wrought many regrets into stockings and slippers, all of which, it may be hoped, were not in vain; but in an unseen, unknown way, rose up like comforters in solitary, heathen lands. She accompanied him to New York; they parted on the shore, a December sun shining mournfully on them and their solemn parting. Laying his hand on her head, Mr. Harder blessed her, while she pressed his hand to her heart and wept. She waved him out of sight, and then turned to—what?—her own free, solitary self.

Abbie had no money, so she set herself resolutely to work to recover her lost skill in music, took lodgings in a quiet part of the city, and studied with great and heroic ardor. Again she taught successfully and with increased respect; she gave private concerts which were so elevated in their character, they became favorite occasions for reunions of talent, wit, and beauty, and eminently good and great minds. Abbie sung to the intellect as well as the affections. To the struggling, suffering soul she had a genuine tone of sympathy, which bore this language, "I too have suffered," but a victor's triumphant exultation was the crowning excellence of her art. What a noble grace is born of truth! it gives a regal air to the most common life. So Abbie in her unprotected, exposed position, solely by the force of a truthful life, the proper exercise of her talents, and a love of beauty, entered naturally into circles of the highest intellectual and moral culture. She was unconventional, but with a nice perception

of fitness, and delicate love for all humanity; she never wounded the nicest delicacy, or gave pain to any form of misfortune. Her heroism encouraged the feeble, and her extended influence, without the aid of arbitrary, external circumstances, made the strong in high places feel their impotence, and mistrust the patent of their nobility.

From her unseen hand rills of charity constantly issued, and many a dry heart blossomed into thankful hope through these quiet influences. Even to the distant land of Burmah, where a lonely missionary toiled, anonymous gifts of money and clothing were received, and possibly traced to their true source.

But fraud intercepts many a good message, and so at length, by some accident, these gifts, attracted by their apparent value, the hand of cupidity, and they were appropriated by some smooth-faced treasurer, instead of the worthy Mr. Harder. To make all appear consistent, the ship which should have carried these valuable gifts, bore the false tidings of Abbie's death.

It is not to be supposed Mr. Harder would refuse the Providence, that soon after this news, threw in his way a most excellent co-worker and co-partner in his labors. Undoubtedly the good Rebecca was impressed to go among the heathen for that blessed end; at any rate, two congenial, sincere souls toiled faithfully together, blessing and being blessed.

News of Mr. Harder's marriage in due time reached Abbie, and rejoiced her exceedingly. She hoped he might thus be rewarded a thousandfold

for the distress she had innocently caused him. She had no respect for the bonds of marriage, excepting as they confirm a true union of soul. It seemed to her right that such bonds should be annulled, when they were found to restrain the form, and not the spirit. Thus she expressed herself:—

“ Spirit-friends where'er ye be,
 Answer, oh, answer me—
 May the soul flee
 O'er land and sea,
 And form or face
 Of beauty and grace
 Freely love, and
 No traitor prove !”

“ A love bound in custom's iron bars,
 That dares not soar among the stars,
 Can not bless a noble soul,
 That loves a part, and loves the whole,
 As does the love whose prison bars
 Are the golden links between the stars ;
 The lightning that flasheth,
 The flood that dasheth,
 The wind that rusheth,
 The morning that flusheth,
 Each and all are links that bind
 Soul to soul, and ' kind to kind. '”

CHAPTER VII.

DIVORCED from her husband! I like not the look of that sentence, yet let us not be afraid of words; if they cover any wrong, they are repugnant, but if they clothe an honest action, however scandalized, we will use and respect them. Abbie, then,

was divorced from her husband. Life opened gloriously to her. The great world, and all its interests, external, human, or spiritual, seemed free to her inquiring spirit. She was restricted by no set of circumstances, and confined to no place. Unselfish to a remarkable degree and sympathetic, yet she appropriated all that is great and beautiful, as if she alone was made to enjoy it, for from the infinite riches of nature she saw that all men may drink, and yet the fountain, in undiminished flow, still invite not only mortal, but immortal truth-seekers. Her life was a rainbow arch of the actual and the ideal, spanning the earth.

But can a woman live a perfectly happy earthly life without a definite home-love and all its dear social ties? Abbie thought not, and trusted to a natural magnetic attraction to bring her in good time to this happy consummation. She always had an ideal to which she conformed in dress and manners. Poets swayed her to their deep meanings. Painters and sculptors furnished her imagination with beings of loveliness and light. Dreams suggested the possibility of spirit aid, and waking life confirmed it. Following the impression of a dream, she wrote the following in truthful simplicity, and gave it anonymous publicity:—

I am waiting for the spirit-guide
My dream once promised me,
When it led me by the river-side,
Beneath a spreading tree.

I am waiting for the crystal wave,
In rare and antique vasp.

The kindly spirit gave,
With all an angel's grace.

This moon long years ago,
This mystic dream was mine ;
No dusky care has dimmed the glow
Of the promise, or the time.

And by this dream here spoken,
May I soon answered be
By some word or token
Of high-souled ministry.

Some philosophers say every thought takes an immortal form and lives forever. Without doubt, the subtle currents that are agitated by the will or the conception and birth of ideas, extend in infinite circles and vibrate forever. Whoever is in the circle of these influences, is stirred by them: the good, by the good thought-wave; the evil, by evil. Cunningham, a scholar and author, sat in his room, looking over the present age and its philosophies. He was suddenly possessed with the idea that some soul was inquiring for him. He followed this interior conviction, laid aside his books, and commenced his uncertain travels, following only the attraction of magnetism. Wherever he went, he scattered his rich intellectual wealth in the form of lectures and conversations. At one of his lectures, among an immense audience of enlightened persons, in a quiet corner, sat Abbie. Not long had her eye dwelt on the face of the lecturer, before distinctly behind and above him, she could see a luminous outline, bearing perfect resemblance to his face, only sublimated and glorified. Directly to her seemed to flow the spirit

of his thoughts. She heard his words and felt his presence.

Nor was she surprised, after a wandering look over the audience, to see him at last fix his eyes fully on her. I will not describe that look; some might understand it, and some would not. Two souls were in quest of each other; they met, and no doubts, or questionings, or self-sacrifices, or change, or death, grew out of this holy and perfect union.

Nor was it *confirmed*, but only *symbolized* by the ceremonials at the altar. Abbie robed herself magnificently—not a gem was spared that could give significance to her triumphant joy. A network of silver tissue held her heavy braids of golden hair behind, and around her ear were chains of gold to hold the pendant diamonds. A robe of heavy, snowy satin was softened by flowing drapery of thin tissue, which was looped around her waist with a cord of silk and gold. So she stood by the side of her Cunningham, who, with tender grace bent protectingly to her trusting love. (He was some inches taller than she was—a fact for the mathematical.)

Reader, I have no doubt there is a colony of ready-born poets, artists, authors, and spiritualists, somewhere on Parnassus, the Green Mountains, or the Blue Hills—in Massachusetts, Iowa, or California; if you or I stumble on them, we shall know Cunningham settled there when he took our little heroine, Abbie, she that was—Nott.

BUSY-WILD.

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POETS have "Idle-wilds"—nature's reservations for her particular favorites, but I, with the million, have my Busy-wild. I am busily sewing, on the threshold of my open door. A man is mowing the tall grass that grows rank, even to the door-step. Little inhabitants, worms, spiders, and various other insects that had colonized, and were thriftily living in the shelter of their grassy world, are hurrying, in great consternation, as the scythe cuts down the blades of their little forest. A huge, Websterian skeleton of a dead humble-bee, lies shorn of his golden splendors—the hero is dead, and ants are busy dissecting and appropriating his remains, carrying each a favorite morsel for his winter store.

The air is full of ephemera, which the slant beams of the sun distinctly reveal. They are wildly waltzing up and down with an ecstatic motion, that seems a joy that should last forever; but they were born to-day—they will die to-night. I shall see them to-morrow morning, as I did this, sticking to the side of the house, on the windows, on the grass, their stiff legs extended as in their last hop, their thin, purplish wings clinging mournfully to the forms that polked

so wantonly and well. I have studied them, they are beautiful, they dance well, they fill the air, and make the golden sunshine merry with their motion. But the morning sees them all dead, with a moral on every gaudy wing.

Here is my Busy-wild. A natural wall of trees hems me in from my neighbors; yet, by a little path, I can descend into a glen, rest me on a seat built in the branches of the trees, cross a little brook on a rustic bridge, and, at length, glide into the library of my friend. He will probably be sitting in a recess, with his thumb and finger pressed hard against causality. An obscure point in spiritual philosophy is tasking his reason.

Mr. P. studies creation in its manifold developments. He finds a significance in the form of a tree, and a human hope, alike linked in the beautiful chain of causes and effects, alike worthy his study, and inspiring to his imagination.

Nature is something more to him than a beautiful mechanism, serving a temporal purpose. It is the fountain to supply present life, that, out of the best growth of our natures, the seeds of higher being may be perfected.

I have sat down in sorrowful and doubting mood, to listen to his discourse, and have seen more hopes and a better faith, spring up from his low-toned philosophy than from much of the cold theology of the religious world. A great, unending, pure life flowing forever; this is the promise written everywhere—this my friend interprets for those who will listen. He reasons closely, but he takes a wide and

Mr S
Perr

general basis to start from—not a few partial, material facts; he embraces all convictions and perceptions, from scientific as well as psychological data.

↳ E,
Humbert
Not so the shrewd, casuistical neighbor, H——. He takes all fine, spiritual theories, nicely dissects them, cutting now and then with a fine sarcasm, and behold, the fragments of your beautiful fabric are thrown to the wind. His wit amuses itself with the world's blind struggle for immortality. In a deep voice, he says: "No advance has been made in discovering the future of man, since Plato and other wise philosophers of ancient times; they guessed and hoped, so do we." He leaves you not a plank or a straw to catch at. "Show me a spirit," he says, "and I will believe in it." I cannot show him one, but my wronged soul stands up and asserts its claims to faith. He defeats his antagonist on material ground. Like Thackeray, his keen eye penetrates the artificial forms of life; he smiles at its absurdities—I do not say he sneers.

For days after a conversation with him, earth looks to me like a well-devised, ingenious combination of forces, that work well, but will turn out only temporary and gross products. Earth loses her pleasant, secret voice.

This brilliant materialist commands by the light of his eye, and force of his reason, your admiration, while he destroys your preconceived opinions, and leaves you convicted only of a great power somewhere. But your intuition is put out with the extinguisher of his wit, the flame of your imagination is pressed out with his material logic. The best he

leaves you is the wisdom to know how to eat and drink well, "for to-morrow you die."

This is a Busy-wild. The young are busy with love-projects, the old are busy looking over the grain of their experience. Death is busy pulling at the heart-strings of two or three reluctant victims. They are lovely, and it is not easy to detach them from their earth homes.

A few days ago, a little tragedy occurred that made every heart heavy with grief.

A kind man has two sons. The oldest is ghost-like, with a heart disease. He is only thirteen years old, but all his sports and budding interests are laid by, and he sits counting his heart-beats, and looking wistfully into the future. The younger, little Eddy, ran to his mother, dutifully and gayly, one afternoon, saying—

"Mother, may I bathe in the river when I drive the cow over the bridge?"

"Yes, Eddy, but be very careful."

This was at four o'clock. Elated, he ran down the street; he met three little friends. Very gallantly, the generous little fellow divided a paper of candy with them, giving the newest acquaintance, little "Ella," a white peppermint, which, now, she will never forget. Dear happy child! in an hour he lay white and breathless on the stones in the bottom of the river. He lost his footing in the stream; his younger companions could not help him; his little white arms were stretched up toward the blue sky, in vain agony. No help of human hand, no help from the smiling sun, no help from the tender arch

of heaven, from the green earth. O God! was there not a messenger near to greet his young spirit when it left his drowning body? was his little life put out forever in the sullen wave?

Oh, what a hideous mockery is life, if such its blank conclusion! What shadows of happiness, cruelly illusive, are friends, and love, and hope!

The sad news that little Eddy was in the river, flew over the village. Now let those that cry out against human nature, look on. Not a heart or hand but springs to save little Eddy. Groups of children, with sad, wondering faces, cluster together, and tell how they loved him, what he said last to them. Men plunge into the stream, looking for that white treasure at the bottom. Kind-hearted women seek the frantic mother; all that pity can do, is done; the little body is found, and carried home; the groups disperse, but there is no joy to-night in all the village.

Is there no good in the human heart? Is there not a deep, living principle of good down under a surface of some evil, and will it not survive all drowning waves of doubt, despair, and death?

Oh, this is a Busy-wild! busy in joy, in good, in evil, in strugglings and strivings and longings; busy in processes of change to higher and higher conditions, and long will it be before poet power can make for us an Idle-wild.

I D E A L I S M .

C H A P T E R I .

IN a little rough kitchen, with unplastered walls, rude doors, with the almost obsolete wooden latch, by a round, white table, before a stove, sat Mr. Wilde and his wife. The room was neat, the little cupboards, that served as pantry and cellar, were hung with clean curtains, and above the water-pail hung a shining cocoa-nut-shell, with a wooden handle, and its brown, fibrous inside, invitingly like the bottom of a brook, covered with leaves. A gun and a fishing-rod might be considered the only ornaments in the room. The fire was burning violently, and the stove was red with heat. It was a very cold December night; the snow in the capricious blast was sketching all kinds of grotesque figures on window-panes, fence-posts, and raising pyramids for travellers' impatient feet to demolish. Mr. Wilde was sketching a beautiful fancy head. It was nothing to him, when he had his pencil or brush in hand, that they had disappointed him in all his long-continued efforts to make them serve his physical necessities. He bent his great head over the picture, and labored as industriously as if his

pockets were as full of bank-bills as they really were of duns, and his home as full of beauty and taste as his brain of fine visions; so he drew silently on until midnight; then, laying the picture in his portfolio, went to bed, to dream of a land of art, with bread and coats, without money, and without price.

Mr. Wilde had beautiful inspirations; people looked at his works with pleasure; commended him, advised him condescendingly, criticized him—"but all that didn't pay." Conscience or some odd feeling or other prevented his flattering his tailor or boot-maker into a sitting for his "very fine picture," and the consequence of such improvident scruples was, he had to pay his debts in common vulgar currency instead of art, or become allied to creditors in a very disagreeable way.

Brother artists said, he did not "half try," for while he was dreaming over his ideal heads, they caught at everything that "turned up," and were sure to find some self-admiring pug, or snub-nosed patron in every exigency. And they progressed, from village wonders to art-union prodigies, and from that anomalous rank, to "wonderful talent" gone abroad; while he struggled hard to maintain himself at home with his brush, and not to be brushed over with failure and despair.

Mr. Wilde in the eyes of common observers was unfortunately organized. At school, the brisk, dashing, brilliant Ned Longworth carried off the prizes and the predictions of sagacious observers, that "there is talent we shall hear from." This promising talent took a very circuitous direction, the

final bent of which was—peddling, or, as his wife more politely expressed it, “*circulating scythe snaths.*”

The beginnings of life, like Burns’ letter, may turn out a song or a sermon!

No one believed our hero could be anything but an inoffensive dreamer. He loved nature and fishing better than books; he would not suit himself to occasions, but maintained a quiet integrity against the influence of pleasure-loving companions and the most seductive temptations. But the climax to his oddity and folly was, “marrying for love.” When he committed that absurdity, it was not to be expected his friends would forgive him. They did not; but censured, condemned, and forsook him. Discreet people will pardon anything in the world sooner than a marriage that is not a bargain. The nearly obsolete idea of giving all for love, risking, believing, hoping all things, prudent correct people despise, and punish, with well-devised persecution, wherever they see it developed in actual occurrence.

Of course it was very hard for him to *maintain* his folly, although he clung to it with fidelity. He had also too much reverence for the true principles of art, to yield them to the low, perverted tastes he had to encounter, and, for that reason, was often obliged to sacrifice half the price of his pictures in adhering to, and defending them.

In the first place, the people he was among thought his was a “*very easy trade!*” one man would like to apprentice his boy to him, because it was light work and large pay. Everybody, however ignorant, feels

competent to criticize a painting. One might be a little modest and backward in giving an opinion of a poem; and even in mechanical arts, people hesitate, doubt, and are dimly conscious of, now and then, a little ignorance on some point; but what person was ever so superficial, ignorant, or clownish as not to be, in his own estimation, a proper critic of any painting or sculpture he ever saw?

These complicated difficulties worried Mr. W. and forced him to many sacrifices of money to his self-respect. He wore his threadbare coat with increasing pride, and lessening hope, as daily returning wants brought daily mortifications and disappointments.

A living group of beautiful heads, with golden curls, dimpled cheeks, fringed lids, and lovely little lake-like eyes, *ought* to suggest nothing but poetry, music, painting and heaven; but alas! the ignoble conclusion forced on many minds, and strongly on the feelings of Mr. Wilde, was: all this beauty and holiness must be paid for.

Bending over the couch of his sleeping children, how often between him and their rose-flushed faces has risen the gaunt, grim phantom of want, staring threateningly in his anxious face, while in his ear is whispered, "shield them if you can."

On the December night which commences our story, the most vivid picture left on the mind of Mr. Wilde was the helpless beauty of a quartette of music-breathing children, and as he turned from their dewy slumbers to his own pillow, a new and strong resolution was born in his soul; and if he

dreamed of a land flowing with bread and shoes without money and without price, he had also a consciousness of having earned it by much toil and courage.

He was so much in the habit of planning for the ideal, instead of the actual, that necessity had hard work to force him into the many little economies and expedients of life. His house was like a grotesque dream suddenly consolidated; the wind sported very rudely with its pendant eaves, and played all sorts of antics with its slight trellises. The river that sung by the door, would, in spring freshets, roll its turbid waves threateningly around the little home, which in fact invited the destructive terrors of all the elements; its light high roof, fire and lightning, while the base was a fine weakness for strong floods. Such were the aerial projects and home of Mr. Wilde.

Hitherto he had never questioned his love of art, it had seemed a necessity of his life. Whether he wore a shabby coat, or ate a plain dinner or not, if a beautiful vision came into his brain, he must transfer it to canvas. He must study, whether creditors crowded too near him, or friends kept too far in the distance; but a new idea was born this last month of the year.

Sitting at breakfast, which, in all its primitive simplicity of character, was always served with a degree of refinement, Mr. Wilde, following the train of thought suggested the evening before, quietly remarked—

“To-day, Clara, I shall put all my pictures and

studies aside; out of sight and out of mind. I cannot paint for love and money, money we must have, and I begin this morning to devote my whole being to this end."

Mrs. W. was surprised at the resolute tone in which this was said, and also pained, for in all their poverty she had hugged to her heart the hope that out of this loved profession would grow success and triumph over want.

"Is there no way in which we can live and you pursue your studies? I will do anything and suffer almost everything rather than see your talents prostituted to an uncongenial pursuit."

Mr. Wilde glanced at her homely dress and labor-stained hands; his mind ran rapidly back over many years of privation; happy, uncomplaining poverty it is true—but he also saw how many glorious opportunities of improvement they had been obliged to forego, how many rich scenes in nature and life were denied them in the narrow restricted round poverty compelled them to follow—he thought of his children—an impatient bitter feeling flashed over his face, and he exclaimed roughly—

"Good Heavens! have you not had enough of this?"

The dishes rattled as he jolted the table aside and his chair, seized his old rusty cap and left the room.

There was a great dust in his studio an hour after; pretty shepherdesses and serene Madonnas, babies' fat legs, and winged angels, busts, unpaid-for portraits, were indiscriminately huddled together into dusty closets; not a wood-nymph or fairy was left to en-

chant the walls—one naked thought only stared into Mr. Wilde's mind, cold, bare, bleak, or mean; *money!* "*I will have money!*" said he, as the last trace of beauty was removed from the room.

But how was money to grow out of a few pieces of drawing paper, some pine blocks, a knife and a pencil, which day after day lay on Mr. Wilde's table in this dreary, silent room? You or I, if we had gone in and seen his careworn wrinkled forehead, his silent study over those confused looking marks, could not have guessed. Neither could Mrs. W.; and truth to tell, what seemed a possibility before, namely, that talent and industry would have their reward, and bring good fortune at length, now looked to her like a dead hope. She thought he had left a difficult road in a stage of progress and knowledge of its dangers; for one untried, longer, darker, and more uncertain.

It was New-Year's day. Mr. W. had the neuralgia in his head, besides a large angular *idea*, which he could not shape into form, for his pencil. He was constantly interrupted with calls and unpleasant looking folds of paper, with long unedifying columns of figures, and unfriendly names; he had, besides, a large appetite, for a small dinner, and a whole, noble soul in a worn, untidy coat.

"I am miserable enough to paint to-day, but to invent anything to obviate railroad accidents and to preserve life, is not in my humor just now, Clara; I scarcely think I, for one, should avail myself of such preservation if I had it, and I doubt, if the truth were known, whether these 'Providences' are so

very untimely after all, especially to neuralgic, dyspeptic, and dunned gentlemen. However, I have an excellent idea," and he pushed a curious little block of wood toward Mrs. W., "which ought to make us independent of petty annoyances."

Clara looked at it unappreciatingly, and replied to the moral part of his remarks. "My dear, the most miserable hours of my life have a valuable experience, which *I* would not exchange for ease or pleasure, much less for a violent and sudden death, even if it opened to me new and glorious scenes beyond our present conception. It is strange to me how any person should wish exemption from the sufferings of life, the positive ills—they so much enrich the soul. Look at our past years of married life, what sympathy, patience, hope, courage, strength have grown out of our privations and disappointments! What strong ties of love have they created to all kindred laboring, waiting souls! Yet with all that we have gained, there are still aspirations in our souls that cannot be quenched, we *must* go on—we must, and shall do something more than live."

"I suppose we shall, although these twinges of pain don't stimulate my ambition or imagination, as much as they do my impatience. But what do you think of my model?"

Mr. Wild explained his idea, grew very eloquent in describing the beautiful working of his invention and its merciful design. It aroused his philanthropy to such a degree, he concluded if all the world were his creditors, he would give them the benefit of his life-preserving discovery; but the grand climax

to his plan was the positive belief that it was worth a fortune to him. One more idea to be elaborated, and then he would prove its value.

This little colloquial outlet to his troubled mind was just what he needed to give room for the egress of that one more idea—and soon it was developed on paper, and seemed just the thing to complete his plan.

Mr. Wilde commenced the new year with experiments, a succession of them—inventors understand that long, hoping, doubting process, they know all about the ague and fever of that new country lying in the territory of Invention. The fever of hope and the chill of despair alternating, hanging on through weeks, months, and years.

Fulton knew what it was—so in our own age, while we are enjoying the benefits of his mental labors, has Morse been through a long course of intermittent hope and despair.

Mr. Wilde found, to leave Art for Invention, was exchanging one thread of suspense for another; however he was tortured, but not consumed, and after having pretty much all the dross of perishable ambition and plan burnt out of him, he found himself gold, pure gold, in the estimation of everybody who knew him. The truth is, the value of the invention was so great, and so easily tested and applied, it secured to him, at last—a fortune—of course, friends.

Meantime he was reduced to the last decent degree of destitution. People who were subsequently so clear-sighted, as regarded his merits, saw a great many faults in him during these dark years. The

natural dignity and grace of his manners were wholly unrecognized; a careless familiar nod was the common mode of salutation vouchsafed him by his *friends*. Mrs. W. found a kind of hyderdindia variety of hue in the friendship of those about her, but she expected no stability; experience had taught her there cannot be consistency and uniformity of action in an imperfect social organization. That humanity is growing into more harmonious life, was to her sufficient consolation.

Censure not the unrighteous deed, but the wrong culture or neglect that caused it, was her motto.

CHAPTER II.

IN a large vaulted room, dim, silent, and shadowy, sat Mr. Wilde. A statue of Hope, half completed, bore the traces of fresh modelling. The artist sat by a humming fire, and the light of the glass covered stove shone out pleasantly and lit up his melancholy features. So pale and rigid were they, one might have taken him for one of the statues with which the room was filled.

From the expression of his face his conception of Hope could not be brilliant, and as he sat and watched the bright flames playing through the arches of crystal, it grew more and more sombre and despairing.

A jovial face in a luxuriant forest of black hair and whiskers, looked in at the door. A figure followed, and dropping from his vast rotundity of per-

son a heavy cloak, he, the brother artist, drew up a chair and sat down to an habitual chat.

“Wilde, I am a miserable man! my cursed roost of a study, where I am cooped up day and night with my infernal family of faces, is intolerable to me, and I have come in to have an hour of pure hearty envy of your better fortune,” and he looked up to the high cobwebbed arch above, and around into the well-filled niches, ranged over the glorious array of studies which the fertile fancy of a refined soul had made, and sighed, half in earnest, at the contrast they made with his own “coop,” and “glass-eyed company of crockery faces,” as he called them.

“And I was just wishing myself back, Alf, to a time when I had not fame or friends or money, but was rich in love and hope, and had a little hut full of them. I have parted with everything natural and dear to me, for this miserable, dreary magnificence. Listen, and I will turn your envy into self-congratulations; for I will show you a miserable man in this seemingly unclouded prosperity. In the first place, the best powers of my best years have been bent to the miserable purpose of making money; my sweetest, holiest visions were banished for one sordid, vile, grasping purpose. In this, my imagination became at last stagnant, and all pure artistic impulses dried up. I gained my object; it was a bitter toil; and then I looked within myself for the capacity to *use* the advantages I had gained. I could study, travel, command any resources of knowledge. But youth with its luxuriant productiveness, I could not buy back with my yellow sickening gold; the dreams of

that prolific period, I could not recall. The *language* of art I have learned, and can use, but the crowding simple forms of natural grace, the high, religious, untainted conceptions of divine life, I have lost in my coarse struggle with gross materiality. No, Alf, we cannot serve Art and Mammon."

"So—Art is a capricious, jealous mistress; I am tired of her whims; but, Wilde, with your prerogatives, I would *command* her; but a poor devil like me, must of course snatch at small favors, follow obsequiously just so far behind, never daring to look beyond mediocrity. *You* may take what position you please, and support it; I must be popular, of course not original, that would cut me off from my shilling crust. I tell you poverty is degrading, and you are enviably removed from it."

"I have not told you all the blessings of my wealth," said Mr. Wilde, bitterly; "they are in my bosom and my home, and are too sacred to show, even as food for your envy. I am a poor man; I can wrap my desolation in cloak of gold cloth and ermine, but it is just as cold to my heart, as any un-gilded sorrow. I am a poor artist, my efforts are far below my former ability; many a rude sketch made in the days of my obscurity, which would not then have procured me a dinner, was better worth the thousands of dollars, and the adulation I now get, than my present soulless, over-studied, elaborate works!

"Alf, revel in your youth, and unharnessed freedom and strength; so long as you have nature and love in your keeping, there is hope; when they are

gone, you will be garrulous over your misfortunes and in Art, as I am now."

Mr. Wilde appeared too serious in his sorrow to be diverted; so, after a mutual glass of sherry which did not revive their spirits, they separated; Alf to his *pallet*, which was spread in one corner of his studio in the neighborhood of his palette and easel, both conjoined with his meals, taken also in his room, rendered them very *palatable*. Mr. Wilde ascended the marble steps of his palace just as the clock struck twelve.

"Not home yet of course," said he, as his eye glanced involuntarily toward the corner in which Mrs. W.'s room beamingly held forth a welcome to its absent mistress. Contrary quite to his usual course, Mr. W. followed the beckoning light and seated himself in the vacant chair drawn up to receive the velvet and diamond weariness of the fashionably dissipated Mrs. Wilde. He leaned his head on the carved back, and looking wretchedly around on the prodigal outlay of wealth in furniture and drapery, in rare devices of ornament, in pictures and statuary, thought, with a homesick feeling, of the little room where once he drew forms of beauty, and its only ornaments were a pair of loving eyes, and a brave trusting heart, looking toil and suffering in the face without complaint or fear. He thought of the fair faces of children, of the faithful mother that watched so tenderly their fragrant and healthy breathing. Three of those sweet lives had been lost when they were beyond the sea, and their graves were among strangers. "My noble Carl, thou only

art mine!" was his weeping ejaculation, as he bent over the fine form of his son in the adjoining room. A rustle and glitter were near, and beside him stood Clara.

Time does not beautify many faces, but it gives majesty of mien to largely endowed natures; it did to Clara. She had a proud imperious grace that secured, and became her position, as leader of the highest fashion. Here was a woman who possessed a moral power to dignify and adorn poverty, who was clear-sighted and serene in adversity; but who, in prosperity, lost all the gentle and mild hues of love and sympathy and became cold, brilliant, and glitteringly magnificent.

Perhaps one great reason for the chill of her sympathies, was the consciousness that she had no more, perhaps less virtue and grace now than she had years before, when she was unknown to the world; and the recollection of the neglect and indignities of that period made her despise the homage she now received. But how shall we account for, or excuse her estrangement from her husband and his pursuits? That is an unpleasant question, because it shows a frailty in woman. Mrs. W. had become familiarized with all varieties of talent, and in the engrossing excitements of intercourse with them, had become, in a great measure, oblivious of her husband, whose study it was to shun gay life as much as possible. They rarely met in anything like confidential intercourse; their diverse pleasures had no junction in common cares and interests; so they, who had once lived for each other, now met almost as strangers.

Mrs. W. frittered away her magnetism, in robes of silk and velvet, and in contact with countless varieties of absorbing people. He, in solitude, needed the attrition of other spirits, and sunk into infertile melancholy for want of it.

To-night behold them standing in their first attitude of mutual surprise, by the bedside of their only child.

"Clara, do you remember the time when we used to stand, as we do now—no, not as now, but together, and look at our sleeping children?"

Clara was silent; mechanically unclasping the circlet of diamonds and taking it from her hair, then removing gem after gem from its place, she seemed looking far back into the past, and silently to feel the delicate and merited reproach of her gentle husband. He led her to her room, and seating himself opposite her, waited her reply. She opened her casket of jewels, and as she laid in the ornaments of the evening, she remarked—

"Perhaps you think this glitter satisfies me that my soul has no want ungratified; or that my former life was richer in good feeling than this—but you remember, I always wished for a number of epochs of emotional history, and never promised to be content with *one*. My dear, I feel that this kind of life has done its work, and that I need a change, I think you do too"—and she looked up with a half-doubting smile.

"Oh, Clara, anything but this! with the mockery of an affluent life to be so poor! Once you would have disguised your noble soul in coarsest unseemly

garb ; you would have toiled till this hour of the morning, that I might not lose one happy moment of inspiration ; now my feeble conceptions are never warmed or encouraged into life by one sympathetic appreciative glance from you—all the world's praise cannot stimulate the nerves that your voice once quickened. I am tired of the artificial life our wealth imposes, and would gladly exchange it for any homely round of natural and healthy labor."

"What do you propose?" said Clara, almost contemptuously.

"Anything *humane, simple, and rational,*" replied Mr. Wilde with an emphasis on each word; "anything that will not stint, pervert, or entirely smother the soul's immortal gifts; anything that will not bring untimely infirmity and blemish on the beautiful bodily forms God has clothed these souls in. Clara, in my studies, I have daily to lament the wide departure from truth and nature, of the world, especially the merely wealthy and fashionable part of it, which unhappily my profession and wealth bring around me. And you, you, my dear, have you not been borne away from all the sweet amenities of your former life by the false and treacherous flow of prosperity?"

"Not irrevocably I hope; because you see, Wilde, I am not immutable, like you, blessed be my capacity to change! and here arises a question, which you must pardon me for asking, because it involves a confession. Were you ever jealous of me? if not, you now have an occasion to be, and precisely on

that, swings the door through which I am going out of my present round of experience into another."

Without seeming to observe the mocking tone of her remarks, Wilde seriously replied—

"If by jealousy, you mean an ignoble, base passion, growing out of sensuous egotism and selfishness on my part, and deceit, vanity, and dishonor on yours—No! I trust I have dignity and resources enough in myself and life to preserve me from a moment's regret for a woman who should prove herself unworthy of me and her position. It is my unhappiness to know you are superior to your present relations. You have more honor and gentler virtues under your worldly and brilliant manner than are recognized or felt by those on whom you waste yourself. *I am jealous* of those talents that, devoted to art, literature, or to moral or physical want, sickness and suffering, might make you such a blessing, and so blessed, as few can be. Yes, I am jealous, Clara, in this better, nobler sense, and whatever other '*occasion*' I have to be jealous, I know my rival cannot hold your abilities higher or compliment them more sincerely, than I do."

"Well, my dear, I have been under the miserable delusion of supposing myself a necessity in the circle I fill, and I have lifted myself up in sublime pride of conscious power, and unquestionable honor. You well apprehend the inferior estimate my flatterers put upon me, and make me doubly ashamed and humbled for my stupid self-conceit. This is what opens my eyes to the truth, this miserable circumstance."

“De Vere, you know him, that stupid millionaire, who (simply by their courtesy to his wines and plate) dines all the town; well, I have amused myself very much with him. He had heard that I could converse somewhat cleverly, and was speculative in my philosophies. I knew that he had travelled vastly, and was a good chart of places and distances, a lay figure for costume exhibition, a bill of fare for the best hotels; indeed his entire materiality was a study for me, I liked to oppose ideal beauty, to his external comforts. When he described a work of art by telling its size, cost, and what duke this, or count that, said of it, I brought out my divinities with all their interior transcendental perfections, and so diverted myself. But do you think, that from my soulless sport, has grown a huge presumptive belief in De Vere's mind, that I have been all along deeply interested in himself! To-night he made himself absurd and compromised my dignity to an unpardonable degree, by constant attendance on me in his curled wig, and with his shaky hands, in a most marked and observable way. This circumstance was a mirror to me, I saw myself as others saw me; I felt your absence, I compared you with others—the false excitements that have led me from you dissolved—there I stood amidst the brilliant throng like a benighted traveller that, having missed his way, sees phantoms in trees, and false lights dancing on the unsteady earth. I stretched my arms to you imploringly—and when I left the confused and defeated De Vere, I resolved that no future occasion or circumstance should embolden or confirm a derogatory

thought of me, and I hastened home with a resolution to have an understanding with you to-night—either you must go with me—or I shall stay with you. How singular that accident, or presentiment should have led you to my room!”

“But, Clara, I have not perceived that you embraced the occasion with much pleasure,” replied Mr. Wilde with an equivocal smile.

“Ah, my dear, I had follies enough to confess, to assume a woman’s defence, ‘an injured air,’—but, Wilde, am I to understand that you doubt me?” and Clara drew herself up, gathered up her loosened robe, and was about to rise. Mr. Wilde bending, laid his hand on her shoulders, saying sadly, “yes, I doubt your understanding of me, we have been too long estranged.”

Here follows a candid exposition of their mutual differences and positions, which, dear reader, ends in a love-paragraph. I omit the details, and lead you at once to the final, very novel arrangement.

It was decided by our friends that in order to enter into a new life, their present relations to society must be dissolved.

The *end* proposed was a purely natural life—the *means*, any form of enjoyment, any mode of study or labor, that would unfold and develop nature most perfectly. Clara was to continue in society; but, dropping all conventionalities and modes of dress that did not harmonize with her purposes, was to test the stability of their mutual relations, and fashion’s tolerance of a true and free woman. Then all artificial restraints would die naturally.

CHAPTER III.

VERY early every morning a large healthy looking woman appeared at her apple-stand, in a crowded street—no matter where—and spread out her tempting fruit, and with shrewd eye, sat down with her knitting and watched the passers-by. She noted every form of pride and vanity, every degree of anxiety and want, every shade of taste and vulgarity, that a public scene like that would present. Oh, what varied revealments this unobserved, but all-observing apple-woman gathered with her few pence and took home to her treasury at night! It was a glorious point of observation; not occupied herself with locomotion or expectation, or any self-consciousness, sitting as it were outside of interest; dispassionate, much-knowing, yet unknown, the self-dethroned Mrs. Wilde sat an engrossed student in that public corner, and studied a great book of natural philosophy. She noted suffering and threaded it to its home, and contrived in various disguises to give permanent relief to those who needed work, to the sick, to strangers, and any form of want. She devised judicious plans for a better social organization; coming in personal contact with those who needed help, she saw clearly their true position and what would elevate it. Trailing by her, in her silk robes, tossing her head with complacent, selfish pride, an old acquaintance would often pass Mrs. W., little dreaming every sweep of dust from her flowing waste of brocade was set down as a vulgarity disgusting as it was

sinful. Following close upon her heels, perhaps a fashionable man, with cool egotism, appropriates all the display of beauty, dress, sunshine—everything agreeable in life—to himself; no pity, no sympathy, no recognition of anything in the world but himself, and his sovereign pleasure. An artificial creature, a stranger to nature, a man born into servitude to fictitious and external laws, which enthrone his senses, and un-king his soul, and, as Alexander Smith says, still—

“Swelters on the starry stranger,
To his nature’s base desires.”

But in the great rushing stream of human life that flowed by her, the apple-woman traced many a pure, fresh rill, bright and glorious as from the bosom of God. Charitable men, and sincere women, full of truth and goodness. She saw their earnest, love-lighted faces, as on errands of mercy they took unostentatiously their various heaven-lit courses, through the thronging multitude. She saw the uncomplaining faithful face of toil, and she honored the sober tread of feet that undaintily followed to duty, through all hours of day, and changes of weather and season. She felt herself to be one of the workers; she had voluntarily shaken hands with toil, and in her small realm met all the representatives of the great republic of humanity. It was from this outer post of observation Mrs. W. chose to commence her studies, that from this general, broad, humble view she might more clearly see what avenues would best lead her to greatest charity and knowledge.

This may seem an Utopian and quite an absurd scheme to conservative and sober minds, but it was not solely Mrs. W.'s originality that conceived it.

Many other philanthropists have left abstractions for practical intimate association with human labor, want, and earnest purpose; although not in this particular way. Theorize, sermonize, lecture as much as they may, honor to these reformers that do not aggrandize and lionize themselves; that are not always careful to preserve the distinction between universal brotherhood and particular *self*-hood, are not always wordily Blooming about in public places, or fatly and lazily reading their homilies on the "dignity of labor," but now and then *give* a feather from their warm nests, or soil their fair hands to fraternize, dignify, and reward labor; *talkers* have "*their reward*," but it is not that of *doers* of the law. So soon does purest language become cant when, losing its spirit, it crystallizes into organization, and only remains to define the limit some melting prior thought has taken; that "womanhood," "self-hood," will soon mean nothing, only that a "reformer" is speaking. "Spirituality is losing in its technicalities," its "interior," its "manifestations," its "mediums," much of the beauty and force of its meaning. Words should be spontaneous, and vary with every individual's experience and thought; they are too often used as machinery to save the labor of thinking—too often the monotonous clatter of the same cogs and wheels of adjective and pronoun turn out the same old thought-fabric. The world is so wide, its lessons may be learned from so many books of

experience and observation, that diversity of plan and language must govern honest thinkers, although all will tend to final good, and to the same end.

Mrs. Wilde went her own individual way. Heaven bless her for it! Behold her sitting at the corners of the streets, not "crying aloud" her wise projects, but drinking in sunshine from the blue heavens and health from every breeze, and at the same time from the human face reading lessons of divinest meaning. If the rain sometimes flapped her calico sun-bonnet too uncomfortably in her face, she, like the rest of her sisterhood, made a temporary shelter of a dry-goods box, or any other available roof, and was more royally and sublimely mistress of the world, than any queen on her throne, for it unconsciously brought its wisdom to her feet, and required of her no oaths or bonds. Children and weary women were often surprised to find in their hands not only a fair and coveted apple, but a piece of gold or silver, as they left this sybil's stand, and were they not strictly commanded to be quiet, would soon have betrayed the donor. She seemed in leaving the grand and idle flow of life to have got at all its millions of tributary streams and their sources.

Thus her days passed; but the glorious evenings that followed were the best comment upon the moral excellence of her plan. The day was filled to its golden brim with good thoughts and deeds; then why, in the magnificence of her home, should she not array herself in graceful robes, and wear the triumphs of art, and make herself a picture, her home a poem, worthy the taste of her noble husband? Why

should not each day of mercy and labor be linked with brilliant evenings where the graces of life might blossom, and fill the soul with heavenly aroma?

Mrs. W. was missed from the haunts of fashion, yet it was well known an enviable circle of original thinkers, scholars, artists of all professions, and many a beautiful and good woman, young and old, met frequently at her house. Fashion saw something capricious and independent, something honest in Mrs. W. in her later movements; it could not follow her; she, unregretting, allowed the chains to fall, one by one, until she found herself disenthralled, and free to get from earth its highest lessons; free to use any of its advantages; free to its sunshine or shade; free to labor with the lowest, or shine with the highest. She might walk out in the morning in loose sack, coarse shoes, and sit in the din of a dusty street, share gingerbread and small beer with beggar, or honest servant, uncontaminated, and in the evening hold her silver goblet in jewelled hand, and drink wine with the gayest or greatest. Without descending to particulars, her conversation had a saving quality in it. It reached without cant, into the sympathies, and led them to truth and virtue.

It is unnecessary to say that in such a genial atmosphere Mr. Wilde revived, and no longer studied without inspiration.

Mrs. W. having finished her pupilage at the apple-stand, concluded to enter another school of study, and was about to fill a place in a bookbindery, when an incident suspended her purposes for a time.

Near her and within hearing, a rival stand was

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TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

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kept by a very beautiful girl. She had a complexion so dark it betrayed foreign blood; it might be African, but imprisoned in it was a sunny glow, it played in her lips and flushed up into her eyes, and gave a depth to her otherwise pale cheek. There was a melancholy pride in her manner which, combined with her extraordinary beauty, her slight and graceful figure, her delicate hands, almost painfully interested Mrs. W., and she took many little occasions to show her favors, and win her confidence. Her reserve was not to be overcome, and Mrs. W. ceased to urge her attentions. She was so beautiful people turned to get a second look, for if once the eye rested on her it could not be satisfied; among those who turned back, Mrs. W. observed a familiar form, which, however, she did not fully identify, as the face was turned from her; but she knew by the painful look of scorn and pride the rencontre left on her little neighbor's face, that it was an insolent curiosity that led the gentleman (?) back.

The next day his visit was repeated, and although so brief in his attentions as not to compromise his dignity, he managed to concentrate an immense amount of offensive meaning in his manner. This, with a piece of gold that he forced into her hand, ostensibly for fruit which he did not take, left our heroine in a rage of impotent resentment. Mrs. W. had witnessed and comprehended the whole scene, and also recognized her old friend De Vere in the offender. She was deliberating how to interfere, when a rude assault by a newsboy on our little friend's establishment upset it, and all her wealth,

both in morality and apples, seemed at the mercy of the wicked, who set it to rolling in every direction. Mrs. W. came now in a very timely manner to her relief. She reinstated her, and restored her property, and while adding to it some from her own store, managed to find out her name was Charleyette Taylor.

"Well, my little friend, you have had an unfortunate day," said Mrs. W., in her natural tone of dignified kindness.

Charleyette looked a full, surprised, and confidential reply; she remained silent, however, and Mrs. W. added—

"I can be your friend; I am not altogether an apple-woman; if you will tell me where you live, and if you wish it, I can aid and protect you from insulting *gentlemen*."

"Oh, do; I am so disgraced in this public business and place! Curse his impudence! If he knew—never mind, I shall have my revenge. Who was he, do you know?"

Mrs. W. replied, "give me the gold, and I can defeat him, and give you his name in triumph afterward." She then took from her purse an amount equivalent to the offensive piece of gold, and putting it in Charleyette's hand, said, smiling, "this is innocent money, and shall protect the innocent from temptation; now tell me where you live, for we must be friends after this."

Somewhat haughtily, Charleyette handed back the money, saying—

"I do not need it;" and imitating Mrs. W.'s

manner, repeated her words, "I am not altogether an apple-girl; I sell for love, not money."

"The profession is dignified by us amateurs," said Mrs. W., quite amused at the ludicrous turn the subject was taking.

"I do not mean love of apples," said Charleyette, laughing in her turn; "something more serious and not so easily gratified as that."

"Well, give me the gold, my dear," insisted Mrs. W.; "we must thwart this gentleman."

"If you will surely tell me his name," said Charleyette, who still seemed distrustful.

"My poor child, you have early learned to doubt; pity with it, you have not learned how to discern between truth and falsehood. Why should I deceive you?"

Charleyette felt the reproach implied, and consented to give up the money, and also to inform Mrs. W. where she lived.

The next day, De Vere missed his beautiful prize from its place; and, in his dismay, condescended to make inquiry of the woman opposite, not noticing as he approached her, that her face retreated some inches back into the obscurity of her sun-bonnet, and that it wore a look of shrewd intelligence rather beyond the expectation of a few pence.

De Vere used every ingenious contrivance to get some information of his fugitive victim, but with peculiar adroitness Mrs. W. contrived to read him a lecture that did not enlighten him so much in regard to Charleyette, as it did on the subject of his own baseness and dishonor. She crowned the occasion

by giving back his gold with such comments as caused him in the confusion of detection, and bewilderment of that strangely familiar voice, in the fear of exciting observation, to shrug his shoulders and walk rather rapidly away, purposing to return as evening approached, and follow up this business. His curiosity and indignation were both excited, and he thought he was not a man to be outwitted by an apple-woman, yet he was; for when he came back, she was gone, and never was seen peddling fruit there any more.

CHAPTER IV.

MRS. WILDE followed up her new friend, and found her in a respectable neighborhood, and very comfortably lodged with a lady who kept a boarding-house for neat and orderly working-girls. Her room was not only decent, but had a look of refinement, from its shelves of books, a guitar, and vases of flowers. Charleyette looked quite dejected, but all the more beautiful, as Mrs. W. more closely and nearly observed her. There was a delicate perfection and harmony in her features, a graceful elasticity in her movements, and a wonderful vagueness of dreamy beauty in her complexion. She had evidently lived somewhere near the tropics. Notwithstanding her pleasure in seeing Mrs. W., she relapsed into a melancholy reserve, when not forced to talk, and it seemed impossible to make any progress in her history. But as Mrs. W. made some allusion

to her intentions for the future, she seemed stung by the recollection of her exposure to insult, and with an angry flash, her eyes all aglow, she demanded the name of the man who had annoyed her. Mrs. W. gave it, and his position in the world. This encouraged Charleyette, and she ran rapidly back over her own history—

Her mother was born a slave to a rich planter in Georgia, but her light complexion and rare beauty had procured for her all the bitter pleasures of a favorite, all the favors of a complicated bondage. Her mistress died, and she was promised her freedom with her children. It was delayed year after year, until she died. Little Charleyette remembered how she herself was admired by all who came to her master's house, how she was made to sing for their amusement, how beautifully she was dressed, and allowed to play with the master's children as an equal, and even waited on by their nurses; that she was taught by their teachers, and, in fact, often mistaken for one of them; that she was seldom recognized as a slave. But above all did she remember a magnificent gentleman, a northerner, an artist, who spent a year painting for her master, and in his house. She remembered hearing them talk about her freedom, and, continued she in the narrative, "The gentleman's name was Mr. Wilde; and he promised, if I ever became free, he would take care of me."

Mrs. W. opened her eyes very wide, but kept discreetly silent; and Charleyette went on—

"A year ago, I was made free. Mr. Taylor, my

master, died; I came north unprotected and alone. His children hated me; I was too nearly related to them. When I got away, I took their name; I had no other but Charleyette, and I knew I had a right to the family name. But oh, what loneliness I have had in my new freedom! I belong nowhere; my blood betrays me. If I go to church, I am scrutinized by the sexton, who never knows where to seat me. I have made inquiries for Mr. Wilde; but I can get no information, although I am told he lives here, and I am constantly afraid of being captured, and yet to discover my old friend, I have braved danger, and exposed myself, as you know, in the most public streets. I have money enough, which my master left me; but I do not understand your strange ways, nor your kind of people, and I am afraid of every one, yet I feel so indignant at my condition, and the reproach of my color! Oh, if I had only one friend! If I could only find Mr. Wilde!"

Mrs. W. told her she knew Mr. Wilde very well, and that she must go home with her, and she would soon find her old friend.

"Do you think he would know you, Charleyette?"

"Oh, yes! for he painted me. I was a little thing; but I don't think I have changed much, excepting in size."

Mrs. W. thought differently, for although she was very childish in some respects, her face had the mature expression of not less than twenty years; but they dropped that subject, and made haste to that part of the city where Mr. W. lived.

What astonishments followed! The magnificence of the place! that Mrs. W. was mistress of it, and the wife of Mr. Wilde! It was like a bewildering dream to Charleyette, who was reserved in Mrs. W.'s room, to cap the climax of surprises, by appearing in full dress (Mrs. W. had provided for this seasonably) in the evening in their grand parlors. Ah, I cannot describe the wonderful beauty of this child of the sun when she followed Mrs. W. into the parlor, and stood before Mr. Wilde! Her dress was soft and thin; and she floated in it as in a cloud. Her long black hair (it was as soft as yours or mine) was so gently lifted in massive puffs from her low forehead it looked as if some loving breeze had blown it aside to steal a kiss. A red scarf, like a tissue of sunbeams, made her rounded shoulder and bosom seem all aglow in their twilight concealments; her hand and foot were perfect beyond all criticism. Her manner had a charming mixture of deference and respectful humility, born of her enslaved condition on one side, and a sensitive pride, faithfully inherited from aristocratic white blood on the other. Mr. Wilde was not a man to be *surprised*; he had got beyond that rudimental weakness; yet he looked a little mystified for a moment when Charleyette was presented to him.

All proper explanations followed. Our little friend was proved truthful; she was adopted into the family, and whatever of personal or moral beauty she possessed was just as freely recognized by Mr. and Mrs. W. as if there was not a dark drop of Ham's blood in her veins. She could not have been

more lovingly cared for, or more respected if she had been cousin to the President; in fact, her protectors did not know but she was! Mrs. W. continued her researches into the laws of labor; she associated herself with different branches of homely industry, and worked faithfully with her hands while she planned reforms, and gave heart and purse aid to every sufferer that came in her way. If she found a person enslaved by circumstances to some ungenial employment, she righted the mistake, and made harmony of discord. Many a restless mind found cheering and healthful gratification in a change that met the active wants of faculties previously unoccupied; many a sickly, but intelligent seamstress, she sent away to vigorous labor as teacher in some western village, to board in log-houses, and get fresh color from long walks, corncakes, sacks, and sun-bonnets.

She concerted a plan with a number of friends to purchase of government a tract of land, into which streams of surplus city life might be discharged; this outlet, although small in comparison with the mighty waste of human life, would still be a constant relief, and much more lasting in its effects than spasmodic charities to local and particular objects.

Wilderglade! with its beautiful lake for fishing, its woods full of deer and wild-fowl, its tangled vines of grapes and berries, and, above all, its rich, brown, generous earth; did it not open wide its forest arms to beckon the young, the old, the honest, and earnest, the misguided and sin-sick? Did not the old trees nod a welcome as they came one after

another, and built sweet homes under their shade? What a nice place for artists, poets, and dreamers to go to! for a more picturesque medley, a greater diversity of character, have rarely met than might be seen in Wilder glade.

Believing that truth would find its way, and govern the soul best without creeds and organizations, every kind of preaching and teaching was allowed by the proprietors of this new home; the good prevailed. The winning voice of purity whispered in every morning and evening breeze. Children learned of the birds to sing; and good teachers translated their hymns into human rhyme and rhythm. Honesty and sincerity grew naturally where fashion and poverty were strangers; the love of beauty grew where no moral deformity blinded the natural perceptions. Religion, in varied forms, blossomed and bore fruit in Wilder glade. Art grew and blossomed afresh in Mr. Wilde's studio; it revived in the air of simple home life and unembarrassed study of nature. Mrs. W. wore no more youthful roses on her cheek; but her heart glowed like a garden full of tulips, mary-golds, and heart's-ease, and was as musical as a tree full of birds.

TWILIGHT REVERIE.

I AM a child again, with a little brown face, and easy, hoping disposition. It is Sunday; I am getting ready for church, getting out my jaunty straw hat, and looking with fresh admiration on the wreath of roses around the crown; I must hurry, my father is tuning his solemn bass-viol; and no organ chant, in dim cathedral, ever woke more devotional feeling, than these stray tones that circle tremblingly around my little chamber. My hand trembles with pious emotion as I draw on my home-knit stockings, that will leave such a deep imprint on my pinched foot; next come my shining slippers, now my white frock, and then my zephyr scarf, the delight of my eyes. I am at length ready, and descend with measured step into the quiet parlor. The family are all there in their various bloom and best apparelling. With stately step my father precedes us; we follow in reverent order.

How wide and green the grassy roadside! Our neighbors and friends come soberly out of the clean white houses, and, shutting the picket gates behind them, join in the general harmonious squeak of Sunday shoes, on their devout way to "meeting." We continue silently on our way, until one of us

girls happening to come up alongside of our father, who is deeply abstracted in some doctrinal point in Theology, is very politely greeted with a "Good morning!"

This upsets our gravity, and we have scarcely composed our refractory muscles till we get to the church steps. We are seated near the pulpit, and as awe of the entrance wears off, we steal a look into different quarters of the house. The hot sun shines in, unobstructed by tree, or blind, or curtain; for in those days, people sat their churches and school-houses, where they did the light of their bold, strong faith, on hills, where they could not be hid.

A slight rustle, Aunt "Massy" (Mercy) comes in with a peony and a sprig of caraway, and, looking benignly around, sits down, and begins a drowsy motion with her shining black fan. Old "Master Jo," the main pillar of the church, a tough, knotty man in his opinions and prejudices, and virtues, walks in with his cane, with short, decided step, and sits as near the pulpit as possible, to catch all its saving influences. A beautiful girl about twelve years old, with long, heavy curls hanging down her sweet shoulders, and a gypsy hat, short dress, and pantalets, steals noiselessly and modestly in; I love to look at her, she seems full of romantic feeling, and I fancy some nobleman, with whiskers and a handsome carriage, will come and carry her off some fine day. No; an old widower with six children, enslaved my sweet Circassian, and I am told her gray locks are twisted away from her thin and

faded cheek, and that all her modest grace has been fretted away by time and a hard, ungenial fate.

But let us not wander from the services of the church. The chorister has prolonged his signal *fa—a—a*— and the singing begins. One man of immense circumference, sings with remarkable gusto; and if it happens to be an old "fugue" tune, his head topples in his enthusiasm, like the crown of a huge tree in the wind, and his double chin rises and falls on his breast in its bellows-like operations. A grand, old, stubborn character, firm and hearty in his friendships, and as firm and implacable in his animosities. The singing goes bravely on, the leader swings right and left, carrying on his broad full tones, the whole tide of harmony, all the little waves chime in at the right time, not a trill or quaver but brings up at the right place; so that the whole assembly get a good refreshing bath of devotional harmony, and sit down prepared for a good jolting, as the minister lumbers them along through his thirdlys and fourthlys. These people went to church to hear the preaching, and not a child, or hardest working man or woman, but strained his or her eyes and understanding open, to receive the doctrines *pro-pounded* by the earnest preacher. But my truant eyes would wander around to study faces. There were two fine girls among the singers, Eliza and Harriet, both proud, lofty, glorious creatures. How I delighted to trace the outline of Eliza's face! What superb indifference marked the carriage of her head, as if she disdained approval, knowing how regally nature had moulded and stamped her! and

yet she died in a poor pitiful hut in Illinois, the wife of a drunkard! Harriet had an assured look that defied all deceit. Her clear, blue eyes made one look about for every prop to self-esteem, for it was evident she despised everything false, or petty—but her husband, which, by the law of contraries, she afterward married! So the light of her sublime eyes went out in stitching for the support of her ignoble life, but her magnificent soul swayed her loftily to the end. Then there was Anna, whose restless changing eye betokened the most delicate sensibilities. Hers was a nature that required the most tender care and appreciation. How surely must her quick sympathies turn her life into disorder and bitterness, unless some discriminating hand places her in a sphere of refined culture! But who studied the temperament of this delicately organized child? who encouraged her poetical fancies into bud and blossoming? who stimulated her distrust and doubt into daring faith and heroism?

Alas! no one; none saw or took the trouble to aid the child nature had made capable of the highest happiness, or deepest suffering; and so, left to the mercy of every accident, without natural heroism, Anna blundered sadly out of one difficulty into another, always superior to her condition, disgusted and at war with it.

What mother that has seen her own characteristics, strong or weak, good or bad, mirrored in the disposition of her child, but sees how varied, wise, and considerate the discipline and education of children should be! What infinite suffering is caused by the

uniform iron discipline of obtuse or indifferent parents!

Gross, coarse natures, by their bold assurance, crowd into the comfortable seats in life, get into high, prosperous conditions, and elbow their way into luxurious enjoyments; while modest, shrinking worth stands outside, knocked about by insolent menials, who willingly carry boastful vulgarity to any height, but insult modesty and sensitive virtue. Anna stood outside of success, and looked sympathetically on everything beautiful, but rarely found it within reach.

Still "the blue sky bends over all," and although human hands did not aid our little Anemone, angels watched over her all the more carefully, and beautified her fate ideally, if not materially.

But where am I rambling? Service is nearly over, and I have not taken my deferential stare, with the rest of the congregation, to the great little man of the village, Esq. Quashem. Every small town has a Quashem, who condescends to mingle his aristocratic nose with his fellow townsmen in divine worship, thus overawing the congregation with his sublime presence. Meanwhile perhaps he employs his fox-like aptitude of brain in calculating how many votes a few hearty grips of good, old, honest hands will bring him; so after service he tries the policy on the unsuspecting, flattered, and inexperienced; who thereafter think he is the man for President.

His wife and daughters piously exhibit all their stock of finery, wearable at one time; people devour

the opportunity to stare at them with inexhaustible satisfaction, take patterns of their clothes, and between prayer and benediction, complete the inventory of all their visible wardrobe.

Quashems are everywhere, and always laboring under the stupendous delusion, that the eyes of the world are upon them and their littlenesses.

We walk home in the sublime and portly shadow of good old fathers and mothers who discourse on the sermon. But arrived home and seated around the table, we leave the apostolic meat for the material hot cakes and honey.

Later years learned me to appreciate the wonderfully clear perception and bold advocacy of truth which at this early period led a good man into many noble sacrifices. When it was a crime to doubt, he stood fearlessly forward and called in question dogmas that have since been universally rejected, but which were then considered the life of Christianity.

When the temperance question was not even agitated, he brought it into discussion in his home, in social circles, in lyceums and halls of legislation, for which, his character was assailed and traduced, his professional interests injured; but this great, noble, genuine New England father, stood firmly in his convictions of right, and eventually saw all these subjects embraced by the people as truths, and other leaders, who crept in behind and after him, glorified, for which he cared nothing, living as he did for truth, and not honor.

Where in the world would one see in a Sabbath

evening more enlightened piety, variety of intelligence, more musical feeling, and poetry of sentiment, combined with more severe simplicity of manners and dress, than is found in the homes of New England? Neighbors and friends drop in at each other's houses, discuss all the solid questions of the day, looking at them, perhaps, with strong local prejudices, and rather narrow vision, but with interest. Every individual feels himself a part of New England, his opinions are worth something. Whether the President of the United States or the district school teacher has failed in government or good republican policy, is matter of equal moment, and interested talk. Then there is a genuine humor, a love of anecdote and jokes very peculiar and delightful. From the formal stately dignitaries of church or state, down to the man that whittles an accompaniment to his conversation, or cleans his nails as a kind of polite recreation, for social occasions; there is a shrewd, dry, droll habit of observation and speech that stamps a New Englander the world over.

For foundation of character I know not where better material is to be found than in New England; but wide travel and general study are needed for the superstructure.

But if you want Yankee character in the concrete, go to Greentown. I used to go there when I was a child, with an oppressive sense of the petrified perfections, the transcendental self-sufficiency, the unbending superiority of the twenty-five poor lawyers, thirteen pinched doctors, ten lady school

teachers, that nearly took my breath away. It was a firm conviction in the minds of this buckram people, that Greentown was the centre of the world's civilization, that it was the sun of the universe, and that the poor benighted world that lived out of the influence of Greentown, was scarcely worth a prayer. They had an insolent curiosity that mingled strangely with their dry, musty exclusiveness, looking inquisitively and contemptuously out of their little eyes, at one and the same time.

Neither steam nor telegraph changes them; the iron track runs through their parchmentary midst, news of other places, of life and magnificence, and change, flies through their rarefied atmosphere, and their sublime stupidity of self-conceit is not disturbed or abated; they think it is only a natural tribute of the outer world to Greentown, the grand focus of intelligence and merit. These people transplanted to Astoria, California, or Australia, would wake up to a very decent comprehension of their own relative magnitude and significance; but if they remain where they are, I am afraid they will hug the delusion to their hearts, even to their dying hour, that they are a favored people on earth, and have an especial passport to heaven, having lived in Greentown.

But let me not leave New England without confessing to the admiration and honor I feel for her brave sons of virtue and intelligence, for her noble, fearless daughters; and to my belief that the strongest moral influences of the day, the highest religious sentiments, have flowed from her genuine old Puritanic rocks.

A MEEK AND QUIET SPIRIT.

AUNT BUTY.

"AUNT Buty has come, Aunt Buty has come!" was the burden of a chorus of childish voices; and sure enough, as I entered the room after my evening drive, there was Aunt Buty with her fair, smiling face, white, modest cap, great basket and all. Seventy years of varied experience, compounded in great part of sorrow and trial, had chastened her deep blue eye into mild and heavenly light, and made the few wrinkles of age look like channels of benevolent wisdom.

A bath of cold water every morning, combined with the pure and tranquil current of her thoughts and actions, preserved a juvenile glow on her cheek. In summer, the sun found her in the garden waiting for his earliest beams, and flowers and birds seemed to know her, and reveal to her their deepest meanings. Animals felt the influence of her tender voice, and no living thing ever appealed to her in vain for sympathy and aid. One day, after seeing a flock of sheep in dust and heat driven to market, straggling pantingly under their heavy fleeces, bleat-

ing their "funeral marches" to the slaughter-house, she said to me: "It must be that animals have other and higher spheres of existence after this. They too deeply share the sufferings of man's perverted course; reason and justice cannot consent to such unredeemable waste of animal life and happiness. Bible Revelation teaches us there are 'speretewal' horses, and I presume all grades of intelligence ascend into higher life."

Aunt Buty had very refined and poetical ideas, her language was significant and very beautiful, although she retained an early provincial corruption in pronunciation. This evening of her visit, after distributing the contents of her basket among the gay children and playing "blind man's buff," and "king's cupboard" with them, she sat down, and as if in a continuous vein of her common feeling she talked of heavenly joys and employments.

"It is good for me to be poor," said she; "it is best that I should feel each day renewed thankfulness for every common blessing. If I had more I should forget half the uses of life, kindness, humility, and faith."

Aunt Buty looked through a clear medium; no selfishness, envy or uncharitableness dimmed her sight; all the complex conditions and circumstances of life seemed to dissolve in the sunshine of her loving soul, and truth shone out beautifully in her opinions. It was a blessing to sit by her and feel the webs of folly and perishable ambition fall away from the soul; to sit in the tranquillizing influence of her spirit.

Angels, I fancy would not disdain to mingle with nature, Aunt Buty, and the sweet children that always gathered about her, for "of such is the kingdom of Heaven."

“THEREFORE, TRUST TO THY HEART, AND TO
WHAT THE WORLD CALLS ILLUSIONS.”*

LINGER, O mist of the morning! for I love thy illusive veil. Last night's snow still hanging heavily on the branches of the trees, and the ice-drops, how softly pure they look through this fine web of melting frost! Oh, thus in my life, let soft illusions hang over facts of coarse or chilling form!—thus let me be deceived in love,—let imagination and fancy shroud it in soft and varying hues, that it may not die in the broad day-lit paths of common life, and that thirsting passions may not drink up its purest essence. Very common elements will sustain the external forms of love, but its *spirit* lives on airs celestial, and must be shrouded in cloud-like and varying drapery: thus let me be deceived in ambition, still believing and still pursuing the frail and glittering frostwork of human praise; let me believe it will not dissolve when I reach it, and turn to tears, and thus, if there is anything unwelcome even at the gate of death, let me be led through soft and shining doubt into the unknown, whose radiant outlines, through mist, we dimly see.

* Longfellow.

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But the mist did not linger, it spread its white wings and flew away over the hills; the sun glared down; coarse facts came out in their nakedness, stood clearly forth and demanded attention. Man, that wonderful creature, who, in the holy light of stars looks a "little lower than the angels," man, whose beaming face, looking gratefully toward the east to catch the first golden flush of morning, seems a fit worshipper in earth's glorious temple; or in the dying splendors of the day, seems transfigured, and ready to ascend into glories of illimitable space; this heaven-tending creature, man, in the sultry and unveiled gaze of mid-day bent his face toward the earth and heeded only these demands; that he was naked, and must be clothed, hungry, and must be fed, or worse still, the importunate voice of avarice or sensuality, crying—give, give!

With faces knotted up with cares, we all bent over our pick-axes and tugged with our iron implements to supply our iron wants. The slow hours of the day with their varying glories, stole over our besweated brows, and in our devoted digging we saw them not; unnumbered hymns of praise were sung by birds, winds and flowing brooks—we heard them not.

We saw each other, grim and stern, bending each to necessity or selfishness, our backs, our hearts, our souls.

But night came on, and, piled in mountain majesty, clouds lifted their golden heads, and crowded in waiting around the sinking sun. Ships came out with their phantom crews, and, sailing up the blue

ocean, dissolved; horsemen battled, and fled with their dissolving spears. Thrones without kings, urns of perfect pattern, lions, floating forms of female loveliness, birds with outspread wings, flocks of white, vapory sheep, and purple and gold-snouted pigs, all mingled with sublime statuesque and god-like forms of majesty. Who would not pause and look up, even with dusty and mote-filled eye, in speechless thankfulness for this unmeasured, un-squared, unplummeted, intangible, uncertain, fleeting, changing display of wonderful painting of the Divine Artist? The outlines of social deformity are lost; man's misdirection and perversity grow undefined in the shadows of twilight, and as the stars grow bright, frailty grows dim, and mist, like a bridal veil, makes earth glorious.

I D O R A .

CHAPTER I.

How gay, how beautiful she was! Six miles' fast trot in an elegant little carriage, beside an elegant, handsome man—six miles of adroit and refined flattery and admiration, on a fine October morning, when the maple leaves crimsoned as glowingly in the sun, as her cheeks in the burning gaze of her gallant's eyes!—who blames Idora if her vanity fairly bubbled over and broke into a thousand dimples, and witching smiles, and exultant glances?

I did not, as I sat soberly beside her rather demure lover, in our larger carriage, filled with gay companions in our excursion. No! I did not blame her, as they drove abreast after some love leisurely lagging behind—and she turned her radiant face triumphantly toward her lover, who had been capriciously doomed to our dull company. Her little coquettish hat tied down with affected demureness around her charming face, on which pleasure rippled in every crimson vein, and seemed actually to shine through her curls, and give additional depth to the carnations in the wreath that blossomed amidst her dark hair.

I did not blame you, dear Idora, for I knew that
you had not yet learned that—

Life is love, and love is sorrow,
Bloom to-day and blight to-morrow ;
Yet far beyond the reach of earth
It has its ends, it had its birth.

I knew you could not say—

Oh glorious this far-reaching is !
It makes of present woes a bliss ;
It tunes our life to a pleasant key,
In one great living harmony.

You did not know, young, beautiful, flattered Ido-
ra, untaught in disappointment and deception, that—

There is in life such complex art,
To blind the soul, and hide the heart,
That none so good or blest can be,
As those from earthly mazes free.

So they flashed by us in the morning sun, and
made a wide detour, choosing the shady sinuosities
of Amber river to witness their enthusiasms—while
we rolled leisurely along the banks of the Quah-na ;
nevertheless, we arrived at the glen first.

I saw you, Belladora, when you whirled up to the
hotel, and in what a sweet flutter of pride you
alighted amidst an admiring group of young men,
and gave that little wicked look of triumph to your
tortured lover. I saw you, also, the first moment
you could steal into a dim recess alone, clip, accord-
ing to promise, a curl of shining hair for the gay de-
ceiver, who had cheated you with his flattery into
the belief that love, wherever you might turn, would
blossom at your feet. I saw, also, what *you* did not
see, that although he received the gift with most

poetical significance of gratitude, and rolled up his eyes with unexceptionable sentimentality as he placed the curl in his pocket-book, that when he took a roll of bank bills from it half an hour afterward, it fell on the office floor, and was tracked around under promiscuous heels, and ground into the dirt, and that was the end of it. Fair, trusting, and short-sighted wert thou, Idora! men praised thee; how couldst thou know the next sweet face would win from their lips the same words, and the breeze that bore them to listening ears, was a ready messenger for the same errand, to other and other fair ones "ad infinitum?" But you, too, lady-love, slighted Lionel, and he loved you steadfastly—at least until he got you safe in his own keeping.

When, with elastic step, you climbed for harebells down in the twilight depths of clefted rock, and Morrrough sprang after you and Lionel like a tiger after him, and brushed me, the inoffensive and feeling witness, into the stream, did I not feel the potency of beauty since it could make such fools and sinners?

But in scrambling for a foothold, the cool waves and white foam quenched my anger, and I was not sorry that I had a support *no more* treacherous than a piece of flood-wood. Idora leaned on four human arms alternately, but the more she leaned the less support she had—the weaker they all were.

But everything Idora did was done gracefully; if she stumbled on the rocks, nothing could be prettier than the embroidered revealings of her skirts, and her confusion; the little accidents, the untying of

her gaiter that showed her pretty foot; the thorn in her hand which a gloveless handling of flowers had secured—all were well-timed, and revealed some latent beauty that else had been concealed; and why not? No art of intellect, no moral grace could have charmed so much.

Women were made for ornament undoubtedly, and those that are not ornamental, can be only useful. But woman for a rational companion, especially in youth! It cannot be, as my friend Dr. Noodle said in our brilliant lyceum: "It is *beyond her natural parts!* she must be educated, Mr. Speaker, before she can claim to be man's equal—*she must be educated!*"

Just so; therefore, in the mean time, let us go on with our trifling, which for so many thousand years has pleased men so well.

Our little party scrambled up a narrow ledgy path into the dim old woods, and in the majestic shade of giant trees, where man should fold his hand in reverent silence on his breast; where, in the solemn whisper of leaves, his words should be hushed and low—they sat down, and in a twitter of compliment fell to adoring the willing Idora. The flicker of light, the play of shadow over her, and the pine-tassel carpet spread around, gave her a hint of coquettish art; so she mingled with her pleasantries a little sober sentiment, a little reposing sense of womanly feeling, just enough to suggest to Lionel at least, delicious pictures of life-long love and devotion. He could not see that a willing and egotistical appropriation of the attentions of a whole party, and

all the grandeur and beauty of such a scene to herself, marked Idora as a vain, weak, helpless child of beauty and folly; or if he did see it, he loved her the more for her clinging dependence on man's praise and protection. There was another fault in Idora which I do not well see how a man of taste could excuse. A flippant, shallow voice, heard among the voices of the woods and waters, those pert, quick, nasal tones, those cracked jerks of spasmodic laughter so common to all girls, make the most disagreeable dissonance with nature's pure and musical flow of harmony that can be well imagined. (A catbird's squall and a cracked clarinet, blown false, are faintest symbols of this soulless perversion of the organs of speech which is so universal.) Otherwise, the chiming in of sweet thoughts, richly worded in clear tones, with the music of the waving boughs, the organ roll of the waters, the silver tinkle of the brook, or the gushing melody of birds, would be a crowning delight. To sit on a mossy bank, your foot resting on the twisted roots that centuries have been busy in forming, acorn cups and partridge berries under your hand, shadows from high, arched trees playing over you—and listen to a voice well tuned, and a soul quietly open to all outward impressions—is a luxury above all table-banquets and gas-lighted, social magnificence of appliance. Heaven and men's souls are near each other, a ladder of sunbeams and shadow leads from one to the other.

But Idora all this time is not thinking at all about Heaven, but whether the veil she has thrown over her head is as bewitching as it might be made; she

wishes the broad-leaved beech sapling opposite was a mirror, that she could see exactly how she does look.

Some little word from Morrrough, in respect to her character, which he is pretending to read, adroitly mingling flattery and mystification—(a piquant way usually adopted in flirtations)—a little word is made a pretence to most becoming airs of offended pride.

“I don’t understand you, sir;” says my lovely Idora.

Of course not, radiant queen; ladies always sooner or later come to that point. There arises a profound mystery in the most shallow intercourse with most transparent of admirers. That, “He don’t understand me,” or, “I don’t understand him,” is the very tempting thicket of tangled sweetbrier, witch-hazel, and brake, that love and coquetry like to lead adventurers into.

Morrrough and Idora mystified each other, and stumbled most enchantingly into every little perplexity imagination could suggest. Lionel grew very grave, and I am thankful to say quite haughty, and I have no doubt the frivolous dallying of his betrothed with casual admirers, led Lionel to store away many vials of indignation, which, when it became his turn to reign, he freely poured on poor Idora’s humbled head.

Some men are fools all their lives, and bend their majestic intellects, their sublime affections, their time, their muscles, to the capricious, petulant demands of that phenomenal kaleidoscope, woman! Some give a few years’ unprofitable service, and then turn and extract half a life of devoted vassalage from

her in return. Some abuse her altogether, not having by nature, the ability to understand her tastes, her proper sphere, or glorious ability; and this is by far the majority. In the lower grades of cultivation woman is generally superior to man. She has more intellect, grace, and refinement. She is a missionary, and too often a martyr to brutal instincts which law and custom sanction. Man overshadows and overawes her with his gross presence in every avenue to independent labor or improvement; he shuts her into just such a home as his tastes and means provide, and there she may give her life and tears to the work he furnishes her, be it tasteful or distasteful; and there she dies too often, before half her days are numbered. But she leaves a *consolation* in ten sickly girls, and three stalwart boys, to soothe the *grief* of her husband, and help the next generation!

But then, on the other hand, if, in the morning-glory of her beauty, men adore her, and swear plentiful nonsense at her, and bend their manly energies to the burden of bouquets for her angel-nose, or the faintest zephyr of a shawl for her divine shoulders; if they hold their protecting arms ever open for exigencies of languishment or fainting—is not this her law of compensation?

No! a mighty host of sensible women reply. Give us a chance to keep our limbs elastic, our cheeks freshened in the air of heaven, our backs flexible, and we will gather our own roses and daises—and *some for you*. Give us access to any place of honest labor, in any land on God's earth, to the rolling insecurities of the waves if we like it, to come and go,

or stay, as *you do*, and we will forego your angel-epithets, and your delicious flattery, and be called *women*, and listen to common sense for ever afterward.

But while we are strolling in these speculations our little party are getting through the twilight paths of the forest, without much adventure. Nothing great ever grows out of party rambling in nature's sacred places; one, or at most two companions at a time, are all the circumstances will tolerate. You must *listen*, if you would hear nature's secret voices, and two well-attuned spirits, tranquilly bending to each other, can gather her meaning; but many tongues, or even moving figures, put to flight the spirits of sequestered places.

The day was awkwardly unpropitious to Lionel; whatever he said or did was misplaced and inappropriate. Dangling along after Idora, only to witness the felicitous progress of Morrrough in her admiration—making now and then a melancholy effort to be agreeable to the rest of the party, Lionel made a very uncomfortable figure in a pleasure party, and, retreating at last behind a mask of proud indifference, suffered affairs to take their own course.

Morrrough was unremitting in his attentions to Idora; he seated her in the coolest corner of the portico when they returned to human habitation and hotel; he hung over her with a fan; he ordered cordials; he psychologically exerted himself to restore her wearied loveliness; he talked regrets and raptures, until Idora was ready to believe this comparative stranger, this man, whose history and life were

wholly unknown to her, this acquaintance of a day, was the very ideal of gallant, lover, and husband, she had always cherished. But if he talked and looked dangerously well by daylight, just imagine him outlined in mysterious magnificence of proportion, by the moon's soft limning; imagine the musical effect of his subdued and pensive regrets that "Fate, whose name is also Sorrow," had not suffered him to meet this "charming Idora" before. And she, poor, beautiful thing, having once listened to the voice of the charmer, cannot be expected to resist the combined influences of the eloquent Morrrough and moonshine, and of course was set down at her door in a bewilderment of delight.

CHAPTER II.

THERE was a miserable, raw wind from the north, although the chickadees were trying to sing, and the sun glared down almost spitefully on the tardy earth; it was time for the crocus and coltsfoot to be up with a greeting for his royal beams, but they still slept under their white snow-blankets, and not a growing thing had yet given token of life. Most people kept by their wintry fires; but Idora—tired of the castles she had built by the glow of the fire, tired of the excitements of dancing, reading poetry, and love-letters, and above all tired of the suspense that hung over her—wandered out on the gloomy shore of the Quah-na. She climbed over the blocks of ice on the bank, looked listlessly among the gray

stones, and with vague unrest on the glittering heaps of snow, as they warmed into trickling sentiment in the sun's ardor. She looked at the coldly glittering waves, and, I suppose had an old-fashioned feeling of sentimental despair, for she was known to write down there and then, in that uncomfortable place, the following *common-place*, which is very comfortable, considering the occasion :—

“ I have lived and loved too long,
I've been beguiled by a siren's song,

(Young lady-poets always get in 'siren!')

Hopes are fled, joys have sped,
I go with them down to the dead.
Sweet stream, roll over me,
Sing the song I've learnt of thee
When I lie down peacefully.
See, she resteth,
No bird nesteth,
Soothed so sweetly,
Shrouded so meekly,
As she that sighed and died,
And sunk where no cares go,
Down on the rocks below.”

This translated, means, that after six months' interchange of most beautiful sentiments in most lovely language, on purest perfection of satin, scented, French note-paper, in sweetest of chirographical characters—this means, that after mutual giving of gilt-edged volumes of delicious poetry with pencil-marked passages—after keeping Lionel six months on the rack of jealous despair— that after giving days of blooming hope, and nights of dreams, to the deep-eyed, the low-voiced enchanter, Morrourh, Idora

discovered he was a married man! living very lovingly with a trusting, faithful wife, on one of the thousand islands in the St. Lawrence, very tranquilly living in elegant seclusion, giving only by way of recreation from study, now and then, in the shades of his library, half an hour to the recollection of a "nice little fond girl out there in—in—Gammonville."

It was a trifle to him to let her know, after his many abuses of "Fate," that the "regret," the "barrier," the "dark, brooding despair," meant simply a loving, laughing wife, who had the most cheery smile in the world for a "despair."

He got it off his mind after awhile; the thing had become a bore; although, if he had happened to see Idora again, why, if she had not faded, it would have been pleasant enough to have her loving confidences.

It may be supposed by this time, dear Idora is lying on "the rocks below, hymned sweetly," &c., but not so. After easing her despair in this rhythmical jingle, she put up her pencil, and rubbing her hands, the ruby ring that Morrrough gave her showing like a blood-stain on her white finger, she put on her little glove and went home as fast as a fierce wind at her back would drive her.

Lionel's revenge at length finds food. He has established Morrrough's imposture, yet it was only a partial one; witness his constant reference to some "dark doom," but it helps in this retributive triumph of Lionel. Morrrough is an impostor, Idora is a humbled beauty begging mercy at the feet of her

injured lover. He has her all in his power; she asseverates that she has unceasingly loved him; he can smile derisively at it; she says she was weakly flattered into an endurance, perhaps even a gratified tolerance of Morrrough's ardent love-making; but it was only for a day. Lionel says, "humph," or more correctly, "nph." Idora becomes impatient before the iceberg, recollects that she is beautiful, and beauty don't have to sue for pardon in that fashion, especially when there are proffered hands waiting in many places where her pretty feet have been; so she rises and retires on her dignity.

Nor did she come down in the gay season that followed, but kept her prettiness unreachably stilted. Lionel's most hated enemy, an old class-mate, by much manly daring succeeded in procuring now and then a distant favor. This operated well; it made Lionel furious.

It was a fragrant summer morning. All the flowers had bathed in dew, and were dressed for the coming of the loving hours. The lilacs thrust their curled and perfumed heads into the open casement quite impertinently. Idora pushed them gently aside, and putting out her fair arm just as Lionel was passing, to fasten them back, tempted him to a sudden bold resolve to go in. He dared not wait to consult prudence, but pushed rapidly up the walk under showers of bird music and flower odors. He rapped with the old-fashioned knocker on the wide open door. Little Tabitha came to the door.

"Tell Miss Idora, Lionel would like to see her."

"Mith Idora thaid I muth tell you she ith thick," said little shining eyed Tabby.

"Ah!" and he left, "more in sorrow than in anger," and shutting himself in his room devoted the morning to confession. He had just sealed a very penitent letter to Idora, begging her to reconsider his case, when, rising to go to the window, he had the unmerited misery of seeing Idora and Malvis saunter down through Willow Glen toward Quah-na.

This looked badly, but it was not half so malicious a circumstance as it appeared.

Idora was not intending to go out in the morning, was really too nervously agitated to see Lionel, but Malvis' sister had officiously sent him to bring Idora to her at "Love's nest," under the linden, on Quah-na. She had something important to tell, "*very important.*" Idora went feebly and reluctantly. Malvis was on the verge of a declaration of love, and Idora taxed her ingenuity to the utmost to ward it off, and succeeded for that day.

On returning home, and as evening stole on, Idora was tortured with self-reproaches; she sat in dishabille in the ghostly moonlight, and gave herself up to self-examination, a new process of thought entirely with her. She felt impelled to decision in regard to her destiny, that is, her marriage. Lionel she loved, there was no denying that—but had she not lost him. And so peculiar his pride, when she turned suppliant he became stony, it almost seemed vindictive in his manner. What could she do? Rap, rap! twice, gently—it was the old signal, Lionel was at the door! What could she do? Go

to the door in her wrapper! all the family are abed. What shall she do; let him go again; perhaps forever, with her haunting regrets pursuing her, and his disappointments trooping after him? No, by all that is humane and honest, no! So, noiselessly she flies with her white arms open, to the door. In the deep shadow of the long hall they stand, and in hurried explanations are going over the troubled past. The old clock strikes twelve.

The circumstances are questionable, but not the honor of the two lovers. Never was there more beautiful reconciliation than these few moments procured.

"I will come to-morrow; read my letter and reply freely to it, Idora—keep nothing back."

Just then an impertinent voice cries at the door—

"Idora, let me in."

"Why, who is it?" unwittingly asks Idora.

"Malvis and me, Lucia; don't you know my voice? We are just from the party at Barnses; let us in a minute, I want to tell you some news."

"I can't, Lucia, I am undressed."

"Undressed! we just saw Lionel go in, and that is the way we knew you were up!"

"Merciful heavens! Leon, run out that back hall door!" and away he flew; but just as his heels were disappearing through the window, which he preferred to the door, Idora opened the front door, only to see, however, the indignant backs of the two prowling mischief discoverers, who were retreating in fourfold resentful indignation. Malvis had revenge to gratify, and Lucia a love of scandal, a vir-

tuous resentment on all lovers, and a pique on account of the foiled plans of her brother. So wonder not, if for a few weeks, some very entertaining gossip flew about the village concerning this adventure.

CHAPTER III.

IDORA has been one year the wife of Lionel. They live in a dear little cottage, and every morning when he goes out to business, she follows him down the sunny green slope before the door, and kisses are slyly given. Idora turns her head with happy gravity toward her little room, sings with her bird, arranges her flowers just as Leon likes to see them, practises the song he likes best to hear, and spends some time mysteriously at drawers of embroidery. She watches the clock as the dinner hour approaches, adjusts her curls, puts on fresh smiles, sees that his favorite dishes are prepared as they should be, descries him approaching the door, and glides out to meet him with fresh delight. Just as they enter the door he steals his arm around her waist, and if your eyes are as good as mine to see into your neighbors' houses, you will see Lionel waltzing Idora round and round, while she, weak with laughter, hangs helplessly on his arm.

Dinner is delightful, everything smiles—evening brings fresh joys, Lionel reads to Idora and Idora sings to Lionel, thus for a year, and some months over, intermittingly.

There is a little mound of earth in one corner of the copse behind Lionel's house ; it is sprinkled with violets which are in bloom. Idora feebly and listlessly goes out and sits there many hours of the day ; sometimes she takes her sewing, and sews and sings impromptu lullabies. If Lionel finds her there, he rebukes her for her foolish fondness.

He comes home oppressed with ambitious cares, he is straining every faculty to obtain distinction in wealth and in a political career. He reads papers and smokes his cigar in his office. Idora complains of loneliness : he replies, that whatever she desires he will give, excepting his time, that must be devoted to something important. He says—

“Idora, don't be sentimental, I hate to hear married women singing love songs to the guitar, or see them languishing around with Moore and Byron in their hands. Come, Idora, we have been lovers, we are sensible man and woman now, and have something to do besides studying to amuse each other.” Here he stopped, for he saw a shower of tears gathering ; impatiently kissed her, and was off.

Idora became reserved and silent in his presence ; sung no more love songs to him, read no more poetry and romance, but, stung by his sarcasms, set herself in a fever of resentment to adorning herself for society.

She did not pine away, and look melancholy. She flushed her cheeks with subtle cordials, and the praise of men, every art of adornment she tried, every look she studied for its best effect. Now had Lionel turned and given her one word of heartfelt

love, she would have thrown all other admiration and flattery, all excitements of society to the wind; but he did not, he grew indifferent, then contemptuous.

Poor Idora! had you known that the morals of your course were not worse than its policy, you would not so have sacrificed yourself. To win back a truant husband never stoop to intrigue, plot, or any frivolous device; it has been advised in fiction; it has been tried, alas! in fact, but it is bad counsel, and brings defeat in one form or another.

Keep superior to your husband in every art and purpose. If he is distant, be magnificently so yourself—unapproachable to any folly. Give him no advantage, no weakness to hang a reproach on. If he is disloyal, go not the same path to find him, it is a hazardous compromise; in all probability you would both be lost. Stay with honor and virtue, they are very good company, and will well comfort you in the absence of most men.

No one would have suspected the misery that beat dully in Idora's bosom, in looking at her quiet and full maturity of bloom. She seemed to have attained a rich repose of conscious beauty, hovering noiselessly amid admirers, not seeming anxious, but always winning attention, and many times a passionate interest.

These entanglements began in public, but had to be disposed of in private; some were adjusted by a few explanations on note paper; some had to be discussed in repeated sessions in her dim and quiet parlor. Idora was engrossed all the time, and no

more missed her husband. Indeed so unpleasant were their interviews when they did meet, it was a relief to both to see each other as little as possible; yet Idora's heart ached, or it may have been her lungs; a dull pain affected her constantly, but the more pain the more wine and company. So she went on for two or three years. Health failed gradually, friends dropped off, flatterers fell away, lovers found a feeble woman, a wan cheek and thin fingers, dull company. Man's love cannot breathe the air of an invalid's room; it seeks the joyous flush of health. Its duties and services are to the prosperous, the smiling, gay, and happy; it gives where it can receive pleasure, sensuous happiness; it despises abstract and transcendental attachments. So when Idora had no more gifts of beauty, and beguiling personal attractions, when she sat pillowed on the sofa, languidly humming to a guitar accompaniment,

“Bring flowers, bring flowers for the early dead,”

there was no ear to listen, but—mine.

Lionel attained a high official eminence; for the first time in years, he awoke fully to his estrangement from Idora, and deplored it, for he was going to Washington, and beautiful as Idora had once been, what an *éclat* her *début* there could give them!

He very much deplored it. “Many advantages are lost,” said he to her, “by your illness just now.”

She smiled bitterly, and said nothing. He left her, hoping she would be able to join him in the course of the winter. She never joined him; but when in a brilliant company of distinguished persons, Lionel

hung admiringly over an illustrious beauty, and begged her to sing him one of his favorites from Moore, Idora was composing her limbs for death. Meekly folding her hands on her breast, she turned her last look on me, and—

The white moon fled through the solemn sky,
The silent hours stole slowly by ;
I sat listening to the laboring breath,
Fearfully watching the finger of death.

As it nearer came to the golden bowl,
I saw the flutter of the struggling soul ;
As it trembled on the silver string,
I heard the tone of its breaking wing.

I saw the lips grow fixed and pale,
I marked the eye in its vision fail ;
At the failing fount silence was stealing,
The work of Death forever sealing.

The moon fled on and morn awoke,
On the new day its blessings broke,
In a new grave the sunshine fell—
When earth-life is finished, 'tis well, 'tis well.

P E R D I T A .

CHAPTER I.

It was an autumn evening ; the great yellow sun was giving a parting glow to the distant prairie, to the water in near and glorious beauty, and to the faces of a noble-looking gentleman and a pale lady who were slowly walking on the shore of Lake Michigan.

Slowly walking, with low and solemn voices, while the sun sunk into the wave ; voices that seemed like mournful echoes of a past of possible happiness, mingled with a present of certain pain.

The sunlight faded from the landscape, from the lake, and from the faces of our two friends, and yet they measured their slow steps on Lake Avenue ; the moon came up and bathed them in holy light ; it rose into mid-heaven, and still these two solemn figures mingled their low voices with the moaning waters, and their shadows fell side by side on the beach.

Ever in life were they to walk as shadows beside each other. Love had crowned them this evening in the ghostly moonlight, not with bridal tokens, but with iron clasps and chains, with moss that had

gathered on their hopes, in the long damps of separation and doubt.

"Ten years ago to-night, you say, Perdita, you married my brother Lyell?"

"Ten, to-night, Charles."

"And you had no presentiment of my love; no misgiving when Lyell looked with his false eyes on you. How can truth wed falsehood and not be shocked; where were the magnetic forces that should rebel against such a union?"

"I had misgivings, vague whisperings of evil," said Perdita, "but I was not then accustomed to listen to these 'small voices.' I preferred the turbulent gayety of Lyell's humor. But once I recollect a strange and sudden shock at a very common and proper gallantry, and I have often recalled my singular manner and words on the occasion. A short time before we were married, on parting one evening, Lyell took my hand, I remember how white it looked, as it lay lily-like and pure in the jewelled-glowing clasp of his pliant fingers (then only suggestive of beauty to my eye). He took a ring and said confidently, 'You will wear this little token for my sake.' What do you think I replied?"

"'No, there will be forever a blood-stain on my finger, as if a dog had bitten it, if I do!'"

"Did you ever hear of anything so absurd! but it seemed for a moment as if there was really a wound and spot of blood on the finger he designated, and I spoke as one lost to the outward circumstances, and with an authority and force that with all his remarkable self-possession made him start; but the

words! could anything be more shockingly *rude*—yet what do you think he said?

“My dream, by heaven!” and turned away without another word.”

“You never wore a ring from him, I take it, afterward,” said Charles, laughing; “Lyell was afraid of you.”

“Yes, he was afraid of me, and this was one link in a complete chain of mysterious intelligence which bound that man’s hidden life and revealed it to me—to speak more truly than I ever have before—had I followed my soul’s convictions I should never have married your brother Lyell; but his external life, graces and accomplishments stifled my *intuitions*, I will not say reason, for that argued well for Lyell. Rumor then had never breathed a word in my ear against him. Yes, intuition is a good word, Charles; it did me good service in my devoted companionship with a criminal in his serpentine courses, even to the prison door.”

“Perdita, yes, in all but *our* relations it has served you well.”

“I confess, Charles, it required more subtle sense than mine to penetrate your frozen reserve, so you have partly to blame yourself if your armor of steel has hidden what I have some reason to believe, in this moonlight, is a human heart of suffering.”

Charles turned full to the moon, and a quiver of agony ran over his features as he said, “Perdita, from the moment I first saw your pure soul committed to that man of sin, have I been a prey to the conflicting forces of love and hate, and they have

torn my conscience and stained it with almost every baleful passion ; but let us not talk of that man or his deeds, it brings a troop of fiends around us ; let us not desecrate this short and holy hour."

Then why, thought Perdita, as she fell again into a measured step and leaned on the arm of Charles, why, since so much wrong has been endured, does he not seize upon the only opportunity of redress ; for ten years I have shared all the vicissitudes of Lyell's abandoned life, I have been with him the most admired and courted among ranks of fashion, and I have wept myself asleep on his prison floor, and with my wan fingers sewed, to procure him some luxury while he was plotting schemes of villainy to disgrace me afresh. Three times in our temporary separations have I had the happiness to know of his successful intrigues with young and lovely girls and their fatal marriages ! I am divorced by all moral and civil law ; I am solitary, independent, and beloved ; why should a too nice sense of honor toward an unredeemable villain, rob me of this, my last happiness ? Compared with my all fearless love for you, Charles, how cold and dreary this compound of self-respect and the self-consuming love of your passionate manhood !

So mused Perdita ; while Charles thrust his last chance of earthly happiness from him, with this poor logic. "I love this woman, God knows, with a fidelity that has excluded half the beautiful ministries of earth, or turned them into torture. Her face has been forever between me and the loveliest form of woman ; it has shut my heart to all joy, and

made me impious. Loved her! when both nature and circumstance conspired to make me act a fool's part in the farce, compelled me to see her give the bloom of her youth and confidence to that miscreant, and for ten years to watch her hopeful, pitiful, mad devotion to him! Oh, it is too absurd; man must be shamed out of the very name and semblance of love when he sees these stupid and blind entanglements. I must take the wreck and skeleton of my fair youth's promise, must I? thankful for so large a remnant of my magnificent expectation! By Heaven, no! The cup of love God promised to my great capacity was full to the brim, and the first drops were tinctured with ethereal fire, the which my intellect counted on as its proper and needed stimulus. It was withheld from me, and I refuse the dregs—I refuse this late and small atonement for all my life's waste and sorrow."

Unconsciously, Charles in this silent, passionate review of his unhappy life, had seized Perdita's hand and pressed it closer and closer, until with a violent and final grasp, as if all the tenderness, disappointment, and anguish of all his years were concentrated in that one moment to be dashed suddenly and forever out of human possibility, he threw it from him with wild and desperate force.

"Villains and cowards know how to win women to their fatal embraces, they know how to elicit all the heroic virtues of the sex, they know how to garland their poisoned lives with the sweetest roses of woman's love and confidence; I have not known how to do it, I have no such knowledge. I beckoned to

you, Perdita; but, O Lord, what a phantom, what a nothing it was!"

Perdita paused, appalled at the high-wrought mood of this usually calm and stately man, and, for the first time in her life, perceived clearly the shocking outrages committed in marriages universally, either in ignorance, or sordid policy, or the cowardice of custom. She saw how blind and deaf she herself had been to all the still small voices of the soul, to the angel-finger of conscious purity pointing forever to a higher ideal of man, than she had consented by custom to take; she saw how insignificant, the blandishments that had seduced her imagination, and she was disgusted with the part she had acted in this drama of errors. Both paused and looked at the rippled path of light stretching on the lake, and Perdita, after a silence, spoke.

"Our love streaks wan and cold over just such a wide, black lake of treacherous past, as this before us, and must now be swallowed up in the profound quiet of despair. I was not, in the immaturity of my girlhood, worthy the grave and dignified, the intellectual character of your love. You now are not—I beg your pardon, but must speak truth—are not worthy the generous abandonment of my tried, redeemed, and strengthened nature. Your morbid self-love makes great exactions; my martyrdom to a false union has given me courage, generosity and clear sight, and—but why dwell on this—it was necessary Lyell should have my life's influences as some token of Heaven, and I do believe in his blackest night of crime his courage has faltered, and better purposes



have flitted before his soul from the recollection of me. It was necessary that I should be disciplined into higher conceptions of the marriage relation; that I should see the arrogant and vain demands of my beautiful youth mocked by cruelest mortification and disappointment; that juster principles should spring from my schooled affections, and consecrate them to the holy offices of universal sympathy; and you, dear Charles, must yet see your majestic self-love laying down its regal robes, you must take up the simple tribute of common love, and imperfect, mixed kindnesses, or remain in cold isolation as you are."

"Perdita, you know not what I have lost—I had a vigorous mental constitution; it pushed its luxuriant growth on every side of the field of knowledge. I longed intensely to throw some perfected fruit of reason from my mature years that the world would relish and preserve. I believed in the power of truth; I thought it would force its way and lead in all life's relations; I relied on its power in science, in art, in love; I expected its subtle influences, if I gave silent, passive heed to its monitions, would unfold my life and crown its fair blossoming. But has it done all this? Not the first of all my expectations has it answered. I have seen it all overlaid with falsehood as in your history. I have seen it completely crowded out and overruled by sophistry and deceit in social life, in books even, it scarcely shows its white garments, and I am myself an embodied lie, a failure, a jest! So you would not have me crown the farce with a final mockery, would you?"

And most of all, it humbles me to think the unanswered love for you that made me powerless, and all my life a failure, was won and carried off in the easiest, jockiest manner in the world by—ah, yes—my brother!”

This mixture of dignity and weakness struck on Perdita’s quick sense of the humorous, and she involuntarily burst forth in an immoderately loud and long peal of laughter. The echoes on the lake took up the fragments and threw them back in mockery to the shocked ear of night, while Charles stood silent in tremulous anger and wounded pride.

“Forgive me, Charles, forgive me for this untimely laugh, surely it was involuntary, my old sin of perverse and untimely levity; let this make peace with us;” and Perdita reached down her white hand and gathered the evening primroses that had opened their faint hearts to the dew and darkness of night, and as she presented them a tear fell among their perfumed cups.

“I dreamed one night, Perdita, that my door-way was completely strewn with dead birds, all with straws in their mouths, with which they were going to build their nests, or with crumbs on which to feed. Every bird was dead with its unfulfilled purpose in its little mouth—it was a simple dream, was it not? The fortunes of my life were worthy this prophetic dream, of little frozen birds, with their frozen failures. I accepted it, and am now once more reminded of it—but I will keep the primroses;” and with them he took Perdita’s hand in his and crushed them all to his heart.

"Look at the night, Perdita, it is stealing to the rosy arms of morn—*our morning* is stealing to the arms of night. The boat leaves at six in the morning, and there is nothing left us in life but to busy ourselves in counting the hours of the day, by their most sober and severe duties."

"We leave all youth's romance, all maturer hopes on this lake shore, Charles, so I feel, and so farewell."

CHAPTER II.

DAY after day floated the crowded steamer down the muddy waters of the Mississippi. Perdita sat listlessly hour after hour watching the low shores come and go with their tangled, rank luxuriance of vines and forest trees. A melancholy looking cabin broke occasionally the monotony of the view on shore, or a wreck of some "snagged" steamer bore its name warningly above the destroying waves. Perdita saw a correspondence between the outward melancholy passivity of the scenes that floated by her, and the inward monotonous level of her coming life. The vague beguiling hopes that had attended all her unhappy course vanished with the ghostly moonlight on Lake Avenue; and as she now sat on deck, her lofty form and beautiful face, so cut off from all relations and sympathies, assumed the calm dreariness of an isolated life, and looked pale, cold, and statuesque.

Yet never in the whole course of her life had Perdita come so near a truthful perception, and large

comprehension of woman's varied capacity and the world-wide occasions for its exercise, as at this moment.

The romantic materialism that had ensnared her youthful fancy, appeared strangely unsatisfactory and perishable in the clear light of her now unclouded spirit. Even the intellectual accomplishments which eminently distinguished her, with vast accumulations of book knowledge, seemed to her, in this clear hour, external and irrelevant to her true life. But clearer than all stood forth the form of that majestic love that had been so refracted and broken by the dense medium of material circumstance.

Now for the first time in her life did Perdita perceive the transcendent force and grandeur of pure spirit-love, and believed the presence there and then of Charles, with his most earnest, pleading eyes, could not have tempted her to limit all the sublime free possibilities of pure spirit-union to the *circle of a marriage ring*. What had seemed to her before a selfish and egotistical pride in Charles, now took the form of soul-instinct, a high and sacred want, the very token and promise of immortal love and union.

Perdita thought long and earnestly on this. She freed herself from temporal and material considerations, and floated away into a limitless heaven of possibilities. "He shall be ever near," she said aloud in the dusk and silence that had crept unperceived, over and around her; "he shall fuse my being with a subtle glory, I will answer the quest of his youth's magnificent powers in so far as love can help unbar

the gates of wisdom, by seeking rapport with all that is beautiful and truthful in nature and the world. For his sake, O heaven and earth, take me to your highest, holiest work and teaching."

Do not cavil, ye saturnine and worldly-wise, it is possible for a woman to dedicate herself to the highest work in the universe, *thus* through *love*, but I know not if in any other way.

In this journey southward, Perdita had, until now, no motive but pleasure. Her elaborate tastes craved food; her imagination was of a sensuous order, and received the highest gratification from the suggestive imagery and scenery of a tropical climate, its wealth and luxury. Therefore, was she voyaging to that magnificent home of Dives, who fares sumptuously every day, clothed in purple and fine linen, and who is so far, even now, separated by a great gulph of obloquy, from beggarly labor, that none need see his disgusting deformities. Perdita always shut her eyes to vulgarity, while she gave to misery from her ever open purse. She was one of those who demand disguises where deformity exists in the physical or even the moral world, rather than to suffer from its exposure. Her integrity high and pure, her sensitiveness to pleasure compelled her instinctively to shun evil, to sit in the sunshine.

But this night far other purposes than pleasure kept her till midnight, a solitary watcher of the stars. Purposes which, to understand, you must go with me, dear reader, through many years of solitary toil and suffering. You must go with me to a rude log cabin called a school-house, in the midst of a

dense forest on the banks of an unhealthy river. You must see amidst a group of yellowish pale young ladies, variously adorned with costly ornaments and scraps of finery, the fragile yet majestic person of our heroic Perdita. Having, by great firmness and perseverance, overcome the obstinacy of the mule that brought her safely through the damp and agueish wood, through the treacherous "Branch," and by the rattlesnake and cotton-mouth; she still hopes by long forbearance in all heroic virtues to instil into these luxurious, volatile, undisciplined young ladies, some noble moral and intellectual truths. She strives hard to unbind those charming souls, and free them from the innumerable prejudices and conceits of happy, irresponsible indolence; to dispossess them if possible of a superfluity of ornament, and supply in its place some notion of utility. And what a task she has! In the face of her Christian conscientiousness of purpose, a lingering doubt would sometimes taunt her with the infidel question, Why not let them grow; beautiful, capricious, idle, short-lived things, grow in their inutile charms, and die without feeling the pressing link of moral responsibility with which all the thinking world is galled? But it would not do, this momentary scepticism did not relax for a moment Perdita's sublime endeavors. She had conceived an ideal of true womanhood, and she struggled to make its impression on the plastic hearts of these southern girls, hoping in time it would develop in many forms of mercy and justice, hoping the exquisite thralldom of luxurious habits would fall from them, and leave them to *see* and ap-

preciate *freedom*, and then—what hopes, what prospects shone in upon the future!

But midsummer days are depressingly hot and long, southern girls, even the refined in general culture, will "*dip*," that is, apply snuff with a fragrant brush-like stick to—not the nose, but its neighboring organ. Some of them will beat their servants with a stick, giving them, in their own language, "a crack over their jaws;" others profusely deal in pearl-powder and pomatum; many of them smoke; all of them flirt at an early age, and generally, with the faintest idea of a woman's duties, at fourteen or fifteen, certainly before twenty, for that is the extreme limit of their girlhood probation, take upon themselves the honor of wives to rich planters, the care of any number, scores and hundreds, as the case may be, of slaves. Certainly there would seem to be here some occasion for a little dry, moral discipline, a small demand for some fundamental homely principles of enlightened action!

The days dragged heavily over Perdita, notwithstanding her utmost endeavor to wing them with heavenly duties. Exuberant vegetable nature seemed to drink up the vitality of the atmosphere, and when the broadest leaves, the deepest dyed flowers, and gayest birds revelled most in luxury of life, then most Perdita's spirits flagged and fainted. It was not enough that the characteristic, munificent kindness of friends should keep her supplied with every variety of delicate cordial, that they should constantly seek in every device of social gayety to stimulate her senses. Perdita, although gracefully sharing in

all their kind efforts, saw ever a "hand they could not see," pointing to her *ideal* woman, and the sorry *fact*, that woman *is*. So Perdita faithfully sought the log school-house, and there gave out her life in various high and holy teaching, while her affectionate, impulsive, fickle pupils gave momentary heed to her, in the unsuggestive school-room, but at night, galloped all recollection of restraint off, on their beautiful ponies, and were as happily unschooled in feeling as the "Joe" or "Jim" that rode beside them.

However powerful an abstract love of truth may be, however unselfishly a woman may dedicate herself to it, it seems impossible to her nature not to look for the encouragement of some appreciative eye, the impulsive stimulus of some sympathizing heart. To go on through sterile years, even in the sublimest work of love, blossoming richly in sweetest prodigality of virtue, unrecognized, giving out life's odorous breath in desert places, knowing there are souls in the universe that would look on that exquisite pain of self-immolation with honor and reverential love, that are yet never to behold it; to pour out love on the air without even the privilege the rock-cliff harebell has of nodding to its neighbor—this is loneliness, solitude; this tries woman's soul. It is almost a pain in the tree and flower world, to know that in glorious forms and colors, most exquisite breath of divine love is wasted in places that man's eye has never found; that treasures of beauty are yielded up every year to the envious frosts, which no eye has noted. If these creations do not enjoy each other and their own world, their

lives die with a repletion of beauty, unnoted, unappropriated.

Perdita, after years of faithful teaching could see good results of her labors in, now and then a family and home. Ladies who had formerly considered it a disgrace to hem a pocket-handkerchief, more cautiously sneered at the coarse hands of northern utilitarianism. Now and then a young lady learned to make her toilette without her Betty, and if the mosquitoes bit her, did not quite helplessly throw herself on her Sally's titillation to soothe the inflamed protuberance. A dim respect as for a reliable force seemed to attend Perdita, and thus she recognized a growing appreciation of self-reliance and freedom. Now and then an indirect apology for the ruinous waste and extravagance in domestic life, would inculcate the "*system*," the "*institution*," which it is none of our business to mention. And some of the most vigorous minds declared it was impossible to grow there, and that only the electrical, cold, stiff, graceless, social atmosphere of the north was favorable to intellectual development.

This put an idea in Perdita's mind, but it came unfortunately just as an attack of bilious fever drove the last struggling physical energy from her wasted frame. Prostrate in a suffocating room, and given over to "blue pills," and black Keziah's intermittent mercies, Perdita revolved in the delirium of her burning brain that haunting idea.

Lake Avenue, and Charles, and waves of human faces, with the melancholy wail of a black woman following a plough in the cotton-field, girdled trees,

all mingled together in bewildering form, and around all in brilliant convolutions wound this shining idea, a hope, a happiness indescribable, and full of glory.

Scene in the morning after a restless night—

Perdita. When do you think I shall be able to go, doctor?

Doctor. In a few days in all probability; but where do you speak of going?

Perdita. Oh, round to that loneliest place; you may tell them they need not trouble themselves about getting out of the carriage; just see me safely down, then I can arrange my plans, and get my outfit.

Doctor. Never mind your plans, don't trouble your poor sick head with them; but if you have any messages for friends, you may perhaps as well give them to me, and I will write for you.

Perdita. Yes, yes, there is one I would like to forgive—and one—you may tell him he will go with me to my rest—and I have planned that he shall be principal of the institution. If the moon should shine, you could lay me into that same ripple of light with the evening primrose, you know, Charlie, and—and—then we will have a marriage of the institutions.

The words died away with Perdita's last breath on her lips, and the doctor, with a shudder, hurried too late, for others to look on the smile that left a momentary gleam on that pure and holy face.

CHAPTER III.

IN the friendly and mournful office of informing the northern friends of Perdita, of her death, and sending to them her trunks, a package was found directed to Charles. It reached him on one of the glowing days of Indian summer, when he had been strangely haunted by visions of his youth, when his old love seemed to play over his faded, yet still clearly outlined hopes, ambitions and plans, like the warm sunshine in the yellow tree-tops, on the brown hills, on the brown fern, and pale moss. It was a day of mournful sweetness, every voice of the woodland seemed to awaken some fond memory of Perdita. Nature, in her wonderful philosophies, seemed to him, governed more in love than in the cold spirit of wisdom on this radiant day, and as he lay down on the rainbow glories of the drifted leaves, and looked in the face of sweet purple flowers that smiled amid their decay; as he watched the shining wings of insects glancing in the sun, and marked how the arm of love pillows the sweet stricken form of nature in her saddest seasons; he felt rebuked by this affluent, faithful spirit, and looked on his own course as morbidly sensitive, exacting, and cold. To make some late amends to Perdita, who, through him, had chosen a severe and lonely life, was his firm resolve. His heart warmed with the thought, as it had not warmed for many a day. He had been informed by letters of her heroic life, her magnanimous

self-reliance and devotion to an ideal good. To unite with her in a philanthropic enterprise, to be warmed by her love, and solidify her plans by his wisdom, in short, to make two lives perfect in truth and love, and thus give a beautiful meaning to nature's universal symbols, filled his mind with a new and ethereal joy. How to shut suddenly into stern, solemn night! with stars and light indeed, but O how cold! Cold, almost frigid was the form that on this Indian summer eve, moved slowly by the lake shore; a shudder ran through the air, too, as night closed in, and still the phantom form moved back and forth on Lake Avenue.

From the fateful package, Charlie gathered the outlines of Perdita's plan, and proceeded, even while grief at her death was in full, fresh force upon him, to embody it. It became his turn to address himself to ideal good, to feel himself overshadowed by a spirit-presence, to drink in the same cup of lonely, patient duty which Perdita had consecrated with her sufferings and her death. He gathered all the particulars of her life together, especially her few last years; entered into her most sacred sympathies, and reverentially followed the suggestions of her spirit. Everywhere it followed him, the clear intense light of an eye—the eye of a spirit. It gleamed in his memory a fixed glowing light; it had a present quickening influence in all his moments; through all the hours of day, it rested in love on the darkest shadows of night, and while it gazed, distilled quietude and sleep on the pillow of the pilgrim lover.

In the centre of our country's wilderness is growing a fairer fabric than mortal man has yet seen. Wisdom and love are elaborating its magnificent designs, and harmonizing its fair proportions; the music of the spheres has been heard, and is fast consolidating invisible form, so that the eye of humanity may see what the ear has heard of divine harmony. Human hands are busy, and the sound of the hammer is heard, yet invisible powers seem to govern the work so that no stone shall be laid amiss, and no error perpetuated. A gray-haired man silently hovers around, and almost without words, controls the builders.

Already has the rumor of this building reached the extreme and diverse points of the moral and social universe, so that the bold and free, the hoping and believing, are leaving old conventional ground, and hurrying to Nebraska's fresh, glowing heart, there to enter the harmonious building, and take their part in the eternal harmony. The northern leaves his traffic and his schemes of ambition, and shaking hands with the southern who stands a free-man at the grand portal of Liberty, enters the everlasting habitation. Woman leaves her follies and futile pleasures in the old cities of the plain, and hurries to the new home, to learn her better destiny, and the timid slave steals quietly into the sanctuary of peaceful labor, and plaintively sings in the grand choral of universal love.

Is it not so, dear dreamer; is there not in the solemn twilight of the coming morn, a dim outline of this glorious edifice, of which wisdom and love

are builders? the ideal twain who were wedded ere the marriage of the institutions, which poor Perdita predicted, can take place.

Looking through life's sensuous allurements, to their highest meaning, Perdita and Charles were more really married, although he was in Nebraska and she—was not, than many conflicting pairs, struggling under the same roof in their galling chains. Despising all doubt, there is to some visionaries a more glorious social structure in progress for the new territories of our fair land, than prophet, priest, or politician hath yet described.

A SERMON.

And now, when comes the calm mild day,
As still such days will come.—BRYANT.

WHEN the sunshine drips through the few pale leaves that tenaciously cluster on the gray bough; when children play “babes in the wood,” with those which the wind and frost left in heaps, crisped and brown; when it is a luxury for spiders to creep out and try a silken turn in the sun; when a warm sand-bank invites to slumbrous contemplation, and an almost forgotten glory comes back to the water and the hills; when little birds chirp out again some sweet summer refrain; when the kitten watches in the sunshine a revived fly; when nature’s heart grows warm again and thrills to yours and mine, dear friends—then we take pencils, it may be, pen or paper, or a book, and find a seat in some sunny hollow.

But when seated in a half-shadow of interlaced branches; when our inkstand is safely lodged under a broad spotted leaf, and the white sheet is opened for a picture of the scene, in words or pencil-strokes; when the dear poet’s hallowed rhymes are before us—still the eye wanderingly counts the fibres of a

leaf, or watches the adventures of a little bug, or vaguely looks in the restless stream.

It seems that external and visible attractions of scenery and circumstance are not all that govern man in his choice of local habitation, but a secret force in nature answering this degree of development, draws him and holds him silently in his place. The severe and yet symmetrical, the rounded, graduated, the *puritanic look* of New England hills, could hold no people on their sterile sides but the unflinching, practical, positive Yankee; *he* finds a stubbornness answering his will in the ribs of the old hills and he subdues it, with cheerful heroism, and makes it blossom like the river-banks of California with yellow gold, and better still, with all virtues of patriotism and social life.

What poet or artist, however, could live in the stereotyped white house, with the just such a fence, just the same distant hills, the corresponding old, dull, correct, round of occupation and behaviour, that make the very distinctive and saving quality of that soil and people?

Who again settle in the fertile marshes and rich plains of the west and south? Only those whose aim is to gratify the sensual appetites at the lowest cost; those only can live there who are materialistic, unspeculative and weak. The hills and rolling prairies invite the greater souls with their fresh breezes and magnificent sweep, with their broad streams and oceans of flowers.

In a spot of earth though there may be beauty and attraction for the *corresponding soul*, the uncon-

genial pines and dies. No vital influences emanate from the earth, no circles of harmony embrace the stranger, the wandering spirit, and no force of material circumstance should hold it from fleeing away. Many a beautiful life has prematurely wilted and died for want of its appropriate place on mother earth's bosom.

Carlyle says something about reading man's thought by his deed: is not his character read by his home, by the hills he has chosen to bound his earthly vision, by the deformity or beauty that shall hem in his personal and near surroundings. And still more may it be read by him who shall discover the silent, secret force that binds life and soul in an invisible chain to certain localities, that draws some and repels others; that wells up life to one and dries up life in another.

Involved in this idea is the history of one of our most distinguished American artists, a man around whom nature has built a wall of majesty that warns the feeble or mean soul "to come thus far and no farther," a man of most gentle and child-like susceptibilities, and yet so towering high in grand conceptions of divinity; so illuminated by inborn genius that his silent look is an awe to falsehood and pretension, but the kindest beacon light to the seeker of truth and wisdom.

I have looked at this man with perpetual wonder. Truly that the rocks should open and let gentle flowers from out their clefts, "emanations of an indwelling life, an upholding love," is not more wonderful than that from out a vigorous New England

village, an uncompromisingly stiff neighborhood, where the whole law and gospel of life is to work hard and get a "liven," and the summit of glory, to have the reputation of being "*hard-working*" people, and "forehanded"—where peddlers sprout spontaneously, and art is a thing unknown or vaguely hinted at in decorative sign-painting; and supposed to culminate in a baby's portrait that "looks as handsome as a doll"—that among a dozen sterling, sturdy members of a family, should arise one whose earliest thoughts and dreams stretched far over and beyond his native hills—whose feeling for beauty and worship of truth, lifted him far above the sordid confines of his material life, and linked him with the great of past ages—this is one of nature's wonders that baffles philosophy.

"That magnificent gulf," said I, "that lets one down from hills among the clouds, and leads to the quiet haunts of men, do you remember it, Mr. ——?"

"That is the road I used to go to mill," he quietly replied, just raising his electric eye from his drawing.

Looking at his wonderful head and eyes, and with his expressive fulness of gentle tones still waking all manner of pleasantness in my ear and brain, I at once pictured a solitary boy with a dusty cloth cap, heavy shoes, with brown hands, driving the old family horse and wagon with bags of grain, down the twilight rocky road that led through what the people called the "*gully*." I imagined how his eye, the same wonderful eye that has since looked on and become familiar with the marvels of art in

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the old world, how his eye ranged over the imposing altitude of the trees, caught tricks of light and shade, that none but the inborn painter sees, from banks of sunlit moss, or among the stones that tried to hem in the dancing brook. I imagined what a religious reverence stole into his heart for God, for nature, and for himself, and that then there followed a feeling of utter solitude, a conviction of native ability beyond the demands of the time and place in which he lived, a presentiment that excited and awed his heart—and then, just then, I imagine the rustle of the wind in the tops of the trees and the louder gurgle of the brook arrest his senses, and put to flight the ghosts of coming years, and more especially a trout-betraying wimple in still water confined by a mossy log, entraps his imagination, and the next I see of the boy-artist, he stands by the brook with an improvised hook and line in his hand, whisking a trout into the leaves of the over-hanging laurel, while the old horse dozes comfortably in the quiet road.

But what I would say is this: that the laws of this boy's inner being forced him necessarily away from the place of his birth, to which he could not gravitate like less gifted souls—they forced him away from the utilitarian projects nursed by his friends to fetter his young years, and with the stigma of reckless unthrift upon him, he took up his high destiny in rather a vagrant guise to be sure, but nevertheless religiously following every hint and hope of his "high calling."

It is singular that elements of beauty so foreign

to the principles of his native institutions and home-bound hills, should have formed a halo around his nativity, and become embodied in such a perfect ideal, as well as beautiful, physical form; there must have been in the wilderness of maternal love a secret spring of poetic beauty, to which this broad river of manly perfections gratefully ascribes its source. But is it not still more singular that the first waking appreciation and honor of such minds never stirs the dull senses of common communities. A man with the clustering honors of distant lands thick upon him, coming into sordid spheres, is disrobed of his greatness at once, and is dwarfed to the comprehension of his neighbors. Nay, more than this, his powers are drawn from him, abstracted by the inferior souls around him, so that without most diligent refreshing from great inspiring sources, his own life runs dry, he even takes upon himself first the airs and manners of inferiors, then the feelings. Therefore, the spirit wars violently against this insidious subjugation; it labors unceasingly to throw its best fruits where they will be gathered reverently, and preserved for the glory and hope of humanity.

But adieu to the artist. I did not essay when I lounged on this fresh bank of earth to run my profane pen into the flying car of fame, and drag one of its occupants down to earth for dissection; this little ant with its translucent body, that is voyaging over my paper, comes more within the scope of my small vision; and yet "when comes the mild, warm day as still such days will come," when every feel-

ing is melted into kindness in the sunshine, and pens, as well as feet, are tempted to ramble, a "*song*" may be forgiven, as in Burns' epistle to his friend, if it does "turn out a *sermon*."

But assuming a preacher's style, I would draw the following conclusions:—

1. That earth and man act and react magnetically on each other.

2. That childhood should be treated reverently, not knowing but its strange ways are dictated by the inspiration of angels.

3. That genius is a law unto itself.

4. That it can receive righteous judgment only from its peers.

5. And lastly, I am strongly convicted there are some hints of truth in what I have written above, but I have not logic enough to hang them together, therefore, I leave them dangling; at least they may serve a critic's playful paw—pen.

B E A R S .

BEARS in the neighborhood! bears on the hills! bears in farmers' orchards stealing apples! bear killed a little boy when he was searching for the cows! Is that so?

"Just so," says my open-eyed neighbor as he shoulders his gun. "True," says another coming up, "I've got old Nick Stoner's rifle that was used to bears forty years ago, and sent now and then a ball through an Indian, they say."

The hounds were baying on the distant hills, the sun streamed over the yellow trees, leaving now and then a sombre patch of dark hemlock, that looked as if it might be the retreat of the worried fugitive, and Mrs. Pease straining her eyes in that direction, while the wind played with her hair, fancied she could see a bear's great flabby arm hugging a tree, while he looked loweringly back on his pursuers.

"This seems like a legend of my grandmother's time rather than a fact of October 25th, 1854," said Mrs. P., to her husband, who was squinting through the sunny distance toward the wood where the bears were said to be wandering at "their own sweet will."

"Yes, it makes a queer contrast to the visitors

that have recreated on these same hills, and strolled through the woods this past season, it is "bear *versus* Broadway" in a social aspect.

"A kind of tonic to our relaxed, enfeebled savagism," Mrs. P. replied. "This wild life stirs an odd feeling in the blood, as if the magnificent brute forces of nature were pleading some kindred with us, and would not have our alliance overlooked, or at any rate, would challenge our intelligence in a fair fight."

"I imagine bear in an encounter with a Broadway dandy," said Mrs. P., laughing. "Dandy's slender legs in their most fashionable pattern of pantaloons, the exquisite tie of cravat, the delicately scented handkerchief, just held toward his offended senses, as he bows toward the intrusive stranger, saying,

"Oh! aw! my friend," rather nervously-feeling of a sudden, that all his killing powers were quite thrown away on this country *boor*, bear—to be sure, circumstance makes the man, don't it though, Ett?

"Yes, it makes him look like a fool sometimes, according to your showing," said Hetty; "however, I must say I like these contrasts, dandies, boors, bears, fools, anything for variety. Next to seeing some delicate little miss, pruned of every natural instinct, tremulous with artificial sensitiveness, so nice in her toilet that not a hair gets astir, or a motion rebels against the restraint of bodice, or gaiter, I should like to see, come tearing down those hills, any animal of the wilderness, with nature's fierce

instincts, all astir. I should like to see him 'run through a troop, or leap over a wall.' "

"Ett, nature is a tireless experimenter; in her secret laboratory in the wilderness, she decocts the *od* force that generates bears, and in human neighborhoods an antagonistic *od-der* force to destroy them. However, I suppose those strong terrible brute forms grow as inevitably from the sombre gloom of old forests as butterflies from a flowery meadow. I only wonder just now, what are our proper relations toward them; that is, Etty, shall I take a revolver and go forth, a valiant hunter, and help exterminate the enemy from the borders of our cornfields and potato-patches?"

This grandiloquent flourish called forth Mrs. P.'s heroism, and she replied in mock majesty—

"Go, Nimrod, it shall not be said my weak imploring voice held you from *bear-ing* your part in these stirring times. Go, let not woman's fond embraces hold you; and I hope the bear's won't either."

Later date ———, bear killed, weighed two hundred and fifty pounds; it was sent to the New York market. If an unusual streak of valor should be discovered, in the course of the winter, among the Gothamites, it may be attributed to the magnetic quality of *bear's meat*. What is the proper dietetic term? one would not feel quite calm enough in the epigastric region to relish this rare dish, preceded by the term *bear*.

Later still, another bear killed by three men and six dogs. Later still, another.

By this time nature's equilibrium seemed fully restored in Mrs. P.'s estimation, and counting up the refined pleasures of her comfortable parlor, she concluded they were a fair offset to the savage sports of the hunter, and that about half way between Bear-dom and Broadway was the *juste milieu*, the proper point to pause in an enlightened and contented happiness.

CAPRICCIO FANTASTICO.

BY

OLE BULL.

WE climbed slowly up the hill, the sun streamed over us, and down the warm road, and revealed the exquisite tangle of spiders' webs among the zigzag rails of the fences, and among the grass; it also illuminated the airy halls in which insects, just warmed into motion, were dancing wildly up and down, hither and thither; his magnetic beams poured over all a genial gladness. That diffusion of warm light seemed to lessen the distance, and melt the barriers, between the soul and all its ideal loves. Oh! how happiness did seem to gather round the golden bed toward which the sun was setting! how it danced along the purple edge of the faintest dream of cloud! how it shot up in pencils of violet light! Climbing up, up into that irradiate region, how fact let go the soul from its hard grip, and hope and love danced off with it into wild and dizzy excess of joy.

The sun went down, and twilight tried every possible effect of varying tint from the combined glory of rose-dyes, orange, cream, salmon, silver, softening gradually into a widowy veil of softest gray, from which the stars looked out.

"Yes it is all very well, spiders' webs, sunset, and so on, but what of it?" says Common Sense, that distinguished, and justly honored omnipresent companion.

Nothing. We rode on, while darkness and mist closed around us, descending gradually from our ecstatic heights, until the horse's hoofs struck on the bridge, by which sound we were reminded of our proximity to Utica, where we had come to hear Ole Bull and Strakosch mainly, Bertucca and Patti secondly, to see Maretzek again.

"Oh! that, *that* is stale; everybody has heard Ole Bull years ago, and ever so many times; besides, critics say"—

Of course, yes, yes, "people *have* heard Ole Bull, and critics *do* say"— but *I* rode fifteen miles over the hills to hear Ole Bull, at this late day; I *heard* *him*.

Sitting in the concert-room, rather, at first, listlessly running my eye over the sea of faces, which gradually interested me, as every human look and feeling invariably does, I noted the beautiful, the sensible, the vacant, the arrogant, the coarse, the refined, the silly, the vain, the grave, and the great—it became quite absorbing. To see how a consciously beautiful woman, or one whose position would secure favorable remark, would stand a moment in some affected dilemma about a seat, or perhaps in recognition of a friend, giving, thereby, the audience the gracious favor of a look, and chance of comment on her distinguishing graces. Another, all modest sensitiveness, knowing her dull gray face had no charms,

slips quietly into her seat, looking out now and then with a soft gray eye, of feeling, that calls forth a blessing from even a stranger. Then there were the fashionables, as they are called, which to me, have appeared everywhere to great disadvantage. They appear a middle ground development, a "demoniac" period between the "initial and celestial," when things take the place of ideas, when abstract grace and beauty are not called into exercise, but are dismissed for temporary whims—when *what is* has no power, but what *seems*; yet I like dress, refinement, gayety, when beauty, grace, and truth, inspire and form within them a *soul*, and dress only claims to be the body, the visible demonstration. But among this class, even protruding from their scallop-shell bonnets, which form no possible line or connection with the features or form, I could see a latent kindness slumbering, a stifled power, a womanly holiness, under the dashing, mocking face of a flirt.

Emerson says the world is always looking for a man. We must look for a woman first; how shall the stream leap so high above the fountain? *Great* men are much greater than is consistent with the laws of physical philosophy; already they make maternity unseemingly proud, or cause it to blush in conscious insignificance. Common men are low enough; below, far below, the corresponding rank and grade of woman. They do not see her true mission; nor have they the magnanimity to acknowledge her influence, *as the greatest and noblest men have always done*. They have an ignorant, bigoted fear that in granting her justice, she will be a tyrant.

But she will teach them yet that *their* good and *hers* lie inseparably connected in *perfect freedom*, and perfect love "which casteth out *fear*."

But my eye rested with great satisfaction on what would pass for *men* in this *age*; men with fine heads and noble airs; I saw those to whom an ideal vision was not a jest; those that dare to think man presses on the confines of sense with a hope of seeing beyond, and that *there is something beyond to see*.

An eager clamor of hands and feet denotes that my speculations are about to be interrupted by the appearance of Strakosch. A nice little modest man, who gave me great delight. What a flattering consciousness of immortal and illimitable power lurks smiling in the soul, when genius opens the window and pours in and out a flood of light, or a flood of sound.

"Who comes next," says a sandy-haired girl, who had been constantly whispering and fidgeting on the seat before me. A face of conceited obtuseness, with a mouth slit into her cheeks, and not being finished at the corners with the least dimple or shadow, opened, and shut, and smiled with meaningless, mechanical, trapdoor-like uniformity. Looking with careless assurance at the programme, she says, in an unembarrassed loud whisper, "It's *Roziny* (Rossini); she's gonter sing, I wonder which *she* is!"

Bertucca was courtesying on the stage, and taking her for *Roziny*, my neighbor, All-Abroad, looked with great admiration on her stiff figure, stiff petticoat, stiff plaid ribbon trimming, to her stiff dress.

And yet Bertucca had not an unpleasant head on

her short neck—rather insinuatingly pleasant after applause—she was applauded.

But how, according to Fanny Fern, "when a woman gets going on in a certain direction," how hard it is to stop. Because nature makes a woman short, and with no lift of majesty, or curve of grace, why should she seem to be haunted with that idea in everything she does, shortening, stiffening, herself by every device, instead of cutting free of this anchor to her success, and making a mental triumph over physical imperfection. A long slender figure, on the contrary, seems psychologized by the lengthening lines of her form; she perpendicularizes everything, and shows a constant tendency to run into extremes in all her appointments.

Bertucca and Patti were very well.

Ole Bull makes a dignified entrance; he is very graceful (I had never heard that), and wore a *dress-coat* more artistically than is often possible.

"Apparition from the World of Spirits, a new Capriccio Fantastico, composed and performed for the first time in this city, by Ole Bull."

I had not thought there were spirits in the house before, but when he drew his bow, I saw them clustering around him; they came between me and the lamps; they lit up a circle around the stage. The audience gradually disappeared; a surging sound came from the luminous ring, around the figure of the player—it caught me on its waves; swaying to and fro, it bore me into the arms of angels. I had no longer any sense of the actual violin and bow from which the music was flowing; the house was

full of it, it was everywhere—the abstract delight, and power of music. Still higher and higher—

“It did float and run,
Like a disembodied joy whose race is just begun.”

Unfolding from my inner sense, I saw the ethereal form of the inspired player. His material form was like a shadow through which I distinctly saw the luminous outline of a larger figure, his own real being. This has occurred to me three different times in human life, in nature many times. Trees have seemed to lose the external attributes of matter, and have revealed an inner life of beauty that held my soul in ecstatic awe; that gave the idea of immortality a meaning so wide and vast, that *to live* seemed a glory unspeakable.

And Ole Bull knew, well knew, that on the bridge of his genius an innumerable company met; by quick tones of recognition did this assurance thrill the sympathetic throng. The apathetic, the materialistic critic sat coldly in his seat; the superficial and artificial knew nothing of this—yet thousands and thousands meet thus, and carry through life the influence of such occasions. One earthly consciousness alone remained in this wonderful trance; it was that it must end—that each new delight was drawing me near the close—and a deserted and motionless form would claim the truant soul; and oh! the sad shudder of that farewell to the last tones of that “Apparition,” when I sunk back again to materiality, and its companion *Common Sense*.

What followed pleased me well, but the glory of

the evening had departed; the Carnival of Venice, in which I never have discovered as much as I ought to even in the hands of this master, was a grand structure, not a picture, not a poem, not a dream.

The audience applauded "Lilly Dale, with variations," rapturously, and truly if anything could redeem it from insignificance, Ole Bull could. When in his exquisite handling he brought to imagination a sweet child with golden hair, singing by a brook, with her blue eyes piously upturned to heaven, and Strakosch formed the full orchestral accompaniment of winds, birds, and waters; truly I thought it a pleasant picture, and that even in our vulgar melodies a divine feeling runs like light.

Returned to the hotel, a clique of critics who know a thing or two, were very much disappointed, had heard everything better done, and had quite done with Ole Bull, &c., &c. Nevertheless my experience could not be gainsayed, and until I have a higher revelation I shall live in the memory of this.

High art or no art, Ole Bull held unutterable bliss within the sweep of his diamond studded bow, for me, and brought spirits near me, both from distant points on earth, and some from above, of whom I may not speak, yet "spirits know what spirits tell," and there is a fast hold to these intangible links, as many do know and testify.

OGGIE FAY.

CHAPTER I.

"WHAT avails my beauty!" exclaimed Oggie, as she impatiently let down her hair before the little six inch square mirror, just large enough to reflect her flushed, angry, but splendid face. "In this little, mean, commonplace home, not even poor enough to be picturesque, what is the use of being handsome; who sees me; who would think of coming into our sunburnt yard; not a tree or a flower, nothing but geese, hens, and children? I wonder why mother will hang her old red and yellow flannel on the front fence, and stretch her clothes-line across the path, and have her tubs and barrels always in sight!

Little Betty sat on an old chest, looking at, and listening to her handsome sister, and as she fidgeted with her little brown hands, she felt that Oggie was unjust, and yet pitied her.

"Poor mother has had to work so hard all her lifetime, she has not had time to think how to make things look pretty," said Betty, gently.

"Yes, but why did she send us to school to learn anything, or see anybody? She ought to have known

it would only be a curse to us. If she had kept me at home tending babies and spinning, I should have been contented, but now I know just enough to make me miserable. I hate this stunted coarse way of living. I hate myself because I am not happy at home and with you all, and because I am—handsome, Betty. It makes me wish I could dress and go into the world, and have influence and power as I know I could have."

"I know what I wish to do, and I'm going to do it too," said Betty; "I am going to earn some money, and buy mother some new dresses, then I shall fix the yard and fill it with flowers, get some pretty white muslin curtains, and a rocking-chair for the parlor, and some new dishes, and I don't know what all."

Oggie turned her great black eyes on Betty with a conscious look of self-reproach and admiration of her sister's more generous plans, and yet with an air of superiority, she replied—

"Well, Betty, I would, if I were you, do that; but I am going to make myself decent, if I can, first, and then I will see about the old shanty. The fact is, Betty, I have suffered so much from being poor that I am determined to get away from it all."

"What are you going to do, Oggie?"

"I'm going into a milliner's shop, that's what I'm going to do; I'm going to Boston."

"I'm going into a factory."

"Come to see me if you do, for I would disgrace me to have you come back later."

Betty looked hurt, but added meekly—

“I don’t see why; we shall both be working for a living, and why isn’t it just as honest to work in a factory as in a milliner’s shop?”

“*It is just as honest,*” said Oggie, laughing, “perhaps a little *honester*; but, my dear Betty, it isn’t quite so *respectable*, so they *say*, I don’t know why, or care.”

“Well if it is honest, it is respectable, I think,” said Betty, a little warmly; “and if you don’t wish to own me when I work in a factory, to help mother, and make our old home pleasant, and you work in a milliner’s shop to make yourself look pretty, you needn’t, I shall feel as *good as you*, any way;” saying which, Betty left the room.

Oggie sat down on the chest, her brunette complexion irradiated with the glowing red in her cheeks, her dark hair lit up with a sunny tinge, lying, as her graceful fingers had left it, in shining folds, and her eyes so large, so black, so full of pride! She was beautiful, and every nerve was alive to beauty and its claims. Born with quick sensibilities which were irritated at every step by her uncongenial condition, she must be pardoned for a degree of impatient selfishness; but not for all that she habitually manifested. Her idea of life was much too grand for the narrow limit of her duties and observations. She felt an ability not demanded at home; true, there were duties enough to do, and hard ones, but they did not call on her set of faculties; while Betty washed the dishes, in the sweetest humor, Oggie sighed, looked over the hills, and into

the clouds for some object of brave daring, for some stirring motive to which she could lend all her grand nature. It was with a dreadful, smothering feeling that she curbed in her restless spirit, and tamed down her step to the gentle, homely duties of home.

Sitting on the low chest, she resolved to go to Boston that afternoon. "This very afternoon," said she to Betty, who re-entered the room "to take back her hard words," she confessed; so delicately tender was her pure conscience.

"Oh! I don't care for what you said, Betty; but I'm going to do something, and be somebody, and the sooner I begin the better; so I shall go to Mrs. Dean's this afternoon."

And she did go. Bidding adieu to the old home, which she had never loved, but around which her heart clung with a melancholy tenderness, now that she was leaving it, she hoped forever, with her few effects in an old trunk, but with her imagination full of wildest dreams, Oggie flew away from the homely innocent scenes of her childhood, to the bewildering tumult of a great city. She had some clue to Mrs. Dean's establishment through a neighbor, whose boast, and prop of family pride was that she "had a cousin Dean in Boston, a fashionable milliner." Oggie, like the inexperienced generally, thought it easy enough to find a situation, once in the neighborhood of so many opportunities. Then again, the sight of stirring life, of beauty, wealth, and luxury, to her young eyes, was a pleasure approximating that of possession.

It fortunately happened that Mrs. Dean, although

somewhat startled by the young girl's presumption, knew something of her family, and having occasion for a pretty attendant on her customers, agreed to her earnest wishes; and forthwith Oggie found herself installed in a fashionable milliner's shop, and greatly pleased with the change.

We may consider Oggie at school; for such, to her young and undisciplined years, was the daily round of show, and dress, and duty of her situation. At school! under teachers from all degrees of fashionable life and custom. She was taught envy, vanity, an unwholesome emulation in ignoble pursuits, an ambition for petty triumphs, a disgust of simplicity and honesty, a thousand petty arts and servile imitations.

What should a young soul learn, sitting ten hours a day in a wilderness of silks, satins, feathers, false flowers, with her personal and individual magnetism passing constantly from her through these various conductors; or worse, absorbed by the vapid conversations, and personal contact with frivolous and unreflective minds? Oggie had not by nature sufficient reverence for simple truth; she had great ideality, and loved grand effects; even if moral principle was sacrificed for such poetical or romantic ends, it did not distress her; but to live a prosaic life, even in purest sublimity of moral purpose, had no promise of beauty or joy to her. Yet it gave her a momentary pain to learn, in her first worldly lesson, how deep a shade of obloquy is constantly thrown upon the associations of a rustic home, by the words "countrified," "country-bred," "country-looking," &c.

Her first efforts, therefore, were to remove every vestige of comfort from her dress and manners that should provoke that terrible stare and sneer. She had been trained to habits of extreme neatness, but in this new life, time for personal cleanliness was not found, when personal *decoration* was the first law; and she observed the most faultlessly dressed ladies were not always the immaculately divine creatures she had supposed—sub-cotton, whalebone, cosmetics, &c.—so that making to herself a law from the usages and examples around her, she resolved to be decently clean if possible, but to be stylish, elegant, fashionable, *she must, or die*. I do not like to tell tales out of school, I would not like to say that that exquisitely dressed young lady that suggests to the poetic mind violets, roses, and lilies, that so daintily uses her soft white hand, and knows so well the grace of her pretty action in raising her embroidered skirts—I would not like to say those sweet lips, crimson pillows for love's kisses—I do not like to hint that the whole creature we often worship, has stepped with all her fascinations into the public street, from a disorderly chaotic world of ill-humor, indolence, and selfishness; that the elements of her being and her wardrobe are alike in wasteful confusion; that her words have been bitter, although coming from those beautiful lips; that her lily hand refused a friendly office to the needy, and that under her arched and haughty instep, all lovely flowers of common sympathy are crushed. Yet I must admit that in proportion as Oggie grew refined, delicate inborn kindness and purity declined. She had not time to

be good. The influence of everything around her tended to make her superficial and artificial. Everything was sacrificed to externals.

"Oggie, you must put aside that mourning dress for Mrs. Herbert, and finish Eleanor Cleveland's party dress; she must have it at six, and the flounces are not half done."

"Yes, but I thought Mrs. Herbert said she was going out of town this evening, and you promised her —"

"Yes, I have to promise everybody, but I must meet the engagements *first*, to those who pay *best*. That dress for Eleanor, at the party to-night, will bring me more orders than Mrs. Herbert's, up there in the country, would in a year—and from the first people, too—besides you can afford a little extra care, for perhaps her elegant brother, who followed you a block to see your beautiful face, will come with her to get it; she said she preferred to try it on here—and who knows but you may get a glimpse of Michael Cleveland; what a name! I wonder they did not call him Lucifer while they were about it;" and so the little woman rattled on, partly from love of talk, and partly to keep her girls in good humor.

"Are the Cleverlands wealthy?" asked Oggie.

"Oh! I would not make any serious calculations quite yet, Oggie," replied Mrs. Dean, while all the girls set up a great laugh.

"I do not know but I shall," retorted Oggie, defiantly. "I intend to marry as high as Michael Cleveland, at the least."

"I think I see you Mrs. Cleveland!" said one

mockingly; and "how does your sister Eleanor like you?" said another; while a third, more maliciously than the rest, added, "will you make a large wedding and invite your sister's friends from the Lowell Factories?"

This unexpected taunt enraged Oggie; and, strange as it may appear, not toward the offender so much as toward her sweet, innocent sister, who had betrayed by letters her situation—and toward her family, her birth, her *fate*, as she internally *felt* it.

Do not think too hardly of poor Oggie; the weapons of women are dreadful when turned toward exterior poverty—"their tender mercies are cruel;" they are pitiless toward homely toil, and the awkward virtues of prudent industry—that is fine women, or more properly *ladies*. The tonnish belle that holds her nose in the air, and looks over the breathing stream of human faces that rolls by her, as if it were only to float her petty greatness, to drift her proudly on, where, to what port I cannot say, and her envious imitator, the reckless sewing girl, both, and all grades between, know and practise every variety of ingenious torture on each other. The highest and haughtiest repel the next degree lower, as unfeelingly and coldly as careful avoidance and *polite* staring can do it; the next, a little more demonstratively, the grade lower; and so down, coarsening in each descending scale. Let us pray for the annihilation of ladies, and the advent of *gentlewomen*. Gentlewomen! I have seen such, and they were beautiful exceptions to the fictitious beings around them. Noble, yet meek, doing and saying sweet and soothing things

to the sinful and suffering, not with a mingled reserve and pride, keeping wide the distinction between donor and friend, as many offensively do, but recognizing the universal human heart as kindred in all its woes, its fears, and hopes. Gentlewomen! I have seen them; and from the garden of their souls there came such odorous breath of kindness, I thought it was becoming and proper that the loveliest hues and forms of costume, should visibly express their interior affluence of beauty. Oh! were every tint and fold of drapery worn as symbol of some grace and beauty of soul! were the silk-worm's life-spun web worn as token of the inweaving of all nature's exquisite sensibilities—as promise of heart-work for the adorning of life! beautiful, glorious would be the rainbow hues of the promenade, the church, the opera, the home. There would be truth where now there is only disguise; there would be harmony where now exist deformity and discord.

Dare we look for the correspondence to all the exterior magnificence we see, into the soul, alas! alas! what shabbiness, what poverty does many a velvet robe hide! what moral darkness does many a diamond mock with its glitter! what weak affections dwindle under the satin bodice! Only the true, the good, the beautiful, the brave have a title to nature's gems and flowers, to art's most wonderful products.

Oggie completed the dress in silence, and just as she held it from her, to take a general survey, Eleanor alighted at the door, driven by her brother. The dress was tried on and found quite satisfactory; but Eleanor declared that her brother must be per-

mitted to enter and give his opinion, for she never wore any article of dress with pleasure that he did not approve. So Michael, with elegant and amused amiability entered, and run his eye over the dress and its graduated flounces, at the same time with a double vision and consciousness, surveying the occupants of the room, his eye rested on Oggie, and without the least apparent emotion, or recognition of a face he had seen before, pronounced his admiration of the dress, in words and tones that had a meaning for her ear which her quick sense alone detected.

"Beautiful, my dear Eleanor! beautiful, exceedingly! worthy a poet's vision, or an artist's dream."

"I am glad you like it, my hyperbolic brother; but tell me in common terms, if you think these mixed colors will suit my complexion in the evening, and if the bodice is too low?"

"Your complexion suits the colors; and the bodice—may no unworthy look profane its sacred trust!"

Oggie till this moment had remained quietly looking toward Michael, but now, as he laughed in gay derision of his words, making a medley of all he had said, and concluding with indifferent levity, by saying—

"Ellie, you must not appeal to your vain and susceptible brother, you know he loves to spoil you." Oggie raised her eyes with a look of searching intelligence that startled him. He shrugged his shoulders and said in an undertone,—“Taking notes, eh!”

When they were gone, Oggie, although flattered by his observations, was yet deeply chagrined by the want of respect, implied, more than expressed. This little incident made a deep impression on her. Her romantic tendencies were all startled into the wildest dreams; at the same time, clear perceptions of the relations of things, joined with acute sensibilities, and a peculiarly severe experience, filled her with angry impatience at the restraints and obstacles in the way of her ambition. She knew she was handsome, but she also knew that the admiration she received was coupled with a kind of insolence; that the tones of flattery that met her ear had no reverence, no depth and earnestness of feeling in them, and with passionate tears and sighs, she contrasted her lonely and exposed life, with that of those protected, tenderly guarded, by wealth, position, and friends. Of course, as many a lonely child has done, she folded her tears and sighs in her pillow, and with the morning came no dawning of a better way than to follow the most immediate interest and necessity. So she sat day after day and schemed and planned how to set off her beauty, and to come near the charmed circle of fashion, which to her seemed the paradise for which all women are striving.

CHAPTER II.

MICHAEL CLEVELAND had remained quite abstracted in the depths of a luxurious chair in the elegant parlor of his home, for a long time, while

Eleanor, first twirling her curls over her finger, then shifting her bracelet, then her rings, seemed uneasy and anxious to commence a conversation. At length nervously breaking the silence, she said—

“Mike, I have a request to make.”

“Proceed,” said he, without raising his eyes.

“I wish you would never be seen again in the street with that *milliner*.” *Milliner*, was uttered in a deprecating tone, that seemed to sink the art and its votaries fathoms deep in disgrace.

“I was about to make a similar request of *you*, that you would never be seen *again* in the street with that damned roué Peterson,” retorted Mike, with very uncommon coarseness.

“Peterson!” exclaimed Eleanor, “the most elegant fashionable man in Boston! a man of the very first connections and position! I should like to know what you mean!”

“Oh! nothing, only that you were walking, yesterday, in Washington Street, with Peterson, an idle, luxurious profligate, and passed unrecognized your brother, who happened to walk the length of a block with a beautiful honest sewing girl; the devil take me if she was not the noblest girl on the *pavé*, if she is a milliner.”

“You don’t mean to say that you would have me walk the streets with shop girls! why don’t you introduce me to your tailor?” and Eleanor laughed in a spasm of derision.

“Oh! no, oh! no, I mean that ladies should do as they have always done, despise their own sex, however worthy, brilliant, or beautiful, if they are

poor or unfortunate, and lavish their favors on the sensual, idle miscreants of ours. I mean that a fresh glowing soul, like that of this poor milliner, should meet nothing but contemptuous neglect from her own sisterhood, that might make her life blossom as a rose, and insulting admiration and infamous proposals from our sex, who profess no interest in such low-born beauty but that of the spoiler. Oh! my God, it is too bad!" and Michael Cleveland left the room, lit his cigar, and tried to puff away his indignation, and we must suspect it—*his love*, into the night air.

Yes, Michael by a rare gift of intuition for a man, had fathomed Oggie's deep rich soul, in the two or three casual meetings he had had with her; he felt the power of her beauty; and he saw with a shudder, the danger that her temperament led her into; he loved—he trembled for—he pitied her.

But even Michael Cleveland, with his noble generous impulses, dared not meet the awful front of custom, and repeat the experiment of a public promenade, with the poor girl he *loved*, for her *rich natural gifts*, and his sister and all her world *despised*, for her *necessity of self-support*; for there was something in Oggie's manner so self-possessed and commanding that even Eleanor had declared, first to her brother, that "the little shop-waiter, at Mrs. Dean's establishment, had the majesty of a little queen, besides being handsome enough to make you stare, Mike." No, he dared not do it! The conversation with his sister had discouraged him; "the gulf is too wide, too deep," he said, to a friend who had joined him. "I

am no reformer, if I was I would begin just here," bringing his hand down upon the railing around the balcony till it shook again, "I would snub these fashionable sinners until they were reduced to the low level their immoral, dishonorable, unchristian pride makes them occupy in the scale of humanity; I would elevate the good, the brave, the beautiful, the laboring, the patient, that now abjectly crawl and are ground under the heel of insolent power!"

"But I, I am as mean as the rest," he continued, sadly; "I dare not, believe me, George, *I dare not* take this poor girl, this gem of beauty, and give it a safe and honorable setting in my life, and heart, and home!"

"Why, man alive, *are* you such a coward? I would elevate her under their upturned noses; I would set her on the 'topmost towering height' of prosperity, if I had your ability, Mike."

"Ability! my ability lies in my enslavement to a purse-proud father, bondage to an ambitious mother and sister, and I may as well own it, a natural aversion and dread of commotion, conflict, agitation, and confusion of old established orders, and an habitual indolence and acquiescence 'in the things that be.' Yet this affair has aroused me to unwonted reflection, and I see and feel a dreadful evil in our social life. I see where crime is engendered."

Both were silent—angels looked out of the far blue depths above them, and implored Michael not to succumb to the flood of fashionable folly and sin that beat about his soul; but with a faint resistance he suffered his aspirations and desires for a better

way to die out with the last whiff of his cigar; then tossing all to the wind, he said with his old levity—

“Thus endeth my first philanthropic lecture; the audience will adjourn from the lecture-room to the library, and drink a health to the fair inspirer of all this nonsense.”

It was a quiet sad evening in September; Oggie had been on an errand to a distant part of the city, and was now walking hurriedly, not toward home, but out into the suburbs of the city. She cast, every moment, glances toward the carriages that passed her, as if expecting some one. The sun fell slantingly on the houses and hurrying figures, and there was a faint breath from the woodland which reminded Oggie of the old home in the country, and stirred some holy feeling of childhood, some hope or prayer of innocent youth, and also the consciousness of her present love and trust, and its attendant danger. Over her glowing cheeks the tears rained, and in solitary excess of emotion, she sat down on a bank.

Purple flowers had dared to blossom even so near the dusty, hard-trodden highway of life; and she gathered a handful to beguile the impatient waiting. Her hair had burst from its bonds, and fell like radiant clouds around the peach-bloom of her cheeks, and shaded her deep wondering eyes.

Michael had sat some time in the carriage looking at her; while she, all unconsciously and forgetfully tied up her flowers with withered grass, singing in a sweet monotone some improvised refrain.

“How long am I to wait, Oggie?” at length cried out Michael, laughingly; “your expectation must be

very intense and anxious, when you can keep a poor gentleman waiting so long, not even raising your eyes to watch his coming!"

"I have done watching enough; it is your time now", said she, with evident delight at their respective situations; "how long would *you* wait and watch, think, if I was disposed to be capricious and should take my time to leave this bank? It is a sweet place, and such a one as I have not seen this many a weary day, and I am in no haste to leave it. I believe I will stay for the moon to rise. I won't detain you, Mr. Cleveland;" and Oggie for a minute thought she would like to send him back to the city without her, just for the sake of the sweet tyranny of the action.

"As you please, or as you *can*, rather," said Michael; and with one bound from the carriage, he alighted on the bank beside her, took her in his strong arms, and in a merry peal of laughter, seated her in the carriage, and drove rapidly on. "We have little time to arrange our plans, Oggie, and get back before Mrs. Dean will be peering about with her bead eyes to see if you are in; so I will tell you at once why I appointed this interview, and what I propose. You are to go to school—at a first class boarding school—not because, dear girl, I see or feel any deficiencies in you that need that discipline. You know I should rather take you under my own immediate *superior* tuition, Oggie, and we together would learn everything in the garden of knowledge—humph! wouldn't we? but I must be serious—to please my people, my set (the devil take them!)—ex

cuse me, Oggie, but they do gall me—to please the *world*, you shall be forgotten as the beautiful milliner, and be known, after two years' stay at Madame Dashen's boarding school, as the accomplished Miss—Miss—why *what is your other name?* as I live, I never thought to inquire until this minute.

“Fay—Oggie Fay.”

“Fay, Fay! That was my mother's name. She had a brother Richard, who died at sea.”

“My father! exclaimed Oggie, thunderstruck.

“*Well, cousin Oggie*, as I am alive! worse and worse, for our family have in vain tried to wipe *that* blot from our escutcheon—this living truth that a poor widow with six orphans was silently calling on them for aid, somewhere under God's heaven, they hoped not very near us—but as a cousin, this looks new, and suggests a privilege, (kissing her hand.)”

Oggie was silent, and felt troubled.

They talked over family histories when the first surprise was over—which are irrelevant to our story. Michael Cleveland her cousin! it brought no joy.

“What do you say to Madame Dashen's?”

“I will go; it is a part of my destiny, I see; but I make no promises of meeting your expectations in accomplishments, or of what I shall be in two years, Michael. You must risk the consequences of my growth, and of my peculiar experience and circumstances.”

Michael saw the meaning of this request; he knew her proud spirit was wounded by his cowardly policy; he knew that in all honor and truth, now was the time to assume the relation of protector and husband,

if he loved as he professed to; but he shrank from the public sneer and wonder, and the private persecution of his own family—he was generous, but not brave.

“Oggie, I give my heart and fortune into your keeping. Two years’ probation, and then we will have our great triumphal occasion.”

How coldly these words smote on her heart; for love had transmuted her ambition. She desired now no triumphs; she envied now not the fortune-favored; only the security and peaceful rest of love’s blest fruition.

They rode in silence until near Mrs. Dean’s, when Michael gave some advice in regard to the preparations for the change of situation. He urged the utmost discretion and secrecy; insisting that Oggie should simply say to Mrs. Dean that she wished to go home; which he tried to prove to her was no falsehood, while she knew it was.

He had written to the institution, and she would find herself provided with everything necessary to her happiness, on arriving there. She would make the journey alone, but he would visit her in a few weeks.

“I shall not see you again before you go,” said he, as he lifted her from the carriage a few blocks from her home, at the same time placing in her hand a package, and pressing her to his heart, which, with all his assumed firmness, swelled and shook his noble frame; away she flew, and looked not back until ringing at Mrs. Dean’s door; when she saw the dim outline of the same form, mingling with the dark-

ness, she knew that regret, and a sad foreboding kept him there, and that even against his will, he was praying for her to fly back to his desolate arms.

CHAPTER III.

SOME natures are disciplined and developed best by harmonious relations, by the society of appreciative friends, by the absence of depressing or irritating cares, by the consciousness of being beloved and pleasing; while some need to have the fragrance of virtue ground and crushed out of them, by the ploughshare of affliction, or the harrow of unrelenting care. Some never know tenderness or pity, or the sweet uses of sympathy, until they have felt them distilling like dew into their own souls from superior sources; but when once the seed has fallen, no bitter root or graceless herb finds sustenance in the renovated, thickly growing, blossoming soul of love.

Oggie in her school relations found herself another, and entirely different being from her former self. She did not overrate her beauty, for no one depreciated it; poverty did not deform it with unbecoming associations. She did not bitterly envy the rich, for she had it in her power, through Michael's munificence, to befriend those more unblest than herself. She was not impatient, but gratefully applied herself to those studies which gratified her natural tastes. Nay, she even reflected, with a chastened, softened feeling, upon her past life, the bitter unrest of her

childhood, her impatience of its duties and restraints. She wondered at her hard reproaches of her mother's tasteless habits. She grieved over her unkindness to her simple-hearted sister Betty, and with many tears wrote the following letter:—

MY DEAR, PATIENT LITTLE BET:—

It is so long since I have written you that I shall not be surprised to hear that you and mother have disowned me. But I lived a very hurried, and, I must say, frivolous and unsatisfactory, selfish, restless life at Mrs. Dean's; but, as you see by my date, I have made an astonishing change. I can hardly explain it to you, but will at some future day. I can only say here, that a generous, noble friend has taken an interest in me, and is maintaining me at this school. I would tell you all; but I am forbidden to betray the patron and friend to whom I owe so much. But you and mother may put implicit faith in the honor of the gentleman, and in my own integrity of purpose. I have changed, Betty. I love you better than I did in the scoffing, mocking air at Mrs. Dean's. I feel that you have been more truthful and kind than I have; and I would not here feel ashamed to recognize you, as I should among my former associates. Not because there is no pride or distinction of rank here. Oh, no! far from that. The school is rank with it. The Principal is a full-blown aristocrat. But I feel independent, and as if I could compel respect; besides, their pride is refined, and their manners inoffensively reserved, which has not been the case with those I have been

with before. I shall qualify myself for a high place in literary and refined society, for I hold a high rank in scholarship; but whether I teach and help maintain our family in the dear little home I used to despise, and add some little comfort to your "pretty white curtains and rocking-chair," which, you remember, I ridiculed, or whether I marry (you need not start at that word, though I do), I shall do all I can to make amends for past neglect, and for a happy future. Do write me all about yourself; whether you have been happy at Lowell, and if you will remain there. I have now no horror of the post-mark; it may be Lowel Factories, as large and plain as possible. I am superior to a blush for honest labor and its associations. I shall remain here a year and a half longer.

Write me often, and believe me

Your affectionate sister,

OGGIE.

To her mother, Oggie wrote a dutiful, kind letter, and inclosed a pretty gift, which so startled the old lady she thought the Millennium had come, and could scarcely restrain her desire to promulgate to the neighbors the secret so carefully enjoined upon her.

These sober duties done, Oggie prepared to answer Michael's last letter. As she sat looking on the blank about to be filled with the warm, true words of love from her deep heart, a disheartened look stole across her face, and she began to wonder to herself why he had not visited her, according to promise. So liberal in words and money, so miserly

of his presence ; it is cruel, thought she, a mock of love and happiness. Then she checked herself, and thought of his delicate, constant liberality, his earnest letters ; now he seemed the better for his self-imposed absence, more delicate and true. "But it is a strange love nevertheless," said she, aloud.

"Never-the-less a love !" echoed a voice, which Oggie knew too well, and fainted, *not away*, went *not* into hysterics, *screamed not*, but suffered herself to be whirled by a hurricane of caresses into a state of oblivious delight.

After the first greeting, Oggie discovered with pain that Michael was constrained and impatient even of the short hour he allotted for their interview.

His apology for so short a visit was the absorbing gayety of the season, and his constant engagements in a round of pleasure, which also was the reason he had not visited her before. Yet he seemed painfully conscious of Oggie's greatly enhanced refinement of beauty of person and manners, and unaffectedly anxious for her continuance in school. He also too demonstratively proved his generosity to be unlimited to admit of a question on that point. Yet what was it that made Oggie shudder with a nameless fear, a doubt? What made Michael watch her with love and pride, and yet with such a look of pain?

Simply because he had suffered his holiest first impulses to be diverted by the corrupting forms of custom, and had become the affianced husband of a renowned heiress and belle, just returned from Paris. Simply because he was flattered, petted, and courted for this very ignoble step. Simply because the re-

moval of poor Oggie, the beautiful sewing-girl, had relieved him from the heartless squibs and jokes of friends, and because his conscience and heart ached every day with the wounds that no gayety could heal or cover.

"I shall not see you again for a long time, my dear," said Michael, "and shall be, in consequence, very wretched, *very wretched*, Oggie; remember that. Remember it that you may mingle pity with reproach, if you find occasion to reproach me. Ah, Oggie! dear child, even you, with your adverse experience, cannot yet dream of the terrible suffering which the wicked laws of social life impose! You know not what a wreck they make of souls full-freighted with love and truth; how they give the finest, choicest sensibilities to the monster, public opinion, and how it swallows up the struggling morality that clings and clings to truth until forced to let go, to sink and die. But no more of this; it pains you. I am sorry. I would make this brief moment a heaven for you, and I am doing anything but that. Do not confide or trust any one, Oggie. You are now—I cannot tell you what you are. Others will praise you; do not listen to them. Remember my love, and distrust all other." He could not say more, for the inconsistency of his words choked him.

It was an unhappy interview, and left Oggie in a very distressed state of mind. Much as she loved Michael, his vacillation between love and honor, and pride and cowardice, lessened him greatly in her respect. Then, again, she was afraid there was indelicacy in remaining longer a recipient of his

bounty when he evidently was dreading the inevitable disclosure of their relations.

But her thirst for knowledge, which was now well stimulated, her consciousness of noble endeavors and the dread of sinking back into an uncongenial employment, and among those who would retard her progress and deaden her better aspirations, governed her decision, which was to stay.

A buzz of inquiry went around among the scholars, and a little hum of scandal in regard to the personal history of Oggie, and as to the title of the handsome young man who visited her to be her guardian; but the irreproachable, studious, quiet course Oggie pursued silenced suspicious comment, and she went steadily forward intellectually, socially, and morally. How happy she felt when surrounded with books in her peaceful room! How inviting the blank sheets of paper spread for the record of her freshly budding thoughts! How inviting the box of quills, cleanly nibbed! for Oggie had too much sentiment to use metal pens. What a delightful contrast all these things presented to that turbulent, desultory, material school at Mrs. Dean's, from which she had graduated! As the lovely seasons passed, her observant eye studied their changes, and the gentle wisdom of their myriad voices. To her, no longer was the question of the color of a ribbon or the adjustment of a yard of lace paramount to the great query as to the hue of the thoughts, the tint of the conscience; nor did they any longer shut her from the external beauty of the world, and hold her soul and body imprisoned in the suffocating air

of a sickly companionship. She dressed more and more simply, as her soul pushed higher and higher into the realms of truth, but more exquisitely neat and appropriately than ever before.

Thus we leave Oggie to complete her two years of study, while we take a peep at Betty.

CHAPTER IV.

OH! welcome Saturday night! the huge water-wheels that go their perpetual round in demoniac darkness, stand still; the iron mouths and claws of machinery have ceased to devour the cotton or wool, which is ever supplied, and which they are ever ready to clutch from the hand of the worker; the shuttles and spindles have ceased to whirl; begrimed hands and faces are set free, and with an extra splash of water, are exulting in the fresh air of the evening, and the subsequent day of rest.

Betty has taken a bath in her little room, put on her Sunday muslin; has set her pots of geraniums where they will thrive best in her absence, and filled her satchel with a paper of tea, some sugar, a new cap, and a paper of snuff for her mother, and putting on her sun-bonnet leaves the yellow painted, six storied, unshaded boarding-house for her own pretty cottage, a distance of four miles from the city. She stops at the Savings Bank as she goes along, and adds a ten dollar note to her sum of savings, and with a cheerful consciousness of having been a loving, prudent, industrious daughter, hastens

to her invalid mother with cheerful step, and heart. The road lies through a wooded glen, fragrant odors fill the air, a brook trickles down the hill. Betty feels these freshening influences, and her heart sends up a sweet breath of praise and prayer. She sings, her voice echoes through the wood and mingles with the robin's vesper. She notes the various leaves, rocking like babes, on the arms of the winds that hum a gentle lullaby. She examines their edges, and wonders why some are scalloped and some are notched, why some are heart-shaped, and why they grow in families of threes and fives. She gathers the different kinds, and mingling in the flowers that have nestled in the shade and moss, and are the sweeter for their seclusion—is reminded by the whippoorwill, that evening will overtake her before she gets to the hill that looks down on her home. She quickens her step, and, just as she is leaving the wood, a sportsman suddenly emerges from its shadow, with his gun. She recognizes at once, a wealthy and distinguished gentleman, who had a country-seat in the neighborhood. Bowing courteously, Mr. Happen opened a little talk, and fell into Betty's step, and thus enlivened the remaining distance. He persisted, as he had no game, in relieving her of the satchel, and hanging it over his shoulder, looked as willing a servitor as if he could not command a servant to remove a fly from his nose if he wished it. Betty was surprised at his politeness. She did not know that renowned gentlemen could do a Christian courtesy. He talked understandingly, too, about the common labors and

circumstances of the country about them, and in such intelligible, simple language, the mystery of greatness seemed to dissolve as she approached it, and left her quite delighted with its resemblance to the common world. He went to her door with her, quite out of his way, and then calling to his dogs, gallantly bowed and retraced his steps to his own place. A simple act, but to Betty's restricted and severe life, what a happy reminiscence it added. Not often is such an unobtrusive yet purely kind deed, registered in favor of those in high worldly positions. But we must make an exception of Mr. Happen, whose whole life was characterized by similar urbanity and sincerity of kindness.

The little cottage was Betty's, she had bought it with her own money; had added to its original dimensions; had ornamented the yards with her own hands; the morning glories that crept over the door, she planted the garden full of comforts, even to the sage-bed, and balm, had sprung from her careful planning; and when she entered the door and saw the comfort of the great rocking-chair, the cheerfulness of the snowy curtains, the clean table spread with bread of her buying, milk from her cow, berries from her own pasture, honey from her own hives; and when, above all, she saw her mother's fond look, and her younger sister's glad love, and neat dress, had she not a right to be proud and happy, nay, had she not a title to honor, a princess might envy?

But *do* we honor Bettys and their virtues? *Is* the most anxious bow of recognition given to Betty

walking with her satchel, or to Eleanor in her carriage; to Betty milking her cow in the cool and dew of the morning, or to Eleanor in the flare and glare of gas-light, coquetting and talking nothings with—*not men*, but with parodies of men?

We have followed Betty to her home, and picked up the main incidents of her life; we have the outline of her habits and character; they may seem so meagre as to hardly reward us for our pains, yet there is a quiet heroism in her whole life that comes near being sublime. Think you it has cost her no tears of weariness, no self-denial, no faith, no patience, no mortification of pride, to rise at the call of the bell, every working day for years, with few intermissions, to work ten hours a day in a greasy, blue calico dress, to swallow her meals hurriedly, to submit to the tyranny of overseers, or to the haughty neglect, or insulting airs of real or affected superiority of position? Has not her eye sometimes wearied with the sight of flying wheels and cogs, and her ear ached with their clamor? have not her nerves startled her by their call for liberty and rest? and yet has she stifled all murmuring, if not in these words, at least in their spirit—

Be still, be still, each rebel thought
Of glory, fame, or pleasure—
Oh! tear me not these thorny goads,
Be dull content my treasure.

In vain, in vain she pressed her heart,
With duty's iron finger,
The daring thought would still stand up,
The struggling hope still linger.

Yet listening then in earnest prayer,
Her heart still striving, bleeding,
There fell a spirit gift, a power,
All less than love unheeding.

And Betty worked, and suffered, and was happy,
for love.

CHAPTER V.

OGGIE'S two years at school are ended. She sits in her travelling dress among her trunks, waiting the announcement of a carriage, and, what was more interesting, for Michael Cleveland. She had his last letter open before her. He says he shall come for her on that day; he seems agitated with the anticipation. He says he has secured her a delightful boarding place out of the city. He does not say he has a splendid mansion *in* it, with a dashing tyrannous wife. He hints at a "love strong as death;" but he does not say it is yoked with despair, black as death. He says he "is agitated," but he does not hint it is with wine, with which he is trying to put out an unquenchable fire of remorse, thereby adding flame to flame. No, Oggie does not read this in his letter, yet it is outlined, mapped out by her prophetic spirit on her soul.

But Oggie's present purpose is to wait the full blossoming of events; if they prove deadly nightshade, and ashen cheats, she will then have revelations of wisdom to suit the occasion.

He comes, the carriage rolls up to the door, the

door opens ; all there is of youth, grace, love, hope, all that belongs to Oggie is compassed in that carriage, as it rumbles away into the rainy, dim road.

Michael was flurried, and talked wildly, but Oggie was so Christian, calm, and kind, he gradually became self-possessed and dejected. He felt weak even in this apparent victory ; he could have implored Oggie to pity and hide him from the misfortunes attendant on his own irresolution and weakness. She did instinctively lead his mind from the threatening present by many noble thoughts on life, by a general question as to its meaning, and before he was aware, Michael found himself reviving youthful dreams of good, youthful trust in the divine agencies employed in all this apparent turmoil and chaos of life ; and to have heard their earnest talk one would have thought a lecturer on human progress, and a bloomer, instead of two lovers were beguiling the tedium of a rainy ride.

It was nine o'clock in the evening when Michael drove up the avenue to Riverside. As he lifted Oggie from the carriage, a tremor shook him like a reed.

He led her in saying, "I have given instructions for your comfort in everything ; I must leave you immediately, and shall not see you again for a day or two. My town engagements are uncommonly urgent, but as soon as I can, I will explain to you everything."

She followed him through a spacious hall up stairs

into a suite of beautiful rooms, charmingly furnished and arranged; decorated with paintings on the walls, with statuettes and busts in niches, and crowning the shelves, loaded with books; and mounting cabinets of rare curiosities. The wildest dream of love would not suggest more delicate prodigality of wish and effort, for the happiness of the object of all this munificence. Surely Oggie looked not unmoved on this. Was she overwhelmed with this unfortunate affluence of kindness, or was it the intense commingling of the perfumes of the vases crowded with rarest flowers, or the fragrant wood that was burning on a silver censer, the quaint device of an exhaustless fancy; or was it that among all this luxury the vital tone of love, truth, utter absolute truth, was wanting? *what* was it that made Oggie faint?

Only for a moment her head sunk on the green damask chair back, like a pallid rose on its bed of leaves; only for a moment Michael chafed her unresisting hand, life stirred again at her heart and roused her drooping will. Taking both her hands in his, Michael said, "This is not the smallest part of what my love dictates, but this is all I can do at present."

"This is too much, since the greatest of all is wanting," said Oggie, "your own best self;" and giving way entirely to one violent burst of tears, she hung on his neck, until gently withdrawing, she folded her arms, and like a statue stood waiting his departure. He looked bowed with anguish when he passed from her sight, and as she hurried to the window, she saw by the carriage lamp that he

tottered as he stepped, and that he looked old with sorrow.

Ringing her bell hastily, Oggie inquired of the ready servant, what time the next train of cars for ——— would leave.

“At ten; in just fifteen minutes,” replied the servant, glancing at the beautiful clock on the mantel.”

“Tell John, or Dick, or James, or whoever is your man for this errand, to take me to the station house directly,” said Oggie, imperatively.

With her eyes wide staring, Ann flew to give the order, and in ten minutes Oggie was taking a bewildered last look at these enchanted rooms, and flew away into the night and into the storm, not like Keats' lovely Madeline with her lover, but alone.

CHAPTER VI.

It is a hot day in August. Oggie sits in the desk of the same old school-house, where, when a child, she used to pat in barefoot to her low, narrow, hard seat, and wait the summons to spell “baker,” and “brier.” The very school-room where she first learned to spin grass in the cracks of the benches, when the teacher was absorbed in other directions; where she used to “keep store with lily leaves,” and build houses with books; the very same old mutilated desks ranged disagreeably around her, reviving some pleasant associations among many unpleasant ones. She recollected the first thrilling sense of

poetry she experienced when learning to commit to memory "The sacrifice of Abraham," that gem from our illustrious poet Willis, which from being admitted into school-books, has quickened the sense of beauty in thousands of youthful hearts, that else had been sealed for years. She remembered the strange fearful delight she first experienced in reading Clarence's Dream, and wondered who Shakspeare was, that wrote such a wonderful thing. She recalled the musical romance of Ossian's "Fingal bade his sails arise" &c., and now, sitting there, having had her own fearful dreams of those dreadful depths in human life, where lie "anchors, heaps of pearl, wedges of gold, and skulls, where eyes did once inhabit," having had her romantic sails spread to the wind, and having also been up the toilsome hill of sacrifice, even as Abraham; she understood the genius of poetry, and part of the problem of life. She had collected the children of her old neighborhood about her, to teach them some of these high truths, and prepare them to learn from life, the lessons left out in books.

I cannot say Oggie loved children with Fanny Fern ardor; that she would, if she could, be "mother of them all;" I do not think she thought them angels, or so wise as Wordsworth hints, when he says—

"The child is father of the man."

No, I think she loved them for some beauty, freshness, innocence; I think she used to love to fold them to her heart; that she loved sometimes to have their soft hands on her cheek; that their words and

ways were studies to her; but that she thought them given to destructiveness, killing flies, toads, and little harmless bugs, and pulling flowers to pieces wantonly; clamorous and impatient, I have reason to believe.

But no mother could be more kindly patient than she was, and judicious; Fanny Fern could not be more inventive of stories and plays to amuse them, and Wordsworth himself would be pleased with her reverence of all the good in their natures.

The school reflected beauty and refinement on the village; so many little mouths to carry the seeds of wisdom from the school-house, and drop them by the wayside and fireside: how great a teacher's power and responsibility!

The little home grew more beautiful under Oggie's hands. Betty, with a thousand dollars in the bank, could afford to hem and stitch, to nurse the invalid mother, and tend the flower-beds, and make herself the busy Martha of home. All was quiet and cheerful there.

Often as Oggie was going to or from school, Mr. Happen would pass in his carriage; sometimes he would take up some of the little stragglers, the fattest or youngest; sometimes he would toss out a handful of pennies, or picture books, and laugh delightedly to see the scramble. In return, they learned not to fear to toss toward him a handful of dandelions, or hold up for his acceptance a bunch of violets, or clusters of laurel blossoms; they offered him the finest strawberries or young wintergreens,

or curious birds' nests, and all the little wonders of the seasons.

But to Oggie he only bowed respectfully, until through an apparently sudden impulse, one Saturday afternoon, as she was loitering musingly along the green roadside, towards home, Mr. Happen checked his horses and invited her to take a drive.

"It is hardly a compliment to republican customs for two persons to meet nearly every day, for a year, and not learn the sound of each other's voices," said he, jovially; "so, presenting myself to you as Mr. Happen, I have the honor to confess myself much better acquainted with Miss Fay, than she supposes."

Resigning herself to the pleasantness of the drive, Oggie did not perceive that they had made the circuit of the village, until they entered the grounds that surrounded the old Happen mansion.

"You have beguiled me into entire forgetfulness of the proprieties of the occasion," said Oggie, "and I have given you no chance to get rid of me; how could I have passed the burying ground and forgotten that that was the way to my cottage? You should have set me down unceremoniously, when you found what an obtuse companion you had, Mr. Happen."

"All right, all delightful! the highest compliment to me, Miss Fay; I had begun to distrust my gallant accomplishments, on which I once prided myself; so little call have I here for their use. I am going to take you into my house; I wish to lend you the books we have talked about, and with your leave will introduce you to some old authors, friends of mine."

Nothing could be more agreeable to Oggie than a seat in that dim library: while Mr. Happen ascended the steps to look on the high shelves for the books, she looked around on the old-fashioned solid furniture, the substantial magnificence of which made modern fantastic devices look like children's toys. There seemed to be nothing frivolous or insignificant in connection with this house; the look and tones of the proprietor, the house, grounds, furniture, books, everything seemed genuine.

After looking over the books and discussing their authors, she was invited to look at some old pictures in the hall; from that was led into the high rooms, to see the prospect from the windows; and, finally found herself in the observatory. A showery cloud was just trailing its dripping edges over the hills, and the impatient sun laughed from under the edge; his smiles run round on the rim of the hills, and bent over their blue outlines, a rainbow. Oggie sat silently and bathed her soul in the serene loveliness of the hour.

"The rain and the cloud always have that wreath of color, that bow of musical harmony, that poem," said Mr. Happen, pointing to the rainbow; "but only rare occasions reveal them."

"Pity we should lose our faith in this inner beauty," replied Oggie, once having become conscious of it.

"Let us not then forget such occasions as this," added Mr. Happen, impressively.

"I shall not," said Oggie; "I will remember that

the darkest lowering cloud, the homeliest duty of life, has a rainbow in its bosom."

As they descended into the lower rooms, pointing to some empty vases, Mr. Happen said, sportively, "I only want some fair hands to fill those, a cheerful face to sit there, pointing to a lady's work-table, to make my home altogether delightful."

"You seem to possess all to make you happy, sir."

"If *all* would only stay, but I cannot keep *Fairy* or *Fay*," was the merry rejoinder; and bowing, cavalierly, he led the way to the carriage.

Three months after this, Michael Cleveland received the following letter:—

MY DEAR CLEVELAND:—

Being an old friend and confidant—you remember a balcony scene, in which some boyish folly was confessed—I am induced to make known to you an important change in my bachelor life. Were I always the demure country gentleman, now sitting by the escritoire of the loveliest wife in Christendom, I should not let you into my confidence; but as I am sometimes in town, and though not a gay man, yet not quite able to hide myself from old friends, and as I am also a married man, and *would* not hide, if I could, a glorious woman, the crown and pride of my years;—now don't infer I am gray, Mike!—why you see how it is, I must prepare you for my coming;—but hang it, you don't understand me yet, and how can you, for I have not pronounced the word that solves the riddle. The long and short of it is,

Oggie—(for that is the word)—will make you fashionables stare, for I shall take her into the most sensitive clique you have. You know I am accustomed to pull the wires for puppets to dance, when I choose to make a little fun out of foolery; but my better object is to give a gifted woman a chance to triumph over adversity, malice, and cowardice. I am going to give a true-hearted woman a chance to found a new social dynasty, on the ruins of old and corrupt usages. Oggie's life will be no secret, mine is not, and mark you, if impudent aristocracy will dare go so far as to taboo my name, because associated with hers!—

No, Mike, we shall have a brilliant battle and a glorious victory, and that you may have a chance to choose your ground, I write. Inform Mrs. Cleveland, and your sister, Mrs. Peterson, that we meet them at the first grand ball of the season.

Yours, as of old,

GEORGE HAPPEN.

In time, the gay season opened with a series of brilliant parties; but there was no battle at all. Mrs. George Happen, wife of the millionaire! who was there to dispute the lead with her? On the contrary, Mrs. Peterson suddenly discovered Mrs. Happen was her cousin! Mrs. Cleveland, the Joneses, the Smiths, the Stones, and Diggsges, all cringed, fawned, flattered, and crawled around her, in the most servile manner.

Michael Cleveland went abroad; it was too much, his punishment was greater than he could bear;

when he saw Oggie in the mature beauty of womanhood, occupying the place he had through moral cowardice denied her.

But for Oggie, this was all too poor a play. She soon glided into the quiet literary world, where diamonds of wit outshone external gems, and pearls of truth were valued higher than any the sea could afford.

WHIMSIES.

THERE are not as many odd people in the world as there used to be. A woman was lately complaining of the dulness and monotony of her life in a little country village; "why," said she, "there isn't a fool or crazy person to stroll in now and then, and give me a little variety!"

Everybody has become so knowing, so proper, so practical, the picturesque and grotesque are fast disappearing; and comfortable as it is to have rationality abound, one cannot help regretting the loss of individuality and its attendant insignia. Among all the solid and sensible, we want to see, now and then, a Slender and a Shallow.

We want to see a fat red-headed boy with his hair in his eyes, and an obtuse wondering stare, enlighten his mother in this wise. He is returning home from school some night, plunging all along into snow drifts, now and then giving variety to his diversions by throwing himself outstretched in the snow, to get a print of his dumpy figure; a neighbor calls out to him—

"Sam, tell your folks to come down here to-morrow."

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" Yethterday. "

"Yeth, marm." He goes on, and forgets the errand; the next day comes and goes; the day after, an illumination of his mental faculties suddenly takes place; a gleam of light shoots into his memory, and reveals to him his forgotten charge. He throws down the axe he is bungling with, runs to his mother, and almost out of breath, says, thickly—

"Grand-pip's folks wants you to come down there."

"Do they, when?" says the mother.

Scratching his head, befogged again, he says, slowly—

"Yetherday!" That little fellow was a genius, he was worth seeing.

Quite another, but a very interesting curiosity was old "Uncle Peter Burnam." He used to peddle Almanacs; and whether it was a psychological effect arising from the astronomical calculations in his basket, or whether it was an independent clairvoyance into the upper spheres, or whether it was a spinal distortion, I never knew; but the fact is in the memory of "the oldest inhabitant" of the little town he used to circumambulate, that he always looked plump up into the sky, and his old straw hat-crown just poised between his shoulders. He never was *seen* to see where he was going, or to ponder the paths of his feet, or to look to the right or to the left, but he kept his eyes looking right up; and when his great heavy shoes made no more tracks in the dusty highways, it is to be hoped his feet trod the higher ways he had always been contemplating.

THEN there was old Moll Foster, magnificently large, and bundled up with capes, shawls, and handkerchiefs, of divers shapes and colors; what a delight it was to see her turn her cane towards our door, and, as we went out to greet her, feel the pressure of her great squabby hand, and the wen between her fingers, and hear her Christian salutation in its most musical, sing-song tone! She was partially deaf, and quite unconscious of the variety of tones she employed in her conversation, and of the occasional extraordinary key she discoursed in. This was a positive charm; for her voice was by nature exceedingly musical. But the crowning delight of her visits was the repetition, from memory, of the famous, most eloquent, and pious letter, which the Rev. Mr. Williams, of Deerfield, Mass., wrote to his son, who was sold to the French, in Canada, by the Indians, who took him captive. The capture of the Williams family is well known in history, but few, I imagine, have had the privilege of hearing the delightful pathos of dear old Moll Foster's voice, in the recitation of the good old Puritan's lament for his son's apostacy from the protestant faith. The rumor that he had turned catholic crushed out of the trial-proved old minister such sorrow as only those days of suffering, and *such men*, and *such faith*, can know. But the eloquence of the good man's lament would never have been appreciated by the little audience of young girls that gathered around "Aunt Moll," if it had not been for her romantic and whimsical intonations of voice. She would commence with—
"My dear son;" it was evident that "son" was

written "sönne;" you could feel the flow of tenderness from the good father's heart into that long melodious "o."

But, ah! I cannot recall the letter, it is lost in the long dim silence that drank up Aunt Moll's sweet voice; and I know of no record where I might seek for it. But akin to hearing the night-winds' wail through the dry leaves of autumn, is the recollection of Aunt Moll's reading of the Williams letter.

A QUEER, fussy old fellow was Jabes; he worked hard for a little money, and had no faith in any bank but the one in the town where he was born. As often as he accumulated the enormous sum of twenty-five dollars, being as skeptical in regard to the safety of the mail as he was of banks, he used to sew it up in a leathern bag, tie it around his waist, take his cane, and walk three hundred miles to deposit it; working on his way to pay his expenses.

Nevertheless, this odd, old, miserly bachelor, had his dreams of bliss, his own peculiar imagination, and original way of indulging it. In the field, when he supposed himself alone, or walking in the streets, in the same fancied solitude, he was often overheard discoursing his blissful dreams aloud. The following is the most luxuriously tender bit of fancy he was ever known to express, in his peculiar, low, and monotonous mumbling.

"Sposin' I had been to work all day hard in the rain, and come night I had a handsome two story white house, and I should go home, and I had a wife

in it, and her name was Mary. Sposin' I had a little girl, and her name was Sary, and I should say—

“Mary, where's Sary?”

That is all! the epitome of his dreams, the “be all and end all.” He never went beyond this—

“Mary, where's Sary?”

POOR old Debby lived in a little hut at the corner of two roads, on a dreary plain, sterile, uninhabited but by one wickedly coarse and disobliging neighbor.

She kept a few hens and a cow, which, with her garden, afforded her whole support. “I clothe myself with my hens,” said she, all unconscious of the comical figure her words suggested. Her pet hen was privileged to come into her kitchen, and lay in the box under the leaf of the round table, which, when not in use, was turned up against the wall. These old-fashioned tables had a standard, and at the top of it this little box, which was usually appropriated to holding the table-linen, but in this case to the hen's social purposes; and in due time the old dame had the happiness to see as fine a brood of chickens under their *feather-bed* in the table as she could wish to clothe herself with.

But pinched as poor Debby was with poverty of this world's goods, she was infinitely rich in a simple religion, and was, to use her own expression, always “wading in a sea of glory.” In her scanty, rusty, black gown, her square handkerchief pinned across her breast, her hymn-book in her black silk work-bag, every Sunday saw her in a short, industrious hobble, pursuing her way two miles to church.

If it rained, hailed, or snowed ; was it hot, sultry, and dusty ; was she faint from scanty fare, or cold from scanty clothing ; did friendly hands aid her or not—the burden of her experience, in the conference-meeting or in private conversation, was, “I feel as if I was wading in a sea of glory.” Nor when she became a town-pauper, did her large faith grow less. Ostensibly, she waded in nothing but penury and neglect ; but a glorious inner light still shone on her “sea of glory,” which she somewhat absurdly thought she was fording. Blessed, happy Debby ! I doubt not thou art now sailing in a sea of glory, having waded through a marsh of difficulties, which, in the light of thy faith, seemed always a “sea of glory.”

DAVID LITTLE was a large, muscular man, broad shouldered and hard fisted. He lived in those old times when men used to make a little “clearing” among the giant trees, the bears, wolves, and Indians, build log-houses, regale themselves on bean-porridge, hard cider, and immense, fat, Indian-meal puddings. Those grand old times, when chimneys occupied the entire side of a room, leaving only a corner for a dye-tub, from which the old fathers got that immaculate blue in their hosiery, which is said also to be the distinguishing color of their religious doctrines. The fires were systematically built of huge “back logs” and fore logs ;¹ it is affirmed of such dimensions they were frequently drawn in by a yoke of oxen.

What a crackling and sparkling there must have

been when all this pile got ablaze! What a merry rumble must have gone up the old chimney! And how the old matron's face burned as she stood with the end of the frying-pan handle in her hands, and gave it now and then a jerk that sent the cake that was in the pan, four or five feet from her, up and over with magical certainty! Then there were the pewter trenchers to eat on, and pewter platters, on which heaps of solid meats and vegetables were piled.

David Little found a warm nook under a hill, beside of a river, and, without any reference to beauty, located himself really in a beautiful spot. Fortune was comfortably kind to him. His sheep yielded him good wool, and his farm good crops, and his wife good sons and daughters.

One drawback had Jacob to his patriarchal repose; he was a great coward. Nature, in one of her caprices, gave him a formidable show of courage in his great brawny figure, and in his bold words; but he was really as helplessly timid as a puny child.

It was his favorite mode of entertaining his neighbors, in addition to the nuts, apples, and cider, to give them histories of his dreadful encounters with bears, wolves, and now and then an Indian, in which he displayed always extraordinary courage, his wife secretly smiling thereat, knowing well with what hot haste his long legs measured the path home under such circumstances. But he was in physical delinquency what many a moral delinquent is, a constant defender of that particular virtue in which he was most deficient. The greatest liar I ever knew was

always dwelling with rapturous admiration on the beauty of truth, and often said, with the utmost complacency of manner, "if there was any one virtue of which she could boast, it was truth, and she whipped her children more for lying than for anything else!"

So Jacob despised cowardice. One evening, after sitting up late with a few jovial neighbors in the hot glare of the great fire, and enjoying roasted chestnuts, pop-corn, butternuts, and cider, commingled with ghost-stories, burglaries, and suicides, wolf-prowling and bear-hugging, and all that family of entertainment, the following true account, related by the heroine of the adventure herself, closed the evening:—

"Aunt Phebe," as she was called, was the least bit of a little woman in bulk, but elastic, quick, and wiry, with courage and a tongue that never flagged. It seemed, by her narrative, that at one time, when her husband, who was a government official, had on hand quite a large sum of money, he was obliged to leave home suddenly. His wife, with keen womanly presentiment, foresaw evil, and begged him to take the money away; but he laughed at her whim, and left her to protect her home and property as a Puritan mother could. It happened the night following the collector's departure, there was a ball in the *neighborhood*, that is about eight miles distant! Three of the oldest of the children were to attend this ball, which in those days was called a "*junket*," or sometimes a "frolic." They went before sunset on one horse, in a sort of saddle called a pillion, which was

so constructed as to accommodate the gallant in front and his "girl" behind him, who, to make her position secure, was obliged to put her arms around his waist, and "hold on." In this case, the brother and two sisters trotted off through the woods in comfortable equipoise to the "junket." Aunt Phebe was left at home with a little boy five years old, and a baby in the cradle. Just as night was closing in around her little home, two men on horseback rode into the deep shadow of the silent wood opposite, and she could just discern their outlines as they dismounted and fastened their horses to the trees. Then she recalled a dream she had the night before, in which these figures played a very unpleasant part.

She proceeded directly to fasten up her house, securing it with bars and bolts as best she could. She found an old rusty gun which she put into little Joe's hands, bidding him follow her word of command when the attack should begin. She had a good musket which she intended to use in earnest if pushed to great extremity. Soon footsteps approached; the door was tried; she asked "who's there?" No reply. After an interval of silence, an effort to open the door is repeated, then the window, then another door, another window. Aunt Phebe and Joe follow the assailed points, she giving Joe very loud words of command to fire, and not to hesitate if they attempt to break in, and he, in the importance of his new trust, forgetting fear, trudges around after her with his old, useless vehicle of death, in absurd and comical importance. Hour after hour passed in

unsuccessful attempts on the part of the robbers to frighten Aunt Phebe into a surrender; once, growing impatient, one man thrust his hand through a window beside a door, with the intention of unbarring it, but a heavy blow from the butt of her gun, wounded it in such a manner he was obliged to retreat. Aunt Phebe rejoiced in that stroke, for she thought it would be of future service to her in detecting the assailant, who she suspected was a fellow townsman. All night long, this little woman held at bay two ruffians, who never rested from their assault until daylight dawned, and the young people from the ball trotted into the yard. Then they fled, and Aunt Phebe sank down exhausted, and could not for some hours recover strength to give an account of the dreadful night she had passed.

The conclusion of this story gave Jacob a fresh admiration for the invincible courage of this little woman, and for the virtue of bravery in general. After the guests departed, he betook himself to bed with an excited imagination, and a delusive belief that under the same circumstances he should be full as brave, perhaps more so, than the heroine Phebe.

It was past midnight, the moon shone calmly on the silent lawn around Jacob's house, his old sorrel mare grazed leisurely near, and the sheep reposed on the hill-side afar. There was no visible enemy, nor any cause of alarm, and yet Jacob suddenly awoke from his dreams, in the full conviction that the wooden latch of his door was burglariously lifted, and the leather string in the hand of the villain.

"Now, marm, is your time," whispered he in an ominous, fear-stricken voice to his wife; "now, Rony, Rony, try your courage; there's somebody at the door!"

"La, no there aint, it is the old mare feeding round the house."

"I tell ye, marm, it is no horse, and we'd better be up and doing."

Seeing no chance of allaying his fears, his good wife got up, and he followed.

"Now, marm, follow my directions, open the door gradewally, and I will take this 'ere fire-shovel, and when I strike there'll be as dead a man as you ever see on our floor, or I'm no man." Rony took hold of the latch, opened the door; "Gradewally, gradew-all-y, marm;" and Jacob stood with his iron shovel, which was in those days no insignificant weapon. The door was opened slowly; Jacob, with the shovel uplifted, felt the moment had come, and brought it down with a force that broke the heavy iron handle as if it had been a pipe-stem.

"There now, you fool! I hope you are satisfied," said Rony, quite out of patience; "and I'm glad for my part it is only the shovel, and not a fellar critter."

A little crestfallen at the termination of his chivalrous exploit, and still not quite sure but some enemy was skulking near, for they were in the dark, Jacob felt his way back to bed, in the rear of Rony, and under the protection of the dim flag that floated around her, as she retreated precipitately back to the snug harbor of bed.

My dear reader, this was certainly before woman's rights had taken any demonstrative form, but it may be, that from some such source the idea first sprouted; at any rate, Jacob Little was in the advance of his age.

ONE of the most picturesque little oddities I ever met, was under the following circumstances:—

It was a wet night, and just light enough for me to find my way up a muddy street, and I was thinking as I went along, how fast the sweet securities of home vanish in a dim, dismal neighborhood like this. The old house I was looking for, loomed up in the twilight, and I could just discern the rags in the windows, and the hop-vines, that somewhat relieved the dreary magnificence of the distained walls of the old tumble-down building.

A ragged boy was kneeling by the side of a cow before the gate, trying very hard to milk her.

"You are a very small boy to milk," said I.

"She ha'nt but three teats, and I have to milk with one hand, or I could get along faster;" and he tugged away at his task, tickling the cow's sides with the long splinters of his torn palm-leaf hat. I passed through the leaning gate, up a grassless slope, and some rickety steps, and knocked. No one came, so I ventured in. A very large hall with a dirty floor, an old stand littered with various things, two or three children playing with diminutive elfish looking dolls on the wide leaning stairs met my first glances. A little woman came out of an adjoining room, and gave me a very polite and

cordial greeting. She had an exceedingly pretty face, a delicate form, and a charming little hand. But her tangled locks pointed all ways of the compass, and her spectacles were shoved up into that bristling heap. She had a sweet voice, and not at all impaired in its passage through her tobacco discolored mouth, or by the quid which she rolled uneasily into her cheek when she talked. She had a baby in her arms, which in foraging for its supplies had left her dress open to the waist, leaving nature revealed, excepting as a bit of variegated linen strayed over it. What was my astonishment when this little grotesque figure entered into conversation, to hear the most beautiful language. She not only used common words with elegant discrimination, but all necessary technical terms which the range of our conversation embraced. In the course of our interview it was necessary to refer to her library, which she proceeded to disembowel from promiscuous old chests and trunks under the bed, in the closets, on shelves, among vials of medicine and strings of onions, in drawers, chairs, and even from various rubbish on the floor. It was amusing to see grand old authors, that we have revered to such a degree, as to hold the very volume that contained their words sacredly; to see them turn up from such odd places. Bulwer was in the bottom of the cradle with the baby's shoes, rattle, and gingerbread; his spiritual Zanoni was much disfigured with molasses candy. Pope, Shakspeare, the Bible, Bryant, Longfellow, Wordsworth, and other worthies reeled in a drunken looking row on the mantel,

among pipes, tobacco, and little earthen dogs, and a vase of smoky artificial flowers. Willis's Inklings were on the pantry shelf with goose oil, and laudanum, and had a strong scent of cabbage. Irving's Knickerbocker was among a distinguished heap of brother authors under the bed. Most of the historical and scientific reading was in chests, and trunks, but the polite literature was more promiscuous. I sat on several Magazines and Dailies, beside a piece of bread and butter and a pair of child's shoes.

My little woman was not in the least disconcerted at the revelations her search after the book I wanted made, but continued to converse in her own peculiarly graceful and remarkably intelligent manner. She had not only read an astonishing number and variety of books, but was actually a critic, a very nice, discriminating critic, especially in poetry. She was familiar with ancient, as well as modern authors. She was a prodigy of learning, apparently as solid as ornamental.

Such a house! such surroundings! and ten children! It was a marvel how these discrepancies and contrarities of parts could hold together; yet they did. I found subsequently she was one of the most affectionate wives and mothers, a good neighbor, contented, happy, and apparently unconscious of the strange contrast between her inner and outer life.

At the close of my call, and as I passed out into the hall, a beautiful little girl, so far as her features were indicated through all manner of fantastic dirt-

sketches, was lispingly reading "Little Ferns" to her sister on the stairs, and I overheard her say—

"I wish Fwanny Fwern was here; I'd give her some of my lasses candy, she's such a nice lady."

This is immortality, thought I! to have my name embalmed even in such questionable odors and places, or lovingly spoken by little lips in such clare obscure as this, would be to me more beautiful meed of praise than much louder and more conspicuous trumpeting in what seem to be higher places; yet I must say the whole were practically better without the dirt, although it was a picture.

It was a hot August afternoon. Mrs. Gaines was spreading a piece of linen on the grass to bleach. She had her "handkercher" tied over her cap; and as she paused, and looked up over her spectacles, she beheld a prim and dignified-looking gentleman at her gate. Straightening herself up, with each hand on her hip, and arms akimbo, Mrs. G. peered curiously through her glasses, and held her mouth inquiringly open.

"Madam, can you tell me the name of this beautiful broad-leaved plant?" asked the precise gentleman.

"To be sure; if I gin it to Jeames once when he was a baby, I did a thousand times, and he was a dreadful rugged child tu. He'd eat his heft, and then he'd have times of yellin' as if he'd split. I allers thought there was somethin' the matter with his innards; but the doctor was afraid of information on his brain. He was next tu Huld; and



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Huld, shé never took nothing but castor ile, and would play all day as chipper as a swallow. Moses, tu, if the measles hadn't gin him"—

The grave student listened so far courteously to her digressions, but, being tired with his long walk, began to doubt his ability to stand the whole genealogy and infantile history Mrs. G. had commenced, so bowing respectfully, he said—

“I will not detain you since you cannot give me the name of the plant.”

“Why, massy tu me! I was a goin' tu tell you what ailed Huld—I would say Mose, and what cured him; but if you are in a hurry, jest walk in and take a drink of my beer. It's made of mullein-root, spruce, and saxafrax, and is excellent good for jarndice. There's a little spice of dandelion-root in it; that's healthy—there! I du believe my bees is goin' tu swarm, and the old man aint tu hum!”

The sun was so hot, Mr. Spring was so tired and thirsty, and the little plant still drooped without a name, he concluded to take “a drink of beer,” and see if it was possible to get the name out of the old woman in some unguarded moment. So he sat down in the shade of an apple-tree; a little brook tinkled by him; the well, with its old-fashioned sweep and bucket, were near, and the bees hummed industriously. Mrs. Gaines, still talking, went after the beer, and in a few moments returned with a brown mug, foaming and sparkling with the

“Hummade beer! You needn't be afeared on't; it is good for you if your vittles ever distresses you. As I was goin' to tell ye, my oldest darter, she had

a dreadful weak stomach. I tho't sometimes, as true as you live, she was spleeny"—

"Well, madam, I am very much obliged to you for your excellent beer; and now, if you will just tell me again the name of this plant, I will be going!"

"Oh, tu be sure! I was agoin' to tell you where to git it; and you mus'n't bile it, but jest pour on the water middlin' hot, and when I uster tu give it for colic tu Maryann"—

"Good-day, madam! I am sorry I have hindered you so long, as you can't tell me the name of this plant." And Mr. Spring bowed, and turned his back upon the astonished Mrs. Gaines, who stood a few minutes speechless at his departure, then, recovering herself, exclaimed—

"I'll be darned if the crittur han't gone off afore I gin him the name of the airb." Then, raising her voice to the highest pitch, she screamed, explosively: "Why, it's master-wort, good for wind!"

A MAN IS KNOWN BY THE COMPANY HE KEEPS.

DOUBTFUL, unless he is a one-ideal, illiberal, egotistical bigot. A large and charitable nature will attract to itself great variety of character. Shakespeare, I have no doubt, might have been seen one day with clowns, another with kings; now with the noblest and purest of earth's daughters, then a student of the most perverted. Going still higher for an example of humanitarian love and confraternity, did not the great divine Teacher of all ages consort as often with publicans as with priests, as often with illiterate fishermen as with doctors of the law? And did he not also stop to give a pitying word of encouragement to the last object of human charity, a lost, unhappy woman?

In our own day, our best teachers in morality and religion are not so strictly banded with sects as to be readily identified. Glory to humanity when a kingly intellect bends from its high throne, and recognizes its relation to souls struggling in weakness, or passion-fettered and indurated!

"By the company he keeps!" Ah, company in its general sense! But "thus far, and no farther"

can souls approach each other than magnetic laws permit.

A student in the great school of human experience might choose to be surrounded with every form and degree of human development; but his thoughts are sacredly enshrined within himself, and can never be approached or recognized excepting by his soul's elect. So, he is *not* known by the company he keeps; they indicate the largeness and variety of his social and moral tenderness, but not his intellectual tastes and the solemn force of spirit-attraction.

Reader, had you ever a friend like an embodied gush of a bobolink's song, or like the flashing silken leaf of a crimson poppy, shaking its most poetical head in the wind? I had, and her name was Florinell. Nell never walked, she bounded, danced, ran, or flew. She lived in the country, and might do as Heaven and her own free heart willed. So she scorned combs for her fine flying hair; she ignored whalebones for her fair, full, expanded waist, and thus outraged custom and all its pasteboard models; made herself very comfortable at the expense of much neighborly scandal and abuse, preserved the healthful glow of her cheek in the face of the indignant glow of her calumniators; and, in short, descended upon these fashion-forged, unnatural, blank times, like a whirlwind of fresh odors.

One, to see her bounding up the long avenue that led to my house, and the noisy greeting of the dog that frisked about her, and heard her silvery voice, in mock eloquence, ring out—

“Down, soothless insulter! I heed not your *tail*!”

one would think *there* was a spirit that would defy art, sorrow, and time; and must bloom forever. Nor should one be astonished after a first introduction to Nell, to see her practise with the dog and children, leaping over pretty high mounds of new-mown hay, or jumping on the bare back of the pony and flying through the meadow, or, springing into the back part of any cart that came along, and whistling like a farmer boy, put herself in a jockey attitude, and drive off.

Nell could fish, shoot at a mark, row a boat, drive *two* in hand, write poetry, dance, play and sing, and astonish bewildered gentlemen to a charm.

But there were lynx-eyed ladies who cavilled, objected, deprecated; said Nell could not do worsted dogs, and puffy glass-eyed birds on footstools; would not waste her eyesight on embroidered muslin; could not crochet good-for-nothing mats, or make pumpkin-seed bags, or patchwork quilts; did not understand the *chef d'œuvre* in that favorite branch of female industry—"the rising sun of turkey-red calico in the centre of the quilt, with a pine-grove and '*piny*' border!" Awful ignorance! unpardonable, wilful contempt of feminine accomplishments! It is true, Nell did not know how to do these things. But she could have made a pudding if a lover had ordered one, for her genius needed just this kind of inspiration, and would have blossomed into the most sedate and comfortable household virtues, under the incentives of love. Good, quiet, demure people, would they only be content in the possession of their peculiar virtues, even with a little Pharisical "thank

God, we are not as this Nell is," were well, and we could all hold in harmonious dissimilarity together. But they are not; they *will* thrust their phlegmatic temperaments and their cold stale customs upon ardent, impulsive, free natures, and try to reduce them to the same dull prescribed round.

"Why," they say, "would you hold such a wild hoydenish thing as Nell up for imitation to our young daughters?"

By no means, anxious mothers, no sooner than I would you! I do not believe in cutting and clipping nature's most beautiful and diversified works, into any one form. I believe in variety, let us learn to let human beings develop their own distinctive characters, appropriating each his individual aliment. Truth above, and before all things. Oh! the perversions and distortions which the unchristian, iron rule of custom, makes of right! Because my neighbors choose to follow a fashion that puts a pound of cotton on each side front, between your shoulders, depreciating and contemning your own natural and properly located breast works, or encases your pleasantly-playing ribs into whalebone stiffness and perpendicularity, am I obliged to do the same outrage upon nature, symmetry, and comfort, or be proscribed as ridiculous, absurd, unfit for society, or immorally ostentatious of nature's own undisguised handiwork?

Nell was honest, true-hearted, could not possibly do an ignoble or mean action. She was undisguisedly beautiful, intellectually capable, and had affections, which, when once enlisted, transformed

her wild and careless spirit into the most tender and generous fidelity. Yet was this most beautiful character so misinterpreted by narrow-minded censors, that her every motion and peculiarity of dress were food for mockery and jests.

Not the least among all the martyrs to freedom, do I regard those heroic souls, who, conscientiously, æsthetically, or by a simple law of nature, have maintained individuality of costume, among all the sneers, disdainful turning up of nose, silent, cold scrutiny, impudent staring, and other unmerciful cuts, fashion's inquisitorial disciples and votaries have always given non-conformists to their creeds. It may sound small among the great questions concerning human rights, to mention that of dress, and to say that "all men are created free and equal" in their rights, to choose the quality and cut of their own habiliments; but among all the depressing, demoralizing, truth-extinguishing, nature-perverting tyrannies, there is no species so baneful, especially to woman, as this serfdom to fashion, and its minions. There is an affected tolerance in society, to conscientious rebels to these arbitrary and unreasonable restraints of custom; but who dares to consult moral principle, or money principal, or his own tastes, however refined and pure, on this subject? How many men would continue to top their heads with that insignificant stovepipe looking hat, if they dared to come down to a gentler, broader line of beauty? How many ladies would consent to go through that wearisome spine-bending process of loading the hips with superfluous quantity of drape-ry, squeezing the chest into a tight whalebone bo-

dice, and manifold other pinchings and pressings, if their rights to any other, and all forms of dress were really acknowledged and respected? Many sighs of poor, vain victims to the delusive importance of fashion would be relieved, by the assurance that it had lost its power, and henceforth women might be simple, natural, and individual. Many weary eyes would be relieved from stitching: how many imprisoned, sickly forms would spring up to seek the sunshine? how many slender fortunes would grow ample? how many sick would be relieved by the foregone embroidered pocket handkerchief, or no longer indispensable yard or two of silk or satin trail? How many sin-poisoned spirits would find no disguise in the mask of fashion, for fashion itself would be lost in natural *grace*, *beauty*, and endless variety. Honest and pure endeavor has been retarded, women's minds have been crippled, rendered frivolous, by this malevolent power, and countless crimes have their root and sustenance in it.

But where is my Nell? Ah! pity to tell, that just in the flush of her gay beauty, her severely conventional and respectable father thought it proper to send her among some terribly fashionable and polite relatives, in New York, to be polished! her descent upon her town relatives with all her careless and random beauty, astonished, and held them in speechless wonder for several days. At length it was delicately hinted to her, that natural hair floating in soft curls around her fair shoulders, would never do; she was liable to misinterpretation and in-

sult; so the fair ornament, that God gave her, was twisted up into a very tight knot, and a tall shell-comb, quite unbecoming her childish and laughing face, stuck triumphantly into the neighborhood of her wounded self-esteem. Her front hair was stiffened with bandoline, and in two immense horns, in the latest fashion, protruded far beyond the line of her fat cheeks, and mocked, with their angles, the sweet curves and dimples of her saddened face.

A short time elapsed and her waist was attacked; here stratagem and manoeuvre were necessary to force her into their severe measures. At length success attended them, and by violent compression, her redundancy of bosom was flattened and stiffened into the snug bodice, and two wads of cotton laid triumphantly and modestly where no natural protuberances ever grow, and she was declared to look altogether improved and quite stylish. Now the ground-plan being completed, she was behung with a variety of dangling ornaments, put into a system of embarrassed motion and tonnish effects, and left to enjoy the results of the polishing process.

Poor Nell could no longer jump over ottomans, or spring upon the table as she had been accustomed to; there were no children to gambol with her, nor could she now throw them over her shoulders like a knapsack if there had been, without a general outbreak of pent-up muscle and solid corporeity, without a fearful tearing asunder of hooks and eyes. She could not read in her constrained condition consecutive hours; mechanical walking was stupid to one accustomed to much random running and

jumping; so Nell betook herself to that unimpeachably correct and lady-like amusement, embroidery. Her fingers, bluer and thinner than they used to be, busily plied the needle and bodkin in the mazy pattern, and her eyes grew lustreless in counting eyelets and knots; her plump foot lost its elasticity, and her spirits flagged, and every day as some gift of nature was lost, and some art acquired, she was complimented by her sponsors on her steady improvement. The roses in her cheeks quite died away, so her relatives consulted their fashionable physician, who gave her homœopathic pills, and advised recreative amusements, the opera, and parties. Late hours and the stimuli of admiration, flattery and wine brought now and then a shadow of the old bloom to her cheek; but it did not show in the morning light.

I saw Nell only once after she was "finished;" her voice was weak and low, her manners were perfectly and purely quiet and proper, her repose was that of hopeless, unimpulsive propriety. She was no longer my gay, varying song-gush, my shining sun-loved blossom, but an unhappy piece of art, scorning from her acquired and false notions her own former natural and beautiful life.

She was taken at length by a petrified specimen of worldliness, put into the stereotyped round of fashionable life, had in due time, be-flounced, be-curl'd, pale blue-legged little young copies of herself, who sat with their nurse in public parks, and watched out of their rosetted French hats with

sickly wonder, other little blue-nosed, be-ruffled, crippled little mockeries of humanity.

Oh, Nell! my ruined, most lovely piece of natural workmanship! How will the Great Artist forgive such desecration, such sacrilege?

In the gay exuberance of physical health, such natures as Nell's do not recognize a determined inner life, but sometimes skeptically and irreverently call in question those higher spiritual truths. This does not shock me; in good time, necessity will unfold these treasures, and the material take its subordinate place. But one of the interesting "company" I used to keep, Rachel, the sober and the just, was often greatly disturbed by her casual juxtaposition with careless pleasure-loving beings. To her honest, reverential mind there were no present revelations of truth, all had been made ages ago, and bound into one infallible all-embracing book. To her mind, the nature of to-day, the *present*, had no divine meaning. There were no interpreters of God's thoughts, to her thinking, but a few priests and biblical teachers.

But, oh! how devoted, pure, and true was this conscientious soul to all its espousals of faith! If Rachel did not act in a large circle, she was earnest, faithful, and brave in a small one. It is true, if the world had been planned with reference to the demands of such minds, its living poetry, its endless variety of glorious productiveness, would have been left out as quite superfluous. Some mathematical facts, and culinary vegetables, one type of animal, and one of man, would have been all that was

necessary. Thoughts blossom in every flower or star, in every song of bird, and human motion; but how many read them? Not those who fear to look far over, and into nature; not those who distrust their own reading. Because the soul grows out of its habitudes, and puts on now and then new wings; because it discards its old sheath of opinions, call it not "backsliding" in an ignominious sense, but a necessary backing out of useless restrictive forms for others freer and more elevated.

Rachel was lovable for her quiet truthfulness, her calm faith. One would be sure that with such spirits, although the world would not advance very rapidly, it would not go to pieces in any extravagant efforts at progress. Rachel did not adorn herself after the manner of this world, but wore modest apparel, which was pleasant, only she could not see the propriety of other and dissimilar minds taking also their peculiar and appropriate adornings, of a gayer, more diversified sort; so it was frequently an annoyance to her to meet at my house the dashing, bewildering, fluttering humming-birds of all variety of nature and habit, which, mingled with graver characters, I so much like to see; Nora, I think was the most ethereally sensuous among all my varieties. A puff of mist, in all its diversified wreathings, could not be more graceful than Nora always was, nor all the sweet odors of a garden more intoxicating than her sensible presence. She attracted to herself everything beautiful, nothing gross adhered to her, and she made the dullest ore look like gold in her sunny smiles. But Nora was not self-disciplined,

and had no stern, solid virtues. She glided just far enough above the surface of things, she kept just that enchanting distance from the real deformities and evils of life, not to see, to feel, or learn how to relieve them. She was one of those characters that everybody likes to serve, one whose caprices command admiration and indulgence, and they were numerous enough. I think in the matter of love alone, at least a dozen disappointed lovers could have shown breaches of promise of her making; and as for casual friendships, and changes of creeds of all kinds, social, moral, religious or political, there was no end to them. Yet every change was more beautifully made than the last, and her twelfth love was just as fresh and delightful as her first. In fact, one would just as soon have thought of wishing a trumpet honeysuckle to be a cabbage, or a humming-bird to be a hen, as Nora to be a practical and sober woman.

As Nature can afford to throw off so many forms of beauty that address only the occult perceptions of the spirit, that cannot in any way be appropriated to material purposes, the inference seems to be, that all our capacities are not developed, if we refuse to receive and admire, to recognize and desire all embodiments of life, from the lowest utilitarian products to the most airy and unsubstantial form of grace that ever blest a poet's vision. Therefore may the stained, toil-coarsened hand haste to bless sweet, untasked forms of loveliness, floating visions of an affluent divinity; so may the sorrowful and disappointed cling long to the music cadences of some

happier, more triumphant spirit, that "carols at heaven's gate or near it," while the gifted and elect of grace can well afford to bend down to the relief and encouragement of all groping and earth-shadowed souls.

Nora dallied gracefully with all beautiful things in life. Her different eras of experience were so many pictures for a painter, or themes for a poet. Utility never counted her as a subject, but in the kingdom of beauty she had some claim to a throne. To behold her as I did, when my eye first rested on her, sitting in the embrasure of a window, her little foot in a green slipper laid on an ottoman, her white hand in mock industry, bethimble with a tiny tip of gold, and now and then taking a stitch in a mazy pattern in mist-like muslin. See her bright curls rippling down the fair shore of her face, and falling in a flood over her shoulder, just outlined through her lace cape. Two or three short curls happen always to stray behind, and give a piquant, careless, adventurous expression to her ample and very clear brow. Her hair is a light brown, and her eye is gray, the most dangerous of all colors, the most uncertain and variable, the most expressive in its unobtrusiveness, and delusive in its latent power. A band of red velvet circled her head and held her truant curls in check.

Nora looked now and then impatiently out of the window, and was evidently expecting some one to "turn up" in the rain and mud; and with good reason it proved, for a ring at the door-bell made her start with delight. It was John Smith, renowned

John Smith! with all the vagabondish attributes of his old and famous family clustering thick upon him. He was sometimes a poor author, about to bring out "his last work;" friends, interested in his pale face, made generous subscriptions, when John Smith and his "last work" would suddenly disappear together. He was sometimes a musician, sometimes a lecturer, a minister, a doctor, *always* a gallant gentleman, with intrigues, love adventures, and debts on his hands. Just the man for Nora to waste her ready sympathies and poetical sentiments upon, for the unoccupied weeks in which her preceding lover was absent on an excursion to the Green Mountains, to recover the tone of his nerves, which she had jarred by some inconstancy; John filled up the interim with much profitable romancing about unmerited misfortunes, Byronic fierceness of gloom, and curse, and hate, and so wrought on Nora's imagination, that in the fervor of her interest for this "dark, doomed man," she sent him several anonymous letters with handsome denominations of bank bills, hoping these would abate his misery, and be a timely resource under the *supposed* clamorous importunities of his tailor or washerwoman. She never knew how many bottles of wine the money bought, nor with what avidity John drank the health of his fair donor, and prayed for the perpetuity of her charities. He was not obliged to mistrust the author of his benefits, and so was saved the humiliation of grateful acknowledgment. John disappeared, however, one fine day, and Nora with many anxious prayers and blessings recorded his

departure in her journal, then dressing herself in a charming checked worsted travelling dress with exquisite tact and taste, took her last bouquet from the vase, and giving her travelling case to a servant, and kisses to her loving family, took a boat for a watering-place, where she had dear friends expecting her.

The Rev. Solomon Kane was at Sulphur Springs for the benefit of the waters to his outer man, which was much worn by the prayers, exhortations, counsel, &c., incident to a "protracted meeting." The Rev. Solomon was almost worshipped by his congregation, and exceedingly popular among the ungodly outsiders. His brilliant and sweeping logic solidified his abundant pathos, and poetical garnishing; a delicate humor played over the whole, and what appeared to be a deep religious feeling, sanctified his eloquence, and brought it home to the hearts, if not to the consciences of his hearers. He rarely carried an audience through a sermon without leading them to a "Bridge of Sighs," and bathing some in their own tears. But as no one could see the "cry here" which he wrote here and there parenthetically in his sermon, as a tear mark, these sudden bursts of feeling, from their apparent spontaneity, were wonderfully effective. With what ardent reverence was his little white hand seized by young and old when he descended from the pulpit! All were inspired by something, they did not know what—it did not seem to be a love of truth and right in any particular form, for he had not discoursed upon positive principles—it seemed mostly

an irresistible force of magnetism drawing the will into submission, not to high moral power, but to the Rev. Solomon Kane.

Now it was not in nature for Nora to sit under the fervid heat of his impassioned eloquence, to see the beautiful wreathings of his poetical fancies, without an impulse to seize his hand, and look a grateful appreciation into his eyes, which she did as the congregation poured out of the church, with an innocent abandonment to the religio-sensuous character of her temperament, altogether irresistible to the Rev. Solomon.

It would hardly be polite to take you, dear reader, into a clergyman's study, and direct you to peep over his shoulder, and read a love sonnet that lies among the pages of an unfinished sermon; no, I shall not do it, but you may read one on these pages, and ascribe it to whom you please. But you will not guess the author with the heart flutter that Nora did, I know:—

Not to look upon the sky,
 Or breathe the common air,
 Not to close a straining eye
 Or groan the saddest prayer;
 But to see thee, and to feel thee,
 So enstamping, so inweaving
 All the life that's left to me,
 That my bonds and duty leaving
 I could shrink to thee and die!
 This, this is love, the maddest yet
 That e'er in sin-red glory set.

My eyes are wet with weeping,
 As the night traileth, unsleeping

I sit, despairing, affrighted ;
Anon the cleft cloud is alighted,
And lightning and love fiercely entwining
Twist my soul in their serpent-like shining.

A week or two only passed away at the sulphur springs, before our unfortunate Solomon had, in the natural course of events, to recall his wandering thoughts, retrace his truant steps, and leave Nora with a glittering diamond on her finger, and a freshly written page in her book of adventures.

Yet what an irretrievable loss he had suffered! and, how sincere the troop of regrets and reproaches that went back with him, to his church and people! Time, faith in himself, in love, in woman, (beside the poem and diamond ring!) had all been thrown prodigally, insanely away.

Nora returned in the beautiful flush of conscious power, to fresh adventures, her sincerity unsoiled; her inexhaustible fascinations playing in the sunlight of love, and breaking on whoever lingered by the untroubled fountain. What philosopher will write the "limits of woman's responsibility?"

I can count a dozen friends, a charming string of pearls, which I wear around my life, each so pure, it bears no likeness to "the company it keeps with me."

There is Lydia, whom God called when she was a child, and bade her throw down her apron full of flowers and come to him—all a *dream*, but so acted on in life, it seems to her and me, the strongest waking truth. From the night of this dream in her little crib, Lydia has never doubted, that when duty

calls her, she must throw away every personal comfort or pleasure, and do God's bidding. No want goes from her presence unrelieved; indeed, all *want* flies to her, from the highest yearning of poet or artist, moralist, or teacher, for sympathy and counsel, down to the diseased wood-sawyer, or decrepit washer-woman. Her nimble fingers plait the ribbon on the child's bonnet, and turn, the next instant, the leaves of a sermon or portfolio, and mark the truths or errors with a nice discriminating judgment, which the author acknowledges with grateful praise.

Lydia never faints or fails in duty, never *fears*, or doubts; though her temples are throbbing with intensest pain, has she an errand of mercy to do, she rises, and reeling with blindness, ties on her hat, and throwing ease and comfort down, says, "God calls me," and goes wherever his voice leads. Storms may break and burst over her, she seeks no refuge until duty is done, and then she counts not herself a heroine, but looks and listens for the next need, that she may relieve it.

Oh! pure friend! I count thee in my circle, as a constant prayer, a living hymn, and in thy consecrated life, my purest devotion kindles.

Ah! slip thee not away, sweet pearl! nor seek to lose thyself among thy sisters, Amie, the friend-gatherer! sitting in thy lovely home, where thy hand has garnered the fairest things of art and nature, and thy heart has drawn the gifted and noble, to share thy munificent hospitality; we search each shady recess for thy pensive face, and cannot con-

sent to see thee forget thyself altogether in ministering to others. We know that no grace, or talent, or beauty goes unrecognized by thee, then why so chary of thy wondrous gifts of goodness? We know the morning found thee gathering bunches of thy choicest flowers, not sparing the costliest exotic, for some bed-bound invalid; we know thine own hand prepared the jellies and recreative drinks that stood on the humble table of thy neighbor. It is well known too, by those that have watched thy life, that gentle words have been spoken in return for the bitterness of envy and jealousy; that in assembling the fair, the beautiful, the profound and witty, around thy table, thou hast never spiced thy entertainments with scandal, and that, never, when guest turned from thy cordial lips, did the breath of slander taint the sweet atmosphere of thy speech.

We know too, thou pearl-drop, that when rarest music has gushed from the queenliest lips of beauty, thou didst mingle thy incense of praise with the admiring group, and not the faintest sigh of selfishness made thy ready homage to waver.

So, in all things, hast thou been generous, and never stinted thy power to group the most beautiful things in life together, by an ignoble feeling.

Then let us, for once, draw thee from thy wonted circlet of concealment; we will place thee on the brow of friendship, as its most conspicuous token and seal.

But what shall we say of Brenda, the great-hearted? that she could not do a trivial thing, that

her step was majesty, whether in unembarrassed stateliness, it passed through the hushed aisle of a church, or made the circuit of a kitchen; whether she walked among haughty and critical worldlings, or among the tattered groups that clustered around her bountiful hand, Brenda had a prestige of greatness, that made everything about her seem regal. I believe a sceptre in a queen's hand could not be more imposingly swayed, or give higher token of native majesty, than in Brenda's hand, did a common broomstick. Her every-day words were uttered in poetic measure and tone, and I could read Byron or Ossian in a corner, and in the pauses, drink in the melody of her voice and presence, to complete the harmony. Her magnificent way of looking at, and handling things, ennobled matter, and gave the simplest duty and custom of life a great and noble signification. Her thoughts were in a grand key, and nothing could depress them into insignificance.

Brenda never needed the props of artificial grandeur to sustain her, although if honors clustered about her, she subordinated and wore them in the most natural and becoming manner.

My friend seemed eminently practical to the superficial eye, because the ideal world was not a sphere apart, to be talked about, in company with her, it mingled with the real, and was a part of her constant and uniform life. She did not proclaim her tastes by framing herself in attractive devices, as is a common custom with many, hanging out, as it were, signs of the internal furnishing; no, Bren-

da disdained this ostentation. Her unstudied surroundings were not obtruding exponents of her character, yet the magnetism of her presence would make one talk nobly unawares, and unconsciously feel linked, somehow, with such minds as Channing and Emerson.

As mountains give to the natural eye relief from the weariness of wandering over monotonous level, so on the moral vision, the life of Brenda rises in instructive grandeur, and I grow strong in looking at her, my friend, the great-hearted.

I know of a peach, and it hangs in the softest sunshine, and its full proportions are not profaned by sacrilegious handling, nor has the down from its cheek, with eager and daring lip, been kissed away. I know of a full throated bird, that sings in the most deep and shady wood, and if listener approach, it flies away, and will not be caressed into social companionship. I know of a silver brook, and it hid itself in moss and green turf, and would not look boldly up to the sun, that tried to inflame its bosom. I know, I know, but shall I tell who, and where is my peach, my bird, my brook? Is this my wonderful fruit, the guarded treasure of humble poverty's garden? No, it has ripened in wealth's most indulgent smiles and care. Does your bird sing in a human wilderness, or in the shade of real trees, say you? Most certainly in a city's benumbing hum, and so also among the clayey multitude has the brook tinkled, hiding its sweet course in affection's green, clinging, twining, moss-like love.

But old time wears a robe of many colors, which all ages have consented to weave together, and many a fair hand, these later years, has run a bright thread along a corner, or as a relief to some grand monotone. And why not? History has put in her crimson patches; with terrible freedom; philosophy has elaborately woven grave designs in various tints, and poetry fantastically run a golden thread all over the whole; romance has been busy with the fringe, but her fingers are relaxed, and modern days have not much ornament or finish to their practical working. Then why should not the pleasant and modest fancies of light literature fill in a little here and there among the body colors, and give a cheerful tone to the solid present?

Look along and see if you can find a token of my sweet friend's fair fingers, for they have not been idle; see if you can distinguish her peach-like bloom of innocence, her song of deep and woody freshness, the silver shining of her brook-like purity. If you can, then may you call her—Louise.

Oh! glorious exemption from bondage to any exclusive class, or kind of company! Oh! glorious freedom to wander, at will, among all classes and conditions of human life! There are embodiments so majestic, they command homage; there are none so mean, but some divine feature redeems them from contempt. Every leaf of the revelation of man is a life's study, the tenderest prayer of love, the boldest prophecy.

DAILY BREAD.

YEA, not only the crust sweetened by daily toil give me, but the look of love from the gentle eye of parental care, the random cheery prattle of children, the cheerful step of willing service; give me these as daily bread, without which the affections would grow into dry and bitter leanness. To my soul give daily bread of truth, some beauty in nature, from which to mould a beautiful thought, and hope of immortality; give me a look into the sky or running water, a breeze from the hills, and oh, may my eye never range over the infinite forms of life without recognizing in them not only a grain of wheat whereof to make a little daily bread for the body, but always and ever a sustaining crust to keep faith freshly growing, and eternally young.

My little boy says he is "God's child," and when he lays on his little bed and bids his last good-night to all the loved names of the family, he soothes the infinite affection of childhood's heart, by saying "Good-night, God." Surely the warm sky looks more lovingly on the eye of simple faith, than on the most ingenious, cold eye of scrutinizing philosophy that ever tried to stare into its secrets. Will ye teach me your secret wisdom, I said to the long

shining leaves of corn, to the silken tassel hanging from the tender ear, and it seemed to bend kindly toward me while I listened with hushed breath, then came a sense of *harmony*, and I said I shall be able to get at the heart of nature, if I keep my soul in repose, and wait.

I sometimes long for the wine of far old lands, for the wine of art, and poetry, and song; I long to float away from all the chains and bonds of local interest, to free my soul to the winds of chance, as the bird breasteth the upper tides of air. I long to toss my thoughts about, like the high swinging branches of an old tree, heavenward among the strong, the bold, and free. I long to throw off old habitudes like garments, and plunge in the billows of eternal, and ever youthful, fresh variety; I want to come and go on a sounding sea of musical unrest. But the daily bread of quietness droppeth gently down from each day's sober duties; I gather manna on the green plot of grass at my lowly door, in graceful ways of children, in the faithful blossoming of roses, and the climbing of loved vines, in watching the wise ways of birds, and the subtle art of the political spider. Daily bread is broken to me by many a gentle hand of friendship, the sweet face of a neighbor looketh in and never without a smiling favor in word or deed. I watch my garden, and my soul is strengthened to see nature with patient care nurse each plant and flower, bring it to its perfect use, then fold it away in such beautiful security, like

the kindest of mothers, looking well to the ways of her household.

So am I quieted; and though my footsteps are chained by circumstance to a narrow bit of earth, although my hands are fettered by many sweet and humble duties, God suffers me not to forget the ecstasy of freedom, so openeth the blue depths of space and shows me the stars; jewels on his finger, the flashing tokens of his presence, of the richness, the majesty of his illimitable power. I need not sail on thy fearful bosom, brave ocean, to feel the dizzy grandeur of life. I may sit at my window in this quiet spot, and my soul shall mingle with the elements in an ecstatic joy of life, and conscious immortality.

“Distance lends so much enchantment” to the sight, that men mowing in a meadow look to those riding in a carriage, like highly privileged mortals. Dropped in a clover field, in seeming contentment, they swing around in beautiful curves an instrument of polished edge, that they may walk in the prodigal fragrance of a beautiful carpet of grass; they playfully toss it about, or heap it in symmetrical mounds. The bobolink, scared up from his nest, drops his most luscious, sensuous medley like wine on the ravished ear; the wind frolics in and out the drifted heaps of grass, and chases the shadows of the clouds that scud over the hills and through the hollows; what can disturb the peace of these fair scenes? The rich and pleasure-sated man leans out from the windows of his carriage, the quick patter of his horses’ hoofs

strikes musically on his ear, and his driver's willing hand is ready to obey his least command; he may order what scene he pleases, what caves or mountains, what waterfalls or glens; and yet he looks out on this serene meadow, with God's laborers gathering his rich harvests, with a painful yearning for the quiet happiness that shines with so deep a calm on the hay field. The laborer stops to wipe his besweated brow, and restore his exhausted vitality by long draughts at the water-pitcher; his eye catches the glitter of the swift wheels of the rich man's carriage, and the gleam of the silver trappings; he sees the white hand of indolent wealth pointing to the landscape, and he thinks, what a delightful life that man can command, with his carriage and horses, and servants, his wine, and books, and travels, his conscious power over men, his ease and security of comfort; he looks down and feels this is a hard road to travel, full of stubble and stones, and he takes up his scythe in bitterness, and wishes as he sweeps it around, that thus could he cut down all distinctions and the barriers between him and luxury.

Each scene to the other was enchanted, each man to the other seemed blessed by distance, which did not render back a faithful picture of all the roughness and thorns of either condition. These men stood nearly on a level in respect to degree of happiness, but not to quality. Both should have been happier than they were. Who will decide between the carriage and the hay field?

My old poplar tree! to some ye can give no

lesson, no impression of regal loftiness; to many, the symmetrical uplifting of all thy harmonious branches toward the sky, the shimmer of thy polished leaf have no beauty. In vain the black-bird swings from thy high top, and shrilly proclaims the heaven-tending nature of all life; it is but an idle croak from a decaying old poplar. But not so have I read the records of thy history, in the spiral point of green that faithfully catches the high light of heaven; not so have I dismissed the grave teaching of thy soft and time-eaten trunk. I lift my eye reverently from my pillow in the gray of the morning, to watch the first rosy tintings of the sun's warm pencil, and at night thy solemn form is pictured in monumental majesty against the sky. Thy branches stretch not laterally, in token of thy desire to shade men, or for the birds' social covert; thou bendest not down gracefully to earth with affectionate longing, nor twinest thy branches with any luxuriant neighbor; but firm to one high purpose, in solitary stateliness thou aimest all thy arrowy branches toward the sun. Thou art the symbol of a pure truth-seeker, a prophet, and thy lonely grandeur is not without a likeness to him who hath no honor from the familiar multitude, but who still steadfastly reaches toward heaven.

I find "daily bread" in the gentle and deliberate footfall of one I love, sitting in a curtained nook with books and work-basket, with pens and paper in suggestive proximity; my ear catches the music of that step at the far extremity of the willow-walk,

or sunflower avenue, or in the beaten path under the maples; my heart springs gladly, and my foot impatiently essays to carry a greeting; but I school my impulses into affected indifference. Soon I catch the outlines of a fine form, the beaming kindness of a smile, a common word uttered in harmony of most pure intent, and high intellectual life; most common and beautiful bread of daily courtesy! as often as it is broken to me, my whole soul rejoices in deepest thankfulness. How beautifully this consciousness of power, this calm strength controls the social elements; no turbulence of gayety, or hurricane of passion, or blackness of gloom, visits the sacred circle, that this majestic spirit governs. His white and benevolent soul throws back all violent passions, and turns them into waves of broken diamonds, into showers of pearls; it breaks their fury, and in self-possessed equity moderates their excess. Two rarest virtues has my friend: patience to listen to all teaching, and the candor to acknowledge truth in any and every form of ministry. The beams of a sportive fancy play through the quiet dignity of his thoughts, like sunlight in the massive shadows of a wood. He is never a victim to quaint conceits, or to grotesque phantasms. Absolute truth forms the basis of his character, but poetic adornments grace the superstructure. Ah, pleasant is the sound of the approaching step that ever bringeth blessings, pleasant the voice that hath no discord in its tones, the eye that shines mildly in its calm integrity! With the sustaining power of

this daily ministration, my life shall know no faintness.

My soul is strengthened by a *quiet* hour; the cheerful hum of voices has died away; anecdote and jest have bubbled on the surface of the social cup for a moment, then burst in a merry peal of laughter, and died into silence; fair faces and arms have twinkled a little while in the white blaze of the evening, they are at rest now, in dewy sleep; music calling from the deep of human passion, has been answered back again, from the mysterious deeps of spiritual infinitude, and a trembling awe has stolen over the dim waves of sound. I love the charmed hour; night has opened her wide arms, and folds the human spirit, as the flower, to the starry stillness of her bosom.

The stars gaze with their magnetic eyes into my soul, and seem to say, "sleep while we watch over you, the dreams we bring are silver-white, and will bind your soul in token of our ministry, and of future companionship." I open the windows wide, that the deep sky may shed its holy influences on me, and that angels may come and go at will.

A quiet hour meets a daily want, and preserves the soul from a distracted abandonment to material pleasures and cares, and from the weariness of physical unrest.

To see life fade and dry away from the tree and grass; to hear the crickets and grasshoppers whirr among the crisped shrubs; to feel that the vigor of

the year is drunk up by the ripening fruits, and know that the yellow sun shines on the *fulfilment* of youth's promise, but on *youth* no longer; to pick in sad quietude of mature age, the purple and yellow blossoms hung around the vanishing robes of summer-glory; these are my birth-day offices, from this time forth. To me, henceforth, the very lusciousness of fruit will taste of youth's heart-life, and tell me of the bright forms that were crushed ere fruit could ripen. I shall know, by every token of mature life, that a long past stretches behind me.

Yet it is better to sit, at this sober hour, upon a brown hillock, and make this birthday notch in my life's poor record, than it has been to hang myself with garlands, and dance, in giddy joy, the fleet hours away, as I have done years ago. Nature dyes her flowers a deeper hue as the season wanes, and they no longer crowd, in rich luxuriance, in garden or wood; thinly clustering by the river, or on the brown hills, life-everlasting, and golden-rod, purple-asters and the flashing cardinal-flower give out their gleaming life, and claim kindred; with love's most intense experience, with faith and duty's most serious history; I greet you loving, sympathizing lingerers, around these last days of summer.

My old aspen stretches its gray arms toward the sky, and vainly catches the showers and sunshine; no renewal of green leaf shall decorate its bare, withered branches again, forever.

Yet I like, amid the trembling life of the youthful and vigorous trees around it, I like to catch a

glimpse of that motionless, lifeless wreck, it should check the wild hopes of extravagant youth, and prodigal expectancy. So, at my fireside, would I draw up an arm-chair, and the venerable head of age should repose on its high leather-cushioned back. A reverent hush should sober the merry voice and step of youth in its dance, and gray hairs should mingle with sunny curls, and the wisdom of long experience, moderate childhood's levity; infirmities should bring into exercise many virtues. I would not, in the rage for social cultivation, banish the homely and old-fashioned speech and custom, much less the very presence of grandfathers and mothers. I would not so prune and uproot every relic of old time, as to have no shadows to relieve the eye from the trim and high-lighted present. So, welcome the unsteady tread of age, the tremulous voice, the wandering words of instructive experience and counsel, the meditative pipe, the cushioned chair, and all the appendants of the past, I have an honored corner for you in my heart.

A DROUGHT.—Shall we have no water with our daily bread? This morning, I raised my heavy head, unrefreshed by stifling, muffled sleep, and night-tossing; "possibly it is *cloudy*, and there is a promise of rain," said I, as my languid hand pulled aside the curtain. The bloodshot, guilty face of the sun glared through the smoky atmosphere, and seemed to me, for the first time in my life, maliciously to rejoice in his triumphant course. No little cups of dew had the night filled; not a leaf was

moistened; nothing offered a shining welcome to the day. The corn leaves were rolled up and shot their shrivelled points out, like defiant spears. The sunflowers hung their heads, as if they were drunk with sunshine, and were penitently bowing to the earth; the trees were casting untimely yellowing leaves; the paths, in the garden, looked like hot, yellow chalk; unperfected fruits were ripening; and thus the unrefreshing promise of another day, depressed my already enervated system, as I looked from my sultry chamber.

A little later. The copper sky is electrotyped, and seems closing over the hills; the dusty trees sway languidly, while fresh clouds of dust thicken and shroud the begrimed traveller and panting horses. The yellow and polished grass is matted together, and creaks and rustles under the sliding, burning foot. Grasshoppers alone retain any sprightliness. The hens brood in the shade, but no shade of cloud broods over us. A dry wind brings dust and insects for our breathing, and swells the throbbing veins; there is no height or depth to *sky*, or *hope*. The range of conversation is limited to, "It is very dry, how very hot!" We have ceased to imagine showers, and the refreshing smell and sound of rain seem to belong to a past dispensation. We are beginning to make vague inquiries within ourselves, concerning the immutable laws of nature, and have a dim terror of their suspension. We wonder if the spirit spheres around us are invaded by this inimical heat and wilting dryness; and thus,

man and tree, shrivelling, lie on nature's heart and wait for her compassionate tears.

Hurry, the shutters are flapping! Shut the west windows, and the north. Bring in the plants; see how the leaves are twisted; and the hail stones! What flashes! and this glorious plash! Is there a leaf that looks not up gratefully? Is there a heart that swells not with undeserved joy? How could we distrust God? See the great drops flying before the wind, and freshening the meadow; hear them dance in the twinkling grass; hear them gurgle in the eave spouts. Oh! nature! thou knowest well how to teach thy children to love thee, and regret their distrust of thy sweet care.

Now, the clouds group together and settle down to a sober week's duty, of watering us;—it is calm, no more parade of this gentle mercy; an irregular running accompaniment along the roof, of little rills, is all that reminds us of scorching thirst, faintness, prayer, despair, and final glorious refreshing; but the vegetable world will not soon be oblivious of this great blessing; it will stand all the solemn night in this holy baptism and be consecrated afresh to the purposes of life. Would that man would read a lesson from this divine rain.

It is time for Summer to depart, and yet she lingers, with loving embraces; still cheating us with the feeling of her presence, and undiminished power. She does not leave us with rent and faded robes; with tangled locks, wet with shivering rain: she

does not sit on the gray rocks, wan and chill, and pull the faded vines and garlands from her shrinking form; no, this year she pauses in the magnificent fulness of maturity; with glowing eyes, and arms full of fruity treasures, and greets her royal sister Autumn; she bespeaks a few more days of loving sunshine; she entreats a little delay of Autumn's frosty sceptre, that all the children of her bosom may gain their last grace of perfect development; a few more radiant, wooing nights, that she may tend them in dewy sleep; she begs a *coda* of the grasshopper and cricket part in her grand harmony; and a final flutter of the butterflies' banners; it is granted; and partaking of these gracious favors, we find in the changing seasons, no want or diminution of our daily bread.

When the short, cold, dark days of December come; when the sun rises from his cheerless bed of brown clouds, and shiveringly steals round near the horizon, not careering triumphantly up toward mid-heaven as he used to in the summer days; when the earth looks blanched and stern, and grim necessity forces the spirit, and makes it subservient to the body's imperative demands—where shall we look for dew and manna for our souls? They come by the humming fireside, from books, from glowing eyes looking out poems of love; from spontaneous thoughts, and their random blossoming in words and friendly actions; from life concentrated and confined in concrete circles; these are the daily food of rural homes when the frost thickly curtains the

windows, and smites the cheek of the traveller. External nature seems armed to beat and drive the soul within itself; to force it to an estimate of its powers and resources. She seems to say, "I will give you no meadows of violets, you shall seek them in your own domain of thought and feeling, I will breathe no bland airs to beguile you into self-forgetfulness." Man shall think, shall study himself, and learn his relations to his fellow man. So with his senses benumbed, his spirit shall blossom as the rose even in the snow of a December morning.

I know of nothing more impressive and sublime in the universe than a throng of people, a sea of human faces, the inaudible but steady beat of a multitude of human hearts; I cannot feel the pressure of human hope, of joy or woe, or see even the indifferent vacant look of passive life, without an emotion of awe. So many eyes, windows of the soul, in which I catch glimpses of the interior life, how they gleam and burn, and startle me with the consciousness that I too am one with them in the fearful struggle; one in the same possession, if not in the same form of immortal hope, I do not meet the familiar face of a neighbor, or look upon the humblest form of human association or home, but an interest stirs my heart, and I feel myself answering back, as "deep calleth unto deep" out of the universal heart of love. I dare not mock at weakness, sin and pain, the awful shadows of humanity. I dare not close my eyes to them, I dare not be removed from them by artificial means; for the soul

uplifted in the higher regions of moral purity, still feels the dews of mercy distilling down on the thirsty life below ; so will I break bread with the sorrowing, eat bitter herbs with penitents ; so will I never put from me the coarse robe and staff of the pilgrim, nor unloose the dusty sandal from my toiling feet, until we all come to holier ground, where we shall eat such bread as we now know not of.

There are times when my spirit loads itself with the woes of humanity, when it groans under assumed burdens, and dares not partake in cheerful quietness, of the daily bread that seems bestowed by a partial hand. There are times when smiles fade out from the faces of mankind, and I only see disappointment, labor, and tears, and I would reach my hand to the wretched and say, "Do we all struggle thus in vain?" I look at the beguiling scenes and shows of the restless world, and I say to myself, these are but the products of sorrow, pain, and strife ; this is a fair outside, but its inner lining is grief, impearled with tears. If this were all, if this mournful pageant, in which joy itself seems the mask of some ghastly wretchedness, did not sometimes fade before the truthfulness of day ; if there were no voices in the air whispering us to look up to the stars, no gentle winds blowing over our hearts, bidding us to keep open to the holier whisperings of God's spirit, we should indeed despair and long for rest.

But when the wearied and disheartened spirit seems about to faint, a glimpse of divinity flits athwart the gloom, it may be from a human smile

or tone, it may be from the flutter of a bird's wing, or in the motion of the sea, or from the scent of a flower, perhaps from a child's glee ; but oh, however, wherever rendered or seen, hopes freshen like grass in spring showers. We shall yet find harmony in this discord, we are groping our way to higher life. We tighten our hold on truth, we feel that we are, in our weakness and error, still borne in the arms of everlasting love.

SPENDING THE AFTERNOON.

It is sultry and thunderous. Mrs. Hartwell is very much exhausted with a morning multiplicity of household duties. She has at last settled into a rocking-chair in the coolest corner of the shaded porch, with her wet hair combed smoothly from her flushed face, her clean wrapper and checked apron on, and a fresh book; Mrs. H. next to a good dinner, loved an entertaining book; she therefore in the jealous delight of a cool seat, and the engrossing fiction of "Hard Times," glances furtively around to see, if by any mischance there is danger of interruption. All is quiet; the dog lies in a hollow of fresh earth under the apple-tree, hens are grouped under the currant bushes, the children are at school, and the good husband "haw-geeing" in the field.

With a deep sense of comfort, Mrs. H. puts her tired feet on the footstool, turns to the interesting chapter she had been obliged to leave in the middle, and resumes the interesting narrative; the pleasant drip of water from the pen stock in the yard, makes a quiet and unobtrusive accompaniment. She had read a page, and while turning a leaf, raised her eyes, to behold her neighbor, Mrs. Tryen, at the

gate, trying to open it. Mrs. Hartwell's first impulse was not to see her, but to let her try the stubborn gate and "try again" according to the song advice to juveniles; nay, she was even rude enough to add, "take it out in trying," but her better nature prevailed, or rather Mrs. Tryen's perseverance, and the trick of the gate was discovered, and Mrs. Tryen came sweeping, hot and panting up the yard, and planted herself in Mrs. Hartwell's proffered chair.

"If I'd a knowed it was so dredful hot, I'd a come this mornin' *airly*," said the complacent visitor, "but now I've got here, I aint agoin' to be in no gret hurry about goin', I tell ye. How ju du, now days?"

Mrs. Hartwell saw she was hopelessly besieged, and was to be pitilessly bombarded with all manner of trivial and impertinent questions all the long, wilting afternoon. She gave a regretful look at *Hard Times*, as she closed the volume, and with some of its martyr-spirit submitted to the *inquisition* then going forward.

Mrs. Tryen was deaf, so that in addition to the ordinary lung-power necessary to drive a perpetual wheel of talk, Mrs. H. had to add enough to keep her voice in a screaming pitch, and to repeat as often as "how did you say?" and a blank look of uninformed obtuseness, signified Mrs. Tryen didn't hear.

A quiet invalid lady boarded with Mrs. H., and her room being in proximity to the porch, it added not a little to the characteristic discomforts of "spending an afternoon" with a gossiping neighbor, to be obliged to hoot out her name, age, where she came from, where she was going, "what ailded her,"

and all imaginable questions put in all imaginable forms ; to proclaim them all so that the woman herself should have the benefit of this information ; it was visiting with a vengeance.

Mrs. Tryen carried a large work-basket, and in that basket, Job's troubles, that is to say, innumerable bits of red, yellow, and vari-colored calico, cut in hexagonal form, which she with consummate patience put together while she "spent the afternoon" with Mrs. Hartwell.

It was one of her privileges, as also that of her class generally, to beg a block, that is, six hexagonal bits of gaudy calico, of all those she visits, to put in the bed-quilt, for that is the ultimate destination of Job's troubles. Nor is this the crown of this ingenious device ; each donor is honored by having her name written in indelible ink on a white Job's trouble in the centre of the given block, so that the perpetuity of the donor's generosity becomes involved in Job's eternal troubles, and a round of patching begged bits of calico, visiting and quilting, fills up the artistic vacuum in the cycles of woman's life.

"I'll trouble you for a drink of water, Lib," says Mrs. Tryen, still indefatigably patching ; "I allers call you Lib, cause your husband doos, he is second cousing to me, you know."

An excellent reason for vulgar familiarity, many Tryens find such a distant family relation. Having refreshed herself, Mrs. Tryen said she was tired "a settin', and she'd jest take a look round the house, I like to see folks's new things, allers." So Mrs. Hart-

well made the tour of the house, beginning in the china closet, and ending in the garret, not omitting a closet, a new "*gound*," or a bureau drawer, and never letting her voice down from its distracting pitch. Mrs. Tryen made important additions to her stock of calicoes by suggesting a present of every handsome rag she saw, and having also become thoroughly informed of the condition of Mrs. H.'s entire household, wardrobe, pantry and cellar, returned to her rocking-chair and basket, begging the use of a fine comb a minute to "slick down her hair," which she proceeded to do, by letting it all down over the shoulders of her "*al-packy*" dress, "rather hot fur to-day," as she remarked in drawing the comb leisurely through her long hair.

After putting up her not very fragrant tresses, she gave herself a little brush, and declared she felt better prepared for tea, and with this hint resumed her patching.

Mrs. H. felt greatly relieved to get into the kitchen, and even the preparation of an abundant and rich variety of cakes and sweetmeats (for your afternoon visitors are critical and unsparing concerning the tea-table), was a luxury, compared with the visiting process on the "stoop."

But her self-congratulations were premature; in the midst of stirring up a cake, in walked the composed and self-satisfied Tryen, and began anew to query. After getting the history of the hens, the cows, and all the various processes of cooking this and that, after throwing in sly hints of this neighbor's extravagance, and that neighbor's meanness;

this woman's industry, and the other's indolence; after asking everything and telling everything, that was none of her business, and entirely unprofitable to body or soul, she sat down to regale herself with a little tea, and, although she declared she "wa'n't a spec hungry," disposed of a variety of good things in a very obliging manner. She liked two or three kinds of cake so well she "b'leved" she would take "tu or three pieces tu the children," and "Lib, won't you jest pen off the receipts of how tu make 'em; I can't write as handy as I uster, and I've a mind tu try 'em." So Mrs. Hartwell "penned off the receipts," and, as it was then nearly dark and an immediate prospect of a shower, she began to feel an elastic sense of deliverance from the afternoon visit.

"I guess I'd better borry your Injun rubbers and umberril, Lib; it looks thretnin', and I may git ketched in the shower."

The umbrella, India rubbers, and a shawl were brought, Mrs. Tryen got herself into them and took her leave.

Mrs. Hartwell saw her fairly out of sight, I will not say with what reference to the old adage, that says, "watching a friend out of sight is a sign you will never see him again." Being delivered of Mrs. Tryen and her Job's troubles, Mrs. Hartwell, in rather a homely way to be sure, came to the philosophical conclusion, that in visiting, she should adopt the motto, "to be sure your are wanted, and then go ahead." She also had a vague notion that "going out to spend an afternoon," was putting

one's hand rather lawlessly into a neighbor's private pocket, and scattering his golden moments with stupid selfishness ; at the same time, counting it a special favor to the visited, which should be acknowledged by his best entertainment of time, table, and *temper*.

THE MISSING PACKAGE.

"Now, my child, do not for worlds lose one of these papers, every date and record of husband's compositions is in this bundle, I never have trusted them out of my hands before," said a handsome matron, as she placed the treasure on the table before her young friend.

"This is the same old piano," she continued, on which he composed 'Mary's Tears,' 'There's Nothing True but Heaven,' and most of those beautiful sacred songs, so widely celebrated."

"And this, his old chair," said Esther; "what a relic this will be to some antiquarian, when 'some time shall have passed away.'"

"Yes, besides his genius as a composer, husband is a father, as it were, in the musical world. You know he was first president of the 'Handel and Haydn Society,' in Boston, and assisted in producing the 'Creation,' the first time it was performed in America. In all the oratorios he took a prominent part for years." And the lady went on mentioning data, for she was never weary of talking of her justly distinguished husband.

"Well," said Esther, "I will do the best I can with these records; you may be sure, I shall hold the trust as sacred, and will return the papers when I have arranged the biography."

"You know," continued Mrs. —, "that these anecdotes, such as Moore's compliment to the musical arrangement of his songs, and other notices of distinguished persons, can all be woven in, to spice the history."

At this moment the gentle entrance of a pale slender man, with bent form, spiritual face, and hand as delicate as a lady's, arrested the conversation for a moment.

"What now, Borden?" facetiously inquired Mr. —, "what schemes, stratagems, or plots, are going forward to-day? How come on the scales, while you and Madame — gossip?"

"We are plotting to catch a lion, we had our trap all set, and behold he walks right into it," said Esther.

"Yes, yes, you mean that Lyon on College Hill, I suppose," rejoined Mr. —; at which a loud laugh hinted there was some point to the repartee.

"No, we have him here captive, and by this budget of papers, he will soon see what we mean to do with him."

"Ladies, can it be you are anxious to perpetuate my name by any careful collection of what I have done, when I am entirely indifferent to it? To-day, in giving a lesson at Mr. Allen's, some old friends of the family desired me to sing. I was very much wearied by my long walk in the heat,

and felt quite out of voice; but I rallied, and sitting down at the piano, commenced—

‘To Jesus the crown of my hope—’

my voice grew strong, clear, and youthful, I was carried away entirely beyond myself, and exulted in the spirit of that beautiful hymn, especially in the words—

‘Bear me away to thy throne—’

I lost all consciousness of everything around me, and when I paused, at the conclusion, the breathless silence of the room convinced me that angels had been with us. I care little what record is made of me on earth, whether I die illustrious or obscure, provided my name is written in the Lamb’s book of Life.”

Mrs. — knew well her husband disapproved of using any of these usual methods to extend and perpetuate his fame; that he was impatient even when she read, and collected flattering notices of his compositions; and that he preferred altogether the humble course of a Christian teacher, to all the honors of an author. She, therefore, said nothing more on the subject, before him; but pressing the package into Esther’s hand, gave her an impressive look of their consequence, and proceeded to bring from her closet a cordial of very choice and subtle nature, which she always had ready for her husband when he returned from a walk.

Esther sat by the window, wreathed with jessamine, and ran over in her mind, the extraordinary

character of the two persons before her. Here was this gifted, blind musician, whose face was radiant with the light of genius, blended with a spiritualization of every feature, patiently enduring his affliction, patiently breathing forth his inspirations of song, patiently pursuing a daily round of severe duties, without anxiety for earthly reward or honor, ready to give up his frail life at any moment; caring little whether appreciative minds cherish his music and preserve it from oblivion or not; beside him is a wonderfully beautiful woman, in the majesty of womanhood, the roses still lingering in her cheeks, the dimples still nesting the smiles that were always playing around them; this brave devoted wife, who honored her husband in his infirmities and helplessness, who supported his feeble uncertain steps with a tender majesty of mien that arrested the stranger's eye, and made him pay a silent homage to woman's love. This charming woman, who turned from the allurements of worldly prosperity, and married from a romance and devotion of love, now almost obsolete, who never grew weary in delicate devotion to her husband, or in stimulating his genius with deferential hint and comment. It was a picture, a poem. But neither the genius or piety of the father, nor the loyalty and beauty of the mother, could keep domestic trials entirely from the hearthstone. Children there were, some brilliant, beautiful, and erratic as comets; some sensitive, poetical, and religious; the home was never without the excitement of change and adventure. Sometimes the whole family, gathering in the music-room, united

their voices in delightful harmony with the piano or organ, in some of those lofty compositions of their father, whose voice joining in impassioned cadences, would rise and swell, and whose face would glow with unearthly radiance. Nor were these gatherings wanting in picturesque effect. There were all kinds of beauty, from the stately turbaned mother, down to the flashing brunette, who always had a book in her hand, though her little dressing gown hung awry, and her natural curls hung in disorderly confusion around her shoulders. One daughter was an ethereal floating blonde, who verily never seemed to touch the earth with either foot or imagination; one who seemed to breathe a more exhilarating atmosphere than common air; one whose religion was poetized, and to whom a common person or event wore a meaning, a charm, a beauty undiscoverable to any more material vision; one, who was never without affairs of love to adjust; one to whom poets addressed their effusions, for whom artists painted pictures, and musical composers dedicated compositions; one in whose hand common flowers seemed to acquire a new beauty, and on whose form scarf and robe floated in unwonted grace, and to whom everything lent a charm. Then there was the tender luxuriousness of face and manner, the religious gravity of Ernesta, true, faithful, and elegantly reserved, ready with conscientious zeal for every form of religious duty; one whose manifest destiny was to be the wife of a classically handsome educated Presbyterian minister, and the mother of ten children!

There was the witty brother, who, with affected gravity, commences a voluntary with a scientific skill and feeling worthy the critical presence of so much talent, and so many connoisseurs, but who, by an irresistible impulse of drollery, improvises snatches of foreign themes, quirks, and trills, misplaces the shakes, and turns, and stops, until even the grave father cannot resist the infinite humor of that brilliant, petted, ruined genius. There is Astarte, the indescribable—too gloriously beautiful for a prosaic life, too daring, gifted, restless for home life, a tone of music divorced from its fellow, a ray of light wandering from its centre—when she stepped leisurely into the room, a shock of magnetic interest always ran around the circle. She knew that on her parted lips a dangerous beauty played; she knew that her luxuriant band of hair wound about her head had a fearful charm; that her white, dimpled hand was full of snares, and that around her whole form the magic lines and curves of grace ran a continual significance of temptation; that she stood near the centre of Paradise, quite near the tree of knowledge. Yet one would seem recreant to nature not to admire this glorious work, this perfection of beauty. None were recreant. The coldest loved her; the impetuous wasted themselves in extravagant ecstasies. Life is long to some; it transforms beauty into ugliness, sinners to saints. It transformed Astarte, and a dangerous beauty became a pious wife.

But Felicia, the sincere, independent, quaint, critical Felicia, whose quick glances and ready words

always heralded a laugh, how well she filled in the little blank between Astarte the beautiful and Letty the *litterateur*! How fertile her devices for enjoyment, and frank her humor, making her wounds of sarcasm or ridicule a wholesome check and reproof to anything false or absurd! Her whole true nature abandoned itself to honest enjoyments, to pleasure; and when she sung, a delicious freshness of feeling made her seem more like a wood-robin in its own native fragrance of shade than like a schooled young lady of modern days. Felicia had her hands ever full of treasures for her friends; but the greatest of all favors was when she gave them, with her heart, to her lover and husband, for she held no old lovers in reserve to beguile odd moments in matrimonial vicissitudes, nor did she ever seek any new ones.

We have looked around, and noted the various character of the family group, while the music is pealing and echoing through the old home; but we overlooked the little waiter, Jo, who, being of a devotional frame of mind, always lay sprawling under the piano during morning and evening prayers, his feet sometimes turned up to the bottom of the piano, making of himself an inverted caryatide, sometimes lying on his face, and when catechized by the pious musician, who conversed with each one separately in this way, "Do you love the Saviour, Joseph?" he replied, in a kind of smothered boldness of tone, "*Some,*" whereat the young man figuring at the organ suddenly disappears, with his hand over his mouth, to suppress an uproarious burst of laughter.

They are all there, a wonderful gathering of genius, beauty, love, and hope.

Six years have passed away; the old home is deserted. No voice breaks the silence of the cob-webbed halls; no music rolls from those empty rooms. The old chair is not left which Esther loved; the form that occupied it was laid in the burying-ground that looks out on the sea long ago. No morning or evening prayer has been heard from the music-room these many years. Beauty, wit, and song, light forms, and smiles, and loves, and tears, all are gone. Farewell, old home! Thine adopted child could not look on thy dreariness and desertion without tears. How must children who first saw the sun and all the glories of earth from under thy roof, who first learned the meaning of love, and wondered at the mysteries of life, sometimes dwell in sad memory on thy sacred associations with youthful heart-life!

Six years are gone, and Esther, with despairing eagerness, is searching dusty shelves, closets, old trunks, chests, drawers, every hidden corner for "the missing package"—alas, without success! Travel, and change, and absence have confused her recollection, and she can find no clue to the treasure. Her old friend, now bowed with years and widowed loneliness, still fondly lingering on the talents and virtues of her beloved husband, begs Esther, as she has made no use of the papers, to return them for the use of a biographer. They cannot be found! Every date and incident of note is lost!

Poor Esther! Every returning year brings her a

sad reminder of her unfortunate carelessness in the form of a letter, bemoaning the "missing package."

"And I can make no redress," said Esther, as the old year of '54 brought the annual kind but sad lament. Remorsefully, she turned over her old music-books, and lingered lovingly over the compositions of her old master. "Yes, he is 'arrayed in clouds of golden light.' Now 'all things are fair and bright.' To him 'this world is no longer a scene of enjoyment and sadness.' What human record could satisfy even the widow's aspirations, since she knows he is singing, as he taught us to sing—

'There is nothing *true* but heaven!'

THE DE WITT CLINTON, BY H. K. BROWN.

WITH a small party of friends, I spent a soft October day in Greenwood Cemetery. After long wandering in circuitous paths, we came suddenly upon an eminence that commands a grand scope of vision, in which, sublimely and harmoniously near, towered up the bronze statue of De Witt Clinton.

Mountain, and sea, and sky, ships from a thousand shores, the past, the future, all blended in one grand effect. That great storm-defying head, intense, stern, calm, prophetic! Tempest-stained, through the silent lapse of ages, it shall still look over the sea, the glory of morning and evening. The light of stars shall glow and fade on generations of men, and still great hopes, action, and daring shall find in that divine head an exponent, an embodied language and a power forever. Many an idle and cavilling tongue will have turned to dust, many a name will be lost from the records of men, when the feet of pious pilgrims to shrines of art shall still linger reverentially near this monument to study the calm majesty of that head. Many a soul shall trace its aspirations for a noble life to this immortal teaching.

Nothing little can profanely look on immortal truth and live; no impious hand can go unscathed

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that handles irreverently the sacred works of inspired and truthful minds. And who that has felt the sublime force of this head, felt it stirring his soul to prayer, but holds it in some way linked with his religion and his God?

THOUGHTS IN THE MOONLIGHT.

I CAN understand how Thoreau could walk miles into the woods to "keep an appointment with a tree." I can appreciate the keen pleasure of a bath in the "pond" when the morning was filling her golden cup with light. I even feel the relish of lying prone on the ice, and watching the winter habits of fishes in their glass house, or a straggling, solitary walk by the stars of midnight, and how the soul under these circumstances should feel itself elevated into a companionship with nature, should laugh at the bonds and cares of life, and mock at the houses and lands, the goods and chattels that have "*got men.*" But returning to the silent house, no fire, no light, no kind hand preparing the "thin gruel" he will eat with a friend. No cat to jump on to his shoulder, or pursue that endless chase after her tail; no dog to rub against his hand; no hen to gossip over the crumbs at his door; no child to displace his books, or overturn his inkstand, or leave its little cart and worn shoe among his papers; no wife to chide his late hour with tender concern. Ah, Thoreau, I do not understand this part of your chill philosophy!

I understand and honor the grand simplicity of hoeing in the bean-field, and how much was yielded from those few acres to your deep thought and inquiries, beside beans. I know that "*you know beans,*" that many a hard-skinned fact beside beans has yielded farina to your thought. I would go back with you to primitive life. I would learn to be great like you, great enough to invite a poet to sit in one *only other chair*, and in the empty room see no barrenness, such rich thoughts and luxury of wit take the place of furniture and food.

THE OLD LEATHERN SHOES.

THERE they stand, the great boots ! not a dainty line or curve in them ; “the harebell could never spring elastic” from under the pressure of *that* shoe ; hardly would a stubborn thistle raise its humbled head from such a crushing weight : A Broadway belle would shriek at thy clumsy, frightful stubbornness and size, and French boot-makers would mock and sneer at you. But, dear old leathern shoes, lovely are ye to my fond gaze, precious to my memory !

To see how many sunsets have ye faithfully protected my climbing feet ; to what far sweet glens, and over what craggy precipices, down what tangled ravines ! To what distant neighborhoods of beauty have I gone “shod like a mountaineer” that otherwise my soul had been denied.

How kindly have my old shoes trodden down paths in the dewy meadows, and revealed the tempting strawberry, or beat an entrance into the blackberry field ! how have they taken me over stone walls and stubble, to orchards of golden fruit, and down to the water’s edge to see the fishes play, or among sedges of wild-flowers ; into swamps of winter-green, and even to the home of the “lily of the

valley!" Morning or evening glory have they not denied me, nor have all the changing seasons found them unworthy of my trust; no rain or sleet or snow has kept them from the widow's lonely home, or the sick or dying bed. It is true they have not tripped haughtily the paved street, or sunk in the luxurious carpet, nor could they polk or waltz me through a season in any *respectable* society. There ye would be derided, dear old faithful shoes, and the pinching elegant French gaiter would step aside in scorn of thy honest homeliness.

But mind ye, thou hast marked no secret galling spot to wreak thy revenge and spite, on the foot thou hast protected so long and well; and I know by thy honest face, thou art not growing any miseries to spoil my evening's repose, when friends are gone and thou art set aside. But there are those lifting up their eyes in torment, in retribution for a disguise in a maliciously, diabolically, elegant gaiter; there are those who made much parade of its elegant form on the *pavé*, and at street crossings, who in the repose and solitude of their chambers curse its fictitious and deceitful beauty, and stinginess of proportion.

But ye, my generous leathern friends, ye have never muddled my brain, by pinching my feet, or betrayed me into any false notions of propriety and beauty. The lessons I have learned from your ample size, and sturdy make—are *truth, honesty, and liberty.*

P H E B E .

THAT protected sweet note with the gentle falling cadence at the close, how it has haunted me! It is not the quick gossiping call of the common Phebe who, like an anxious mother, whose daughter "is out," chidingly repeats her impatient Phebe, Phebe-e-e Phebe-e-e! No, this Phebe, that has by its plaintive lament so often tempted me from my book or work-basket to wander on the river bank, looking into every tree to see what shape of bird-form a tone so human in its sadness could take—this Phebe which calls me, but never reveals herself—whose mellow note still gurgling in her throat, seems to grow distant like an echo, instead of a real voice—is not the common provident domestic bird that builds her nest in the corners of the eaves or under the wood-house, neighboring with the squirrel; that so prettily covers her nest with moss, and nestles her little white breast so confidently on her pillow of sticks and straw, even while the wondering children are peering about inquiringly into her domestic concerns. No, the Phebe that haunts me defies my vigilant curiosity—a ghost of sorrow, a tone-shrouded grief.

It was a warm sunny hollow where I stretched

myself unreservedly on the young grass, that was just pushing through the gray blanket of old leaves that had protected it through the winter; the birch-tree hung out its green tassels; and the maple held up its fruity redness of blossoms, and the "pussy willow" was full of downy bloom; the river sung its old song of gladness, and flashed in the sunlight, and drank up the blue of the smiling heavens.

The oriole was examining his old nest and flaming about his new mate, and every redbreast and bluebird was on the wing. The blackbirds were gallantly, but rather roughly planning their summer homes in the meadow, and fraternally selecting their brides in Fourier-like association. But my bird sung; and I heard no other after that—laying my ear to the earth and looking up to the tremulous leaves, I listened to Nature while she told me this story.

Phebe was a sensitive little girl, and her nerves were always in a tremor. She was very loving, but so easily shocked and wounded by any rudeness, that she could not play happily with other children long at a time, or endure the varying moods of her brothers and sisters; even her mother often unintentionally drove her child in mute distress to her solitary room, by some impatient word. But her favorite resort in trouble was a dell, to which her little feet had beaten a secret path; there she wove a seat of grapevines, bittersweet and clematis, high up in the branches of a tree, simply by climbing up and twisting the vines together into a tangled and firm knot. There would she sit with her feet hanging out

of her nest, and talk to herself, to the birds, and flowers beneath her, sometimes singing songs and repeating little rhymes that she had learned.

One day, while swinging back and forth in her cradle of vines, suddenly there fell into her lap a little bird; she looked up in surprise, thinking at first an angel had dropped it from the white cloud that brooded in soft folds over her—but in the gray branches that roofed her head she saw a nest of young birds, and that this had fallen from it. Phebe, reasoning from her own experience, thought the little bird had been grieved by some unkindness, and perhaps was pushed from the little home. She took the tender unfledged thing and put it in her bosom, that she might get down without hurting it—then swinging herself carefully from the branches, let herself down to the ground. She went home with her hand holding the flutterer in her bosom, and with most anxious delight showed the little treasure. Her mother said she had better let it go, “for it would certainly die;” one brother wanted to give it to the cat; another more kindly offered to make a cage for it, while in the mean time she should nurse it in a basket of cotton.

The cage was made and furnished, and the bird, quite well in its new mode of life, put into its home.

But in the country, where every tree and bush has a singing bird, where at your very door you may tempt the chipping-bird and chick-a-dee-dee, who would wish to see the winged rovers of the air limited to a little round of wire-bound space, and to an endless monotony of hop and flutter from perch to

bathing tub, and from bath to perch? Poor exchange for endless variety of woods and fields, for fruits and flowers. Not for all their forced gayety of song, their ill-timed and misplaced gayety, would I imprison birds, or any creature with wings.

But Phebe had her little Sky-drop, as she called her bird, and as it fell to her charge, conscientiously, lovingly, took care of it.

How impatiently she watched its growth, and wondered when it would be old enough to sing! how delighted she was with its preference for her hand, and when it chirped in answer to her voice! There was never wanting a bush of green leaves, some berries or fruit in the cage, "so that the bird should not forget its birthplace," Phebe said.

One morning, at the table some fun and raillery about Phebe's fondness for her bird, and her silly talk to it, quite distressed her, and, choking with grief, she left her untasted breakfast and hurried to her room. Passing the window where hung her bird, she glanced tearfully up to it—when with its little round eyes fixed on her the bird sung out in a clear voice, *Phebe, Phebe*.

Phebe was startled with delight, for this was its first song—she flew to the cage and repeated with it, Phebe, Phebe, lingering long on the last note.

"Do not speak short to me, little sky-drop, as others do, sing me kindly," said Phebe, putting a little handful of seeds into the cage. The bird pecked them from her hand, and Phebe smiled through her tears.

Daily, Phebe grew more painfully sensitive to

common careless words, and unthinking rudeness of manner; daily her nerves grew more uncontrollable; her heart palpitated so violently, when she was suddenly reproved, that she had to throw herself many times a day, on her little bed; and daily little Sky-drop sung louder and clearer, Phebe, Phebe, Phebe.

Quite pale and thin, she noiselessly hovered about the house, unobserved by her more robust brothers and sisters. One day sitting by the kitchen table, listlessly, watching her mother while she made bread and pies, and little tarts, which Phebe wondered how anybody could eat; she, as if from sudden and painful necessity, said, "mother, when I die, I want you to let my bird out of the cage, and don't let George catch it. Robert won't, for he has promised me."

"Die! what nonsense, now, you ain't agoing to die, Phebe, though to be sure you do look kinder spindlin'; you must take some of that are serrup your father took for rumatiz; go now and take a swaller."

Phebe reluctantly obeyed, and then from the agitation the conversation had produced, with the nausea of the "serrup," was obliged to hurry to her bed. She did not get up to tea, but just as the sun went down, begged Robert to bring her bird-cage and hang it at the foot of her bed.

In the night a clear prolonged note, with a sobbing fall, awoke the family; some thought Phebe called, and some thought the bird sung out strangely, in the midnight. It could not have been Phebe, for

when her mother bent over her, she was still, not in sleep, but death.

The next day the bird was set free, and from covert and shade, ever since, there comes at times, that wonderful sweetness of sorrow, in the musical call, Phebe, Phebe, Phebe.

Can a bird's note have more tenderness than a human voice, and minister to the soul when friends do not?

THE BRAVE.

“The world belongs to the brave.”—*German Proverb.*

“To the brave.” So sat I musing; the fire rumbled like the sound of a distant waterfall, or like the hum of bees, in a summer day; but not like them bringing cheerfulness to my soul. The clock ticked with friendly fidelity, and the dog breathed sonorously, by the fire. I knew that sweet sleep had folded the blossoms of my heart in healthful rest, that their souls were floating in dreams, in such sweet lull as innocent childhood alone can know. Want and sorrow were not near me; and yet resting my head upon my hand, despondingly, I still repeated in doubt, “to the brave, the world belongs to the brave.”

A sad crowd of faces rose to my vision, faces of wives, tear-stained and haggard, from long suffering, perhaps from toil, and sickness, and want; perhaps from the infidelity and desertion of husbands; or it may be, from the ingratitude or folly of children; I read in the stern lines of long-continued sorrow, the patient, brave struggle that had gone on for many years, and I wondered if the world belonged

to these brave souls, and if it did, why they were still defrauded of their just inheritance.

The noble heads of reformers crowded before me, furrowed with the traces of deep and earnest thought. I reflected on the solemn convictions that had inspired these men, and urged them into a warfare with falsehood and crime, and the valor with which they had battled the mighty enemy. I recalled the sacrifices they had made of repose, of wealth, of time, and reputation; and I looked to see their possessions in the "world that belongs to the brave."

Certainly, the kingdom they had won belonged not to this world, for neither fame, or riches, or honor attended them, in consequence of brave battling for truth and right.

Inventors, who, in defence of some cherished discovery, or new application of old laws and principles, have suffered ridicule and neglect, and sunk into obscurity, while their immortal gifts to the world have accelerated its progress: where and what is the world that belongs to these brave?

And so I went on, recalling to mind the various classes of heroic souls, that had found little, very little of this world in their possession, after a life of brave action; and my heart grew heavier and heavier, as the clock ticked and the fire burned.

Mankind, generally, seemed pitiable for their weakness, blindness, and folly; the exception of truth-lovers and right-doers, small in number and less in influence. But then again running my eye over the wide present, with all its great plans and

promises, and contrasting it with any period of past history, progress was written so plainly on the law and necessity of life, I took courage and embraced the great world again, in devout confidence and love.

Coming into a better mood, pleasant things floated into my memory; records of brave endeavor and its reward; the slow but ultimate redress of wrongs to nations and individuals; the tardy but final recognition of true merit in the world's benefactors. Soon my soul reflected the glow of the fire, and hummed a pleasant tune, in concert with the merry blaze. I thought of this and that cheerful soul which made labor light, and twined roses among the dullest, heaviest chains of duty. This was a healthful condition of mind, and things lost their leaden hue, and vindicated the wisdom of their Author.

More fully to impress myself with a 'lesson in *faith*, I made this record of one I had known.

A L M A I

was singing on the stage, in the concert-room. The rapturous greeting that had announced her entrance was hushed into a breathless silence. With pale calm face, and eyes uplifted, Almai poured the earnest love of her heart, in tones of sustained and steady sweetness and power. There was no strained spasmodic exhibition of skill; no affectations of artistic execution, but a simple and direct rendering of the thought and feeling of the composition. True, there

was a rapt expression on those gentle features, and now and then a flush of more than common life on her cheek, a play of divine light around her pure mouth, and her eye seemed to look far away into some distant world; but she was so calm and earnest the external senses slumbered, while the soul awoke to consciousness of life. All hearts were opened to her, and thrilled to her rendering of life, through her own experience.

The acclaim died away, bouquets were gathered from the stage, and Almai, with the triumphs of the evening still surging through her brain, hastened to her room. It was so silent after such a tumult of emotion; she felt almost rebuked by the still moonlight lying on the floor, and the shadows clustering in the corners. Suddenly, in an agony of tenderness she sunk into a chair, exclaiming—

“Oh! my child! my child! the tones of thy sweet voice, in some pleading want, would outweigh all these clamorous honors! Lillian, my bird, my lost! and pressing her hand to her head, Almai let the tears drop unrestrained; and the tide of her grief beat about her bosom in violent swelling sobs.

The world was warmed into generosity to Almai; her rare gifts of genius and beauty, wedded to a sweet sympathy and truthfulness of manner; her industrious reverence and cultivation of her talents; her liberal soul, always open to enjoyment and fresh teaching, attracted to her friends; new and varying scenes of beauty, adventure, surprises in gifts, in love, in honors; “the world really did belong to this brave young heart: then why these tears? have the

great wheels of fate run over some sweet home affections? has all this charming beauty and song grown from a tear-watered soul? a heart that has known suffering before success?

Almai's birthright was a child-like faith, which, with its pure white blossoms, was the "life-everlasting" of her soul, the clustering beauty of all her actions. From the time she was four years old, and sat on a low stool, reading the notes with precocious readiness, of "Old Hundred," and singing with confident precision, church psalms; until standing before the public an acknowledged favorite, pouring her rapt soul into the grand harmonies of Handel or other great masters, she never doubted but she was born to sing, and with a bird's unquestioning instinct, soared into the blue depths of heavenly longing and love, and soaring still, like Shelly's skylark, ever singing.

But the sweetest flowers of earth push sometimes from out a snow-bank, sometimes from the thin soil, on a rock, in the damp shades of a swamp; so Almai, although born in a home of tenderness and gentle domestic virtues, was out of place in her obscurity, and with heroic effort, must, to be true to her instincts, make her way into other spheres.

At fifteen, she went through the vicissitudes of a teacher's life, taking upon her unshrinking shoulders the irksome responsibilities of a village school. At little trials that would wear the patience of a less hopeful spirit, she only smiled and sung the sweeter. Where others faltered, she pressed smilingly on. She alternately taught and studied every season, until

an appreciative friend gratified her highest wishes, by placing her under the best musical tuition that could be found. Happy, and at home everywhere, Almai entered into her new life among talent and cultivation, of the highest order, as if it was as natural to her as the air of her own pine-clad hills, at home.

To be always ready "for any fate," is the grand secret of success; *to lose no time in doubting, to lose no power by waiting*, when the opportunity comes; this is what insures progress and secures the highest aims.

Almai never wearied of study, it was a natural mode of development to her, so of course she poured her soul more and more readily into the channels of harmony, and gave each day more satisfactory expression to her feelings and hopes.

But a marriage, with her sympathetic and generous benefactor, changed the prospects of our heroine. Back to a quiet home, among the meadows, with new duties for her cheerful spirit, behold our Almai, and instead of morning practice of "sol-feggios," hear her singing, sols getting up-i-o, to the accompaniment of kettles and milkpails, and pleasant lowing of cows, and gabbling of hens and turkeys.

"All is well that ends well;" but when the soul feels a daily diminution of power, for want of proper exercise and nutriment; when the restless eye wanders from the actual and present, with dissatisfaction and intense longing for other scenes, it is time to free the spirit from the imposed shackles,

and, trusting to its intuitions, follow its tendencies, never fearing but that like all essences, and subtle forces in the natural world, it will find its proper level.

With a babe nestling in her bosom, Almai still heard in the solemn stillness of her solitary thought, voices from afar, calling her to other life; so when the busy household demanded her energies, when the critical eyes of indefatigable industry reprehended some delinquency, Almai, with cheerful decision, and with devout faith in herself, took her little nursling, and in the wildest depths of a wintry month, sought her husband, who, from pecuniary necessity, had gone to a distant State to retrieve his marred fortunes.

Now mark what a woman can do; a youthful mother with the new cares and anxieties of maternity still unfolding to her in perplexing variety of duty! See her select with judicious care, not the situation that would secure to her the most ease and indulgent protection from her husband, but the one that would by the most arduous endeavor, facilitate her own improvement, and retrieve their impaired fortunes.

In the modest arrangements of her new home, Almai found herself mother, nurse, cook, and woman of all work. As soon as the hurried and complicated duties of the morning were performed, lesson hours came. Putting her baby in a safe place on the floor surrounded with toys, and making the fire secure, Almai hurried to her pupils, leaving a request with a woman in another part of the house to look in once in a while on the baby. Her scholars kept

her until noon. Hurrying home, faint and hungry, unnerved by constant use of her lungs, and discords and false notes; sometimes bedabbled with mud, and wet with rain, sometimes benumbed by a biting blast, she re-entered her little room to find the fire gone out, the baby impatiently fretting for care, and husband just coming in to dinner! Rallying her exhausted energies, and choking back a sigh, our brave little wife prepared the dinner. As soon as it was dispatched, an engagement with scholars at her room prevented her from clearing away the table, and with the suspended duty disguised under the clean tablecloth, which she threw over the fragments of dinner, she laboriously taught the slow hours of the afternoon away. Evening pressed a multiplicity of duties upon her; domestic demands were answered by her ready hand; then laying her child into its little crib, she prepared for rehearsal with a musical club, and for a series of concerts in which she was to sustain an important part.

Sabbath days brought no rest, for an engagement in a choir brought its attendant necessities of practice, and the home must still have its daily attention, to keep the table spread and the hearth-fire glowing.

Month after month Almai labored thus, with hands and heart and head, and with uncomplaining fidelity devoted the money she earned to the mutual support of the family.

Where was her husband? Striving also. But often a generous soul starts in life with large faith and hope in the world, but for want of the magnetic force that attracts responsive kindness and success,

the fine sensibilities recoil within the shut soul and remain in inelastic despondency. The heart that was so open and kind in youth, finding many of its holiest trusts misplaced, closes all its avenues to outward joy, ambition, or worldly success, and would be alone with nature, and the healing quiet of solitude. And often the soul that thus suffers should be revered for its very excess of delicacy, and though the world recedes from it, as not among "the brave," yet a kindly few will recognize the noble elements that prompted so prodigal an expenditure of early faith, and met such depressing disappointment.

Action begets power, and Almai found herself at length, by force of her own deservings, sustaining a high place in her profession, and so beloved that none who knew her, or heard the sweeping fulness, the clear, pure, far-reaching tones of her voice, could refrain from paying some tribute to her genius; perhaps a tear, often gorgeous bouquets of rarest flowers, costly gems, and all the usual plaudits that enthusiasm prompts.

It was a withering morning in August, dry, dusty and dispiriting; Almai had risen early, torn up the carpets of her rooms, packed her furniture, paid rents and all sorts of bills, and now sat over a little trunk raining hot tears upon little pink, blue, and green frocks, on tiny shoes, and embroidered fragrant linen. Still packing and weeping, the trunk was filled, closed, locked; taking little Lillian by the hand with her husband, the little party proceeded to the depot. A relative was waiting there to take

charge of Lillian, and carry her into the country. Almai had consented to this, through the advice of her husband, who saw the advantages of the opening year would be greatly enhanced in value to Almai, if she could be relieved of the sweet but wearing care of her child.

So wonder not, if the phantom of a little face and outstretched arms, sometimes came between Almai and her audience, or that there is a strange thrilling tone in her ear, outvoicing the plaudits of the admiring crowd; but wonder at the cheerful firmness, the steady energies of that young and delicate wife; at the self-denying, hopeful composure of that gentle mother; at the advancement under dreariest difficulties of that gifted soul, and let us rejoice that now and then a soul, by a happy but severe experience, finds that

“The world belongs to the brave.”

A LESSON FROM NATURE.

ALL day have I been imprisoned in the house; the wind has blocked up my door with a wall of snow, has capped all my windows, and keeps a thick veil of snow-flakes flying in the air. With a deal of unamiable egotism, this same wind keeps a continual surging and shrieking around the house, angrily catching up an inoffensive drift and setting it down there, then, being no two minutes of the same mind, whisking it up, drifts it here; now the puzzled snow flies from an eastern blast, when suddenly a western catches it, and waltzes it capriciously away in vain and aimless eddies. The wind makes light of the old trees, and disrespectfully bows their gray heads, and tosses their arms aimlessly, and packs snow on their trunks, flirts the clouds before the face of the sun, and garments before the face of the bewildered traveller. The wind muffles the sound of bells, and defrauds my ear of their cheerful music, arrests the foot of my neighbor on his snow-blocked threshold, and dims the outline of his roof so that we may feel no social nearness.

And I sit by my window, and think that beneath these stern and chilling drifts all the kind and genial

forces of life are cunningly working, preparing at the very first smile of the sun, to put forth such wonders of beauty as the eye of faith can scarcely picture under these temporary blasts.

What a lesson to the poor soul that allows a cold and dreary fortune to still the pulses of inner life; that suffers the sweet issues of love to forsake the thousand channels to beautiful and useful ends, and dies before the spring calls to a glorious resurrection. Teach us, stern and moaning trees, tossing under a frowning sky, still to keep near the roots of life the motion and form of beauty, so that when the warm kind days come, buds and leaves may clothe the patient soul, and display the results of its silent, secret winter-work in untold grace and loveliness.

A REMINISCENCE OF CHILDHOOD.

“Low down in a beautiful valley,
Where love crowns the meek and the lowly.”

ALL day long the monotonous hum of an old-fashioned melody set to these words, has haunted me. With the memory of the droning plaint of the air, comes a melancholy dreamy picture in strange contrast with the hurrying ambitions of common life.

When I was a child, I often accompanied my father in his professional visits to the sick, in one of which I gathered some moral effects from the scenery and circumstances which come back to me with this old tune and quaint words.

The small brown house was literally “low down in a beautiful valley” under a wooded hill on the banks of a beautiful river, fringed with sugar-maples and wild cherry trees, and on the green meadow around the house, the children when they were well, trooped about among clovers and buttercups, in perfect freedom from, and innocence of all restraints of fine clothes and perhaps of clean faces. But now they were all sick, the only two rooms of the house had in every corner a bed, for not less than eight or

ten children are generally the peculiar *gift* of such conditions.

The mother (and how vividly impressive her face comes back to my memory) was of fair proportions, regular features, with a wonderfully sweet soft voice, and such a look of pious content as I never saw equalled. Nor was it an ignorant and stolid submission to a hard fate; she seemed fully to appreciate the very finest qualities of the human mind, not from observation of the effects of refinement and culture, but as they exist in nature. A playful humor often mingled with her grave observations and played over the matronly tenderness of her face like the tinting of the sun on the leaves of a fading autumn flower.

It was she who went singing out and in the sunny threshold of her door, with a cup of water for a sick child, or to bring wood to boil their gruel,

"Low down in a beautiful valley,
Where love crowns the meek and the lowly;"

and the delicate modulations of her voice stole around the low rooms, and seemed a pleasant opiate to the sick, for they were all gentle and uncomplaining.

The woods crowded protectingly upon the hill in the rear of the house, and seemed in their solemn tranquillity to look off on the peaceful meadow and echo in a soothing way the same refrain, and all the little flowers humbly raising their sweet eyes from the grass in the meadow seemed still to repeat "the meek and the lowly," while the river, cheerfully singing in its obscurity, confirmed the *feeling* of the

whole scene, and repeated the sentiment that "*Love crowns the meek and the lowly.*"

Here was a woman who, since she had not been blessed with external advantages to develop her fine nature, and give it harmony of outward expression, had turned to the graces of the spirit and richly adorned herself, and I question whether she was not really better qualified for a high position in social life and as a *gentlewoman*, than had she been in any intermediate point between her low brown house, six barefooted children, homely dress, and a "palatial residence in Fifth Avenue," "thousand dollar" toilets and all.

Be that as it may, as I sat on the low bed, swinging some tail feathers of a peacock over the fever-burning child, and took into my young and inexperienced mind the moral of the scene, I learned something which in after years has come back to me in time of need; and not unfrequently that motherly face, with the soft brown hair parted evenly on her broad, full brow, and the tempered light of the intelligent hazel eyes, the sweet voice, the August intensity of sunshine gilding the doorway, the hum of the flies, mingling with the melody of that quaint hymn—all are seen and heard as long ago.

When some structure of fancy has been rudely overthrown by a hard blow from stern fact; when schemes of ambition have failed, and left blank and bitter desolation; when ideal wishes have had to bend to base and material forces; when love has been shrouded in temporary clouds, or household

affections shocked by sickness or death, then even the simple pathos of an old hymn may brush from the memory sweet dew to freshen love, and revive peace and patience, and it may even give strength to know that thousands have trodden, and are still walking meekly, yet in the dignity of truth and beauty,

“Low down in a beautiful valley,
Where love crowns the meek and the lowly.”

AN OLD THEME WITH VARIATIONS.

MY heroine is not perfect ; that will shock you, oh, romance reader ! But the fact must be confessed, Fidele was not perfect in a physical, moral, or mental point of view ; but she was interesting, as you shall see and confess. In person (that is the most anxious point with gentlemen, so I proceed to that first), Fidele was brilliant, but not in one feature faultless. Her brow was not marble or alabaster, but of intellectual mould, smooth and fair. Her hair was a sunny brown, and hung in natural clusters of massive curls ; it was not silken, but of slightly wilful fibre, as also was her temper. Her eyes were blue by day, and black at night. Did ever see such eyes ? They are born of fire. Her nose was of classical outline ; but some little unfriendly muscle about the nostril gave it at times a haughty and contemptuous expression. Her mouth and teeth seemed luxury itself, couched among pearls and rosebuds. When she was mirthful, love danced on her shining teeth, and shot arrows from sly little dimples, and revelled among all the varying lights and shadows of a wilderness of smiles ! If she was in sorrow, so soft and sad a grace floated around her one was charmed into admiration and sympathy.

But this same loveable little mouth could send out little sarcasms and skirmishing witticisms, although her heart was always full of sincerity and truth. Fidele had beautiful hands; not so very small and tapering, but plump, cordial, enthusiastic, rose-flushed, loving hands. She was tall, and all her motions were undulating and full of flowing grace. I shall not introduce you more fully to her mind and character, but leave her to reveal them as I proceed in my little narrative.

It was evening in October. A wood-fire was blazing on the hearth in a little parlor; a cricket was singing, and so was Fidele. This was the last night of her summer in the country; and her heart was aching with all its garnered thoughts and feelings.

At a little table, quite absorbed in writing, was Edgar West, a poet. He was writing with such intense earnestness that he did not observe Fidele, as she laid down her guitar, and, sitting on a low stool in a shaded corner, watched with troubled interest the face of her lover, for such he had been by declaration since their first ramble in the woods in May. She marked his glowing eye, usually so calm; she looked on that towering brow, lost in clustering curls, as on a mountain gleaming among the clouds, and in each line she traced the path of some great thought.

“What inspires him to-night?” thought Fidele, “for in all our long love I have never awakened a glow like this. Have I at last the happiness, the pride to know that his highest moods of creative

thought are in some way enkindled by me? This would indeed be to my heart the very blossoming, the heavenly aroma of love! For this have I wept and prayed! Oh, it has not been enough for my heart to feel itself a common necessity to him, the atmosphere only of his ordinary life! I must be the balmiest breath in all the air, the loveliest hue, the most subtle, refined, intoxicating presence that a poet can feel or describe! I must be this to him or nothing!" And Fidele sighed.

Edgar looked up, but not to her; for on the sofa near him, reclining indolently, was Lilla. Her languid eyes met his, and for the first time since she came to the home of her friend a spark that had lain in her heart shot up into a flame.

"I have a poem. Shall I read it, Lilla? It will be a fine opiate, and you will be sure to sleep well after, if not during the reading of it. Fidele! Ah, there!" And in the most musical tones in the world, Edgar read "A Dream."

Lilla listened, her heart dissolving in delicious rapture. To be the theme of such a poet! and in the presence of Fidele have her influence so felt, so acknowledged! Every tone of his voice, every pulsation of his heart was answered in her own tumultuous breast and rapt eyes.

And Fidele! How did she see herself and the ambition of her heart thus suddenly prostrated and trampled upon? With tears, with anger? Neither. Every faculty of soul and sense was quickened within her. She saw, she heard, she felt with an intensity that seemed madness, and yet she was as cold, and

calm, and still as death. She saw the feeble-souled, selfish, fickle Lilla distinctly in every capacity of soul and sense; she measured herself with her. She saw her magnificent lover turn from the great soul she knew dwelt within herself to hang a garland of honor around Lilla's unappreciative brow. She saw it all, with a strong and clear purpose, which it took years to accomplish.

Fidele had been too prodigal of her love. She had imbibed the spirit of Edgar's genius that she might kindle his ambition with her loving worship. She gratified his sense of beauty by presenting, as if by magic, the fairest forms of nature and life to his eye. She diffused, as it were, her love through the universe, so that everything through that medium ministered to his happiness. She disrobed herself of individualities, and clothed herself with the beauty and harmony of nature. Alas! that full possession of, and power over that Koh-i-noor of a soul should have prevented Edgar's perception of its worth, and led him for a moment to observe the egotistical Lilla!

"It is the last night we shall be together in the country," said Fidele, calmly. "Let us sail once more up to Glencoe." The proposal was agreeable to all, and the little boat soon shot out from the shore with that trio of hearts, beating in wild, tumultuous conflict. Fidele had the clearest internal vision, and as a broken conversation went on between Lilla and Edgar (every word nothing in itself, but worlds full in meaning), Fidele scribbled with a pencil by moonlight, and of course quite

illegibly to any but herself, in Hudibrastic humor, this :—

“Oh, mystery of mysteries
That in this union lies !
Harmonious yet conflicting trio,
That live to love, and love to live so
That none can shrewdly guess the end—oh !”

At length they land under the old hemlock, at the very spring where Edgar told his love, and pledged his heart to Fidele a few months before.

“The blossoms and fragrance of summer are gone from earth and heart,” thought Fidele. “But by each faded leaf that twirls, deserted of health and bloom, on these trembling branches, I learn my lesson of constancy in despair and death. I may fade and die at his feet ; but the time will come when he will stretch out his desolate and forsaken arms, and pray in anguish for the love he now has thrust from him—pray in vain !”

Just then they were to ascend an abrupt bank. Lilla, with coquettish art, threw off her shawl ; and as the moonlight fell on her fair, dimpled shoulders, she threw her white arms around Edgar, and he swung her up the bank. Fidele followed with philosophic coolness. They sit down, and, checked with shadows and moonlight, weave deeper shadow into each future destiny. Lilla regarded the moon as a very friendly lamp, lit up to reveal her charms, and the whole scene as a happy combination of causes to heighten a great effect, namely, her beauty, and its influence on Edgar ! She contrived to be the only object of observation and theme of praise.

Her efforts were well rewarded by a profusion of witty compliments from Edgar, and even admiring attention from Fidele; for Lilla *was* lovely, flushed with the wine of Edgar's praise and conscious triumph.

"Let her have unlimited power," thought Fidele. "Let her fully reveal herself; not a thought or passion, be it weak or strong, right or wrong, shall hide itself. He shall see her as she is; then, and only then will he know me."

The moon was high when they turned homeward; and Fidele felt that this sacred spot, with all its vows, had been profaned, and gladly, without one word of reference to the past, turned from it forever. That night she made the following record in her diary, blotting it with tears:—

"Heart, why tremble, why weep? Life has many interests; all is not merged in one. Why so heavy, oh, my heart? Time will wear the edge of thy misfortunes; they will not always pierce thee.

"Oh, did he know me all! Could he see my life, hung by so many threads on his every word, every action! Could he know how silence, when I could have prayed, in the humility and agony of my despair, for one word, how his cold silence froze my heart! how my hopes stiffened in white death! how I begged in my soul for life that I might make one struggle to overcome this great terror! But ah, no! He sits, calmly acting a love to one being that shall destroy her, and sees not, or smiles in amused surprise to see another life in fierce and desperate conflict with a great o'ermastering love!"

The next day, with trunks and baggage, and the harvest of wisdom or folly they had gathered from that summer in the country, they turn New-Yorkward. Edgar, following a shining track toward fame, was to leave in a few days for Europe. The morning of his departure soon came, and still no explanation, no reference to their relations to each other was made by either party.

"Adieu, Fidele. How shall I miss my good counsellor, my life's interpreter, which you have been to me! And you, Lilla," he said, without waiting Fidele's reply, "phantom of mischievous delight, you ought to be ever by a poet's side. Adieu, both."

Edgar's handsome form was lost to sight far down the street before Fidele recovered from the shock of his farewell. Lilla abandoned herself to the sofa and the last novel.

The two friends, although quite dissimilar in tastes and character, had a very cordial feeling of friendship for each other, which had grown out of their childhood and school-days, and they were rarely separated. Both families were wealthy; Lilla's of the dress-fashionable class, Fidele's of the literary-fashionable. In the season that followed, each was a belle in her sphere. Fidele attracted men of genius and refinement, and dazzled them with her brilliant beauty and wit, and her *indifference to success*! Lilla was followed by a train of fashionable young men, who could hardly be distinguished one from the other, excepting perhaps now and then by a little pre-eminence in perfumery, vanity, or stupid-

ity. Sometimes they met, the two circles, but never without rousing an indignant feeling in Fidele's bosom that Edgar West should pay homage to the idol of such a troupe. Lilla's ambition, however, was satisfied. She only remembered Edgar as a conquest, and spoke of him as such quite unreservedly. Fidele inspired the artist's pencil and the poet's dream, and received the most flattering tributes of honor and love from talent of every kind, always with grateful appreciation, but without passion; that seemed dead within her.

Edgar's letters were descriptive, practical, and kind to Fidele; to Lilla, they were witty, poetical, metaphysical, and dreamy. Such fine sentiments were never more entirely wasted on unexceptionable paper, or read by more unappreciative and handsome eyes! Fidele wrote to Edgar descriptions of Lilla in her best phases, and fashionable gossip; Lilla wrote playfully about *herself*!

But Edgar had other correspondents on this side the water; and one, an old college friend, himself one of Fidele's most devoted admirers, and ignorant of her engagement to Edgar, gave him a thrilling account of her, with a list of her captives, and a full, confidential disclosure of his own love.

With sudden and strange enlightenment, Edgar saw his infatuation! Fidele, in all her power of talent and grace, and, above all, with her great soul of love, stood before him, and beside her the evanescent and shallow-hearted Lilla.

Edgar was in a full tide of literary success, in the land of art and song, and among circles of highest

rank and fashion; not statue or song, the praise of men, or the love of women could now win him from one black piercing thought, that cut his heart like a sword.

"I have dashed my happiness from me," he would sometimes say, in mad despair, "and now, remorse, my bride, I embrace thee! my sole companion through the rest of my journey." In a more self-complacent mood he would soothe himself with the hope that his illustrious name, his fine person, and art of pleasing, and eyes full of penitent love would win back confidence to the heart he had justly lost. These distracting moods became at length insupportable, and he resolved to complete his travels and return. He resumed his wanderings, with the firm, dreary purpose, not to communicate with Fidele until he should feel he had, through kindred, though greater sorrow than her own, made himself worthy of her.

"It is two years to-night since Edgar left, and a year since he has written me," said Fidele. "How long, and cold, and dark the struggle that goes on in the heart, when confidence and hope die; but love cannot! how like a troubled ghost it comes back in old familiar tones, and looks, and haunts me; a mockery of life, a shuddering shadow, I can never escape." Fidele was sitting before her mirror, and, as she held this communion with herself, she looked long and earnestly into her own eyes. How strange this meeting one's own spirit, looking, as with divided self, into the soul's secret depths!

Oh! Edgar! has thy nature a talent or grace I

have not recognized and loved? But my love, my confidence, my ambition, my pride; what demands they make! and they must all be answered before I can meet thee. Oh! Edgar! only true life of my life."

That same night, in a wild hour, on the shore of the Mediterranean, Edgar threw out his arms longingly, and with impassioned voice, begged some friendly spirit to bear a message to Fidele. "Tell her, oh! angel of mercy! to wait for me; whisper hope to her heart; give her a glimpse of my rent soul, and let her pitying tears soothe her agony and mine." His prayer turned into a mocking laugh, and the angel's face took human and luxurious lineaments, until Lilla, only, seemed with him there. She seemed to stand idly near the water, and the black waves played over her white and dimpled feet. Her soft eyes were fixed on Edgar, they would not turn away; his soul grew faint in their long gaze; her arms seemed extended towards him; and while he looked, the cloud-like folds of drapery that floated around her dissolved, and her white shoulders and arms, and throbbing bosom thrilled on his palpitating vision. He leaned forward to embrace her, when, oh! horror! a hideous spectre grew suddenly out of this fair form, a phantom of terror; he shrieked, "Oh! Heaven! save me!" What a strange echo started up at that wild voice, out of the bosom of night.

"It is ridiculously wild and stupid for me to yield to these hideous fancies," said Edgar, "I am getting miserably diseased, I must get into a more matter-of-fact atmosphere, and, after all, New York would

be the best medicine for this fever of my brain. I will turn homeward to-morrow."

Edgar obeyed this sudden resolution, and after some delays and adventures, and much heart-pain, mingled with agonizing hope, arrived home.

It was a bland spring morning when Edgar ascended the marble steps of Fidele's old home; a genial warmth seemed to fall into his very heart as he waited the answer to his summons; waited in that soft sunshine, at Fidele's door. "At the very threshold of heaven," said he. "Oh! my poor soul, drink in this blessed light! and soon (hasten tardy servant) I shall—" the door opened, and Edgar entered the familiar room, where they parted. Its gems of taste were there. Sunlight, like a loving eye, lit up the sacred corner where Fidele loved best to sit. Above her little table, with its vase of fresh flowers, hung a recent portrait of Fidele. Edgar held his breath; it was like her as he had seen her last, but refined with a touch of sorrow, as impossible to describe, as it is not to feel. He was absorbed in it, when a step bewildered him with the idea that Fidele was near, and he looked up with rapturous anxiety. Lilla met his gaze! Lilla!

Oh! Fate! why will ye have it so? Not Fidele, but Lilla shares this sacred moment, extended into an eternity, with its hopes and fears, its bliss and pain! and that moment now shrunk into a spasm of dizzy rapture, to be remembered by Edgar forever with pain. To Lilla, it was only food for a vain thought or two, and a boast to a few friends and lovers, to whom she confided the secret, that Edgar

West loved her; that she had been an unconscious, but successful rival to Fidele. She described his confusion in meeting her, which she complacently said was owing to his want of assurance, in regard to her state of feeling, and concluded with the benevolent reflection, that she would soon relieve him from further anxiety by discarding him, "for although," said she, with gay indifference, "he is a fine fellow, I do not think I love him!"

Ah! ye men, your words of flattery to vain and selfish women are distilled into wine, which you must drink again and again, with them. It may sicken you! It *may*.

But where was Fidele? She had been travelling three months at the South, trying, among all varieties of life and scenery, to mould new purposes into a form of active life, and to forget her earlier self. Her heart was like those great fields of girdled trees, peculiar to the scenery of the South. The first luxuriant and lofty growth of feeling had been arrested by a cruel cut around the very trunk of love; and now she longed to see those leafless and decaying monuments of glory fall, and a new herbage, be it what it might, bud and blossom in its stead.

When Edgar was first informed of Fidele's absence, he reproached her with cruelty and inconstancy, but finally, seeing as with a flash, the whole course of their love, he concluded she had done only what a proud woman might do, and still preserve a true and faithful heart. "Now to my room, and my pen; my brain drinks up the fire in my heart, and while that forgets love and happiness, I will

coin burning thoughts for a world that can yet feel;" and Edgar wrote. Soul and sense lent their impulses to thought, and the labor of a year produced a poem, which kindled his fame into immortality. As soon as the last sheet was written, he threw down his pen in perfect abandonment of purpose, or care, and left immediately for a tour through the West. Magnetically, or otherwise, he was led along Southward, until finally, one fine evening in May, Edgar West was riding through a luxuriant stretch of "bottom land," in Alabama. The fragrance of the sassafras-shrub and the thorn-tree blossom was in the air, and so was the fatal miasma. So giving rather a cursory glance to the strange birds, flowers, and serpents that arrested his eye, he told "Joe," his negro man, to lead on to the first plantation. He soon drew up at a spacious log house, surrounded by fine trees, and half covered with vines. It was a pretty place, one end of the "passage" looked into a very extensive garden, and there he was soon seated, busy with his own thoughts and the mosquitoes. The master of the house was absent, but was expected every minute. A carriage soon drove up the avenue, attended by a fine looking gentleman on horseback; a lady descended the steps. "She alights with grace," listlessly observed Edgar. "That long veil must hide a glorious face if there is anything in motion, and yet I have had hideous disappointments in that way; there is no safety in speculations on women."

Just then the veil was thrown back, and so was

Fidele, with astonishment; but Edgar advanced, and almost fiercely folded her in his arms.

"I have found you at last, and forever," said he, "nothing can wrest you from me now."

"*Nothing* but a husband, I suppose," said a jovial voice; and a strong arm assisted Fidele to disengage herself.

"Her husband!" repeated Edgar, almost unconsciously.

"Oh! no, not *her* husband yet," still more merrily answered the voice; "but *a* husband, happily."

"Let me explain," said Fidele, recovering herself; "this is one of my friend's practical jokes, Edgar, Mr. Brown;" then turning to a laughing little face, that had just joined the group, she presented "Mrs. Brown."

That night, Fidele sat by her lamp, and read with every nerve quickened to its highest tension of happiness, "The Waking," sequel to "A Dream," dedicated to "Fidele."

I N E Z.

INEZ had just escaped, with all her glowing charms, from boarding-school thralldom; and, notwithstanding the careful culture and rigid discipline of a model trio of maidenly sisters, was beautifully fresh, unaffected, impulsive, wild, ungovernable, and attractive. Her full dimpled form had thriven well on the bread-and-butter regimen, and the bloom of her cheeks and red of her lips had deepened in the shades of school-girl obscurity. Not one of the matchless pearls of her sweet mouth had broken in all their nut-cracking tasks. Her eyes, "so brightly dark, and darkly blue," were undimmed by the labyrinthine problems they had seen entangled, or the meshes of lace they had seen disfigured. And never was a flood of golden brown hair parted more simply on a little low white brow, that would be classically beautiful, in defiance of the intellectual expanse her literary friends held up as the true style. But if you look on all these beauties coolly, see once her little rose-tinted fingers in a wild revel of music-making, and hear the impetuous, unrestrained gushings of that free, joyous spirit, and you love Inez. If you do not, I know who did:

one poet, one artist, one principal of a Theological Institute, one rich Southerner, one professor of music, three seniors in colleges, and not less than six freshmen.

Moneta was a shade older, two shades darker, as enthusiastic, but many shades more thoughtful and discreet. She was at times more brilliant, and in a favorable light, under pleasurable, social, or mental excitement, was called magnificent. Inez cared nothing for the past and made no reserves for the future; but Moneta looked "before and after, and often with her laughter, some pain was fraught."

These two met; and like two dew-drops flashing on the same leaf in the sun, their souls danced and flashed, and mirrored all above and around, in their own bosoms, even as one. Life floated gayly over them, with only an occasional tear-cloud, which never hung long between them and light, so soon in youth such clouds dissolve.

Moneta was the guiding spirit; thus she, being less universal and diffusive in her affections, looked with some misgiving on the dozen lovers at the feet of Inez; and could not see, without pain, the first honest heart-love of some solitary student, the "be all and end all" of his love history, offered at a shrine where so much incense was mingling; some so fleeting, and none so prized, or treasured, as not to be blown away by the next breath. As yet, *her* heart swung round, a world in chaos. Light had not yet been spoken, and the sun, moon, and stars shone not in their proper spheres. But she wrote long letters to her cousin Fred, and talked philosophic

nonsense to the professor in mathematics, who stated his love in a problem, and found the answer before she did, and said he could prove it right, while she insisted it was wrong, but could not prove it.

We will leave Inez for a time in a full tide of success as heart conqueror, in possession of the sages of the East, the voluptuous votaries of pleasure in the West, church-men, and world-men, the grave and the gay, the weak and the witty.

When torn from Inez, Moneta was like a star that had lost a ray from its bosom; and Inez was that ray wandering in infinite space. Through long years of separation, Moneta held out her spirit-arms yearningly, to embrace again the lost part of herself. Fortune wafted her far westward and southward: sometimes she sang; and the same breeze swayed the mistletoe, and wafted her song under a southern sky. Sometimes she roamed through northern glens, and grew thoughtful and earnest under the invigorating influence of a colder clime.

Life at length lost its rainbow hues; society, with its conventionalities and insipidities, no longer ministered to her spirit. The soul turned to itself, and vain yearnings, and a strange quest of knowledge sprang up within. The only link she had with visible things, seemed with nature. Her paths of knowledge became invisible to her friends, and all grew cold and strange. But revelations were made to her, and the influence of strong and informing spirits fell upon her, and she became a poet-spirit, doomed to worship and roam forever in, yet never to utter the songs of, that music sphere.

Now for the first time, all suddenly, a being unlike herself, pauses before her; pierces her very soul with his far-searching, quiet eyes; takes her captive at his will, and rules her destiny. Their lives commingle in a singular flow of artistic and musical harmony. Keni dreams, and from his hand creations of beauty glow with life, and around his name plays the prophetic light of immortality. Moneta dreams, but her visions dissolve into intangible forms, and vanish.

It is six years since our two youthful friends parted. Moneta receives a message, begging her by the sincere devotedness of an early and beautiful friendship, by the pleading voice of nature, to come and see her Inez; now Mrs. Gray, also Mr. Gray, little Rose and Billy. In the spirit of her younger day she closes her entreaty with the assurance that—

“No morning ever cometh,
No twilight ever gloometh
But I am thine, more only thine.”

Moneta would not delay; she would see the once beautiful idol of a gay world in her home, a wife, and a mother. She would see to whom such perfection of beauty, such rare grace and accomplishments had been given; perhaps strongest of all was the desire to see Keni under the influence of a being who had been irresistible.

Therefore, the close of a sultry day in August left two weary travellers at a dusty depot, in a retired corner of a New England village. An hour's ride, on the banks of a lovely river, and the carriage

stopped at the door of an unpicturesque, unpoetical white house. This looked not like the abode of Inez, but Moneta had been apprised of a reverse in the fortunes of Mr. Gray, and was prepared for something less than the magnificence of their first page of wedded history.

On entering the little parlor, however, if there was not a display of wealth, there were indications of taste. Vases of flowers perfumed the room; the piano was open, and leaves of choice music were scattered carelessly about; two or three good paintings adorned the room, and a subdued and pleasing light harmonized the whole.

Inez soon entered. She was more beautiful even than in her spring-time. A mellow radiance softened the eyes that once gleamed with wild joyousness. The roses of her cheeks had paled, but there was a matured grace of outline in the voluptuous swell of her perfect figure, a calm self-possession, a soft assurance of manner, that appealed to the heart more strongly than her former self-willed and impetuous loveliness.

I pass over the greetings and congratulations of our friends, the renewal of their early vows, the entire abandonment of sunny days and starry nights to strolls, rides, music, and long life histories, earnestly told, and eagerly heard.

I must describe the after cloud-day, the frost-night. Keni confessed all truthfully to Moneta, that the varied and constantly unfolding charms of Inez were a delightful study to him. One moment his imagination was stimulated and his judgment

perplexed by her arch and intricate ways; then a quiet child-like confidence of manner, a singleness of purpose presented a new phase of observation, and unsettled his former convictions; and each succeeding day increased the interest with which he studied her singular character, and painted her beautiful face.

Moneta was prepared for this; "it was the fruit of the tree she planted," and she calmly saw it grow and ripen.

Inez was apparently the same fond, confidential friend as in former times. She artlessly confessed her interest in any gifted being, any one unlike her husband. She was grateful to him for the chivalric generosity, the unbounded indulgence he had ever shown her, but sympathy, congeniality, they had none, nor even masked themselves in the semblance of such a virtue. He freely sought his own pleasures, and put no restrictions on Inez, in the pursuit of hers. Understanding their relative positions, they lived in more *concordant disagreement*, than many who pretend to nicer harmony.

Thus far Moneta had perfect faith in Inez. She thought her an errant child of nature, often pursuing a trackless course, from a restless desire for novelty; and a natural daring abandonment of self to impulse. That she would violate faith, that she would be deliberately or purposely false to friendship, or honor! she never for a moment believed it possible.

Days deepened, and weeks strengthened the power

of the charmer, and lessened and weakened the resistance of the charmed.

Now sprung up a troubled doubt in the bosom of Moneta. Did Inez regard the claims of friendship as highly as her own reckless love of adventure? Would she not violate the most sacred ties for the gratification of her love of conquest? "I will wait patiently, I will see calmly," said Moneta.

Her affections seemed purified in the flames of her virtuous resolves and sufferings, and to herself she seemed ennobled by calmly seeing each day the love of husband and friend ebbing from her, and leaving her to pursue thoughtfully, her lonely and neglected way.

At length a professional engagement, long postponed, roused Keni from his long, rapturous dream, and he left for a distant city, to be absent some weeks. The night before his departure he coolly assured Moneta she need feel no uneasiness in regard to his acquaintance with her friend. He had been pleased with her, but had not the smallest trifle to give a private record in his memory, and as there was no word or thought connected with her, he was not willing she should inspect, he would take the liberty to sleep undisturbed over the past and in earnest of the future; and thus dismissed with a brief "good night," Moneta closed her sleepless eyes, and Keni slept profoundly.

After his departure, Inez was abstracted, unsettled, and restless. She wandered about like a troubled ghost. For relief from her ennui, she proposed frequent drives. These were through delight-

ful wooded scenes, and by the purest and most untroubled streams that ever glided among flower-banks; and they never failed to enliven the spirits of our friends.

Through their mutual sympathy with nature, the lately fading features of their friendship seemed to revive, and confidence was restored between them.

It was the day of the promised return of Keni. A letter confirming the intention, just received, lay open on the table. The morning sun was shining on words that seemed to transport Inez into an ecstasy of delight.

"And what shall I say to thy friend? Tell her to be quiet till I come."

"Oh! that means so much; that is spoken to my heart," repeated Inez, again and again.

Another message from a brother artist to Keni, was the one last intoxicating drop that raised her spirits to their highest point of gayety, and flushed her cheek with a deep glow of pleasure, and kindled in her eye the wild joy of her youth. "And to the angel of loveliness that hung over your shoulder when you penned the golden thoughts, say, 'Spirits know what spirits tell,' and she will understand me though I keep silent."

"We are going to ride, Moneta, I shall drive; come, what a magnificent morning!" and Inez took the reins in her little, delicately gloved hand, and the spirited animal was controlled by that fearless, tiny figure, as though some magnetic power was on him.

It was an autumn morning, after the first frost-

night; every tender and delicate blossom hung blackened and drooping in the glorious sunshine, but above and around gorgeously colored leaves flashed and fell in every gentle breath of wind, the golden-rod nodded its graceful plumes, and the purple star-flower looked serenely out from its wayside home.

Inez was communicative, unrestrained, and unguarded. "It was here," she said, "Keni and I last walked. Here I gathered wild roses for him; and oh! Moneta, quiet and unimpressible as he seems, I have had great power over him, and yet I do not think he is capable of loving long; he is like me, changing and full of caprices."

She heeded not the effect of her words, nor paused for a reply. She was absorbed in her own wild joy. "Once I drew from him such passionate words, when he gave you the picture of Zelica, and you said, 'what glorious eyes!' he whispered in my ear, 'yours, yours.' These things mean so much in him, and oh! his message to-day—

"Yes, he loves me for a time, and that is enough. I shall change—let him—only let me have my day of power and I am satisfied."

These selfish, cruel words fell one after the other on the heart of Moneta—the deliberate thrusts of a dagger from the hand of a friend. She felt the wounds, she felt her life-blood drop, drop, drop; she saw the light of honor and truth go out in the beautiful eyes of a friend; she saw the radiant soul of her loved Keni shrouded in a cloud.

The frost-stricken flowers drooped lower and

lower, the sun mocked them with his light, the dyed leaves seemed bleeding and glittering in their own life-blood. Moneta grew faint and sick, and begged to be carried home. Hope, faith, and strength failed and died together. She was borne to her room, and lay insensible alike to frost and sunshine many days.

How did Inez meet Keni that night? How felt she towards Moneta? She declined, with affected delicacy, the cordial hand he gave; but a secret joy danced in her eye, and for him she sang in sweetest tones, "Sleeping I dreamed love," even after refusing it to her husband.

To Moneta she was cool, collected, and self-justifying.

"Why do you put on this martyr-look?" said she; "is it to accuse me to my husband? he has no interest whatever in the affair. Is it to make Keni believe I have betrayed him? He knows better. As for me, you ought to love me as much as ever."

"Truth and honor have died in the souls I have loved," feebly and mournfully replied Moneta. "In my heart, faith has died, and I have buried an early and lovely friendship. Henceforth you are lost to me and wandering far; and there is no attraction in my once burning bosom, to bring back the scattered rays of our love."

Keni was troubled, after hearing a free, calm account of all that had passed from Moneta. "It is all over," he said, "her power is lost—the spell is broken. She has been false to friendship, and false

to me. For what I have been she has not revealed, and what she has repeated were idle words discolored by her own imagination. I am now awake to my own imperfection and misery. You alone should be happy."

A pre-engagement to make one in a bridal tour, compelled Moneta once more to join the family circle, and to sustain a part in the coming festival. Mr. and Mrs. Gray, and servant, in their carriage, make the two days' journey in silence. Keni and Moneta, in subdued and silent tones, review the past, in their little rockaway, and renew vows of love and truth. They arrive at the festal hall, and great joy and excitement prevail. Inez prepared herself for one more evening, hoping to make a public display, among her early lovers, of the last captive in her train. She was a shade pensive, but still a consciousness of potent beauty lent her ease and grace, and resentment at the little interruption in the progress of her love, gave a haughty curve to her lip, and arched her neck with something like dignity.

But the spirit of beauty had fled from her: thus it seemed to Keni, as his eye met hers. "Faultless in form and feature," he mused, "impassioned, and intellectually capable, but"—and he turned his eye to the calm dignity, the radiant repose of a pure spirit, that, like the golden atmosphere of an Indian summer sky, hung around his thrice beloved Moneta; "not like her is she beautiful; she faded in my hand, ere my soul had drunk in the beauty of her perfect workmanship. But there is an ever re-

newing charm in the form of innocence, and such alone is worthy my study, and capable of enduring power."

Inez, mortified and indignant at her signal failure, said, when the room was deserted by all but herself and Keni—"You have mocked me; you drank the wine of my beauty and dashed the goblet to the earth; be it so. The subtle drop that intoxicated you, was a drop of *fire*—it will burn in your memory—shine in your dreams a lurid wildering light. I shall be avenged in the consciousness that I cannot be forgotten."

Moneta sat at this hour describing the first frost-night in the history of her wedded love, to the good, the lovely bride Meta, sister to Inez.

"I am not surprised. We do not understand her. She is strangely and dangerously beautiful. Read these," said Meta, and she put a package of letters into the hand of Moneta.

The clock struck two. Motionless and tearless sat Moneta, with the last page of that burning revelation before her.

"Has she then come even between me and my worshipped ideal, hiding the light from poet-life? Truly, the path to wisdom lies through a wilderness of mysteries. Will those who have met in wandering there, meet again?"

A R H A P S O D Y .

It was in October, on "one of those charmed days when the genius of God doth flow," that the following rhapsody was written, and thereto was appended a story. The secret influences of another day, after a long interval, remind me of the prelude, so I link the present improvisation with that, leaving out the story, all plan, order, and unity, preferring to shock every idea of authorship and common sense, for one unrestrained ramble with impulse and fancy; so here follows, in high exaltation of feeling—fit first of enthusiasm:—

There is such a waste of glory in the scene at my cottage door, this morning, I am impelled to gather up with rapture-trembling hands, some tokens for all those who would love these depths of golden ether, this array of flaming hills, this river, with its border of crimson and gold, these "Scarlet Letters" on earth's bosom, tokens of her redemption from the super-genial ardors of summer. What great souls are needed to harvest the mist on the mountain, the gleam on the water, and all the gentle music of the falling leaves! Oh! Poet-soul! fly to the hills, the heart of nature is bursting to transfer

its great music-thought into thine. The sun veiled in golden mist, these nights of liquid love, distilled from moon and soft shadow, are they not for such as thou? Come and drink in this valley; holding, like a jewelled cup, its amber water, come and drink love, the genius, the great passion of the universe. Sit thou here, my friend, under the leaning trunk of this old hemlock; see above you, it entwines in its green branches the pale boughs of that young birchen tree. At our feet is a spring, and within a pebble's throw is the river. Behold, how coquetishly it circles round that curve in the bank, and kisses the flaming sumach leaves as they fall to its bosom and sail down in a transport of bliss.

FIT SECOND—FEB. 11.

The sun was half an hour high, shining through the jewelled trees in the little glen, when I stepped out on the verandah, and looking over a wide level, incrustated with diamonds, saw a glittering group of children in red caps and flying tippets, with sleds sliding head or feet foremost, rolling, dancing, or running, in such excess of joy, I instinctively mingled in the group, laughed, shouted, and danced, drew Indian figures on the snow, blessing the Lord in my inmost heart for such capacity for physical enjoyment and such glorious means for its gratification. The river, trying to break away from its icy restraints, softened by a frost-veil of silvery mist, said to my heart, "we will yet be free, sunshine is opening my bosom, and my stifled heart will sing some truths in old and eternal harmonies, one of

these fine days." Across the river, an amiable community of cows were sunning themselves around the old home barn, and far off over the hills, on the blue Hassan Cleaver (Heaven splitting), lay a violet light, a tint for an artist's pencil. But the sun is getting high, while drinking the dissolving diamonds, and the children, like "winged flowers or flying gems," are hurrying schoolward, so I return to my little room. Dear little nook of comfort! with its few gems of taste. These two heads of Du Bufe are worthy a critic's study. This veiled portrait is a link to spirit land, and is daily studied for recognition there. Here are vases of grasses and pendant vines, and there are birds' nests full of summer histories, of sun, and song, and shower, and all that makes up bird life. Here is a portrait; what zeal in truth, what depth of love, what loftiness of purpose, what practical ability, what poetic refinement are thine, my father! and how well appreciated and expressed by the artist in this picture.

A rap! our dear old friend the Rev. Mr. Pierce, dear reader—a picturesque and an agreeable character the world is honored in knowing. As he enters, how dignified and kind his salutation! in what benign and harmonious manner he passes from stately courtesy to the older members of the family, to the most winning caresses of the children, even to the very baby. Was ever seen a fine massive head so much enhanced in its venerable expression by long gray locks, lying on the shoulder? The coat, in its ample, antique folds, seems to preserve the noble form from the effeminating and sordid influences of

modern fashion. Every garment is large, unstudied, honest; no disguises, no dyes to mock in fiendish malice the appropriate wrinkles of age; no glittering ghastly teeth, no inharmonious wig to saddle his head, and bridle his brain with the foolish desire to look youthful. He sits in the great arm-chair, and we talk of Kossuth; of slavery; of the habits of spiders; of "The Scarlet Letter;" Longfellow; Betsey Trotwood's sacred green; its amusing application to himself, by his facetious neighbor; from this we get along by easy stages into a discourse on creeds; found a new church. The most beautiful feature in the service was the offering of flowers or fruits by children at the altar: thus encouraging in their little hearts, natural expressions of the soul's love and hope. The whole structure seemed a flowery arch through which the soul could pass pleasantly and befittingly from the visible to the invisible.

From these pure heights we descend to dinner, and shock prim propriety with puns, conundrums, and anecdotes. Our gay little friend comes in, and we have some music from the guitar and piano. I can hardly restrain her little feet from the polka, but as our reverend friend has no mental organs that express themselves in *feet*, she, in deference, keeps quiet. Now Mrs. —— enters, with her head full of books; and we have profound polemic discussions, rapid historic passages, and little delicate contests about dates and facts which are diverted into channels of pleasantry, and we finally pass from the grotesque into the realms of art. Now we all submit to the guidance of a tranquil but

powerful genius, which, like the eyes of its possessor, kindles from repose into glowing and commanding light. We are taken through the technicalities of mechanical invention into the highest ideal, until we sit before a model of magic beauty. But our family party now break up, the lofty divine, the pale artist, the blond *litterateur*, the little danseuse, the dark wife with her enjoying eyes, the three children with golden brown curls, and the dog, Logan.

The honored guest departs; the friend of the Wares and other eminently wise and pure spirits of the age; and as we look upon him—the almost only polished link of antique manners we have in our social chain—we feel the force of the words, “a whole, true man.”

Now flee thee, Katinka, to cloud land, twilight is hovering in thy little room, thy shadowy friends are there. Ik Marvel sits with his feet on the fire-dog studying flame and smoke. Hawthorne is weirdly weaving ghostly fabrics of intense but dusky hues; Longfellow is beguiling you with a Golden Legend; Edith May is chanting her *Te Deum*, and Willis has winged his Thought Angel, and it stands waiting at the portals of your soul.

I wonder if it is a happiness to authors, to know, that in the choicest, the very golden hours of life, they are, by some, made heart-guests, sought, studied, blessed. I do not know; but farewell, oh! rare and charmed day! thou hast melted all icy restraints to free and happy thought, and now the sweet rain is musically dissolving nature and heart into more genial condition, into the very elements of Dream Land.

L E D A .

I LIKE these old oak-panelled walls, sombre, high, and arched ; I like these huge chairs, with their ample, cordially extended arms, their high leather-cushioned backs ; I like their framework of crooked gray sticks, just as they were cut from a green waving forest fifty years ago. The heavy crimson curtains are looped up to let in a pleasant light, and beautifully it plays over the stone vase, antiquely shaped, and full of green moss and flowers, that smell of deep woods, old stumps, and shady water-courses.

I sit here in this window seat, and the little aspen-tree, my favorite, self-planted little foster child, trembles in the gentle breeze, and turns its shining leaves unceasingly in the sun. So looked the beautiful child, Leda! the little child, whose spirit eyes are ever serenely shining from the canvas on the walls, reminding me of the time when her fair dimpled fingers were culling their first violets, and she, the while, seemed to be looking into the spirit-land for the *mother* there. She was, at two years old, like a little scared bird, that scarcely dares to stay on this beautiful earth, and her smiles were ever like sunlight on dew.

I watched her all along her childish years, and I marked that leaning trembling spirit was yet patient, and capable of long endurance; for see how silently and long she sat at the purse she was netting for her *sister-mother*, and how she still urged her weary eyes and trembling fingers to count and thread the tiny beads, till the sun was down, and all the little noisy romping children on the lawn had crept with their freshly washed faces to bed.

At twelve how delicate the rose color of her sweet pensive face, how frail and fragrant seemed the opening leaves of her beautiful life. I seem to see her now as she used to glide into the little village-church, all palpitating and timid, following her dignified stately sister, like a little boat in the wake of a great ship; and quite overwhelmed and lost in the great ocean of general observation she appeared to feel as she rounded the perilous corner to enter her seat. Then how gratefully she composed herself in her secure little nook, feeling so safe and happy beside her protecting sister, with only the minister's pure eyes on her, and her bunch of flowers and Sabbath-school books. But the minister—ah! there is might in the most placid wave, my Leda, as well as in the stormy dark eyes of the magnificent Augustine.

A few years more and I have read thy heart's first leaf of love. By the record of that branch of locust-leaves that calls up such a fluttering of wild joy, by the "Voices of the Night" and "Pencilings by the Way," those treasured forfeits, so artfully lost, and eagerly paid, I read, that if sought, thou

wilt be won by Augustine, who, though he waits long, still loves thee best.

Truly there is a "purgatorial state," through which all true souls must pass on their way to the heaven of wedded love. I saw thee, Leda, in that bitter parting without words, that separation of years without knowledge of or hope of meeting again, the lover who was ever to watch thy destiny. And yet the tears on those worshipped memorials of him, thy heart-offerings and prayers, prove thy constancy in despair.

Who would have thought to see in this, the most tearful period of thy life, the careless gayety, those aimless fascinations, that, playing on the surface of the dark current of thy life, beguiled so many in sunny hours, and drew *one* on even to the sullen grave in which he lies. Poor D——, how fatally he lamented his destiny; how prophetic his words, that "the faint odor of the evening primrose would, in some happy period in the lifetime of Leda, cause her to shed a tear on his grave."

She was gay—the really weeping Leda gay; and fanned with the most intoxicating breezes of adulation. It was something to have the great learned divine, just home from his world-travels, beg the favor of an acquaintance with her, and not a little puzzled was she in trying to find what in her interested the historian, who could write such large dry volumes, or what in her simplicity pleased a lawyer, who could live on old musty books, full of unintelligible words.

Youth and bloom do not last forever, neither do

lovers' misunderstandings, or the world's evil calumnies. So it happened one propitious day that a peace-winged messenger came between the almost desperate Augustine and despairing Leda, and unravelled their difficulties, proving to each, that what the world had been calling inconstancy, was only disguised misery, and what had been called *indifference*, was only the blank, *truth* left while she sat veiled and weeping in the cloisters of the heart.

With the tremor of excessive happiness, Leda became the bride of the noble Augustine. For awhile after, indeed, to me, she lost her identity, for in the confidence of her full tide of joy, in her first flush of pride, she was brilliant without tears, luxuriantly shining in the sun. Society and Augustine for awhile had her all their own. Nature and I sat apart, and communed together alone.

In the old village church, I sat listlessly one summer morning, thinking of Leda, when softly and gracefully glided in the once fluttering child, now loftily serene, in the first stage of a mother's pure joy. An India muslin, with scarcely less color than her exquisitely delicate face, floated around her, like mist around a star; the thin white lace of her veil, the soft buds that kissed her cheek, the rich colorless shawl that swept from her gently sloping shoulders, down till it seemed graduated and lost in shadowy folds at her feet; her ethereal grace of motion, her dress, her air, all so harmonious; the expression of her face, so calm, so elevated, filled me with rapture.

One flame-like, glittering color, gleamed out from

her side. A little hectic spot was this *Cashmere* bag; (not reticule, ye word-exquisites; a little bag, that peculiarly feminine appendage, in which, beside the linen lawn handkerchief, so faintly perfumed, you are sure to find a little flower, a scrap of choice poetry, a rich gem in some trinket form.) This little bag, so circumscribed in form, and subordinate in place, yet so brilliant, glowed in her dress, as imagination and enthusiasm, undimmed through years, had shone in her pure soul.

Much need has she now, when her lily child lies drooping on the glassy wave of time, of this vivid flame, for, elevated and purified, it has become a living faith, a rapturous hope of heaven.

What a charmed place is this high, old, silent room for a dream-ramble!

A VOLUNTARY.

To lie on the grass in the sunshine, to hear the birds sing, to breathe the fragrance of bud and flower is a very common and blessed thing. But when the sun looks through the body into the heart—when, from the topmost branch of the freshly-leaved maple, swings an oriole's nest—when the jetty head and flaming breast and shining wing of that bird are before me, at my feet, glittering gem-like in the grass, and when he sings his clear, exulting note, so passion-like and fearless—then, when all inferior birds pour in their varied and delicious notes, and the wind begins to bow and sway all the great woods, and they, organ-like, solemnize the whole, and the shining, dancing river is at my feet—then I must *write*, and write to *thee*, spirit of my thoughts, poet-izer of my life.

I am thinking if this is an elementary stage of being to the oriole, and he is to progress (?) until his wings are exchanged for a dress-coat, his song to a masculine note, and he walks, a mustached, whiskered biped, in Broadway—it is to be hoped he will never have the power of looking back to his pre-existence; and I am also thinking it must be a deli-

cious thing to be even a weed, clad and fed, growing in dew and sunshine, without the necessity to toil or spin, without need to appropriate one ray of this blessed sun to anything but happiness.

To lie on the grass with your soul giddy and swimming in excess of joy, and let the great world swim round you in its delicious waltz—do you know what it is, weary footed ones, ye fashion-made, fettered things, that try to refresh your winter-wearied vision with French flowers, lace and muslins, fresh kid and patent leather? Ye “violets” and “dandylions” of Broadway, dare ye compare yourselves with these, scattered around me in this velvet meadow? Can you imagine their beauty and fragrance and not envy them and me, and sympathize in and understand the delicious rapture that sends a thrill to the finger-ends and stirs every sleeping sentiment in the soul?

If any look on such a mood as this as the result of some nervous malady, let me describe my case, with all the fallible means I have used for my recovery. I found the sun, wind, water, birds, grass and flowers were driving all practical thoughts out of mind; that hours were stealing by, and no thought of struggling, toiling life came to disturb or disenchant me.

I resolved to throw off the influence, first, by a stroll into a pasture, where, I doubted not, the sight of animals designed for use would suggest wholesome thoughts of a butter-making, beef-eating world.

But the quiet ruminations of matronly cows, as they leisurely wander among cowslips and spring

beauties, suggest nothing more disagreeable than the luxury of calm animal life in its happiest natural element. I paused by the piggery and listened to the German-like grunt of those profound students of nature, and admired their patient and persevering researches into the most uninviting facts in physical science; but nothing could I learn from them of the toil and suffering man is bound to endure in order to fulfil his destiny. Thus of the *hennery*—it afforded only a beautiful illustration of the practicability of *fraternal associations*.

Social happiness, unity and equality, were all the sermon I could read from them. It is true, certain leaders among them seemed especially endowed with gifts and capabilities, but they were lent with such gallant grace for the good of the whole, that strife or envy could find no foothold here. It must be somewhere in nature, this law of labor, strife, zeal, suffering. I will go to the "ultimate," the "flower and fruit of creation," the "crown," the "glorious perfected head of matter." I will go to my neighbor, one of the busy, bustling, unresting crowd, and find the fundamental necessity of all this "vanity and vexation of spirit."

"Mrs. Judge Vanderhappenhausen has just received an elegant spring bonnet from New York; it is such a gem of a bonnet, there is not such a one in town; and such an exquisite shawl and muslins; besides, do you believe, her husband has just presented her with a box of fashionable jewels, and bought new furniture for the entire house. Such extravagance! People say if they should live within

their means they would display no more than their neighbors. But my husband is in New York, and perhaps I shall have something when he returns, as well as Mrs. Vanderhappenhausen." So said Mrs. Doctor Brown.

Here it is! I have found it!—the social law that works such healthful contention and unrest. I will to the battle; I will be a heroine in the strife; I will do and dare and suffer for advancement and distinction "*in the world*"—that is, among my ten contemptuous or envious neighbors.

I must have dressmakers and milliners—must submit this amplitude of waist to be compressed here and enlarged there, according to the latest fashion. My house! how old-fashioned and quiet and simple! Where are the painters? the gilders?—where is my husband?—*he* must lend his pencil to subserve this *great* end—must strive, business-like, to convert his fancies into golden realities, and leave his unsaleable Madonnas, Cupids and Psyches.

* * * * *

I have tried the prescription. For two distracting days I have been running from shop to shop, from fashion to fashion—have tried to drive from my bewildered brain the last echo of bird-notes, and to hear only "the bow on this side and the puff on that; the ruffle on the top, the long waist, the pearl trimming, the frills and flounces and the capes." Oh spirit of confusion, get behind me!

I have fled to the shades again, and here I am, ye poor infatuated, stifled, fictitious belles of Broadway; an obstinate, incurable loungeur in shades, an insane

lover of rest; and for your sweetest and loveliest faces, your lily hands and dainty feet, I would not exchange the sight of these gay and fluttering wings of birds, this bit of pale green moss, these liquid sounds that bubble up, as I lazily throw the shining pebbles at my feet into the amber waves below.

Swing on, little oriole, in your home-branch! heaven's sun warms you, its breezes rock you, the broad maple leaves shelter you: be blissful now, for who knows what destiny awaits you after this stage of bird-life.

A LETTER FROM THE COUNTRY.

OUT of my nest among the trees I will twitter to you a little gossip. I am pitying your hot and dusty condition, having just read your editorial lament. I have also a pleasant, sinful feeling, which, I am afraid, is a common frailty of the human heart—a feeling of exultation in my better destiny—which gives me this peep into pure, running water, these gusts of heaven's air, and through green music-branches, checks of heaven's blue, I am rather pleased at the idea you may be envying me, and I stretch my lazy length along a little more luxuriously on the grass, as I think of a walled room and seats cushioned softly.

Let me not address your editorial or military dignity unbecomingly, but *did* you ever recline under a tree and look up into its branches? This is your only way to get a pure conception of a tree. In such a position worldliness and care pass off at the extremities, and on the soul new images of beauty are painted; new harmonies swell on the ear. God's power and grace are not lavished around you in vain; nature is no longer an accident, but a fact, as god-like and great as man. Power, and wealth, and

condition are now accidents. God, Nature and Man fill the universe. Lie still a little longer and you grow brave, and feel in your heart that you dare to be true, honest and just. A little longer, you feel graceful and beautiful. You have never danced a polka, but you have seen the branches swing over you: you cannot play an opera, but you know the meaning of eternal voices in the air. Then magnetic currents flow into your soul, and love melts all form into a divine essence. Spirits—some from earthly forms, and some that have gone higher—thrill you with recognizing glances; they lift up your fluttering aspirations, and bring you into a blissful condition of blossoming thought. Now you will sing a hymn, paint a picture, or write a poem, or—go to sleep; but whatever you do, when you rise, you will find a deeper well of humanity within you, and that a great flock of idle wishes and ambitions have flown away during that siesta on the grass, and while you were looking up into a tree.

And here, my friends, I think of an absurdity, which I wish might be corrected, partly for the sake of those who commit it, and partly for the honor of all beautiful places in the country, which the town refugee may seek.

When you visit the *country*—which means woods and fields, not a village of gaping gossips—leave your fashion and finery, your bracelets and wimpling-pins behind you. Their tinkle and shimmer distract you from that calm, tranquil mood which the gentle murmur of the brook is winning you to. Brilliant and varied colors you may wear; nature

suggests them, in free and unconventional forms of drapery. But you do not come into the country to astonish and bewilder unpractised eyes with your millinery, or your last set of jewels; you do not come among us simple rustics to awaken envious longings which we may not gratify; or as models for us to cut our patterns by. To preserve us from this misapprehension, enter Nature's great sanctuary, all country homes and places, with the simple, pure spirits and manners of disciples of a great teacher. Do this for the honor of our glorious haunts, which your patent kids, I hope, may not cause you to leave unvisited, and we, the arbiters of fashion *here*, will promise you when we go into your polkish, garish town, to powder our faces and wear such dyes and disguises as you may require, to render us inoffensive to your supreme goddess, Fashion.

GENIUS AND LOVE.

THE rain is falling with a continuous lulling sound on my low roof; the spider is hanging his silvery web from the rude rough rafters; the great elm at my window is sighing under the weeping sky; it is a quiet, lonely day, in which I bless this humble roof, instrument of sweet music to my soul. It is a day in which seclusion can be had perfect and secure; a day in which one turns to one's self with cordiality and gratulation at the rare possession of such good company. On such a day books look unusually friendly and inviting; the stiffest philosophers and theologians seem to relax a little in their stiff bindings, and almost to throw open their covers and invite you to look in. The poets, always divinely meek and willing to lead the humblest child of earth into paradise, look more genial and glorious than ever; even old dusty, smoky newspapers and almanacs wear communicative, entertaining faces. It is a day to look into odd corners and drawers for old letters and manuscripts. Thus prying about, I have found a bird's nest (what my aunt calls a "hang-bird's" nest) has been by some caprice used as a portfolio, and from its unusual dimensions, a

large bundle of fragmentary manuscripts have been concealed in it.

I have rescued one from its oblivious nest, which you see is scarcely fledged, but yet appears designed for flight. Feeble, unpromising, shrinking, trembling little thing, how will you sustain yourself!

Letter from an ambitious wife to her husband.

“Five years ago, my dear Reni, I turned from a great variety of worldly pleasures and interests; from ease, freedom and independence; from one or two admirers, and some friends; from my own selfish ambitions, from vanity, and love of approbation, from a quick and unbridled temper, from all within, and without myself, but *love*.

“In a rugged, tangled, rocky path, leading over great chasms, and through dense wildernesses, on, on, and up towering heights, still up and beyond, even to hills that bathe forever in heaven’s purest light, I saw a traveller just girded for a journey.

“He looked to the eternal succession of hills, even at the first step; but his eye was clear, and his hope strong, and his desires infinite as the distance. I took my place by his side; not that I had power or hope to leave monument or trace to those who should come after, of having been on this perilous journey; not even to share the glories at its end; but to follow in the light of genius, to bear something of its sufferings, and to see its triumphs. I have borne cheerfully, privations and fatigue, and have seen the gay world recede without regret. I

have lost sight of friends and have not missed them. I have wrapped my coarse robe about me, and eaten my crust by the wayside with great thankfulness and peace, for I saw by such toil and isolation the lofty purpose was to be accomplished.

“Oh! I have looked with enthusiastic admiration, amounting almost to worship, on the impulses of genius that led you from a wilderness of men, and their sordid pursuits, into a solitude of laborious thought. I have said, ‘Let it be so!’ If to conceive and work out some great design the senses must be refused, the minute exactions of social faculties disregarded, leave them, if need be, to perish; so shall the highest and noblest powers gain by constant pursuit a glorious triumph. Be reckless, be grasping, and daring, in battle for the soul’s freedom and immortality.

“Thus toiling upward, the social world looks small and far below us in the misty distance, in its *arbitrary* relations, but oh! beautifully free and glorious in its *natural* elements, and as an intermediate state, to intelligent, unresting spirits.

“Happy and hopeful have I struggled by your side, Reni, until now. With all we have left behind and the glorious prospect before us; in this great wild mountain-pass, I see you pause with delighted quietness by a clear dancing stream. With artistic deliberation and grace, you prepare rod and line and the decoying fly. Shining, golden trout are darting, leaping and plunging in their beautiful element. With admirable skill one is secured in his playful evolution over the gilded and concealed

hook. This is a great triumph. Even the shades of quiet Izaak Walton hovering near must have thrilled with pleasure at that feat.

“I am sitting in the shade. Night is creeping on, and you are angling still. Dews and damps are settling on me. I am thinking that in the earth lies a huge, unshapen block of marble, which, through the creative, illuminating powers of your mind alone, will become a living, lasting form of beauty and loveliness; and I look at every cast of the fly with feverish impatience, increasing almost to agony.

“Oh! intellect, nobleness and grace! worthy to wreath a monument for ages, I see ye sporting these precious moments away, on the ripple of a stream!

“I know it is only for a healthful repose, this pause in your pursuit. I know that soon you will resume your sandals and your staff, invigorated and strengthened for the highest achievements; you will win the summit of your ambition—but I have paused in the midst of the journey, and my strength has wasted in waiting; a fever has consumed me, and I must rest here.

“You will miss me; but it will be only in a human form of burdensome infirmities—my *spirit* will float over and around you until the end—and I shall be beautified in your memory. My soul has not been fully revealed to you in the mould nature gave it; but in the mists of memory, love itself will soften and refine each feature, and give to form its needed grace; so that I shall be to you lovelier and

holier than I have been here—and perhaps the ideal to inspire your loftiest labors.

“I look with calmness on my wasted form, for I see it was needful I should rest, that you might go on; and so ecstatic will be my joy when I see your works worthy to be ranked with the immortal triumphs of Art, I shall bless the moment when I laid aside these frail quivering nerves, for an impalpable but infinitely higher form of being. Then shall I perfectly comprehend and enjoy the soul that has been the object of my study, my love and my ambition.”









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