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The
Keepsake

14

Per. 2705 d. $\frac{402}{1857}$



21/-



Paint by Jean-Baptiste

W. M. G.

Portrait of a woman

1840

THE
KEEPSAKE

EDITED BY
MISS POWER



FOR 1857.

See page 230.

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DAVID BOGUE, 86 FLEET STREET;
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LONDON :
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THE
K E E P S A K E

1857.

EDITED BY
MISS POWER.

WITH BEAUTIFULLY FINISHED ENGRAVINGS,

FROM

DRAWINGS BY THE FIRST ARTISTS,

ENGRAVED UNDER THE SUPERINTENDENCE OF

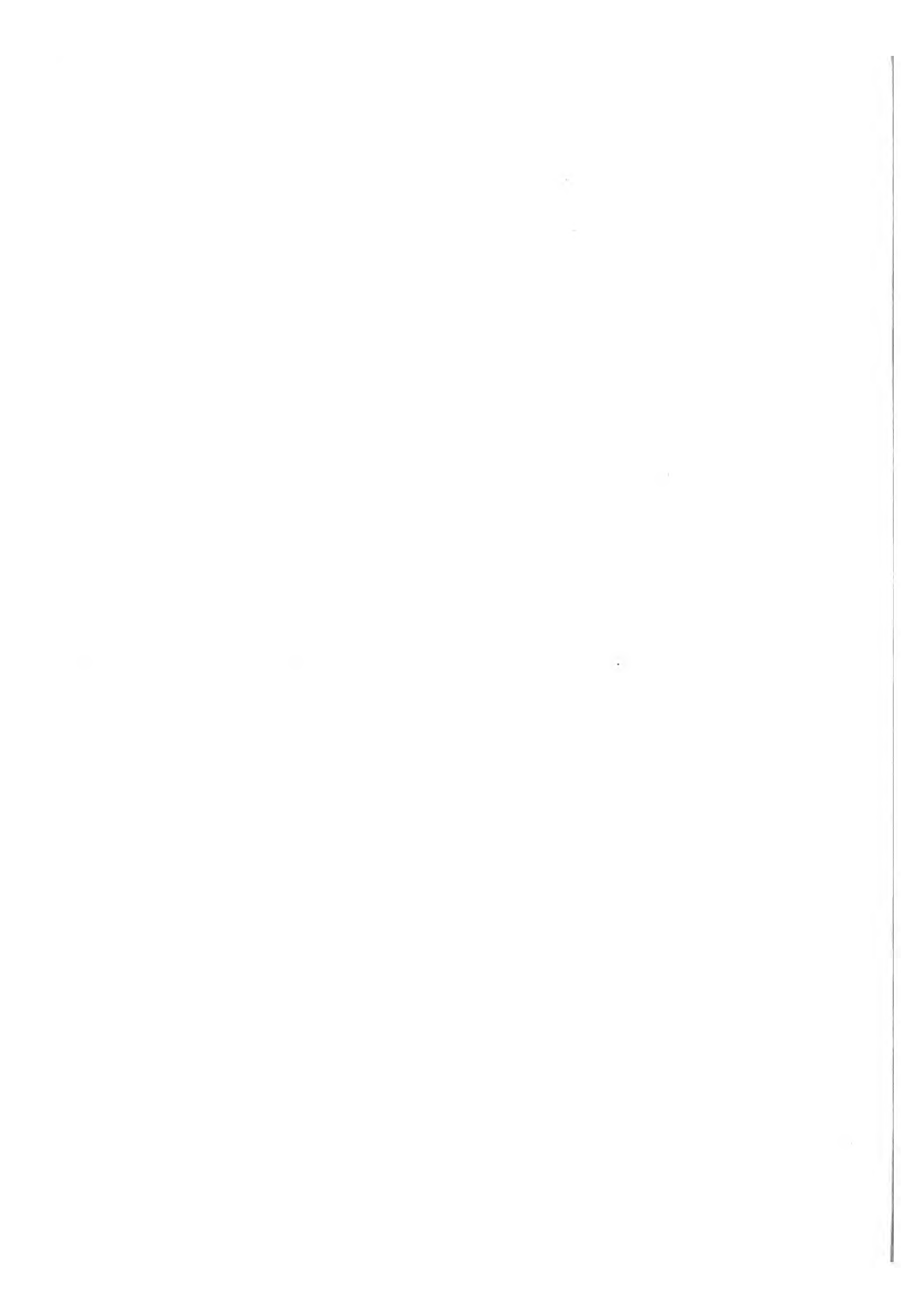
MR. FREDERICK A. HEATH.



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The Keepsake.

ON THE
PORTRAIT OF LADY MOLESWORTH.

BY H. F. C.

SWEETS to the sweet—renown to the renowned,
Brightness to brightness should apportioned be.
There are some beauties fashioned to be crowned
By the pale blossoms of the young May-tree ;
And some, who in their June of life, should don
The gold and purple and the jewelled zone ;
Here, of that bright and stately band is one,
Before whose coming should be clarions blown ;
And glad harps ring, and flowers perfume the way,
Crushed into odour by her dainty feet,
And all that gorgeous, graceful is, and gay,
To welcome her in joyous concord meet.
Courteous and kind—mirthful, yet ne'er too free,
Fit for all joy and festival is she.

1855.

B

Scarce is the smile portrayed, the rhyme half sung,
The hour of gladness perfect in its glow,
When, lo! a cloud by midnight whirlwind flung
Across the noon — a voice of bitter woe
Startling the music into silence dread,—
And, where the pageant was so bright and brief,
A sudden mourner by the noble dead,
Claims from all hearts an echo to her grief.—
Dark is the hour when fall our goodliest trees,
Whose every bough with fruitage ripe is stored,
When sink in the abyss those argosies,
That have our bravest armaments on board.
Firm—friendly—wise—his hour of Fame begun,—
Well may we mourn with *her* a bright day early done.

LOVE AND WISDOM.

BY HENRY KAINS JACKSON.

KNOWLEDGE oft comes to me in fairest guise,
As I, a child, sit by the great highway
That leads to Wisdom, and intreat the wise
Beneath the shade one restful hour to stay.
To them I listen, as a soldier's son
Who hears of heroes' deeds his sires of old have done.

Rare groups pass by upon their pilgrimage ;
Strange are their habits, stranger tongues they speak ;
Whose rays of meaning through a poet's page
Must singly glimmer in translations weak,
A woof of sunbeams never to be wove,
Save when we rave with Lear or mourn our Juliet's love.

Mahomet fables in his Paradise
Soft bells are hanging 'midst the murmurous leaves
Which winds do shake, and fill with harmonies
The perfumed stillness of Elysian eves ;
But Wisdom's words are truly bells, which, shaken,
The harmonies of Truth within the mind awaken.

And I have listened with a soul entranced,
 As from the pilgrim's lips the music dropped :
 To young *Romance*, with eagle eye that glanced
 From his proud eyrie which a world o'ertopped,
 Where dwarfs and fairies, ladies fair and knights,
 Amid enchanted scenes his wandering ken delights.

Next *History* came, a strong old man, whose gaze
 Was fixed upon the shadows left behind
 By the realities of former days,
 Chained in the dungeons of Oblivion blind :
 He rescued them ; the heroic deed and name,
 To move about the world in royal robe of Fame.

Another pilgrim paused. My ravished ears
 Listened to strains divine. *Philosophy*,
 A sun-burnt traveller in his prime of years,
 Proclaimed the truths that live with memory ;
 And what my stripling reason could not reach,
 The present maketh clear, or coming time will teach.

Next a fair woman 'neath the grateful shade
 Rested her beauty—in her hand a lyre,
 With which she charmed the winds that round us stayed,
 Wailing o'er the sweet sounds that did expire.
Music her name ; she makes the heart her own,
 To elevate the soul that hears her not alone.

Her foster-brother with her—*Poesy*,
 Morning upon his cheeks and in his eye,
 Told such a wondrous tale, it seemed that we
 Lived 'mid the scenes o'er which he hung his sky ;
 Or if we travelled every country through,
 We walked upon its flowers with sandals of the dew.

My soul was filled! in every form she wore,
 Knowledge was lovely and beloved by me;
I thought I'd tasted of her sweetest lore,
 And seen the fairest shape that eyes might see:
But Knowledge yet reserved her dearest form
Locked in her softest speech, and hoarded her best charm.

It came at last—a pure Madonna face,
 Shrined by old painters in its golden hair;
Trust, in her eyes, made them his dwelling-place—
 Witness of her heart's worthiness to bear
That sweetest secret which the heart can bless,
For when she told it me—Knowledge was Happiness.

THE MOTHER'S BEQUEST.

BY MRS. ABDY.

“ So Dr. Addison has again come to visit poor Mrs. Cresfield ; I see his carriage over the way,” said Miss Hyndford, laying down her worsted work as she spoke. “ I think, Susanna, it will be only kind of me if I call there after he is gone, and ask his opinion about her, and inquire if I can do anything to be of assistance to the family.”

“ I do not think there is any necessity for your doing so, sister,” replied Miss Susanna. “ We sent to inquire after Mrs. Cresfield this morning ; and we know her to be so well taken care of in every respect, that I think offers of assistance on our part would seem not only needless, but officious.”

Ladies, like members of parliament, are not to be judged of by a single speech. Probably my readers may conclude Miss Hyndford to be warm-hearted and friendly, and Miss Susanna to be selfish and apathetic ; but such was not the case. Had Mrs. Cresfield been a poor woman, in real want of the sympathy and attendance of a comforting neighbour, it would have been Miss Susanna who would have proposed the visit, and Miss Hyndford who would have negatived it. Mrs. Cresfield was a person of easy fortune, had a son and two daughters, a skilful physician, and three active, attentive servants ; therefore she stood as little in want of the assistance of a neighbour as could well be conceived possible. But Miss

Hyndford was a determined gossip, and had found, or fancied she had found, great food for investigation in the domestic tactics of the Cresfield family. Dr. Addison's carriage drove off, and Miss Hyndford speedily donned her bonnet and cloak, and crossed the way, feeling herself quite like a Sister of Charity. Half an hour elapsed before she re-entered her own drawing-room, where Miss Susanna sat placidly knitting.

"There has been no variation in Mrs. Cresfield's symptoms since this morning," she said, "and I was not allowed to see her!"

"I did not suppose you would be," said Miss Susanna. "Did you see Agnes, or Emily?"

"Emily was taking a walk with a friend," replied Miss Hyndford. "I think it is rather unfeeling of her to like to be out of the way when her mother is so dangerously ill."

"Poor thing," said Miss Susanna kindly, "I know that she was persuaded to do so by Agnes. I never knew a more devoted nurse than Agnes proves to her mother; therefore the constant attendance of Emily also, cannot be needed, and might be injurious to her health."

"Yes!" said Miss Hyndford dryly. "Agnes is indeed a devoted attendant on her mother; rather more so, I think, than is quite desirable."

"I am truly sorry to hear you say so," answered Miss Susanna, laying down her knitting. "Did she tell you this morning that her exertions were too much for her strength?"

"I think her strength is quite equal to any exertions," said Miss Hyndford. "But she did not tell me so this morning; she was occupied in reading to her mother, and did not like to leave her."

"And yet you stayed there above half an hour?" said Miss Susanna, inquiringly.

"You are exceedingly prying this morning, Susanna,"

replied Miss Hyndford. "You ought to know by this time that I have a particular dislike to inquisitive people. However, if your curiosity must be satisfied, I will tell you that I was conversing with Jane Williams, who, you know, we recommended to Mrs. Cresfield as housemaid six months ago, and she related to me several anecdotes of Agnes Cresfield, which quite prove to me that she arrogates a very undue ascendancy in her mother's house."

"That is rather surprising," said Miss Susanna dryly, (at least as dryly as so gentle a creature could be supposed to speak); "for I remember to have heard Jane Williams commend Agnes in the highest terms, saying that she was the most devoted of daughters to her mother, and almost like a mother to her younger sister."

"A great deal too much like a mother," replied Miss Hyndford. "It is perfectly absurd, considering that Agnes is not quite five-and-twenty, and Emily turned of eighteen, that she should assume such airs of eldership towards her."

How amusing it is to hear the remarks that people make on the errors, or the supposed errors, of others, in the most enviable unconsciousness that they are liable in their own persons to precisely the same censure! Miss Hyndford was six-and-forty, and she treated poor Susanna, who was five years her junior, with alternate condescension and austerity, deeming her scarcely fitting to form an opinion about the colour of a ribbon, and quite unfitting to form one respecting the character of an acquaintance.

"Agnes always seemed to me very fondly attached to her sister," said Miss Susanna with unwonted spirit, "and to consult her comfort and advantage in every respect."

"Like most people very forward in forming and giving an opinion, you are quite wrong, Susanna," replied Miss Hyndford. "Agnes is undermining the interests of her sister, and

also of her brother; she is exerting the influence she gains over her mother, during the long hours of her attendance on her, to induce her to leave the greater part of her property to herself: all the fortune of the Cresfields came, you know, on the side of Mrs. Cresfield, and she has the unrestricted power of willing it as she pleases."

"I conclude Jane Williams gave you this information," said Miss Susanna, "but I should be rather inclined to mistrust it. Supposing that Agnes was exercising improper influence over her mother, it is not likely that she would do so in the presence of a housemaid."

"Susanna, I scarcely know you this morning," said Miss Hyndford. "There is something cavilling and contradictory in your manner which is highly unbecoming to you. It is not, of course, probable that Agnes would lay open her artful schemes in the presence of a housemaid; but fragments of conversation may be overheard and put together."

Miss Susanna was on the point of responding, that fragments of conversation heard through the keyhole are often put together by the hearer in a very unsatisfactory shape, but she thought she had gone quite far enough for one morning in the novel assertion of her independence of opinion, and betook herself to the unenviable employment of getting her knitting in order, several stitches of which she had allowed to drop in the eagerness of her defence of Agnes Cresfield.

A month had passed; the long-expected event had taken place. Mrs. Cresfield was no longer numbered with the living. The will had been read, and there was no reason why its contents should be kept a secret; consequently, people were enlightened regarding its "whereases" and "provisos" without the necessity of paying a visit and a shilling to Doctors' Commons for the purpose of gaining the desired information.

Strange to say, Miss Susanna, who was generally far behind-hand with her sister in all gossiping details, was the first to hear of the matter in question.

A lady related to the Cresfields had called on her while Miss Hyndford was absent on a walk; and when the latter returned and found Miss Susanna with no other companion than the white Persian cat, little did she think of the companion she had been receiving, and the news which she had in store.

"Mrs. Judson has been here, sister," said Miss Susanna, in her usual calm, low tone of voice, "and has been telling me the particulars of poor Mrs. Cresfield's will."

Loquacious as was Miss Hyndford on ordinary occasions, she did nothing more at present than utter a hurried "Well!"

"Part of Mrs. Cresfield's income went from her at her death," said Miss Susanna. "The sum she had to bequeath amounted to fifteen thousand pounds in the three per cents; this she has left equally divided between her son and her two daughters."

"And Agnes is sole executrix, of course?" said Miss Hyndford, in a measured, oracular tone.

"No, indeed," said Miss Susanna. Agnes is one of the executors; the other is Mr. Carston, the merchant in whose counting-house Edward Cresfield was placed two years ago, and who, you know, is a distant relation of the Cresfields."

Miss Hyndford felt quite disconcerted; Mrs. Cresfield's will was so provokingly right and sensible, that it did not seem open to one injurious comment. Accordingly she delivered herself of the true, but not very original remark, that "Time would show all things," and repaired to her own room in such a very ill humour that nothing but an opportune visit from Jane Williams could have restored her to tolerable spirits.

A few months had elapsed. The Cresfields had found retrenchment necessary in consequence of the diminution of their income, but their comfort was not much affected thereby. They removed to a small house in the same street, and kept two servants instead of three. Agnes was still the careful, skilful housekeeper; such, indeed, she had been for several years, the protracted illness of Mrs. Cresfield having incapacitated her from taking any part in domestic details; and in regard to their visiting acquaintance, it still remained on precisely the same footing. They had never mixed with what is called "the world;" they had associated on friendly terms with a few families, and they still continued to do so. Among these were the Misses Hyndford. Agnes had always liked and esteemed the kind-hearted Miss Susanna; and although she disapproved of the meddling, prying character of Miss Hyndford, she flattered herself (poor Agnes!) that there was nothing in her family affairs which could possibly invite scrutiny or censure, and that it was not at all likely that Miss Hyndford could feel anything but good-will to one who had treated her with unvarying courtesy and attention. Agnes was not aware how easily an inveterate gossip will suffer herself to imbibe prejudices against an innocent person, nor how surely, when those injurious prejudices have been suffered to gain ground, and have been communicated to others, a feeling of ill-will is engendered towards the object of them: all dislike those they have injured. In consequence of the retrenchments of the Cresfields, Jane Williams lost her place in their family; and before her departure to a new situation in the country, made a communication to Miss Hyndford, which that lady saw fit to remunerate with the gift of a sovereign.

"Susanna," she said that evening to her sister, "I have now obtained certain proofs of Agnes Cresfield's treachery and

duplicity. Jane Williams overheard Mrs. Cresfield say to Agnes, two days before her death, 'Do not refuse to accept the bequest, dear Agnes: no one but yourself is worthy of it.' A few words then followed which were not audible, and Mrs. Cresfield continued,—'I give it you in token of the excellence of your character and the high opinion I have ever held of you.' A pause ensued, and Agnes made some rejoinder, in which Jane could only distinguish the words, 'My brother and sister.' 'It will be better,' replied Mrs. Cresfield, 'that you should keep this conversation a secret from Edward and Emily; they might possibly feel hurt at the acknowledgment of your superiority to them which I have made in death, and which I have always felt to be your due in life.' Now, Susanna, what do you think of this dialogue?"

"I do not believe a word of it," said Miss Susanna, with as much dignity and decision as if she had been accustomed to have her own opinion and her own way from childhood. It is difficult to say what rejoinder would have been severe enough for Miss Hyndford to make, had not a neighbour just then happened to drop in, and all other matters of interest were merged in the soothing influence of the cribbage-board.

Miss Hyndford, next morning, called at the Cresfields' house, and was fortunate enough to find Emily alone.

"You are looking very pale, my love," she said; "I suppose you will soon be going into the country?"

"Very soon," replied Emily. "Our aunt in Devonshire writes us word that she is all impatience for our annual visit."

"But, my dear Emily," said Miss Hyndford, "why does your sister continue this humdrum plan? why does she not take you to the Lakes, or on a tour through Wales?"

"These would be expensive plans, Miss Hyndford," said Emily.

"True, my dear," replied Miss Hyndford; "but a little additional expense need not be any object to Agnes."

"I do not quite understand you, Miss Hyndford," said Emily, opening her innocent blue eyes to their widest extent. "Do you not know that our income has been diminished by the death of dear mamma?"

"I know that this is generally believed to be the case, my dear child," said Miss Hyndford; "but may not your mother, previously to her death, have made over to your sister Agnes a large portion of her property which has not been specified in her will?"

"Dear me, no!" exclaimed Emily. "I have heard people speak about such things having been done, and they said it was defrauding the government and the legacy duty."

"But your very remark, Emily," said Miss Hyndford, "proves that such things *have* been done."

"Not by such persons as mamma and Agnes," said Emily, with spirit. Besides, Miss Hyndford," she continued, with a laugh, "how little you must know of Agnes to think that she would want to inherit more money than Edward and myself; or that if she had it, she would be able or willing to keep her possession of it a secret from us."

"Well, my dear," said Miss Hyndford, "I have given you a hint; some day or other you may think more seriously of it than you seem to do now."

That evening Emily mentioned Miss Hyndford's communication to her brother.

"How truly ridiculous!" exclaimed Edward; "I never heard of a more absurd conjecture. Our dear mother was so extremely communicative to her children in everything relative to her affairs, that I am certain if she had purchased a

few tickets in a foreign lottery, or a few shares in an Austrian gold company, she would have made her speculation a constant source of conversation by her 'ain fireside.'"

"And mamma," added Emily, "had so very small a collection of trinkets, always saying that she likened herself to the Roman matron, who considered her children her brightest ornaments, that I am afraid we cannot suppose Agnes's mysterious inheritance to consist in jewels, like the fortune of Constance Neville, in 'She Stoops to Conquer.'"

"It is altogether a most diverting story," said Edward. "I had no idea that Miss Hyndford had so fertile an imagination: however, Emily, I think you had better not say anything about it to Agnes; it may make her uneasy to think that she has been the subject of so gossiping a tale, although of course nobody will believe it."

Edward now began to talk about his own affairs, which were very interesting to himself and his sisters. Edward was a fine, handsome, spirited youth, a few months turned of twenty. When, two years before, he had entered the counting-house of Mr. Carston, who, as I have before mentioned, was a distant relative of his family, his mother entertained the hope that in the course of due time he would marry his employer's daughter, and have a share in the business.

These visions appeared rather more likely to be realized than is generally the case with maternal visions, for the pretty Mary Carston, who was three years younger than Edward, seemed to take much delight in his company; and although his home continued to be at his mother's house, he was a frequent guest at that of Mr. Carston. Latterly, the young people had come to an understanding with each other, but they could not prevail on Mr. Carston to sanction any engagement between them: he did not pursue any of the measures usually ascribed to arbitrary fathers—he did not dismiss his

offending clerk, nor lock up his enamoured daughter—he did something still more provoking, he laughed at the lovers, told them he thought they had taken leave of their senses, and assured them that five years hence would be quite time enough for them to think and talk about love.

“How earnestly I wish to be rich, Emily!” said Edward. “I might then hope for Mary’s hand, notwithstanding my youth. James Harrison, who has just come into a property of two thousand a-year, and is only a few months older than myself, might choose a wife from any family; it is not my youth, but my small fortune, to which Mr. Carston objects. Five thousand pounds is indeed a poor inheritance, especially when it is considered that I have no future expectations.”

Emily argued with her brother, according to her simple powers of rhetoric; told him that “youth was, after all, a great blessing; that five thousand pounds would be considered a very pretty property by those who had none; that Mr. Carston was exceedingly kind-hearted, although rather too much given to bantering; that Mary would be sure to be true and constant; and that everything would in the end turn out for the best.”

Agnes and Emily paid their visit to their aunt in Devonshire, and returned home. A few more months elapsed; it was now a twelvemonth since the death of Mrs. Cresfield. Agnes and Emily had received an invitation to a dance at the house of an old friend, Mrs. Litchfield: they had both promised to go, but a severe cold kept Agnes at home; she was, however, anxious that Emily should fulfil her engagement, and placed her under Miss Hyndford’s care.

Emily danced during the greater part of the evening with a young man of the name of Jocelyn; he was remarkably agreeable in appearance and manner, and his fortune and

position in society were, it appeared, undeniable. He seemed much pleased with Emily; Mrs. Litchfield, laughingly, congratulated her on her conquest, and Miss Hyndford, in the drive home, repeatedly expressed her delight "that Agnes had not been of the party, as, though neither so young nor so handsome as Emily, she had so many specious ways, that she was sure of fixing the attention of the young men on herself."

The next day, Jocelyn called on Mrs. Litchfield, and prevailed upon her to allow him to accompany her in a morning visit to the Cresfields; he felt impatient to renew his acquaintance with his fair partner. Agnes received him with kindness and good breeding, and Emily with undisguised pleasure. He became a frequent visitor at their house, joined them occasionally in their walks, procured tickets for lectures and concerts, to which he escorted them, and the very servants of the house soon became aware that Mr. Jocelyn was smitten with one of the young ladies. There was great truth in this supposition, but Agnes was the sister preferred by Jocelyn: he had been struck with the sparkling beauty and vivacity of Emily, but very soon, even in the course of the first morning visit, he discovered that Agnes was far more attractive, more intelligent, more fitted to become the companion through life of a sensible man. I have heard of instances in which a young man has entered a family as the suitor of one sister, and afterwards transferred his attentions to another, and I have always severely reprobated such conduct; it sows dissension between those who have been united from childhood, and gives to the forsaken one a rival in a peculiarly objectionable shape, because she must necessarily be in constant association with her.

The case of Jocelyn, however, was widely different; his attentions to Emily Cresfield had been those of one evening, his compliments the standard prettinesses of the ball-room; he

had certainly felt a wish to cultivate her acquaintance, but when he saw and conversed with her in her own home, she appeared to him trifling and uninteresting, and had Agnes not been an inmate of the house, his visit would in all probability never have been repeated. Emily soon grew dissatisfied with the very small share of attention that she received.

Jocelyn was an enthusiastic admirer of music. Agnes played and sang finely, while Emily's performances were those of a school-girl. Jocelyn was well read both in ancient and modern literature; there was a constant transfer of books between him and Agnes, and never-ceasing literary comments, quotations, and comparisons occurred in their conversation, which occasioned Emily, who could talk of nothing but new novels, to feel herself sadly in the background. She went one morning to Miss Hyndford, and disclosed her troubles to her. The spinster's eyes gleamed with malicious exultation.

"Did I not tell you, my poor child," she said, in a sympathising tone, "that your eyes would be soon opened to the real character of your sister? She has been circumventing you in the affections of your lover, even as she did in those of your mother; not contented with robbing you of your rightful fortune, she is now robbing you of your peace of mind!"

Miss Hyndford delivered this speech quite with tragical emphasis; she had actually persuaded herself that she was speaking the truth. After a long conversation, Emily returned home with red eyes, and the persuasion that she was an exceedingly ill-used person. Agnes, looking extremely placid and happy, was engaged in turning over the leaves of a splendidly illustrated work, which, she informed Emily, had just been sent to her by Jocelyn. The sight of this occupation was too much for Emily's composure.

"It is strange, Agnes," she said, "by what manœuvres

you can have succeeded in so completely fixing Jocelyn's attentions on yourself."

"Surely you jest," said Agnes, with a smile; "your superior youth and loveliness must always ensure you so many admirers, that you cannot be displeased if Jocelyn should somewhat prefer me to yourself."

"Then you *do* allow that you are the object of Jocelyn's preference?" exclaimed Emily.

"I believe so," said Agnes, with simplicity.

Completely irritated by this rejoinder, Emily now poured forth a torrent of angry reproaches. Agnes felt no power to interrupt her, nor to defend herself. It was truly a bitter trial to be thus accused and reviled by her whom she had tended in childhood, taught in youth, and loved and cherished in womanhood. At length she spoke.

"Has there been anything in my previous conduct towards you, Emily," she said, "which can justify you in suspecting me of artifice and injustice in the present instance?"

"Your own conscience can best reply to that question," said Emily: "you certainly exercised great influence over our mother, to the prejudice of Edward and myself; we both well knew that you were her favourite child."

"How much you are mistaken," said Agnes, mournfully; "our dear mother placed much confidence in me. I was the eldest of her children, and thoughtful and discreet beyond my years; but in regard to real love, believe me, Emily, that you and Edward were preferred by her to me in her life, and that she gave proofs of that preference even in her last hours."

"I am inclined to draw quite a contrary conclusion," replied Emily, "from some rumours that I have heard on the subject."

Agnes, being perfectly unconscious of Miss Hyndford's

insinuations regarding the bequest that she had received from her mother, did not attend to this remark,—she seemed buried in thought.

“Emily,” she exclaimed at length, “I implore you to reply faithfully to a question that I am going to ask you; do you really love Jocelyn? Is your happiness dependent on a union with him?”

Emily, whose mingled vanity and jealousy had actually led her into a state of feeling which she believed to be love, unhesitatingly declared that “her affections were given to Jocelyn—that she could never love again, and that the very thought of his probable union with another was enough to break her heart.”

Agnes merely replied by tenderly embracing her, and quitted the room. The visits of Jocelyn caused no further rivalry between the sisters—they ceased from that time. In a few days he called on Mrs. Litchfield, and announced his intention of travelling. Mrs. Litchfield surmised that, having entangled himself in a double flirtation with the fair sisters, he took a summary method of getting rid of them both. Miss Hyndford and Emily considered that the arts of Agnes having failed to capture him, he was so much annoyed by them, as to feel disinclined to keep up even a common acquaintance with her: this view of the subject proved exceedingly consolatory to Emily; she might have said, like Clarinda in the “Double Gallant,” “the pleasure of seeing my rival mortified makes me feel strangely good-natured;” for the passion-stricken girl, who had avowed that she could not survive a separation from Jocelyn, was singing “I love the merry sunshine,” with great spirit and vivacity the day after Mrs. Litchfield had announced the news of his farewell visit to her.

Edward Cresfield had taken very little apparent interest

in the loves and sorrows of his sisters; his mind seemed occupied in some secret trouble of his own, and a new source of anxiety and disquietude now opened to poor Agnes. First, she imagined that some misunderstanding had occurred with Mr. Carston, and next, she conjectured, that as one-and-twenty is not an age remarkable for stability and constancy, the charms of the pretty Mary Carston had been superseded by those of some still prettier girl, and that her brother was conscientiously mourning over his own want of fidelity. She had, however, shortly an opportunity of discovering that both these conjectures were unfounded. Mr. Carston invited the Cresfields to a little party, and the devotion of Edward to Mary Carston was unmistakable. Mr. Carston, in the course of the evening, spoke of Edward to Agnes in the kindest manner, praised his increased solidity and steadiness, his attention to business, and his love for domestic society, and even alluded to the agreeable fact that Mary's opinion of Edward's good qualities completely coincided with his own.

Agnes watched her brother narrowly for some days, but still failed to gain the least clue to his altered state of spirits. It was evident that he had not fallen into dissipated society; for Edward proved himself completely deserving of Mr. Carston's commendation touching his domestic tastes. He passed long evenings with his sisters, not, however, as was formerly the case, in music, conversation, or reading aloud, but in sitting with a book in his hand as a pretext for silence, seldom remembering, however, to turn over the leaves. Emily, not so watchful and quick-sighted as Agnes, merely thought that her brother had grown very stupid.

"Edward will be of age next month," she said; "but he seems to have completely antedated the period of discretion. He has too much of it, instead of too little. I hope I shall never marry a merchant. I suppose when they have been

poring over accounts and writing letters of business all day long, they are not fit for anything in the evening."

"I must speak to you on a sorrowful subject, Agnes," said Edward one night after Emily had retired. "I have this morning received a communication from Mr. Carston which has placed me in a painful position. He has borne in mind a wish once hinted to him by our dear mother, and is kindly desirous of acting upon it; he is willing to admit me to a share of the business when I come of age, in consideration of my bringing into the firm the five thousand pounds of which I shall then be put in possession."

"Dear Edward," exclaimed Agnes, "do you call this a painful communication? Surely you must have something distressing to add to it. Has Mary's opinion of you changed?"

"Mary's opinion of me is still the same that it has always been," said Edward, with bitterness; "she thinks of me far more highly than I deserve. Agnes, I have involved myself in pecuniary difficulties; I cannot bring five thousand pounds into Mr. Carston's business as I should be rejoiced to do; I have anticipated my inheritance, and lost a great part of it!"

"My dear Edward," exclaimed Agnes, "you shock as well as surprise me! Can you, so well principled, so well educated, have indeed yielded to the fatal attractions of the gaming-table?"

"No, no, Agnes!" replied Edward, "do not believe so ill of me. I have done nothing disgraceful; nothing which has not been done by men who hold a high place in the world's esteem. I was anxious to become rich, imagining that Mr. Carston was deterred from giving me his daughter rather by my small fortune than by my youth. I ventured a sum of money in a daring speculation, but I was not rash enough to venture my all. Being so nearly of age, I found it easy to raise, on moderate terms, the requisite two thousand pounds;

the speculation failed, but no one is injured by me, neither have I involved myself in any liabilities beyond the sum I have mentioned."

"Thank Heaven!" exclaimed Agnes, "that the case is not worse."

"Under ordinary circumstances," pursued Edward, "I think that I could soon have reconciled myself to my loss; I should have taken into consideration the remark of Carlyle, 'Experience *does* take dreadfully high school-wages, but he teaches like no other instructor,' and I should have trusted that the sacrifice of nearly half my property would have enabled me to guard the remainder with greater care. In my present position, however, my folly must immediately be made known to Mr. Carston; he has a horror of speculation, in which he flatters himself that I participate; not only shall I be excluded from ever possessing a share of his business, but I shall have the far worse trial of losing his good opinion, and foregoing all hopes of the hand of dear Mary."

"My beloved brother," said Agnes, "do not make yourself unhappy! hope for the best. I think I can suggest consolation to you, but I will not immediately do it; we will speak again on the subject to-morrow night."

Edward impatiently waited the promised communication, and the next day appeared to him to be one of unusual length.

"Dearest Edward," said Agnes, when again left alone with him, "I would not tell you last night that I have both the will and the power to extricate you from your present embarrassing situation, because I feared that you would, perhaps, consider my offer as arising from the warm impulse of the moment, and might, on that account, think you were doing right in declining it. I have well considered the step I am about to take; give yourself no uneasiness respecting the two thousand pounds; the sum shall be immediately placed at your

command, to return to the person from whom you borrowed it; you shall receive your inheritance without any drawback, and Mr. Carston need never know that you entrenched upon it."

"Agnes! dear Agnes!" vehemently exclaimed Edward; "your offer is, indeed, noble! but do not imagine that I can take advantage of it. What! shall you, who were not even aware of the folly I committed, bear all the penalty of it, while I escape unharmed? Besides, I, like other men, have a vocation in which I can labour, and add to my inheritance; you, like all women in your class of life, are unable to increase your income by your own exertions; your fortune is already limited, should it become more so for the sake of enriching an erring brother?"

"Remember, dearest Edward," said Agnes, "that you stand in no common position. At the present crisis of your life, fortune, love, and happiness seem placed within your reach, do not deny me the pleasure of assisting to secure them for you."

"I cannot allow it, Agnes!" replied her brother; "my conscience would continually reproach me if I permitted you to impoverish yourself for my sake. Supposing that our dear mother were permitted to look down on this world of trouble, can you imagine she would approve of an action like that you are contemplating?"

"Yes!" exclaimed Agnes, with energy; "I believe, nay, I know that she would approve of it! Duty and conscience, dear Edward, as well as affection, impel me to offer you this assistance: I should not be obeying the dying wishes of my mother if I failed to do so."

This last argument proved successful. Edward gratefully accepted of his sister's proffered aid; the money was procured for him in the course of the next day, the debt was imme-

diately defrayed, and a month afterwards he took possession of his little inheritance, and his name was entered in the firm of Mr. Carston's house. His engagement to Mary was also sanctioned, and their union was only deferred on account of the youth of both parties.

Agnes considered it quite unnecessary to enjoin her brother to secrecy in regard to her gift, it being so clearly and palpably his own interest that nothing should be known of the circumstances that had led to it. Edward, however, on the morning after his birthday, being alone with Emily, who was congratulating him on his happy prospects in life, could not resist telling her of the noble generosity of Agnes; he had sometimes thought, and with great justice, that Emily was not so sensible as she ought to be of the many excellencies of her sister, and he was desirous that she should learn to do full justice to her.

"It was very right and proper of Agnes," said Emily, after she had listened to her brother's communication.

"Right and proper!" exclaimed Edward, rather indignant at the coolness with which she had listened to his recital; "you employ very strange epithets, Emily, to designate an action which appears to me truly generous and noble!"

"But it strikes me as a remarkable coincidence," said Emily, "that Agnes should say that duty and conscience impelled her to give you the money, and that she was obeying the dying wishes of her mother in doing so."

"A coincidence with what?" asked Edward, who was not aware that Miss Hyndford's gossiping communication to Emily had been lately followed up by many minute details relative to the subject in question.

"With words," replied Emily, "overheard by Jane Williams, when they were uttered by our dear mother a few hours before her death, when she pressed a bequest on Agnes, and

conjured her not to refuse it." Edward mused a little while. The coincidence did, indeed, appear to be remarkable. "Therefore," continued Emily, "I cannot allow that Agnes has behaved generously. If our mother privately made over to her a large sum of money, it is only fitting that she should divide it with us, and I am glad that she is disposed to do so; but what I blame Agnes for, is, that she should not honestly tell us that having received more money than ourselves, she is desirous of sharing it with us, instead of making a mystery of the whole affair, and receiving thanks for her munificence."

Edward thought that Emily spoke much more sensibly than usual; in fact, Emily's remarks would have been quite just had she not argued from false premises; she chose to take it for granted that Agnes had been endowed with a large sum of money, without considering that she had derived the information from very questionable authority. Since Edward had become one of Mr. Carston's partners, he had ceased to reside with his sisters. Mr. Carston had recently purchased a house and grounds in the neighbourhood of London, in which he and his daughter spent most of their time, and he was desirous that one of the firm should reside constantly in the house of business. Emily complained repeatedly of the increased dullness of their home, and Agnes was glad on her account to accept the invitation of an old friend of the family residing at Hastings, who was desirous that both sisters should pay her a visit for a few weeks. Emily was somewhat disappointed to find that Mrs. Denton mingled with no gaieties, and visited but very few families; but her regret did not last long, for among the few families she gained an admirer, one whom she repeatedly declared "was superior in every respect to Jocelyn." In one respect he certainly was superior to him, he did not pay attentions or lend books to Agnes; he

seemed to have neither eyes nor ears but for her beautiful young sister.

George Ansted lived in the neighbourhood of Hastings with his father and mother; the estate on which they resided was their own; the family had once been very rich, but extravagant progenitors had sadly mortgaged and encumbered the property before it came into the possession of the present proprietor. Like many other parents, Mr. and Mrs. Ansted had decided that their only son should marry an heiress, but the young man was not to be easily pleased; one heiress had a plain face, another a bad temper, and a third a defective education; he wisely kept aloof from penniless beauties, and he seemed likely to live and die in single blessedness, had not his mother hit on the happy expedient that he should pursue a middle course by uniting himself to a girl beautiful, accomplished, well-connected, and possessing somewhat about ten thousand pounds. Ansted flattered himself that he had met in Emily Cresfield with the original of this fancy sketch. Her beauty was undeniable; her family, although not aristocratic, highly respectable, and her French ballads and flower-paintings sufficient evidence of her accomplishments to be quite satisfactory to a lover. The Hastings people gifted her with a handsome fortune. Ansted did not pause to investigate the truth of this report, for he was really and sincerely attached to Emily; and when he proposed to her one morning in a ramble to the Lovers' Seat, he would gladly have abided by his declaration had her independence turned out to consist of five hundred, instead of five thousand pounds. Emily told him the amount of her fortune with apparent candour; but candour had, in reality, no part in her communication; she knew that Ansted must, sooner or later, become acquainted with the real state of the case; and she was desirous of telling him at the same time that her elder sister was possessed of a

large independent fortune, and an unequalled munificence of spirit.

“Dear Agnes never intends to marry,” she said; “all her thoughts, hopes, and wishes are concentrated on Edward and myself. In regard to her generosity, it is of too lavish a nature. She very recently compelled my brother Edward to receive from her a large sum of money. He resisted her entreaties a long time, till at length he found that she was absolutely determined to have her own way, and he was obliged to accept of her kindness, for which he feels the deepest gratitude.”

Much in love as Ansted was, he certainly was sensible of an increase of happiness when he heard of the delightful sister-in-law in store for him, the benevolent fairy who actually showered down gold upon people against their wishes, and enriched them for life under the playful and delicate protest, that “she was determined to have her own way!”

All this conversation was faithfully reported by Ansted to his father and mother; and, consequently, they went with a very good grace to pay a visit to their future daughter-in-law, and their attentions to her elder sister were so kind and marked, that poor Agnes, who could, of course, ascribe their conduct to no interested motive, was quite touched and gratified by it. Agnes, indeed, was thoroughly grateful for the fair prospects that were opening to her sister; she had far more anxiety on her account than on that of Edward, and she knew that such had always been the feeling of her mother. Emily's distaste for all useful occupation, her beauty, her thirst for admiration, her love of company and amusement, all combined to make her path through life a very dangerous one, unless she were constantly guided by a firm hand, and marked by a watchful eye. Such she had hitherto found in the sister who loved her so tenderly that she never permitted her vigi-

lance to assume the semblance of authority; but Agnes had often trembled when she contemplated the probability of the beautiful, thoughtless Emily, being united to a husband who would either sternly reprehend and control her, or fondly and carelessly indulge her in her most unreasonable wishes, till mutual unhappiness would ensue.

There was everything connected with Emily's present engagement to lull the fears of the anxious sister. Ansted united to amiability and kindness of heart a more than ordinary portion of firmness and judgment, his parents possessed excellent tempers and high principles. It was settled that the young couple should reside with them. Emily was pleased with the plan; it gratified her pride that her husband should dwell on the estate which was hereafter to be his own, and it suited her indolence to be relieved from all trouble respecting domestic management. Mrs. Ansted was mild and considerate, and Agnes felt persuaded that Emily would be safe from the temptations of the world; she would be surrounded by those who loved her too well to neglect or upbraid her, and Agnes indulged the hope that she might yet become a valuable and useful member of society.

"How delighted Mr. and Mrs. Ansted seemed to be with you, dear Agnes," said Emily to her sister immediately after their visit. "I am half afraid they would have preferred you to myself as a daughter-in-law."

"At all events," said Agnes with a smile, "their son has shown better taste. I suspect, Emily, that I am indebted to their kindness from the fact that I have the honour of being your sister."

"And a very truly valued sister," said Emily, caressingly. "I have told my dear Ansted so many anecdotes of your devoted kindness to Edward and myself, that I cannot wonder he should have prepared his parents to admire and esteem you."

Agnes felt somewhat surprised at this speech, for Emily was far from being of an affectionate or grateful disposition; but being always ready to judge on the charitable side, she concluded that the love Emily felt for Ansted had caused her heart to expand to others, and that she had suddenly become sensible of many acts of kindness from her sister which she had never seemed to acknowledge at the time they were bestowed. She therefore imprinted a kiss on Emily's blooming cheek, and quietly went on with her needle-work.

"It was very disinterested of Ansted," said Emily, "to make choice of one of my small fortune. Of course it would have been extremely desirable for him to have met with some heiress who could have freed the estate from encumbrance."

"Undoubtedly it would," said Agnes. "But heiresses are not always attractive in appearance and manner; and I am sure that Ansted would not marry from interested motives."

"How I wish that my little fortune were doubled!" exclaimed Emily after a pause.

"I believe you have expressed a very general wish," said Agnes smiling. "But perhaps none of us would be happier if it were fulfilled."

"It is easy for the rich to be philosophical," said Emily.

"If I really am possessed of any philosophy," returned Agnes, "it is certainly not owing to my riches. Were I rich, Emily, I would, notwithstanding all my wise axioms, realize your wish by doubling your fortune."

"Of course you could very well do so if you liked," said Emily.

"My dear Emily," said Agnes, "what can have given you this fabulous idea of my wealth? Do you think that, like Margaret in Elie Berthet's pretty tale, I have obtained private access to a gold-mine?"

"I think," replied Emily, that the noble gift of two

thousand pounds which you bestowed upon Edward would never have been given by one so discreet and careful as yourself, had you not been able to do it with ease and prudence; and I think that, considering the great error committed by Edward, and that I have never done anything wrong, it is not unreasonable in me to hope that I shall experience a still greater proof of your generosity. I am going to ally myself with an ancient family; and surely such a connexion is far more creditable to you than Edward entering into a business-firm, and engaging himself to a merchant's daughter."

There was much in this speech to hurt the good taste and good feeling of Agnes; it showed Emily to be mercenary and envious as well as vain and haughty.

"You argue in a strange manner, Emily," she said, "that because I have thought fit to be generous to a brother, I am bound in consistency to be still more generous to a sister. I assure you that Edward showed far more delicacy of mind than you do, and that it was with difficulty I could prevail on him to accept of the sum I offered to him."

"I dare say I should have behaved just like Edward if you had offered me the money," said Emily. "But as you said nothing on the subject, I thought I would just give a hint to you that my feelings are very much hurt at your making so much distinction between me and my brother."

Emily now began to sob very plaintively and perseveringly, but Agnes, for the first time in her life, was proof against her sister's tears; she was thoroughly displeased by her conduct.

"I am sure," sobbed Emily, "that if our dear mother were alive, she would wish you to grant my request."

Agnes started. Emily had touched an awakening chord within her bosom. Agnes was not aware how correctly and minutely Edward had repeated to Emily the conversation which she had held with him, when, in pressing on him the

gift of the two thousand pounds, she said that she was certain her mother would approve of what she was doing could she know of it. Emily, in reality, was merely playing the part of a mocking-bird; but Agnes fancied that some mysterious influence was at work which had caused the weeping girl to divine the dying wishes of her mother.

"I know," pursued Emily, "that our mother loved me as much as she did Edward, and took quite as warm an interest in me; and I know that she would not wish one of her two younger children to be enriched at the expense of the other!"

Agnes could not deny Emily's assertion; in fact, Mrs. Cresfield had taken a far more anxious interest in Emily than in Edward, because she had, like Agnes, formed a just opinion of her character, and felt assured that according to those with whom she associated in after life, her faults might be increased or repressed.

"You speak truly, my dear Emily," said Agnes, kindly. "I know that our dear mother, if permitted to look down upon us, would approve of the union that you are about to form, and that she would wish me to show my sense of it in any way that might afford you satisfaction. I cannot quite realize your sanguine hopes; but I am willing to bestow on you the same sum that I gave to Edward."

A slight cloud passed over Emily's face; she evidently longed to say something about Edward's imprudence and embarrassments, but she thought better of it, and poured forth eager thanks, and showered affectionate caresses on her dear generous sister. The Ansteds were duly grateful for Agnes's gift; but it was quite evident that from Emily's glowing accounts of the riches and generosity of her sister, they had expected something more. The marriage of Ansted and Emily took place in a few weeks, and Agnes returned to her now solitary home in London. She had the pleasure about

this time of renewing her acquaintance with a very dear school-friend, some years older than herself, who had married an American of handsome property, and had long been resident with him at New York. They were now visiting England for a few months, and had just fixed themselves in London for the benefit of masters for their two young daughters. No one could be surprised that Agnes should be delighted to pass much of her time with Mr. and Mrs. Marsham; but in the course of a month, Agnes adopted a plan, which caused great wonder and dissatisfaction among her friends and connexions. She let her house furnished to a yearly tenant, and took up her abode with the Marshams. Miss Hyndford and her coterie expressed unqualified disapprobation of this arrangement.

“The dearest friends are sure to fall out if too familiar with each other,” said Miss Hyndford, “and every single woman who goes to live with a married couple, either flirts with the husband, or cabals against him with the wife!”

And the spinsters who surrounded her tea-table, strange to say, all expressed their unlimited accordance with her opinion. Edward and Emily were greatly disconcerted; they had each felt much pride in boasting about the wealth of their sister, and this sudden and sweeping retrenchment was certainly no confirmation of its existence.

“Do you really think,” said Ansted to Emily, “that your mother left so large a sum of money at the command of your sister? It seems singular and unaccountable that she should do so, and that such a secret should be made of it!”

“I know it from the best authority,” said Emily; “a person with whom I am well acquainted, heard the parting words of my mother to Agnes.”

Emily discreetly sank all mention of Jane Williams, and Ansted concluded that the auditor of Mrs. Cresfield's address

to her eldest daughter had been most probably the family physician.

"But why does your sister give up housekeeping?" he asked. "I never saw anything in her character indicative of parsimony."

"Neither is she in the least parsimonious," replied Emily; "I rather think she is tired of living in an unfashionable street, and wishes to take her time in engaging a new house. I believe she has rather an inclination for the neighbourhood of Hyde Park Gardens."

Edward encountered similar wonder on the part of Mr. Carston, but rebutted it in rather a different way. "To tell you the truth, my dear sir," he said, "my good sister Agnes is somewhat too fond of money; the love of saving, like that of spending, is generally known to increase with time."

"But is it actually the fact," said Mr. Carston, "that Agnes has such abundance of money either to save or to spend? Mary tells me of a report of her private fortune which I really cannot believe. I knew your mother well, and she appeared to me to be the last person in the world to store up secret heaps of wealth, and then shower them all upon one child. Did Agnes ever tell you that her mother had made over money to her?"

"She spoke words which could admit of no other interpretation," replied Edward.

"Did she ever do deeds which could admit of no other construction?" asked Mr. Carston.

"Assuredly she has done so," replied Edward; but he felt that the generous deed done to himself must not be repeated to any one, least of all to Mr. Carston, and therefore informed that gentleman of Agnes's liberal addition of two thousand pounds to her sister's marriage portion.

"That was decidedly a noble proof of sisterly affection,"

said Mr. Carston; "but do you not think that Agnes made rather an unjust distinction in bestowing all her pecuniary favours on Emily, and none on yourself?"

Poor Agnes! how lately had Emily brought a precisely contrary accusation against her!

"I am sure," said Edward, feeling much mortified to hear his kind sister charged with unjust partiality without the power of defending her, "that Agnes is quite as warmly attached to me as to Emily, and that she is equally ready to serve me."

"Well," said Mr. Carston, "Agnes is living without expense now, and receiving rent for her house, which must more than indemnify her for that which she pays for it. I think her property must be accumulating so fast, that it will be a charity to give her the opportunity of doing a little good with it; not that I wish her to present you with money, Edward, but I should like to admit you to a larger share of the business. Suppose Agnes advances a few thousand pounds to you for that purpose, and that you pay her legal interest for her deposit, you will be a gainer by this arrangement, and she will be no loser."

Edward readily acceded to this plan, called upon Agnes, and made the proposition to her suggested by Mr. Carston.

"I cannot comply with your request, Edward," said Agnes; "I have not the ability of doing so."

"Rather say you have not the inclination," said Edward; "possibly you do not wish to invest any part of your property in business, and if that be the case, I am sure I am the last person in the world to persuade you to do so; but you who have been so very munificent to Emily and myself, must have the ample means of continuing to be so; where four thousand pounds have been given away, many thousands must remain behind!"

“ You speak like a mercantile man, Edward,” said Agnes ; “ but such calculations do not always hold good. I can only repeat that it is not in my power to comply with your request, and as I think you never detected me in an untruth, I hope you will do me the justice to believe that I am not guilty of one in the present instance.”

Edward quitted his sister, very much dissatisfied with the result of his visit, and told Mr. Carston that Agnes was too careful of her money to trust any of it out of her own hands. Mr. Carston felt hurt and offended ; he imagined that Agnes was generous to Emily and niggardly to Edward, because her pride was gratified at the connexion of the former with an ancient family, and he naturally considered that his relationship to the Cresfields, and Agnes's professed friendship for Mary, should have rendered them at least equal objects of interest to her with the Ansteds, who were only the acquaintance of a few weeks. Consequently, Mr. Carston and Mary become very cool in their manner to Agnes, and as she sincerely regarded them, their conduct caused her much concern, even although she was sensible that she had never given them any just cause for it. Some months passed. London was in all the glories of its season, and the Ansteds engaged a house in Curzon Street for a few weeks, and introduced Emily to their friends.

“ I am the happiest of the happy, my dear Agnes,” said Emily to her sister, one morning when paying her an early visit ; “ my husband is more of a lover than before our marriage ; his father and mother quite doat upon me, and their friends are all delightful people ; I have only one little wish ungratified.”

“ What is your wish ?” inquired Agnes, rather coolly ; for she knew by experience that Emily had an unfortunate apti-

tude for wishing to have things that were difficult of attainment.

“I have been present at several parties,” said Emily, “and I have remarked that all the married women wear jewellery, and I feel quite uncomfortable to be without any. I heard once of a lady who apologised for her excessive love of jewels, by saying, ‘they are the only bright things that never fade!’”

“I think,” said Agnes, smiling, “that it is quite unnecessary to apologise for so natural an admiration as that which we feel for jewels—they are appropriate and beautiful ornaments for those who can afford to buy them; but in your case, Emily, as your husband is not rich, I would advise you to dismiss the idea from your mind, and to say nothing to him on the subject.”

“I never thought of applying to him on the subject,” said Emily; “I had hoped, Agnes, that you might not have been unwilling to present me with a few ornaments. I assure you that I do not wish for anything costly; I should be quite satisfied with a diamond brooch and a pair of bracelet-clasps to match.”

“It would not be convenient to me to make you so expensive a present, Emily,” said Agnes.

“Nay!” rejoined Emily; “I cannot think that it would be inconvenient to you—you are living with Mr. and Mrs. Marsham, and saving all expense of housekeeping!”

“Do you know,” said Agnes, “that Mr. and Mrs. Marsham return to America in ten days?”

“So I have heard,” said Emily; “and you will then, of course, keep house again; but you have been already living with them for six months, and must have made considerable savings.”

“Are you aware, Emily,” said Agnes, completely provoked by her sister’s pertinacity, “that you are violating the customs of society by pointedly asking for a gift, and persevering in your demands after you have met with a decided refusal?”

“Perhaps I am,” replied Emily; “but have you not set me the example of violating the customs of society? Is it usual that a daughter should receive a large sum of money from her mother to the prejudice of her brother and sister?”

“You display more ignorance, Emily,” said Agnes, “than I should have supposed you capable of. Was not our friend and relative, Mr. Carston, joint-executor with myself of the will of our dear mother, and do you think that he would have suffered me to defraud you and Edward of that which was your rightful due, even if such had been my own wish?”

“I am not so ignorant as you imagine me to be,” said Emily. “I know that the property which you derive from my mother was made over by her to you on her deathbed.”

“Emily,” said Agnes, with a look of genuine amazement; “I entreat you to tell me who has imposed upon your credulity by this absurd tale?”

“Our friend, Miss Hyndford, was my informant,” replied Emily, “and she named Jane Williams as her authority, who heard my mother, in her last moments, press a bequest upon you, of which she said you alone were worthy. You hesitated for a little while, and she entreated you not to refuse it; you then made some remark about your brother and sister, and she requested you to keep the bequest a secret from us, lest we might be hurt at her acknowledgment of your superiority. Can you deny all this, Agnes?”

“And is it possible,” said Agnes, without replying to her question, “that you and Edward can believe that I have taken advantage of my influence with my mother to possess myself of money which ought to have been equally divided between

us, and that I have been assuming generosity in making pecuniary presents to you both, when in reality I was only making a restitution of part of that property which I had unjustifiably engrossed to myself?"

"Such is our opinion, undoubtedly," said Emily; "especially when we remember what you said to Edward about the dictates of conscience and duty, and doing what our dear mother would approve of, if she could know what you were doing."

The usual self-command of Agnes quite deserted her; she hid her face in her hands, and burst into a torrent of tears.

"I am sorry that our conversation has been so unpleasant," said Emily; "but, perhaps, it is better that we should have come to an explanation on the subject; and you know, Agnes, it is still in your power to undo all the evil you have done, by making over to Edward and myself our proper share of my mother's bequest to you!"

Emily took her departure, feeling as secure of the diamonds as if she were holding in her hand the receipt of Hunt and Roskill for the purchase-money, and piquing herself greatly on her superiority to the elder sister, whom she had left behind her in the unwonted character of a culprit. Agnes did not place sufficient trust in Emily's veracity to feel quite assured that she spoke truly when she said that Edward participated in her suspicions regarding the bequest. When she had somewhat recovered herself from the shock that she had sustained, she wrote to her brother, repeating the conversation that she had held with Emily, and asking him if he really believed her capable of the conduct imputed to her by the latter. Edward's reply was short and conclusive. He lamented that Emily should have expressed herself abruptly and disrespectfully to her sister; but avowed his opinion on the subject of the bequest to be quite the same as her own.

After devoting an hour to consideration, Agnes sought Mrs. Marsham. "You have been kind enough, Elizabeth," she said, "to press me repeatedly to accompany you to America, and I have declined your invitation; are you willing to renew it?"

Mrs. Marsham's reply was by an exclamation of pleasure and an affectionate embrace; and in five minutes Mr. Marsham was rubbing his hands with satisfaction; and the little girls fondly hanging round the dear Miss Cresfield, from whom they had anticipated so distressing a parting.

Edward had immediately acquainted Emily with Agnes's letter to him, and with his own reply; and they both agreed that they must now quietly await the event, leaving Agnes to act as she thought fit; which mode of acting they earnestly hoped would consist in transferring a tolerable number of thousands in the funds from her name to their own; and they eagerly tore open every letter they received, trusting that it would be found to enclose stock acceptances. No such communication, however, made its appearance; but a letter at length arrived, directed to Edward in Agnes's handwriting, and bearing the Liverpool postmark—a few lines written within the outer cover of it signified that it was equally addressed to Emily and himself, and that it was the request of the writer that they should read it together. The contents were as follows:—

"By the time that you have received this letter, my dear brother and sister, I shall have set sail for America in company with my kind friends the Marshams. It is probable that we shall never meet again; nor do I suppose that you would greatly grieve were such to be the case, since your unfavourable opinion of my character has been clearly shown by the accusations of fraud, treachery and avarice, which you have mutually brought against me. I deem it, however, due

to myself to give you a full statement of the circumstances connected with my mother's bequest, for such a bequest was unquestionably made by her to me, and the words overheard by Jane Williams were correctly repeated. I had never been a favourite with my mother; I had neither the advantages of person nor the vivacity of manner which distinguished her younger children. All her thoughts, in health or in sickness, were for their welfare; and she was full of anxiety lest the warmth and impetuosity of their nature should lead them into trial and trouble. 'My good Agnes,' she said to me the day before her death, 'you are prudent and steady beyond your years; it is most probable that you will never marry; promise me that you will devote your time, thoughts, and fortune to the interest of your brother and sister. I leave them to you as a precious legacy; do not refuse to accept the bequest, dear Agnes; no one but yourself is worthy of it. You may be involved in distressing responsibilities; you may be under the necessity of ceaseless watchfulness; you may even fail to gain the gratitude which you will have so just a claim to expect, if you conscientiously and truly fulfil this my bequest. But, Agnes, remember that your mother gives it you as a token of her high value for your consistency and excellence of character.' I could not immediately reply to her. I wept silently for a few moments, and then said, 'My beloved mother, I accept your charge; and may Heaven prosper or desert me as I prove true or false to the duties I have undertaken. I will in every respect, and at the cost of every sacrifice, endeavour to supply your place to my brother and sister.' My mother fondly embraced me. 'I counsel you,' she said, 'to keep this, my last bequest, a secret from Edward and Emily; they might possibly feel hurt that in death I have made this acknowledgment of your superiority to them, which, unknown to them, I have always made in life.'

“Such was the conversation of which you have, hitherto, only heard a part. I was happy to think that my mother had placed so much confidence in me, thereby showing her high opinion of my integrity and firmness of character; and I could not help indulging the hope that perhaps her spirit might be permitted to watch over me, and to encourage and strengthen me in the discharge of those duties which I had undertaken in compliance with her request. I found those duties far more severe and trying than I had anticipated; but I prayed to Heaven to support me in the path I had chosen, and I did not pray in vain. It appeared to me at one time that I might unite the performance of my duties with my own happiness. I loved Jocelyn; he evidently returned my love; and I felt that my young brother and sister would indeed gain an inestimable advantage in having such a friend and protector. One evening I had just received a letter from him, in which he declared his affection for me, and offered me his hand. You, Emily, will remember the painful scene that took place when you merely suspected his preference for me; you will call to mind your tears, your lamentations, your declarations that you could not survive the trial of seeing Jocelyn united to another woman. Could I, by accepting him, bring sorrow, disappointment, and mortification on my beloved sister? How, then, should I be fulfilling the last wishes of my mother? I did not hesitate a moment as to the course which duty required me to pursue. I wrote to Jocelyn, explicitly and firmly refusing his hand, and assuring him that no lapse of time could make any alteration in my feelings on the subject. We never saw him again! This was my first trial: my second was in the involvements and troubles of you, my dear brother Edward. Though, I trust, I have never placed an undue value on money, I certainly felt it somewhat of a sacrifice to give up to you nearly half my fortune, but I saw no alter-

native ; ruin was on one side of you, love and prosperity on the other ; it was in the power of my hand to turn the scale, and I felt that my mother would have wished me to do so. When you, Emily, pressed me to add to your marriage portion, I knew that if I refused to do so, I should cause you to appear to disadvantage in the eyes of your new connexions, to whom it was evident you had been boasting of the riches of your sister. I also knew that I should foster in your mind a feeling of envy towards Edward, and of dissatisfaction towards myself, which would effectually prevent me from retaining any ascendancy over your mind, or of being of any future benefit to you in your way through life. My little fortune was now diminished to a thousand pounds ; but I felt truly grateful to think that my beloved brother and sister were now, as I had every reason to believe, placed in situations of safety and happiness ; that they were each engaged in marriage to the object of their affection ; and each raised in worldly circumstances above the evils of a narrow income. I considered that my mother's bequest had been carried out in all its conditions, and truly thankful did I feel to Providence that such had been the case. I knew that I could not live on the interest of a thousand pounds, but I was aware that I was mistress of many accomplishments, and could easily add to my income. I let my house, and took up my abode for several months with Mrs. Marsham, devoting several hours every day to the education of her children. She anxiously wished me to accompany her to America ; but my heart clung to my brother and sister, I could not bear to separate from them. Judge, then, what I must have suffered when it appeared that both had been for many months under the belief that I had been deceiving and misleading them, and practising on the weakness of a dying mother to enable me to defraud and circumvent her dear children. I have fully

and minutely exonerated myself from the accusations that you have brought against me, but I feel that we cannot return to our former freedom of intercourse. Farewell, my still dear brother and sister; may you both enjoy a life of prosperity and peace. Think of me sometimes; think that you have suspected me unjustly, and that I have fully and freely pardoned you for doing so."

Many were the tears shed by Edward and Emily over this letter. They felt that they would have given worlds to have looked upon their kind, affectionate sister, even for a few moments, that they might tell her how deeply they repented of having wronged her. They wrote long and affectionate letters to her, imploring her to return to England, and to divide her time between them. But Agnes was too much loved and valued by her kind friends the Marshams, to be moved by the tardy contrition of her brother and sister. Two events occurred in the course of a few months which so fully occupied the attention of Edward and Emily, that the thought of their absent sister rarely entered their minds;—Edward's marriage with Mary Carston took place, and Emily became the mother of a beautiful boy.

I am able to close my story with some pleasant intelligence from America. An intimate friend of Mrs. Marsham's has just received a letter from her, in which she mentions the arrival at New York of a gentleman with whom her husband had become intimate during a visit to England some years ago. Mr. Jocelyn was also, it appeared, a friend of Agnes Cresfield's. He communicated to the Marshams his former proposal of marriage to her, and the unexpected refusal which he had received; and they, in return for his frankness, informed him of every particular connected with the self-sacrifice of Agnes. Jocelyn renewed his addresses, delighted to think

that the Atlantic intervened between Agnes and the objects of her fond guardianship; and his suit was perfectly successful.

It gives me pleasure to think that my heroine is likely to be rewarded for all her trials; and as I am a well-wisher to marriage, I am rejoiced that her reward should come in the shape of a wreath of orange flowers. But even had Agnes passed through life as the fading spinster and the neglected governess, I think she would have been happy, for she would always have enjoyed the solace of an approving conscience, and the remembrance that she had nobly and devotedly fulfilled the conditions of her "Mother's Bequest."

DREAM ON.

BY GIFFORD FORSAYTH.

[“ Sleep leads the soul to the land of dreams, and woeth Memory till she unlocketh her cavern of precious things—heart-treasures which have floated swiftly from our grasp down the dark river of time, and lie petrified in Memory’s deep-hid cells. Yet when the gentle breath of Sleep passeth o’er Memory’s brow, she permitteth the ice to thaw, the petrifications to return to life, though but for a moment; and restores to us loving eyes, happy smiles, and sweet voices which may rejoice our hearts no more, save when Sleep openeth the portals of Dreamland to the yearning spirit; and Memory leads us back from the reality of the present, the uncertainty of the future, to the crowded city of the past.”]

DREAM on, fond heart! awaken not
To feel life’s weary chain;
To know that Love must be forgot,
And Hope ne’er smile again.
Dream on! and Thought shall bear thee back
Upon her eager wing,
While o’er sweet Mem’ry’s faded track
A rainbow light she’ll fling.

Dream on, though Youth’s bright gems depart,
The thefts of time or death,
The golden casket of the heart
Be chang’d as with a breath.
Dream on, nor see transform’d to lead
The gold so pure and fair;
No azure gem, no ruby red,
Or diamonds sparkle there.

Dream on, nor wake to feel the change
 Has pass'd o'er heart and brow ;
 To find Life's sunny path seem strange,
 All cold and darken'd now.
 Dream on, and Mem'ry shall restore
 The treasures thou hast lost,
 And Time's dark waves shall bring once more
 The jewels on them toss'd.

Dream on, behold the turquoise blue,
 Truth's emblem ever meet ;
 The ruby shedding radiance new,
 On all its blush may greet.
 Dream on, that ruby is the rose
 Of early, happy youth ;
 And the pure turquoise will disclose
 Its innocence and truth.

Dream on, and still Hope's diamond ray
 Shall bless thy heart's deep cells,
 As stars when twilight 's past will stay
 To light the pure, clear well.
 Dream on, and let thy heart beat warm,
 Nor feel the chill of Earth ;
 Forget her tempest-cloud and storm—
 In dreamland Joy has birth.

In the deep hush of purple night
 The past renews its pow'r,
 And visions all that once was bright
 In Youth's glad springtide hour.
 Lov'd sounds once more are on the air,
 Voices for ever gone ;
 Heav'n is all bright, and Earth all fair ;
 Oh heart! dream on! dream on!

AN OLD OAK CABINET AND ITS CONTENTS.

BY SHIRLEY GÉRARD.

I AM an old man now, yet—

“ Time has laid his hand
Upon my heart, gently, not smiting it,
But as a harper lays his open palm
Upon his harp, to deaden its vibrations.”

Picture to yourselves a tall, spare figure, still dressed—although the fashion is long gone by—in the costume of our third George. My hair is grey, powdered, and tied in a queue behind; and as I pass along I hear the whispers—“ Strange—old-fashioned,” and the like.

I have been a great wanderer in my time, but now I have settled down for life in a little peaceful village, not far from the busy world of London.

I was at breakfast when the letter came—a letter from Willie, from my dear old friend William Ellerton: my eyes grew dim as I read the first line, which was,—

“ Come to me, Godfrey; come quickly: I am on my death-bed.”

I was obliged to take off my spectacles to brighten them, and as I did so, something like a tear fell upon the paper. Poor Ellerton, he had been my first friend in my school-boy days, and we had grown to manhood together. He had two brothers, one much older and the other much younger than himself; the eldest was a wild fellow, and when quite a boy had parted from his father in anger, and had never been heard

of after; the youngest was still a little child when my friend William was ordained.

I glanced at the letter's date, and to my dismay saw that it had been written a week before: perhaps now I should not find my friend alive. I called my housekeeper, and, no way surprised, she prepared for my sudden departure, and about ten o'clock I was on my way.

Railroads were not *in* then, but four splendid horses drew us rapidly along; it was summer time, the hedges were white with hawthorn, the meadows were filled with labourers, merry children frolicked about, and their joyous laugh was borne on the ear for miles. Yesterday how I should have enjoyed such scenes, but to-day my heart was so sad, I thought the people almost unkind for being happy.

About four o'clock the coach arrived at the village where Ellerton dwelt. I had visited the place (the last time I had seen my friend) some eighteen years before. I left my bag at the little inn, and went my way by a path I well remembered to the vicarage.

As I passed the church an irresistible impulse constrained me to enter the grave-yard. Almost at every step the name of some person I had known in former years met my eye, and it was with a doubly-saddened heart that I approached to where two people were standing over a newly-made grave.

To my surprise, one of them, after looking earnestly at me for a few moments, exclaimed,—

“Bless me, Mr. Harcourt, is it you? Ah my! after such a time! And poor Mr. Ellerton!”

“Mills the sexton!” I exclaimed in my turn, holding out my hand.

“Ah, sir! I knew you in a moment, and many and many a year has gone over my head since I saw you last; but my kind master, sir, poor Mr. Ellerton!”

“What of him?” I cried hastily: “am I too late? is he dead?”

“Ay, Mr. Harcourt,—gone to his long rest. Not an hour ago he was laid by the side of one he loved in life, only too well.”

My eyes sought the ground, and rested on a pure white marble slab, next to the freshly-covered grave, on which were the words, “The hand of Providence is in all things, both for good and evil;” and lower down the text from Corinthians, “Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.” With a full heart I turned away, and accompanied by Mills, continued my walk to the vicarage.

“Ah, sir,” began the old sexton again, “he thought much to have seen you; your name was ever in his mouth, and he desired, if you came after he was gone, that you were to get an old oak cabinet which stands in the study.”

“I would have come,” I replied, “but his letter was delayed for a week upon the road.”

By that time we had reached the house; it was little changed since I had seen it last, but here and there I could see traces of improvement.

I dismissed Mills, with a gratuity for old-acquaintance’s sake, and entered the house alone. I knew the way well, and as I opened the study door my eyes rested upon old familiar objects; the kind face of my honoured friend alone was wanting to bid me welcome there. A picture attracted my attention, and I approached to examine it.

It was the portrait of a young and—stay—I did not think her beautiful at that first glance, and I must not call her so. No, the conviction that she *was* beautiful seemed to grow upon me unconsciously, and to this hour I know not where in that picture the charm lies. At length I tore myself from the contemplation of what I ended by pronouncing a faultless face, to look at the only other picture the room contained. How I

started as I came near! it was a life-like resemblance to Ellerton. The deep thoughtful eyes seemed looking into mine; the high, open forehead, surrounded by locks, rich and curling as I had known them; the beautiful mouth and sweet smile I so well remembered,—all were there, and as I gazed tears once more dimmed my sight.

Why was he taken, the good, kind, beloved, and useful member of society; and I left, a foolish, useless old man? My thoughts were sinful, and I bent my knees to the Almighty Dispenser of every human good, to pray for a more submissive frame of mind.

The old oak cabinet was in the room; a quaint yet beautiful piece of furniture.

The front and sides were massively carved in imitation of fruit and flowers; heavy clusters of grapes hung down, and beautiful roses, with leaves and buds as in nature, were all dark with time and rarely polished; the open panels were crossed with a light carved trellis-work of oak, lined with fluted blue velvet.

It was locked and sealed, but the key hung beside it, and on the parchment which covered the lock was written, "For my friend, Godfrey Harcourt; to be opened by him alone: also the two pictures in the room. I know he will value them."

My heart was too full to open the cabinet that night, so, taking another long look at the pictures, now mine, I left the house and returned to the village inn.

I wandered about old haunts and familiar places next day before I revisited the vicarage, and in the afternoon I again entered the study: my hand trembled, I could hardly break the seals his hand had placed there; at length it was done, and the cabinet stood open before me. There were two shelves, entirely filled with rare coins, valuable minerals, and beautiful specimens of dried moss and fern. For a

while I could see nothing more, but then a roll of paper attracted my attention; I took it out and closed the cabinet. The paper was written in Ellerton's hand; I opened it, and found that it was addressed to myself in these words:—

“I know, Godfrey, dear old friend, that these incidents in my life will be full of interest to you. I have not seen you for many years, and an inward feeling prompts me to think that we may never meet in this world again. Farewell; think of Ellerton!”

I sat down in the deep bay-window of the study to peruse the MS., which I transcribe as follows:—

I am only going back fourteen years, and to me it is as yesterday, so fresh are the events I am about to narrate in my memory. I had been for some years living in this village of Lenshill, before the Manor House was inhabited. I was informed that it had belonged to a gentleman called Welldon, who had married a very lovely girl, but only survived his marriage six months; some time after his death there was a daughter born, and immediately afterwards Mrs. Welldon quitted Lenshill for Italy.

She had been little more than a year gone when the news reached the village of her second marriage, but no word of her coming home.

Ten years had passed since Mrs. Welldon's departure, eight of which I had spent at Lenshill, when one morning I heard that she was expected home,—of course, accompanied by her husband and family; it was also rumoured that she was in very delicate health. Another week, and I heard that she had arrived, and that her husband's name was Mansergh.

I lost no time in paying my respects at Lenshill Manor. I was shown into a drawing-room furnished with elegance and luxury. On a low couch, half-buried in cushions, reclined

Mrs. Mansergh. The report we had heard of her ill-health was true, consumption was rapidly wearing her away. She was still very beautiful, but the melancholy expression of her face gave me a painful feeling.

There was another lady sitting with her, who was introduced as "My husband's sister, Mrs. Denham." How unlike the gentle, refined Mrs. Mansergh, was this rough-voiced, vulgar lady, overloaded with dress and jewellery! But I was kindly welcomed by them both, and Mrs. Mansergh immediately began to speak of the village and its inhabitants; asked me how long I had been here; and when I told her, she regretted her long absence, and tears stood in her dark eyes.

"Every year I intended to return, Mr. Ellerton," she said, "and I fear, now that I have come back, I shall not enjoy it long."

"Nonsense!" interrupted Mrs. Denham: "you said, Eleanor, when we were in Italy, that you would not live to come home. To be sure you will live to enjoy it. Why not? and get back to Italy again, too."

The invalid smiled faintly.

"May I see your children, Mrs. Mansergh?" I said, to change the subject. At the same moment there was heard in the adjoining room the sound of a sudden blow, followed by a cry of pain, and the voice of a little girl saying, "Indeed, Robert, I did not break your horse!" Then the drawing-room door was burst rudely open, and a coarse-looking boy of about eight years old entered, dragging after him a slight delicate child of about ten; the boy crying out, "Aunt Denham, she has broken my horse."

The little girl—who, from her great likeness, I had at once guessed to be Mrs. Mansergh's daughter—when the boy released her sprang to her mother's side, and nestling close to her, did not move until Mrs. Denham said,—

“I am sure she did, Robert,—mean, spiteful, little thing! But never mind, my boy, I will take care that it shall not happen again.”

At these words the child bounded to her feet, and throwing an indignant look at the boy exclaimed,—

“For shame, Robert, to tell a falsehood! You know that I scorn even to touch your things, and that I did not break your toy.”

“Lucy!” exclaimed Mrs. Mansergh reprovingly, for the child’s voice was loud and angry.

When her mother spoke Lucy turned, and falling on her knees beside the couch, again began to speak vehemently, this time in Italian: but the previous excitement had been too much for Mrs. Mansergh, for I observed that she turned very pale, and though I made an effort to draw little Lucy away, she only clung closer to her mother. In a moment Mrs. Denham seized her roughly by the arm, and half-pushed her from the room. Lucy shook off her aunt’s hand, and darting through the conservatory was quickly out of sight.

In a short time I took my leave, promising Mrs. Mansergh that I would see her again soon. I could not account to myself for the interest I felt in little Lucy. I pictured the child’s position in the family, with an invalid mother, unloving aunt, and tyrannical brother; her stepfather I had not seen, but judged of him by his sister.

I had watched Lucy when she left the drawing-room fly across the park, until she had disappeared among the trees, and as I bent my steps homeward I looked about in all directions for her, and soon discovered her sitting under a tree with her head bent down, and her long rich curls falling over her face.

She did not hear my approach, but when I said,—

“Lucy, why do you stay here under this burning sun?” she raised her head, and fixing her dark eyes upon me said,—

“The gentleman who was with mamma?”

She had a very peculiar foreign accent, which I had not observed before, but she spoke English well. I sat down beside her, and drawing her towards me, won from her the whole story of the broken toy. She said “that no one cared for her but mamma, that Aunt Denham and Robert hated her.”

I was silent then for a long time, and almost forgot that I held little Lucy still within my arms, until she said in her sweet voice,—

“I should like to know where you live.”

“Not far from this, Lucy,” I replied: “look up, and I will show you the chimneys of the rectory.”

“Rectory, what is that?”

“It is what we call the house where the clergyman lives.”

“I don’t know these things,” replied Lucy sadly, and with a gravity beyond her years.

“Do you ever read or learn from books, Lucy?” I inquired.

“Never, now,” still in the same grave tone: “mamma used to teach me; but since some time she has not been able, and Aunt Denham will not love me.”

I could see how pride struggled to keep back the child’s starting tears.

“Should you like to learn, Lucy?”

“Like!” clasping her hands earnestly. “Oh, how much! But with you?”

“Yes, Lucy, with me, at my own house, where we can be quiet together. Will Mrs. Mansergh let you come?”

“Mamma? Oh, yes. I am sure, quite sure she will. Let me run to ask her; I will come back very soon.”

“Not so fast, my little friend; I will ask her myself—perhaps to-morrow.”

“Oh, thank you; thank you. Good bye. I am so happy now.”

She caught my hand and kissed it; then, starting from my side, she ran rapidly towards the house.

An early hour next day and I was again on the road to Lenshill Manor. I was told that Mrs. Mansergh was not yet in the drawing-room, but on sending up my name I was admitted instantly to her private apartment.

It was a pleasant room, furnished with exquisite taste, and commanding a beautiful view of the park and surrounding country; it was redolent, but not overpoweringly so, with the perfume of flowers: the *jardinières* were filled with brilliant geraniums and rare, lovely roses; the light muslin curtains, lined with pale blue silk, waved to and fro with a soft drowsy motion in the gentle summer air. Mrs. Mansergh was on a couch, close to one of the open windows, and as I opened the door I heard her say, “Go, darling, I will call you by and by;” and on entering I perceived evident traces of little Lucy.

I was cordially welcomed by Mrs. Mansergh, and that she had heard of the object of my coming I knew by her first words.

“You have quite won my little girl’s heart, Mr. Ellerton; she can talk of nothing but the *Signor’s* kindness.”

“She is a sweet child, Mrs. Mansergh, and, I fancy, more than ordinarily clever. I anticipate great pleasure in our studies.”

“Ah! those studies; we must speak of them. Are you

quite sure, Mr. Ellerton, that you wish to teach my Lucy? Remember, I say quite sure."

"Mrs. Mansergh, can you, do you, suspect me of wilfully playing with Lucy's feelings? Do you, indeed, think that my coming here this morning is only to explain away any false notion she may have given you with respect to my intention of teaching her?"

"Forgive me," said Mrs. Mansergh gently, and laying her worn hand upon my arm; "I have pained you unintentionally. I do not mean that you are not quite serious in the intention; but have you thought what a blow it will be to that very sensitive little mind if, after two or three months, you weary of her instruction? Let me entreat you, if you think this might be the result, never to begin. Better for Lucy to continue in ignorance than to find thus early in life that true friendship is but a name. She would feel it deeply, Mr. Ellerton."

"I like your frankness, Mrs. Mansergh," I replied: "you have, I acknowledge, put this subject in a new light; but still I feel that I need not fear myself. Should I not be unworthy of my sacred calling were such a sequel possible? No; believe me my fancy for Lucy is not a passing one. I own the feeling is rare; but there are hearts and minds that even in a first interview are strangely drawn together, and thus have I felt for that engaging child."

"You are right, Mr. Ellerton; the feeling you have mentioned is rare; for how often do we see with near relatives, that after weeks of acquaintance they will part as little known to each other as before they met? Who will venture to deny, that in a case like this there is some great mind which cannot enter into the thoughts of one beneath it, but lives on without even an effort to descend to what cannot ascend? Then the

lesser mind will say to its fellows, 'Such a person is stupid, has not a second idea,' when the only reason is that they cannot appreciate: but let kindred spirits meet, and mark the result."

Excellent woman! hers was, indeed, a "kindred spirit;" one which few could appreciate or understand. She had spoken eagerly, and at the last words her feeble breath was quite gone.

I was thoughtfully silent, and after a short pause she continued,—

"Mr. Ellerton, we both know that the unthinking world will laugh at 'first impressions,' and I have often been ridiculed for believing that in human nature there are sudden impulses which, though mysterious in their creation, are undoubted realities; but whenever I speak on this subject I am led far beyond my power. I had many other things to speak about, but it will be better to defer them until you know Lucy a little more. Shall we, before she returns, settle the hours you would like to have her with you?"

We had nearly arranged all to our satisfaction when Mrs. Denham entered the room, followed by Lucy. The child, rather timidly, gave me her hand, and then stood close to her mother's side.

After a short greeting to me, Mrs. Denham began,—

"Well, Eleanor, I believe I must congratulate you on improved health this morning; it is unusual for visitors to be admitted so early."

"Mr. Ellerton is a privileged friend, Mary, and we have been talking on business."

"Business! That child has been telling me some nonsense about the parson going to teach her, but surely it is not true?"

“Quite true, Mary. Mr. Ellerton has kindly taken compassion on Lucy’s ignorance.”

“Nonsense, Eleanor!” interrupted Mrs. Denham; “how can you be such a fool? It is your son Robert you should have him to teach.”

“But, Mrs. Denham,” said I, “suppose I do not like that arrangement. What then?”

Lucy, at a sign from her mother, had left the room before her aunt replied.

“Like, Mr. Ellerton! how can it concern you? Your money will be paid as surely for one as the other.”

I felt the hot blood mount to my forehead, and I fear, indeed I know, I answered haughtily,—

“There is some mistake here, Mrs. Denham; my services have not been engaged for money.”

“Oh, indeed!” with a slight tinge of sarcasm. “I beg your pardon. Voluntarily offered! How disinterested! Really you surprise me. And excuse me, Eleanor,” she added, rising to depart, “if I wish him joy of his bargain.”

In a few moments Lucy stole into the room again; and with sincere joy was her sweet face lighted up when she heard from her mother that she was to accompany me that morning to the rectory, and every day to come to me at the same hour.

She was soon ready, and we set out. It seemed to me that her spirits rose as we increased the distance from the house.

Godfrey, kind old friend! I am not going to dwell on this part of my history. I found my little pupil endowed with talents of no common order, and it was my duty and chiefest pleasure to teach her to use them right.

Six months passed quickly over, and it was the beginning

of December, when Lucy one day told me that her stepfather was expected home. He had been at Lenshill a short time before, for about a week, but I had not seen him; yet my visits to the Manor House were frequent, for I had learned sincerely to respect Mrs. Mansergh.

One morning I was surprised by the appearance of a servant instead of Lucy. He brought a note from Mrs. Mansergh, written in a feeble, failing hand; it contained a request that I would go to her without delay — to-morrow might be too late.

I set out; it was a lovely morning, and had my heart been light I should, indeed, have enjoyed a walk in the keen, frosty air. Lucy was waiting at the hall-door to take me to her mother's room; she spoke hopefully, and said "that mamma seemed better this morning. Mr. Mansergh is here," she whispered, as she opened the door, "but he will go soon now."

There was a gentleman, rather handsome, and dashing in his appearance, reclining in an easy-chair by Mrs. Mansergh's couch, twisting a well-aired newspaper in his hand; he was in shooting costume, and was now and then throwing looks of extreme impatience through the window at his son and four dogs, who were gambolling noisily about. On my entering with Lucy he rose, saying,—

"Now, Eleanor, I may go. I suppose this is your friend, eh, Miss Welldon? You should have introduced me. Good bye, Nell; I'm off for a snipe for your dinner:" and, patting Lucy's head, he left the room.

"Lucy, you will leave us, too," said Mrs. Mansergh. "Not for long, my darling," seeing the little girl's pained look; "I will call you very soon. Oh! Mr. Ellerton," she continued, when we were left alone, "how can I ever thank, ever repay you, for your kindness to my dearest child!"

“ I am sufficiently repaid by her great improvement,” I replied.

“ Mr. Ellerton,” she began, and her voice trembled, “ I shall soon die ; I am quite resigned, and very happy, but for one thought. Lucy—when I am gone who will love her ? Not my husband, and surely not Mrs. Denham. Lucy will have no fortune by her father’s will ; this property was settled upon me for life, but only to descend to a son. My husband told me on his death-bed that I should find in his oak cabinet an account of his early life, and also the name of the person who should have Lenshill at my death, if our child, then unborn, should be a daughter. Mr. Ellerton, I have never looked in that cabinet ; I bequeath it to you now ; you will examine these papers, and see that everything is fair. I have said that Lucy will have no fortune ; if she had, my sister might like to keep the *heiress* with her, but ——”

“ Mrs. Mansergh,” I exclaimed eagerly, “ would you trust her to me ? No words can express with what joy I will undertake the charge.”

A happy smile lit up the pale, beautiful features of my dying friend as she replied,—

“ You have anticipated my request, Mr. Ellerton, and made me, oh, how happy ! Lucy shall live with you, but there shall be no agreement of guardianship ; it is better for you both to be free to part at any time you please.” She had spoken rapidly, and a fit of coughing interrupted her. “ This fearful cough, it leaves me so weak ! Mr. Ellerton, you will not, I know, forget your promise ; I cannot talk any more now ; call Lucy, and we will read together.”

I did not leave Mrs. Mansergh until late that evening, and then I felt sad and sorrowful to think how soon we should lose her.

For the next week Lucy did not leave her mother, and I

paid daily visits to the manor. One morning I was told by a weeping servant that the gentle spirit of her mistress had passed away quietly in the night.

And now, Godfrey, my heart grows light again when I take up the parable of my memory, and write of five years after.

I remember one summer evening I was sitting in my window, a wise book of learning in my hand, when, to refresh my brain, I allowed my eyes to rest upon a figure at my feet—it was Lucy Welldon, my adopted daughter. I will not describe her to you, Godfrey. No; to me there is ever something too sacred in a truly lovely face that stays my hand when I would dissect it, feature by feature, upon paper; but, Godfrey, conjure up with that all-powerful optic, “your mind’s eye,” some rare vision of purity and innocence; call it Lucy—you will see her then. She was reading, too, and for a long time I watched her without speaking; then, abruptly, I jerked out the question,—

“Lucy, will you love my brother Guy?”

“I do not know him, papa.” She always called me so. I have often heard children say that word, yet in my dotting fondness I have thought that from other lips it never fell with so soft an intonation.

“But you will know him, Lucy,” I replied; “he will be here, please God, to-morrow, and you will love him better than you love me; he is more your own age.”

The demure shake of the head said, “Impossible.”

“Oh, Lucy!”

“I may love him nearly as well,” she answered, getting up, and putting one arm round my neck; “but even if I do, he cannot overtake and bring back all the love I have given you these last five years.”

And Guy, my noble brother!

He came next evening, Godfrey, like a sunbeam, into our quiet house. I loved to look upon the handsome lad of nineteen, my youngest and favourite brother, and I felt a fatherly pride in his joyous, animated countenance, and tall, well-proportioned figure, as he stood beside me that summer evening, and poured out his delight at seeing me once more. Dear Guy!

I looked about for Lucy, but she was not present. No; with exquisite tact she had remained away while we, brothers, met; but even as I moved my hand to the bell to summon her she entered, looking so fresh and beautiful in her white dress that I wondered not at Guy's start of surprise.

"Lucy," I said, bringing him forward, "this is my brother."

She gave her hand in a sweet, shy manner, and his whole face lit up with a radiant smile as he bent down and addressed some words to her; then, bringing her a chair, we three sat down in the pleasant bow-window, while Guy mentioned his plans. He was going abroad for two years, he said,—now and then speaking to Lucy, until she was drawn gently from her reserve, and soon I had the pleasure of hearing her low, soft laughter mingling with his richer tones.

"William, this is lovely," said Guy, coming behind me the next morning, as I walked, according to my custom, in our little garden; "what an enviable life you have here, old brother!" and he put his arm affectionately through mine.

"Enviably, Guy?"

"Yes, Willie, I do envy you;" and as I glanced up at him there was a bright colour in his face like a woman's.

"Willie, she is a darling little girl."

I stooped, ostensibly to put my fingers round a pansy, and upturn its face, but in reality to hide from him the look I felt upon my own.

“Guy, look at this; it is a splendid flower.”

He stooped, too, but I knew it was unwillingly.

“These are Lucy’s pets; she takes all the care of them,” I continued, plunging without thought into the subject I wished most to avoid.

I could not *then* accuse Guy of being insensible to the roundness of my pansies, for he examined them most carefully; and when we moved on, there were some blossoms in his hand.

“These are like herself, Willie,” he said, touching some lovely blush-roses; “her care, too, are they?”

I nodded, being intent, apparently, on the survey of a fine show of currants.

“Come, Willie—come for a ramble;” and Guy fairly drew me away, and as fairly drew me into a conversation about Lucy. I told him everything,—what a sweet girl she was; what a comfort to me; and, truly, I thought he would never tire of listening.

“I never heard so sweet a voice as hers,” he said, when there had been silence for a few minutes; “some lines which I read long ago were recalled to my memory when I heard it,” and he repeated softly several times,—

“Is it a voice, or nothing answers me?
I hear a sound so fine—there’s nothing lives
'Twixt it and silence.”

I squeezed his arm to bring him back to earth, she was beside us.

I think the next week was an idle one: it is true I found myself every morning in my study among my books; but my eyes would wander through the window, and my ears would drink in the softened tones of the two voices I so loved—those of Guy and Lucy.

But his last day with us came too.

“God bless you, William,” he said, as he grasped my hand at parting; “take care of her for me.”

Those last words, and the nervous trembling in my brother’s voice, brought a new light to my mind.

Two years—two years—how long to look forward, how short to look back! When they were passed my Lucy was almost a woman, yet to me, stupid old man! she seemed still the same: but there was a change,—she was taller, more dignified in her appearance, and the childish appellation of “little Miss Lucy” had fined down into the more mature “Miss Welldon.”

At the second Christmas came a letter from Guy, to announce that he would be with us at the festival. When I told Lucy, a soft but bright blush stole over her face, betraying the real gladness of her heart. I loved to see those blushes rise on that fair young cheek; I never take a walk upon a cloudy day, that they are not recalled to my memory; so like them is the sun when it bursts suddenly forth, and with its vivid light sweeps away all shadow from the road before me.

And on Christmas eve Guy came: a miserable pelting snow without, and a bright fire and cheerful faces within, bid the traveller welcome to Lenshill.

He entered the room with outstretched hand to me, and those eyes, which never were downcast with shame or guilt, looking straight down into mine.

One firm, tight pressure of my fingers, and he turned to Lucy; her hand was not so soon released. “You call him father, Lucy,” he said, in a grave, quiet tone: “I am his brother, give me an uncle’s right.” He drew her towards him, pressed his lips to her forehead, and when I looked again she had left the room.

Then had I leisure to look at my brother, to study him in the opening of his manhood: he had now a tall, strongly-built, but most graceful figure; and his face, no way disfigured by the browning of a southern sun, had a setting of dark curling whiskers.

“Child no longer, Guy,” I said; “grown far past your brother.”

“I may look so, but I never can grow past my brother, so far superior as he is, and always has been, to me,” was the reply, in that soft, harmonious voice, that seemed to quiver and vibrate on the ear, as Guy laid his hand upon my shoulder.

There was a quiet happiness round our Christmas table next day, as my brother narrated some scenes during his life abroad; he spoke little to Lucy, and when he did it was with a shy sort of diffidence for which I could not account.

As the first day of the new year was drawing to a close, I was sitting with no light, save from the fire; the drawing-room opened off the study, and through the half-open door came the sweet tones of Lucy’s piano and Lucy’s voice—she was singing to Guy—lulling me into a light, but dreamy slumber. How long this went on I know not, when, without opening my eyes, I felt that a substantial form stood between them and the firelight. “Guy,” I said; “you here?” He was leaning with folded arms upon the chimneypiece.

“Is anything the matter, Guy? Why don’t you speak?”

He lifted himself up, throwing back his shoulders, and tossing the dark curls from his forehead.

“Were you lonely by yourself, Willie?”

“Well, no, I believe—that is, I am sure I was asleep.”

“Oh, were you?” and I thought he looked relieved.

“You did not miss Lucy, then?”

“No. But, Guy, is anything wrong?”

“Nothing;” and he sat down: the light fell on his face, I thought it looked pale. “Willie, she alarmed me fearfully just now.”

“How? She is not ill, Guy?”

“No, no, thank God,” was his fervent answer; “she is well: but, Willie, she asked me to sing for her to-night, and, confound my wilful tongue! it brought out a sorrowful ditty, learned by me I know not where. To my surprise, when I had finished I found Lucy sobbing like a child: she then entreated me to leave her, and I could not but obey.”

“Oh, Guy, we must be very careful of her. A London physician told me, that never before had he seen so highly-wrought a nervous system as Lucy’s; that comparative trifles would have an almost fearful effect upon her; and more, Guy, he told me that any sudden shock would totally deprive her of intellect,—that, indeed, would be fearful.” My brother’s face was turned from me.

“But, Guy, we need not dread this; I trust her life will be a happy one.”

“Happy! yes, it will, it shall be!” And he rose suddenly.

“Willie, am I selfish in my love? would you give her to me?”

I knew what was coming—I bent my head to the storm; but the thought of what I should be when Lucy was gone came upon me, and crushed without mercy the power of speech.

“Willie, won’t you speak to me?” and Guy knelt by my side.

“What must I say?”

“What is on your lips, dear brother?—say.”

“Hush, Guy! would you teach me to sign my death-warrant?”

“Willie, I never believed that in all my life I could love any one as I love her: for your sake I would try not to be selfish, but I cannot unlove her now.”

I felt myself growing morose—savage—I knew not what; but I checked the unchristian feeling, and made my brother happy.

I know not how Guy's wooing prospered, for he was not a common lover; he treated Lucy far more like a sister, and with all the respect that is given to an elder one. But one evening when she entered my study, I knew that the crisis of her life had come; on her brow I could read the new-born dignity of an affianced wife; she came to me and put her arm round my neck.

“Papa, I have come——”

“Stay, my child, a moment: do you remember one day, two years ago, when I told you Guy was coming home, and said that you would love him better than you love me? You then declared it was impossible; now, have you not come to tell me that you were wrong?”

“No, no,” and Lucy's other hand was on my mouth, “you must not say so. I do love Guy, very much, but still——” She stopped; Guy at that instant entered, he came and stood beside her.

I looked at them both with pride; he so noble in appearance, so well qualified to protect through life that slight girlish figure behind my chair. I put her hand in his and left the room to wander in Lenshill Park—to try and think of my future loneliness.

Mind, I said, “to try;” for whenever I walked alone one subject would be a thought perforce.

I tried to shake it off now, for it reminded me of a neglected duty, and most people wish to avoid that remem-

brance ; but no, it seized me—linked its arm with mine—stepped along with me—held me tight—made me listen. I endeavoured, but in vain, to ponder on why a rabbit should be scared at my approach, and dart away with its small tail elevated to the utmost; nothing would banish the neglected duty, so I came to a definite agreement.

The thought was that I should long ago have looked in the old oak cabinet for the paper left by the late Mr. Weldon, Lucy's father, which paper said to whom the Lenshill property should descend. Seven years had some one been kept out of his right by my culpable inertness, for culpable I knew it was; so I came to the resolution that, before Lucy's marriage, I would read the paper, find out the heir, and instal him in his rightful property.

I had some uncomfortable misgivings as to how he would take my tardy conduct, but the next sight of Lucy's bright face put them to flight.

In the lengthening days of April I was to lose my adopted daughter, and it was March before I worked myself up to open the cabinet. I cannot tell why I disliked the task, but I shrank from it like a plague. Whenever I was in the room alone, my eyes would wander unbidden to its shining panels: on one of them, the furthest from my chair as I sat near the fire, there was a large bunch of grapes carved; these grapes I had a childish fashion for counting. I see them now, Godfrey; they are before my table as I write: the three first rows of the cluster have three berries across, then two rows with two, the last row one. Stiff and prim, hard and polished as they are, I always fancied that the bunch so sour to the thirsty fox must have been their facsimile.

At last, one dry windy afternoon, Guy and Lucy being

out together, I stood key in hand before the cabinet. I put it in; it turned with the sharp, short click of a good lock—the door swung back—the cabinet was open.

A fragrant odour of cedar saluted my nostrils; I inhaled it with pleasure; I fingered the coins, and pinched the dried moss and fern with which the shelves were filled so long, that nearly an hour passed before I drew out the packet and sat down.

Something hard—a miniature, doubtless, of Mr. Welldon. I drew the “something” out, and wiped it with my handkerchief carefully, and held it at arm’s-length for a first look.

“Why, what is this?” I exclaimed, as my eye took in the picture. “Is there a spell upon me, or do I really see Guy’s face, Guy’s smile?” I brought it to the window—I held it close—I held it far—I laid it down—I mechanically took up the written paper in which it had been folded.

Have you ever, Godfrey, thrown water over bright live embers in your grate, just to hear the fizz?

I have, when a boy.

Well, that paper came upon my glowing joy like water upon red embers; but I did not fizz, I did not even smoke: I sank down into black ashes—I went out at once. What did that paper tell me? you will ask. It told me that our elder brother, Henry, did not die at sea, as we supposed; that Mr. Welldon was that elder brother. He said not how the property of Lenshill became his, but he reproached himself for not informing his family of his prosperity; and for atonement, in the event of his then unborn child being a daughter, he bequeathed the manor and park to his wife for life, and after her death to his eldest surviving brother. So, Godfrey, there I stood the possessor of Lenshill. Ought I not to have held my head high, and walked as it were on the clouds? But no. I was crushed—despairing—miserable.

Mr. Welldon was our brother, Guy was Lucy's *uncle*. I sat down to collect my thoughts. People speak of that as coolly as though it were an easy task; I found it a rough and hard one.

A thought was no sooner collected, than another scattered it, and Guy's voice sounded in the garden while all was still in confusion. "What shall I do?" There was a light step crossing the hall. "I will put off the disclosure until to-morrow," was my resolve, and at the same moment my voice pronounced aloud,—

"Lucy."

She came. I dropped my handkerchief over the picture.

"Your pleasure, papa," she said gaily, and dangling her bonnet by the strings.

I writhed in my chair.

"Lucy," I said, "would you like to see your father's picture?"

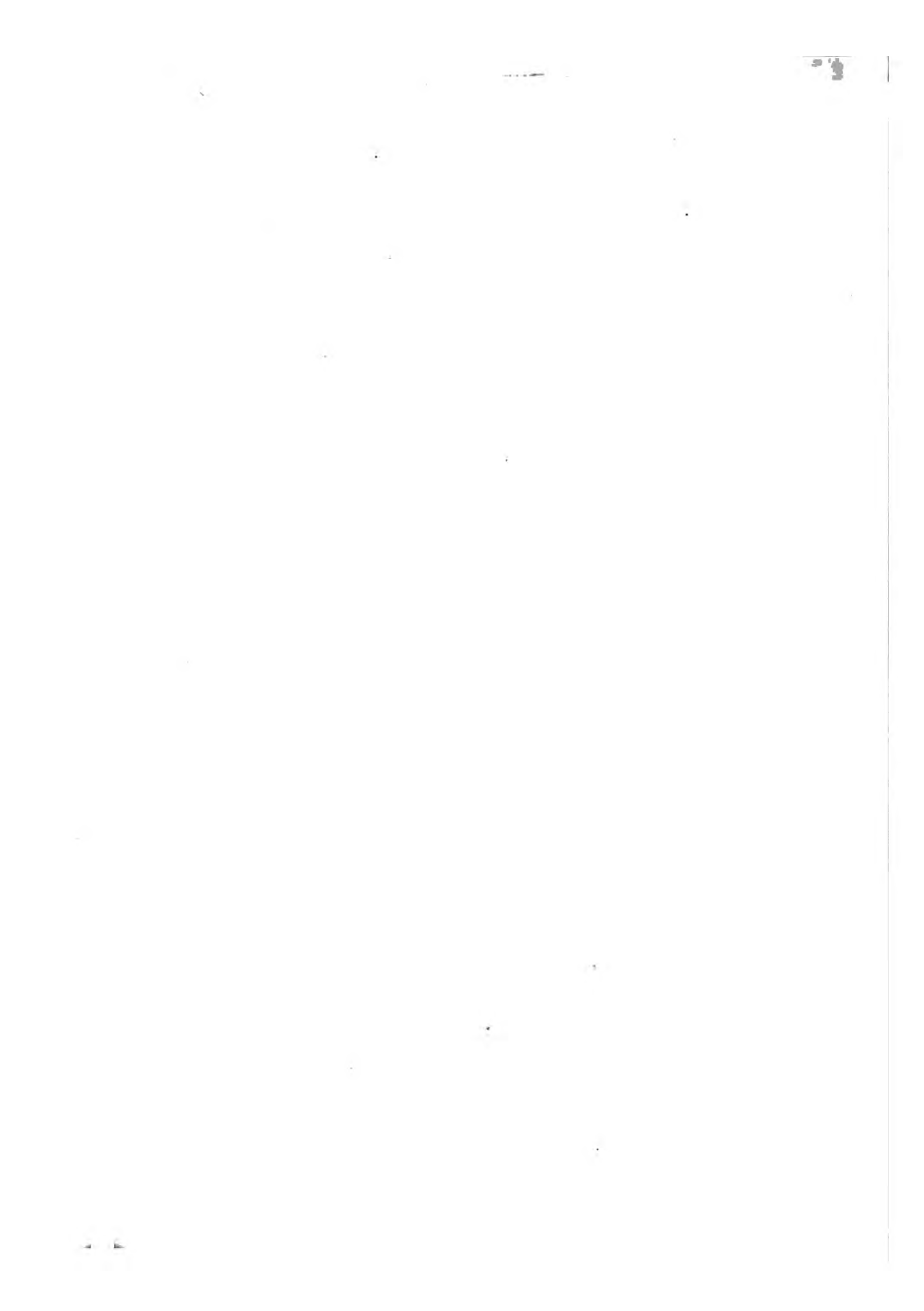
"Oh, you have opened the cabinet, then! Yes, show it to me by all means: Poor, real papa! How your fingers tremble!" as she took the case from my hand and looked at it. "How very like Guy!" she exclaimed the next instant. "Did you see the likeness? could you have been relations?"

"Oh, Lucy, my child! God give you strength to bear it. I have just now discovered that we were brothers."

I put the paper into her hand, and placed her in my own chair: necessity had made me calm. I watched her while she read; as she drew to a close her face became white, the paper dropped from her shaking hands, her head fell forward on the table, and she murmured,—

"Thy will be done!"

Why need I dwell minutely on what followed? The day fixed for that wedding, against the celebration of which the hand of the Lord had interposed, was some time past

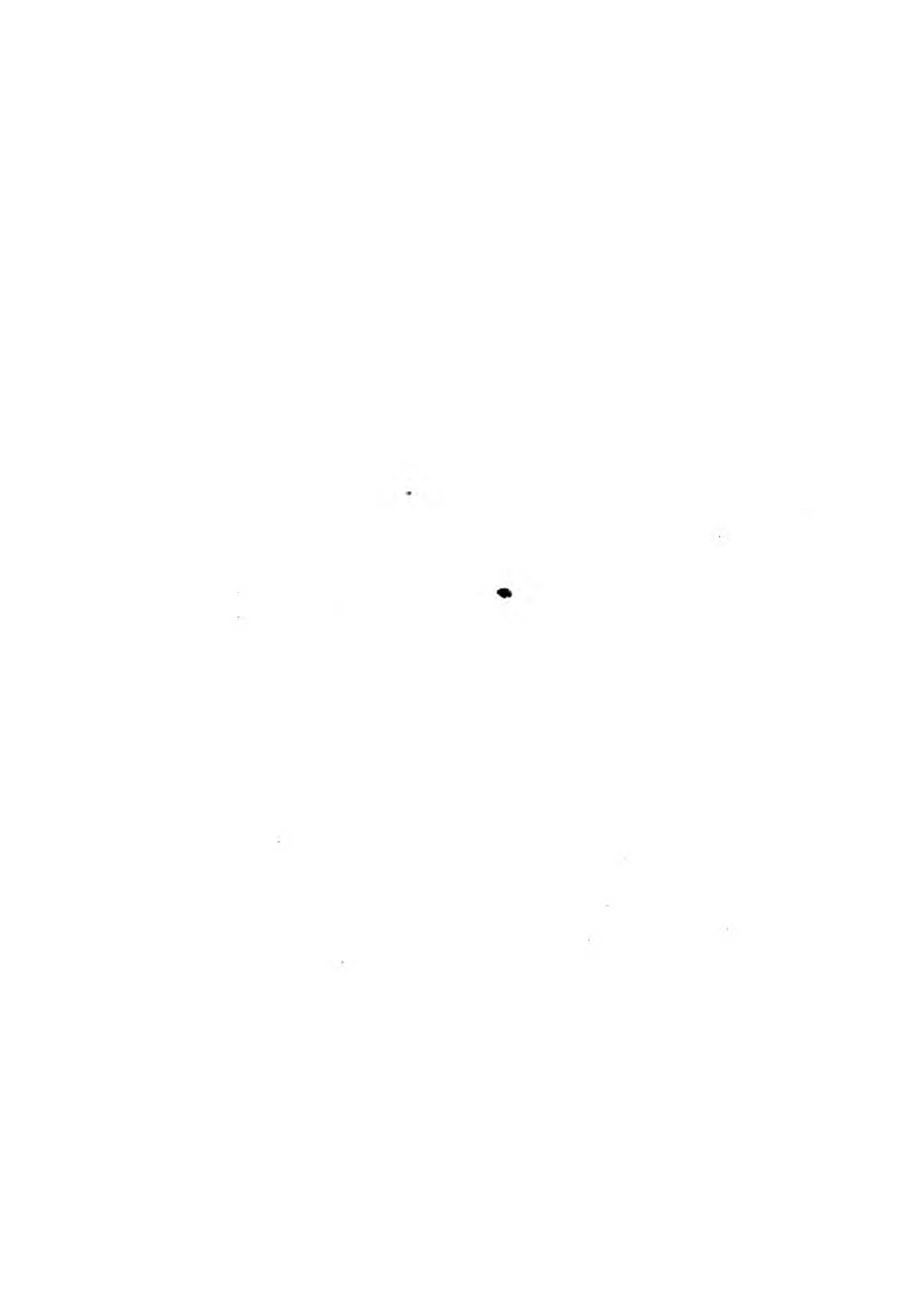




F.H. Corbelli

A Well-timed Hint

The Saturday Evening



before Lucy spoke again. I often thought with dread of the physician's words, but at length, to my unutterable joy, memory slowly returned.

Poor Guy! my heart bled for him; he seemed to have grown old in one night. By silent consent allusion to the past was never made, the marriage that would have been was never spoken of again.

One evening my brother and I sat together, silent, melancholy, thoughtful, as usual; tea was brought in—that was a mournful meal now; the ministering hand was absent: my eyes were directed to the door; I rose to close it, when a figure passed into the room which I knew and loved too well.

She moved to her place at the table and sat down, the light from the window fell full upon her. I turned away in anguish at the alteration; she looked ready for the grave; a rim, dark almost to blackness, circled her eyes, and a fever flush burned on one cheek.

She held out her hand to me, and said in a low but steady voice,—

“I have neglected both my uncles too long.”

Guy had not seen her enter, he started to his feet as she spoke.

“My other uncle!” and her voice faltered slightly as she again held out her hand. “I am rich in relations now.”

He covered his face and groaned aloud, but was calm in an instant when Lucy laid her hand gently on his arm, and whispered softly, “Guy, let us thank God.”

Poor child! her feeble strength was soon exhausted, and after the silent meal she rose to retire.

“Guy,” and she held his hand with a convulsive grasp between both her own, “for my sake you will leave England again for a while: a year hence, if we meet, we shall understand our new position better.”

“God bless you, Lucy!” was his heartfelt answer. “My dear niece, good-bye.”

Next day, without seeing her, he tore himself from Lenshill.

A year hence, Godfrey, I was alone: Lucy lay at peace in the quiet churchyard.

Here ended Ellerton’s MS. The shades of evening were gathering when I laid it down, and I went forth to walk in Lenshill Park, to ponder on the strange discovery—on the gentle, childlike Lucy—on the lonely wanderer Guy.

BREAD UPON THE WATERS.

BY MRS. SHIPTON.

SAY not, " 'Twas all in vain,"
The anguish, and the darkness, and the strife ;
Love, thrown upon the waters, comes again
In quenchless yearnings for a nobler life.
Think ! In that midnight, on thy weary sight
The stars shone forth—and 'neath their welcome rays,
Thine hopes to Heaven like birds first took their flight,
And thou shalt find them—" after many days."

Say not, " 'Twas all in vain,"
The vigil, and the sickness, and the tears ;
For in that land " where there is no more pain,"
The grain is garnered from those mournful years.
The faded form, once sheltered on thy breast
In gentle ministry thy care repays,
And smiling on thee from her sinless rest,
Fear not to find her—" after many days."

Say not, " 'Twas all in vain,"
Thy tenderness, thy meekness—oh ! not so ;
A strength for others' sufferings shalt thou gain,
As healing balm from bruised flowerets flow.

Weep not the wealth in fearless faith cast forth
 On the dark billows shipwrecked to thy gaze,
 The bark was frail, the gem had still its worth ;
 And " thou shalt find it—after many days."

Say not, " 'Twas all in vain,"
 The watching, and the waiting, and thy prayer ;
 In piercèd hands hath it unanswered lain ?
 'Twill grow more radiant as it ling'reth there.
 'Tis space—where once thy quiv'ring form was cast,
 Thy heart-wrung sobs no floating breeze betrays ;
 Yet, mid the white-winged choir thy prayer hath past,
 And " thou shalt find it—after many days."

Say not, " 'Twas all in vain,"
 The patience, and the pity, and the word
 In warning breathed 'mid passion's hurricane,
 Unheeded here—but God that whisper heard.
 The tender grief, o'er strangers' sorrow shed—
 The sacrifice, that won no human praise—
 In faith upon the Waters cast thy Bread,
 For " thou shalt find it—after many days."

AMYS CRUELTY.

BY ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

“FAIR Amy of the terraced house,
Assist me to discover
Why you, who would not hurt a mouse,
Can torture so your lover.

You give your coffee to the cat,
You stroke the dog for coming,
And all your face grows kinder at
The little brown bee’s humming.

But when *he* haunts your door, (the town
Marks coming and marks going),
You seem to have stitched your eyelids down
To that long piece of sewing.

You never give a look—not you,
Nor drop him a good morning,
To keep his long day warm and blue,
So fretted by your scorning.”

She shook her head,—“The mouse and bee
For crumb or flower will linger;
The dog is happy at my knee,
The cat purrs at my finger.

But *he*,—to *him* the least thing given
Means great things at a distance:
He wants my world, my sun, my heaven,
Soul, body, whole existence.

They say, Love gives as well as takes ;
But I'm a simple maiden,
My mother's first smile, when she wakes,
I still have smiled and prayed in.

I only know my mother's love,
Which gives all and asks nothing ;
And this new loving sets the groove
Too much the way of loathing.

Unless he give me all in change,
I forfeit all things by him.
The risk is terrible and strange —
I tremble, doubt, deny him.

He's sweetest friend, or hardest foe ;
Best angel, or worst devil ;
I either hate, or—love him so,
I can't be merely civil.

You trust a woman who puts forth
Her blossoms thick as summer's ?
You think she dreams what love is worth,
Who casts it to new-comers ?

Such love's a cowslip-ball to fling,
A moment's pretty pastime.
I give—myself, if anything,
The first time and the last time.

And, neighbour of the trellised house,
A man should murmur never,
Though treated worse than dog or mouse,
Till doted on for ever."

A SOLDIER'S NURSE.

BY MRS. NEWTON CROSLAND.

“There is a Wisdom that is greater than Prudence.”—COLERIDGE.

IF wisdom came with advancing years as inevitably as do wrinkles and grey hairs, there might be more reason than there always is for the high value a certain class of persons set upon that misconstrued quality, Experience. I confess, however, that I have known a vast number of middle-aged and elderly people, who in their passage through life seemed only to have gathered together a heap of inconsequent facts—dry husks for the memory—without having extracted from the whole mass one grain of the sweet kernel Wisdom. Terrible people are these—although, perhaps, well-meaning and well-principled—to be set in authority over those fresh young natures who, belonging surely to a different order of intelligences, are wise with the wisdom of truth and goodness, as if from inspiration rather than from mortal teaching. I do not say that the positions are not sometimes reversed. Doubtless there are noble-hearted parents and guides, who have to lament the feebleness of a young soul which they would fain expand and elevate; but at least, when this is the case, the light is in the leader's hand, held aloft as a beacon, incapable of being dimmed or extinguished—and the right and the might are on the same side, instead of being ever engaged in a deadly, though silent, wrestle.

I look upon Helen Renshaw's home to have been but the type of a thousand others, in which the old and the young are not of accord in those springs of thought and feeling which, rounding the inner life, in due season work outwardly into action—at a cost of jar and conflict which must be measured by the degrees of natural discordance, and the powers of resistance of all parties.

Helen was an orphan, the daughter of an officer in the army; but her mother's brother, Mr. Wharton, and his wife, had been for many years, not only her natural protectors, but the guardians appointed by her father's will to fulfil the duties of parents. And they had fulfilled these duties to the uttermost of their ability conscientiously and affectionately, treating their niece and ward literally like their own children, of whom they had several. Helen knew this truth, recognising it in all its force; and there were times when she thought herself wicked and ungrateful, because the same course of life which rendered her cousins Charlotte and Fanny happy and contented was to her a waste and a weariness, a succession of vague aspirations and thwarted purposes, of monotonous trifling and dwarfed energies.

Happily for her mind's health, Helen was a great reader; and her books, especially grand and true poetry, usually restored the balance to her judgment, and set her conscience at rest after these temporary fits of remorse. Not being endowed with a particularly analytic intellect, she, perhaps, hardly knew that the charm and solace she experienced in her chosen reading consisted in the sympathy she found in books with the germs of true heroism which were in her own heart. Intuitively her taste led her away from heartless, satirical writings, whose authors, unlike the Eastern host, seem always presenting the unripe side of the world's peach to our view and contemplation, and may, perhaps, some day be judged

to have been more pernicious in their teaching than the most immoral writers of the sentimental school. Escaping thus the dangerous literary epidemic of her age, her taste had remained pure, and her mental appetite steady and good. Insensibly, her very gentle and perfectly feminine character had acquired a certain self-reliance and decision, which were quite unsuspected by those about her; for it is a fact past dispute, that only the sympathetic know one another.

Helen was five-and-twenty, and, consequently, had been for four years in possession of her little property. On coming of age, she had made certain arrangements with her uncle and aunt, which enabled her to establish her independence with regard to pecuniary affairs; but the habit of control on their part had grown so firm, and Helen still yielded so easily to their yoke, that to all outward appearance she was as little a free agent as her cousins, some two or three years her juniors, and who—youthful reflections of the parental type—followed in every indicated track with an alacrity that won golden opinions. The difference between the yielding obedience of the young people must be marked, although the elders had scarcely observed it. Their children showed congenial alacrity; their niece patient docility; and this because Helen Renshaw had not yet found an occasion that was worth the cost of rebellion. Like attracts like, and the Whartons were so essentially commonplace, that all their acquaintances deserved to come under the same denomination; but for her books—the blessed truth-telling books—and, perhaps, some few comet-like visitations which had crossed the plane of the Wharton orbit, and then retreated in alarm, Helen must have thought herself a *lusus naturæ*, so completely did there bristle about her a hedge of uncongenial natures.

Helen had received three or four offers of marriage, all considered eligible by her uncle and aunt, but which had been

promptly, politely, but decidedly declined. The handsomest and wealthiest of these disappointed swains had transferred his affections to Charlotte Wharton, and was, in the summer of 1855, on the point of marriage with that well-contented damsel. It began to be freely whispered that Miss Renshaw was so ridiculously particular that she would probably be an old maid after all.

It was an old-fashioned country-house in which the Whartons chiefly resided, with an old-fashioned garden, full of old-fashioned flowers attached thereto ; and I must confess, their love for genuine old English flowers was a redeeming trait about them. There were only about half-a-dozen of the new and scentless hybrid roses dotted about the lawn, and these looked sickly, dropped their unopened buds, and resisted the gardener's treatment. Exotics were rarely and sparingly introduced, and they never approved of the soil and the aspect ; but the June roses and moss roses came like a rich harvest, serried almost as closely as ears of wheat, making the atmosphere delicious, and the ground pink with their rejected wealth ; thirsty sweetbriars paid out like spendthrifts a usurer's claim of odours for every drop of rain or draught of water they received ; white garden-lilies reared themselves up, as if each was a sign or a sceptre ; the starry jessamine peeped in at many a window ; and clematis and honeysuckle climbed and clung about the doorways and porches.

A certain arbour in the garden, redolent of sweet odours and shaded with thick foliage, was a favourite retreat of Helen Renshaw. Glad to escape consultations on crochet-work, the earnest trifling of her cousins, the minute small-talk of visitors, and the hundred-times-told stories of her aunt, she often passed whole mornings in the garden, reading, writing, working, and thinking — the last occupation being a part of her daily life. Not yet called to congenial action, she could

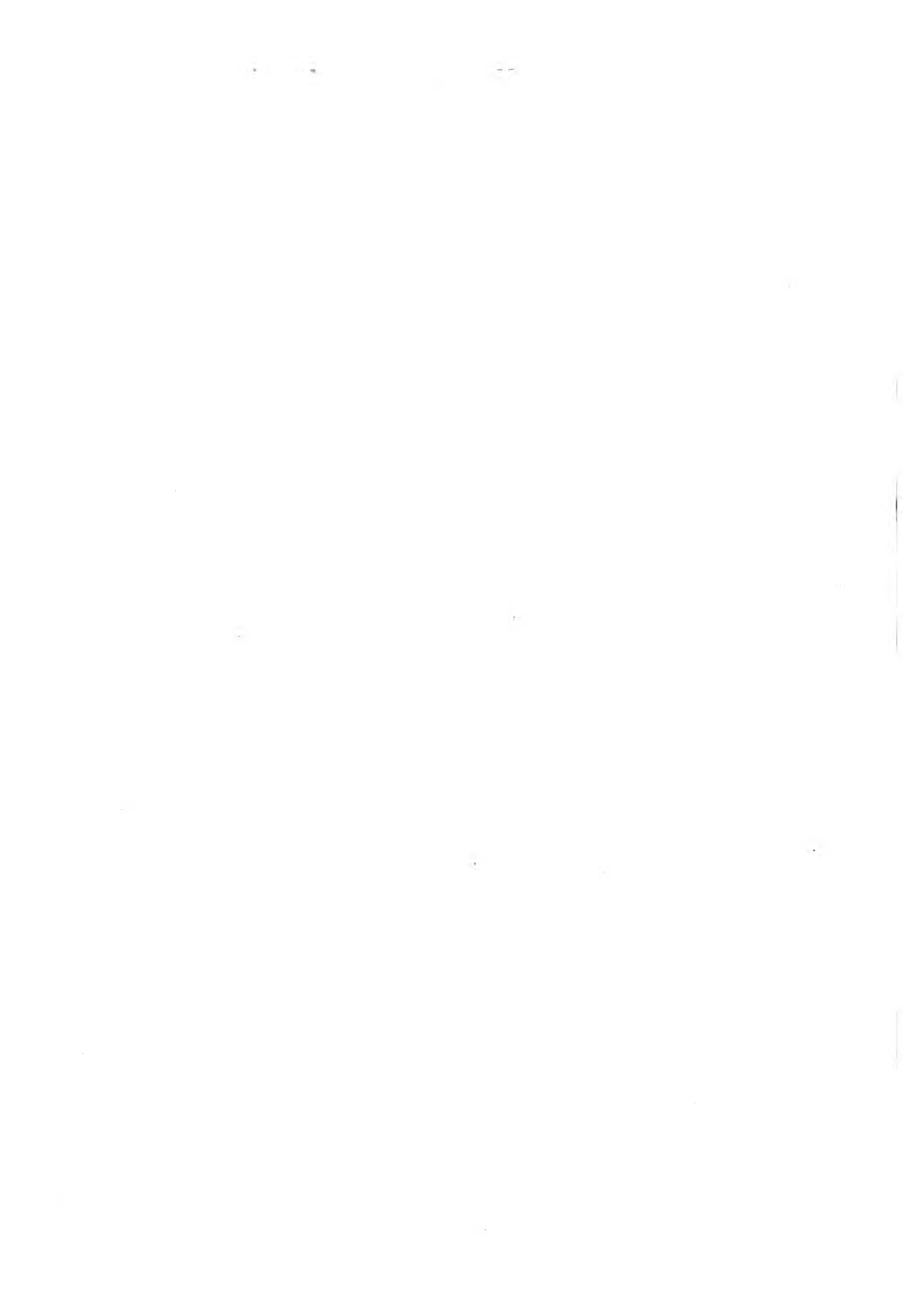


T. Brooks

1848

Illustration

THE
LITTLE
GIRL



scarcely have existed without meditation. One morning a letter was brought to her as she sat in her leafy nook, and though the lines were few, she gazed at them until they were imprinted on her memory, and then continued to muse as if a panorama of the future were unrolling itself before her. The letter was from a lady whom she had seen in London a few weeks previously; one of those comet-like personages whom she had feared would never again cross her path, but whom she had requested—hardly hoping the favour would be granted—sometimes to write to her.

In a gay party they had talked on grave subjects,—religion—the war—woman's social position—the lady nurses. And now Mrs. Foster's letter gave Helen just the information she was desiring on the last-named subject. Aroused from her prayerful reverie by the luncheon-bell sounding from the house, Helen folded up the letter, and with a step a little slower than usual, and a mien just perceptibly calmer and graver, she proceeded to join her relations. The clatter of knives and forks, and the process of satisfying the appetites of several hungry persons, prevented any one from observing such slight indications of purpose or emotion as those I have remarked, and the common talk of the hour proceeded in the usual strain.

“I wish, Helen, you had been indoors this morning,” exclaimed the bride elect, in the pause which intervened between her consumption of cold chicken and gooseberry tart. “I wanted your opinion whether I should work in steel beads or gold ones, for my ottoman. You see I am not quite sure about the sofa-cushions, and whether we shall have amber fringe or green ——”

“Oh,” interrupted Fanny, “don't tease Helen in that way; you know she never cares about anything.”

"Except the 'Times' newspaper," exclaimed a still younger sister, a half-sneer, half-banter, in her tone.

"Don't be so stupid," returned Charlotte, with the sharp authority of eldest sister. "Helen has very good taste indeed when she chooses to exercise it."

"Ah, when!" persisted the younger: "but I repeat that, in a general way, Helen does not care about anything except the newspapers."

"I confess," replied Helen, "that ever since the War commenced the newspapers have been deeply interesting to me. Remember that passing events make future history, and you know you would not be angry with any one for feeling interested in a book of history."

"No one is angry with you, my dear, I am sure," observed Mr. Wharton kindly: "you must not mind a little quizzing about your enthusiasm."

"I do not mind the quizzing, and I glory in being a soldier's daughter, and never so much as to-day, for it seems to give me more than a common right to pursue the path on which I have just decided." As she spoke her voice trembled a little, and her eyes filled with tears, but she very soon recovered her composure.

"My dear Helen, what do you mean?" exclaimed Mrs. Wharton.

"That I have decided, my dear aunt, on offering my services as one of the volunteer nurses for our brave soldiers."

"Helen! Helen Renshaw! you must be out of your mind to think of such a thing!" exclaimed the elder lady, breathless with pure astonishment.

"I hope I am quite sane: I never felt myself more in my senses than I do to-day."

"But it is such an improper step for a young lady to

take," chimed in Mr. and Mrs. Wharton, speaking sometimes alternately and sometimes together; "and you know our opinion on the impropriety of the movement from the beginning. Really we cannot sanction such a preposterous step."

"I am deeply sorry for it: to have had your sympathy and encouragement would have been a real pleasure to me."

"Why, Helen, you cannot mean that you will persist in this scheme in opposition to our advice?"

"I must do so," replied Helen, in a low, clear tone. Then taking Mrs. Wharton's hand, she continued: "You have been a true and kind protectress to me, but the time has come when I must assert my own individuality; and live out my life according to my conscience and my capabilities. The cry of the suffering army comes to my heart, as I believe it has come to hundreds of other women, like the trumpet call to soldiers themselves; it calls us—it claims us—and surely it should be a satisfaction to those we leave behind to know that we go readily and joyfully,—we who have no ties to sunder, no duties to abandon."

"Oh, Helen! how can you talk in such a manner!"

"My dear uncle, I say the truth; moreover, I feel that to perish in such a cause would be a happier fate than to live out a long existence of low aims and selfish purposes."

"But a woman's common lot, that of wife and mother, is surely not such a life as you describe?"

"Certainly not: but I am not a wife, and I have no domestic duties to abandon."

"Really it is quite shocking!" pursued Mrs. Wharton; "and you have taken us so by surprise! Do you know the sights you will have to witness?"

"I shall have to behold mortal agony of the keenest kind; but how much worse must it be to endure it! If I

can assuage that anguish in the smallest degree I shall be fully recompensed."

It would occupy half a volume to describe the common-places which were heaped up in futile array to persuade Helen Renshaw from her purpose; the astonishment which was evinced at her daring; and the quite unnecessary dread lest her example should spread. She came to London, went through the preparatory hospital training, was accepted as a volunteer, and at the same time that Charlotte Wharton was spending her honeymoon on the Rhine and in Paris, Helen was bending over the pallets of our sick and wounded soldiers in the hospital at Scutari.

To say that she is still the blooming Helen Renshaw of a year ago would not be true; yet her health has suffered less than might have been expected—the mind, satisfied with a field of fitting action, having, there is no doubt, helped to support and sustain the body; and there is a light in her soft grey eye that gives a seraphic expression to her countenance. It was there always, but it seems to have kindled into a steadier flame during these latter times.

Only quite recently has she returned to England; and seeing her again under her uncle's roof, one might fancy at the first glance that the story of her absence was but a dream. But a little closer knowledge brings something like an appreciation of the endless consequences that are evolving from her heroism and devotion. With the living proof before them that Helen Renshaw, and such as she, have trodden down hard, ignorant prejudices, the Whartons, and such as they, are vanquished once and for ever in the battle that was silently waging between two forces. The difficult and important duties the Lady Nurses took upon themselves to fulfil were, perhaps, the least part of the noble work which

they less consciously performed. When every journal has rung with the theme, it is trite to remark on the blessed influence exercised on the soldiers themselves by the presence and companionship of gentle and refined women; but, perhaps, though equally true, it is less generally recognised, that the calm courage, the noble self-denial, and the admirable good sense and presence of mind displayed by the Scutari Nurses, have done more to elevate women in the minds of a large order of men not previously capable of understanding woman's highest endowments, than all the "Woman's Rights" leagues and legislations that ever were instituted. Again, that noble band have restored to maidenhood something of the honour in which it should rightly be held. They have shown that women may be brave, and noble, and useful, and energetic, and disciplined, without the prop of a man's arm to lean on; and if young women better understood this truth, and without any dread of old-maidism on the one hand, or any fixed determination to marry or not to marry on the other, waited with faith in God's providence till the soul found its true mate, there would be fewer wretched marriages in the world than we now have to deplore.

Helen Renshaw may or may not marry. She is not likely to wed unless she find her soul's mate, and they may meet late in life, or in this world—never. Yet she is now more likely to be known to congenial natures than she was formerly, for she has, of course, made new friends in various stations. Dwelling beneath her uncle's roof, she is no longer under any yoke; nay, she is even more than a free agent, for the spell of her influence is beginning to be felt throughout the household.

The other day, a soldier who had been tended by Helen through weary nights and days in the Eastern Hospital, came with his wife twenty miles to look upon the face that had been

to him like that of an angel. The meeting was strangely pathetic. Helen was again simply the English lady, but the brave and once more stalwart fellow could not feel it so. He wept as he looked at her; and the poor wife clung to Helen's hand, covering it with kisses, till Helen took the woman in her arms and shed tears as abundantly as the others. There was something in this soldier's visit, something in the picture-painting of his vigorous, manly talk,—and he was parlour guest and servants' guest for many hours,—that revealed to the whole household the heroine that had dwelt among them unawares more completely than letters, and speeches, and newspaper paragraphs, and ladies' and gentlemen's chastened enthusiasm, had yet done. Fine fellow! I wish he were here to add his comments by way of postscript to this brief narrative!

EXCELSIOR.

TRADUIT DE L'ANGLAIS DE LONGFELLOW.

PAR LE CHEVALIER DE CHATELAIN.

DE la nuit dru tombaient les ombres
Quand un Jouvencel traversait
Des Alpes les défilés sombres
Avec une bannière étrange qui portait :
Excelsior !

Son front était plein de pensées
Et son œil lançait des éclairs ;
C'étaient comme des voix passées
Ces étranges accents qu'il jetait dans les airs :
Excelsior !

Il vit maintefois la lumière
De foyers chauds, brillants, heureux ;
Au-dessus, spectre séculaire
La glace miroitait ; et lui de dire aux cieux :
Excelsior !

“ Arrête !” lui dit la Vieillesse,
“ La tempête bruït là-haut,
Le torrent coule avec rudesse”
Mais dominant le Temps, la voix dit aussitôt :
Excelsior !

“Repose,” lui dit la Jeunesse,
“Ton front alourdi sur mon cœur !”
Dans son œil vif un pleur d'ivresse
Perla; — mais lui soudain reprit avec ardeur :
Excelsior !

“Gare à l'effrayante avalanche,
Et gare à la branche de pin !”
C'était le vœu d'une âme franche !
Mais des hauteurs du roc ce mot tomba soudain :
Excelsior !

Le jour épandait la lumière
Que les moines de St. Bernard
Au ciel élevaient leur prière,
Quand ce cri retentit à travers le brouillard :
Excelsior !

Un voyageur parmi la neige
Trouvé par un bon chien, gisait,
Tenant dans sa main comme un pleige
Cette même bannière étrange qui portait :
Excelsior !

Dans le froid et gris crépuscule
Il gît inanimé, mais beau ;
Lors du ciel sur le monticule
Comme d'un saint écho roula ce mot nouveau :
Excelsior !

THE COMMUNION OF THE DOOMED.

BY THE REV. HENRY THOMPSON, M.A.

[The following verses commemorate an event which took place the evening before the assault on the Redan. A considerable number of those who communicated on the occasion fell in that sanguinary conflict.]

A YOUTHFUL priest sat in his tent,
As clos'd an autumn day ;
While Meditation came and went
'Twixt England far away,
And the good blood that should be spent
In the grim morrow's fray.

He mus'd how thousands then should stand
Their Maker's throne before,
And know the secrets of that land
Where trial day is o'er,
And Woe and Weal impress their seal
For ever, evermore !

Up rode in haste an orderly :
His schako touch'd he light ;
And, reverent, for the chieftains he
Besought the holiest Rite :
For shriven and bless'd should Christian be
When bowne for deadly fight.

Brief pause! behind the guarded foss,
 A plank on the drum-head,
 For altar-cloth, proud England's Cross,
 Stout Scotland's Saltire red,
 'Mid the blue field of Ireland's shield,—
 The holy Board is spread.

No vessels proud of jewell'd plate
 On the dread Altar rest;
 But Need and Love can consecrate
 Where Faith bestows her best;
 And by the Presence uncreate
 Gold, earth, alike are blest.

Two bayonets, ere to-morrow's night
 With foeman's steel to close,
 Uphold the symbols of the Light
 That on the world arose
 When "Peace on Earth" Heaven's armies bright
 Sang to the midnight snows.

The canvas roof, for chancel arch,
 Stoops o'er the pride of war,
 As in the threescore warriors march,
 With medal, clasp, and star;
 Guard-grenadier, and cuirassier,
 And lancer, and hussar.

Fierce youth, bold manhood, stalwart age!
 All dight in full array,
 As bent on English turf to wage
 Mock war for idlers gay;
 Not with unpitying foes engage
 In grasp of earnest fray.

They own a Presence in that place,
Body and soul to scan ;
And would His tabernacle grace
With all the pomp they can,
Nor wear the garb before His face
They would not bring to man.

No voice, no sound, about that tent,
Of timbrel, trump, or fife :
All brows are bare, all knees are bent
Of those who, for the strife,
Arm with the awful Sacrament
Of everlasting life !

Rest, gallant veteran, generous boy !
Sweet be your rest and deep !
Ere Noontide flames o'er Kadikoi,
A sweeter, deeper sleep
Shall bring you dreams of ceaseless joy.—
And do we well to weep ?

Nay ! look we home on millions drear,
Sloth-harden'd, passion-led ;
Self-starv'd, from lifeless year to year,
Of the true living Bread :
Then turn to those who slumber here,
And ask, Where lie our dead ?

CYRIL BASKERVILLE, OR RETRIBUTION.

A SKETCH.

BY ELIZA WALKER.

“Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

THERE are certain things in this world of ours, to my thinking, a great deal too much praised, whilst against others a most unnecessary amount of vituperation is levelled; amongst these is our dear English climate, which, because it has not always a fierce sun blazing in the sky, is denounced as chill, cloudy, misty, and by a thousand other ungentle epithets. I confess to such a deep, earnest, passionate love of my country, that I cannot bear to hear even its climate ridiculed. Though, with truthful sorrow I confess, it does sometimes, on very provoking occasions, mar with its chilling winds and weeping showers the most nicely-arranged and the best-concerted schemes of pleasure. But such was not the case when this little tale opens. It was the “leafy month of June,” and the day was one of cloudless sunshine. The heavens exhibiting a broad blue expanse; the air, rich and balmy with the fragrance of beautiful flowers, mingled with “the fresh odour of the new-mown hay;” the very birds, as if enjoying the incense exhaled around, poured forth a continuous strain of gushing melody. It was the very day for a fête and festival.

And such it was at Myrtle Manor, the pretty seat of Sir Lionel Baskerville, whose only child, Cyril, this day attained his majority, and entered (in prospective) on all the duties and responsibilities of *heirdom*,—associated with a stainless, time-honoured name, and large unencumbered estate. There were a host of guests assembled at the house, and diversity of amusements provided for their entertainment. Amongst the ceremonies accessory to the occasion, was one which had been of long usage in the Baskerville family.

This it was—(by the way, there was a strong taint of superstition in all the Baskervilles.) There was a lovely spring situated a few miles from Myrtle Manor, to which a fanciful legend was attached, and which was supposed to bear upon and influence the fate and fortunes of the heir of Baskerville. It was the custom, the day that he attained the age of twenty-one, that he should visit before twelve in the day the spring in question, and fill at its source—which lay hid almost from “mortal ken,” and was reached by tortuous, intricate, and precipitous paths—a cup to the brim, and if he succeeded in regaining the spot whence the spring bubbled in freshness and freedom, without spilling one drop of the water, then would his future career be bright and prosperous; on the contrary, if by any mischance the precious liquid escaped from the goblet, then would evil and disaster shadow his life.

Cyril Baskerville, with some of his young companions, repaired to the spring at the appointed hour. He wound his way through all the mazes and difficulties of the path, to where its fount sprung, and filled—with a joyous spirit and laughing lips—the cup to its brim; with firm unfaltering hand he carried it, and not one drop of the clear bright fluid had escaped, when, just as he had reached the bourne of safety, his eye caught a glimpse of a young girl who had come during his absence to fill her pitcher at the spring, and

while awaiting his return, was beguiling the time caressing her little brother. Cyril started at the vision of loveliness before him, his foot stumbled, and the brimming goblet with its sparkling treasure was dashed to the ground.

Alas! how many feet have stumbled, fatally and for ever, in the broad pathway of life—how many a destiny foundered when the goal was nearly won, through the power and enchantment of a fair face. And so will it ever be. People may talk as they like of “beauty being skin-deep,” and all such nonsense; the “might and majesty of loveliness” will ever assert its supreme sway over the human heart, to subjugate and enslave. Perhaps some natures—imaginative ones especially—are more susceptible of its influence, but to a certain extent its power is recognised by all.

As no description ever conveys to the mind the reality of beauty, I shall give but a very brief outline of Agnes Latimer, the girl at the spring. On her face and form was stamped the impress of loveliest womanhood, with all the glorious attributes of youth, purity, and innocence, environing her. She was of lowly birth and calling, her father renting a very small farm on the Baskerville estate. Cyril till this moment had never seen her, though the rumour of her beauty had reached him. And now he saw her fulfilling one of woman’s dearest vocations, caressing a little child. Surely if there is one thing more than another *anomalous* in nature, and which is contrary to all the laws and instincts of the gentler portion of humanity, it is that of a woman who does not love children; yet how many do I hear avow themselves bored by them. Dear, blessed children! to me there is no society so welcome, no music so delightful as the innocent prattle, the clear, ringing laughter, of infantine lips. The very air always seems to me freshened, purified, and sanctified by the presence of little children.





C. Duke

Frederick A. Heath

Spring in the Valley

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101 Nassau St., N. Y.

Cyril, as in gallantry bound, accosted the fair peasant, and offered to fill her pitcher at the spring. The request was modestly and gracefully declined, but he would not leave her till she had promised to accompany her parents to the rustic ball given in his honour in the evening, and be his first partner in the dance.

The festival is over—the guests departed—the revelry ended. But were there no records “sown” that day to be “reaped” hereafter? Verily there were.

The meeting at the spring between the heir of Baskerville and the pretty peasant, led to results little anticipated by either. Interview followed interview—and from these daily communings sprung a passion on both sides which steeped existence at the time with intensest joy and brightness: the shadows were yet to come. Agnes received the love offered as many a wiser and more worldly one has done, trustingly and uncalculatingly. To her Cyril seemed, in his elevated position, his magnificent beauty, and mental might, a something almost above humanity. And that he should stoop to woo her, obscure and poor, elicited in her woman’s heart the deepest gratitude; as much as the affection he tendered ministered to that “strong necessity of loving” inherent in all feminine natures, and in some dying out but with expiring breath.

Cyril was a strange mixture of error and excellence. Proud, impetuous, wilful, there was yet in him a deep under-current of tender and generous sympathy for the helpless and oppressed; and just because his lady-mother—one of the haughtiest of her class, who soon became cognisant of his attachment to Agnes—used every mean and base endeavour to separate him from her, so much the more did he cling to and uphold her. Reverencing her, honouring himself too much to associate with her image one polluting or lowering

imagination, the only issue contemplated in his attachment was marriage; and after some months he succeeded in persuading her to leave her village home and accompany him to London, and there, at a church in the eastern part of the metropolis, they were married. For a while they were happy,—she, poor girl, in her new and blessed position, supremely so, as wife of that glorious being she could almost have knelt to and worshipped; but with Cyril, the lonely, secluded, and monotonous life they led, soon became wearisome and distasteful. His impatient nature, chafed into bitterness by the taunts and scorn his *mésalliance* called forth from his parents when he announced the fact, made him entirely discontinue all correspondence with them; and not desiring they should know even of his location, they took up their abode in one of the obscure suburbs of London. And so months passed: she—irritable, wayward, as he had grown—still contentedly blest to have him near her in any mood; he, intolerant of the thralldom of that very affection he had used his every earthly effort to call forth, develope, and foster.

At this period he chanced—no, that is not the word, for what action in our lives, however minute and trivial, *is* chance?—he visited one day the west end of the town; there he encountered, passing through Regent Street, an old and intimate college friend, son of an influential member of the then administration. The renewed acquaintance led to subsequent interviews and mutual confidences. Cyril told of his marriage, of his estrangement from his parents, and, worst of all, of the financial difficulties this banishment involved him in. His friend listened with the warm ardour of sympathetic youth to the revelation, interested his father in behalf of Cyril, and a short time only elapsed before he was empowered to tender for his acceptance an important appointment in one of the colonies. The offer was instantly and eagerly acceded

to. Any change was welcome to him, discontented as he was with himself, and most unjustly with the gentle, loving being who leant on him almost for life. Yet there were interposing obstacles to his acceptance of this new position, which with many would have led to its renunciation. The post must be at once filled, and immediate departure to discharge its duties was an inevitable condition. How could Cyril meet this exigency? Agnes was about to become a mother; her accompanying him was out of the question; even to announce his departure to her now was fraught with peril and danger. Could he leave her—his idolising and still loved wife, Agnes—without his assuring and sustaining presence in the hours of agony and trial that awaited her? He could, and did. He yielded to “the force of circumstances!” I use a phrase which I believe has cloaked as many an act of atrocious cruelty as ever the law has taken cognizance of, and punished, with its strong and righteous arm. “The force of circumstances!” as if every human heart ought not to shield itself with a panoply of moral strength to oppose *any* “circumstance” which outraged one principle of humanity, violated one iota of the eternal and immutable rule of right, or silenced with its miserable sophistry the whispers of Conscience, “the oracle of God!” which, disregarded though it may be, comes with its “still small voice,” and tells the soul in the hour of temptation, ere evil intent germinates into action, that “whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

Cyril, as I have said, abnegating his better nature—setting at nought the sacred influences which ought to have swayed him—left his young wife alone and desolate. The fact of his departure was communicated by letter to her. He had not the courage to brave the sight of the anguish he inflicted. The piercing shriek, the convulsive sob, he was not obdurate enough to listen to. All sorrow should be sacred; all de-

lineation of it withheld. If for no other reason than this, that no pen, however vivid, can give even the faintest idea of mental torture, in all its heights and depths of maddened agony and despairing abandonment.

Agnes—crushed, and stricken, and prostrated as she was—yet lived on; lived to become the mother of a fine boy,—a baby Cyril. The letters she received from her husband were kind and frequent, urging her to rejoin him as soon as her health permitted. But after a while the tone of his correspondence altered. He talked of his plans being unsettled; of the fatigue of the journey to herself and child, &c. His remittances to her, lavishly and punctually, continued to be sent; but the quick, intuitive perception of love, soon discovered in the shallow subterfuges now suggested as reasons for her remaining in England, that it was not alone by broad seas and burning plains Cyril was separated from her. Between them now there was yet “a wider gulf fixed”—the fatal and diverging barrier of estrangement. His heart, she felt, was hers no longer. Perhaps it was in another’s keeping! And so it was! For a few months she bore up meekly and uncomplainingly. Her pride—and she had much of that self-respecting pride which every feminine nature ought to possess, in how large a measure!—forbade her uttering one sentence of remonstrance to him. Though young, she had already learnt that affection was never yet brought back by the bitter auxiliaries of taunting words or indignant sarcasms.

Time passed on, but time did not cicatrise the wound in her torn and lacerated bosom. Well has one of the master spirits of our age said, “There are sorrows no time can heal;” for the heavy burden of grief she carried within, which soon dimmed the lustrous eye, withered the bloom on the fair young cheek, and substituted for the light, elastic step, the listless gait of despondency and dejection, there was but one

rest—the quiet grave beneath the verdant sod! And ere a little year had passed from the period when Cyril bade her farewell, as she fondly hoped for a few hours, but, as it was ordained, for eternity, she had paid with her life the penalty of her love: proved, as too many have done, the truth of the words,—

“That soon or late,
Love is his own avenger.”

But is there not a better and higher lesson involved in the retributive punishment? Doth it not speak “trumpet-tongued,” that all who make to themselves idols of the frail and perishing things of earth, whose allegiance to the creature is purchased by disloyalty to the Creator, must expect to receive, sooner or later, their righteous doom, from outraged, insulted, though long-suffering Deity?

And so ended the brief career of Agnes Latimer. She was admired, loved, deserted. In these few words, how many a woman’s destiny is comprised! To her village home at Ashdale—it was her dying request—they carried her to be buried. There, in the green, peaceful churchyard—that bourne for blighted hopes and broken hearts—her body is laid at rest. Her immortal spirit, bursting the confines of humanity—the shackles of time—hath passed to its eternal state of weal or woe, and dwells now, and for ever, with the “God who gave it.”

Long years have rolled by since Agnes died; and now, while returning to Cyril, we must condense, in a few words, his backward career. It had been one of unshadowed prosperity. After a few years he resigned the appointment, lucrative as it was, which separated him from Agnes, and proceeded to Australia. There success was achieved in every speculation he entered into. He had married in India the woman whose fatal ascendancy over his wayward affections had estranged him from Agnes, and led to her early death.

But after they had settled in Australia some time, a malignant fever carried off his wife and the three children which had blessed their union. Cyril was again alone in the world.

With this sense of isolation came the desire to revisit England, and see his first-born son; and now, after fifteen years' expatriation, Cyril Baskerville stands once more on English ground. Letters awaited him on his arrival, announcing his father's decease, and his consequent accession to his title and possessions.

It was a lovely summer afternoon when Cyril landed at the Tower. After taking his dinner at one of the hotels near London Bridge, he sauntered forth for a stroll; the church-bells were ringing for evening service—to how many is that Sabbath music the sweetest and most welcome melody, bidding the worn and weary come to the temple of their God! come to receive those messages of holy hope and sustaining solace which alone can impart strength and support under the heavy burden of human trial and tribulation. Cyril wandered on—the bells ceased—the doors of a church he was passing were wide open,—it was a sunny, glowing evening, in “leafy June” again!

Cyril entered—looked around—started. Why, yes, surely—this very same quiet, quaint old church, was the one at whose altar, when he last saw it, there knelt beside him, in all her bridal beauty, that fair girl—his own Agnes; the first, and then the fondly loved and wedded of his heart!

They began to sing—it was a sweet plaintive hymn, with a mournful, wailing tone in it, that haunted the ear long after it had ceased. It was the favourite hymn of Agnes, the one she used to sing to him every Sunday evening before retiring to rest.

Truly is it said—

“It may be a tone of music which may wound.”

A few notes of a strain heard long, long ago, may resuscitate from the buried past scenes, events, phantoms, and array them all in palpable and terrible distinctness before us, and

“Strike the electric chain
Wherewith we are darkly bound,”

with such fearful, unerring accuracy, that while avenging Memory remorselessly and pitilessly “plies its work of pain,” the pure, torn, bruised heart, pants and groans beneath the tortures inflicted; as in the olden time the victims writhed under the agonies of the rack and the thumbscrews.

And so was it with Cyril,—his punishment had begun.

That church, that sad and simple hymn, brought back Agnes to his mind, in all her girlish freshness, all her absorbing, unselfish, intense love and tenderness: how requited by him? by neglect and desertion in her hour of extremest need!

The sermon was on Retribution; and as the preacher, with impassioned earnestness, told of the unswerving rigidity with which those words of holy writ are ever enforced, that “whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap,” Cyril “trembled!” Trembled lest that retributive justice, whose feet never falters, whose eye never slumbers or sleeps, should yet demand requital, for the hopes he had withered, the affections he had spurned, the life-springs in one young heart he had mercilessly snapped.

Cyril left the church, aroused to the consequences which ulteriorly follow any deviation from the broad path of rectitude and duty: left the church, with the resolve that the one aim and object of his future life should be, by the affluence of love he would lavish on his son, to atone for the injuries he had inflicted on the mother. He would set off on the morrow to Myrtle Manor; clasp his boy Cyril, now his heir, to his heart, and so fence him round with all the accessories and appliances

that affection could suggest or wealth command, that his path should indeed be one of "pleasantness and peace."

Cyril carried his design into effect, and started on the following morning for the home of his ancestors.

And now we are once again in the same locality where our sketch opens. But how different is the aspect! how changed seems everything around! No sounds of revelry and mirth greet the ear; no joy-bells with their merry music float upon the ear; no light laughter, bursting from happy hearts and glowing from beaming eyes, is heard or seen now: there is the stamp of gloom on every brow, the deep hush of sadness reigning around, save where it is broken by the low choking sob of womanly sympathy. Whence the cause of all this grieving? what the occasion of these tokens, which silently, but surely, interpret the presence of some mighty visitation of Calamity?

These signs and symbols of mourning and anguish are for the early dead.

The young Cyril—the only son of his father—whom that father had never yet seen, but who was now rushing to embrace him in the strong grasp of paternal love, and guard within his arms for ever with such protecting and jealous care and affection, lies stretched in death! Death, too, invested with more than its ordinary adjuncts of awful solemnity; death abrupt—fearful—self-inflicted,—the boy had drowned himself!

The cause of this catastrophe has only to be explained and our little tale is told. The child, brought forth when his mother's brain was reeling, her heart aching from her husband's desertion, had ever been weakly in frame, and feeble even to imbecility in intellect. He grew up, it is true, as boyhood advanced, with a face of surpassing beauty; but the eye lacked the fire of spiritual inspiration or intelligence, and in

the features, fair and faultless as they were in their chiselled symmetry, there was only the stamp of helpless vacuity. One only object elicited from him any manifestation of sympathy or feeling, or developed from his mind's barren and dreary waste one answering response of pleasure, one demonstration of pain. On his dog alone were concentrated all his powers of affection; to him he exhibited the most lavish and passionate attachment. The poor faithful animal had been the favourite and companion of his mother, sharing her brief and fugitive hours of happiness; and when the season of desolation came, seeking, by his fond, unswerving fidelity, to solace and soothe her; and when she lay shrouded in her coffin, it was by coercion alone he was severed and taken from his watch over the dead!

The mother buried, to the child was transferred his devotion and service. To him it was nothing that that child was deficient in mental strength; he clung to him with the tenacity of early association and unbroken habit; fed from his hand; guarded his footsteps; slept at his feet. Years wore on, yet the poor dog, laden as he was with the infirmities of age, with failing sight and tottering limbs, still barked his joyous welcome if his master drew near; still crawled to his side, and with his mute gestures importuned for the long-accustomed loved caress. But the dog—the sole, strong, isolated source of joy and consolation to the helpless, imbecile boy—became to others wearisome from his failing powers. They resolved to destroy him by drowning, and this they did.

Cyril at once missed his dumb favourite, and it was pitiable to hear the moan of lamentation in which, with imperfect accents, but with vehement gestures, he bewailed his loss. He sought out all the old familiar haunts and places they were wont to ramble in; vainly—vainly. He returned home in solitary misery. When the shadows of evening were

falling, he eluded the watch which was generally kept upon his movements to sally forth again, and search for his companion and friend. He reached a piece of water, where it had been his custom and pastime, often the livelong day, to sit and watch his dog leap into it for the sticks he threw in, which with joyful alacrity he would dive for, and lay with bounding gambols at his master's feet. He stood by the stream, gazing on it with all the acute anguish of severance and bereavement he was capable of experiencing. Suddenly he saw his favourite floating on the surface; he knew not that he was cold and dead. Enough for him that he saw him—had found him once again! With one impetuous, desperate plunge, he jumped into the stream, caught the animal in his arms, and with him found a watery grave!

It was a few hours subsequent to this occurrence that Sir Cyril Baskerville arrived, and saw, for the first time, his eldest born and heir—the hoped-for prop of his declining years—stretched before him a swollen and lifeless corpse! “Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.”

A PETITION TO F. H.

IN FAVOUR OF A NEWLY-PLANTED TREE.

BY CHARLES SWAIN.

DEAR Fanny, 'tis no common tree
That asks thy youthful aid and kindness ;
There 's more in life than we can see,—
The best of seeing is but blindness.

And this slight plant in future years
May thank thy care, so e'en begin it ;
There 's more enclosed than there appears,—
This tree 's a mystic heart within it.

The morn with golden lips may touch
Its drooping boughs, their bloom renewing ;
And flowers, the flowers we love so much,
Around its root be odours strewing ;

Yet e'en a tree needs human care :
There 's nought below which God hath given,
That leads not feeling unaware
From things of earth to things of heaven.

Who knows how link by link we draw
The slender chain which life enforces?
A drop of dew may show some law,
That guides the planets in their courses.

Perchance the very sand we pass
May teach a truth without our seeing;
And e'en a simple blade of grass
Proclaim the universal Being.

Nothing we see, but is for good;
No sight, no shape throughout creation,
But hath, if rightly understood,
Some wise and spiritual relation.

Throughout all worlds, throughout all time,
The outer of the inner telleth;
Each seed is but a germ sublime,
Where wisdom, love, and beauty dwelleth.

And I can ne'er the thought forego
That flowers, and trees, and all that groweth,
Have sympathy with hearts below,
And love the hand that love bestoweth.

It may be fancy — but to me
The drooping flower, the tree dejected,
Seem but the types in their degree
Of human hopes and hearts neglected.

So Fanny, dear, though I'm away,
Be my tree's friend in hours of trial;
And if it need thee, day by day,
Give not its need a cold denial.

Then should each bough with vernal power
Spring upward, like a spirit soaring,
Or meet with joy the sunny hour
Or laugh, amid the bright rain pouring,

Be sure that language hath not fled ;
Though mute, it speaketh words endearing :
There 's many a grateful prayer oft said
That reacheth none save God's own hearing.

Heed not the counsels, love, which *doubt!*
But follow truth, — nor look thou sinward ;
Full many an angel waits *without,*
Because none crieth — “ *Come thou inward!* ”

Still keep thy faith in human worth,
Still be thy love to Nature given,
When he who set this tree in earth
Hath grasp'd the Tree of Life in heaven.

UTTOXETER.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE SCARLET LETTER," ETC. ETC.

AT Lichfield, in St. Mary's Square, I saw a statue of Dr. Johnson, elevated on a stone pedestal, some ten or twelve feet high. The statue is colossal (though perhaps not much more so than the mountainous Doctor) and sits in a chair, with a pile of big books underneath it, looking down upon the spectator with a broad, heavy, benignant countenance, very like Johnson's portraits. The figure is immensely massive—a vast ponderosity of stone, not finely spiritualised, nor, indeed, fully humanised, but rather resembling a great boulder than a man. On the pedestal are three bas-reliefs; in the first, Johnson is represented as a mere baby, seated on an old man's shoulders, resting his chin on the bald head which he embraces with his arms, and listening to the preaching of Dr. Sacheverell; in the second tablet he is seen riding to school on the backs of two of his comrades, while a third boy supports him in the rear. The third bas-relief possesses, to my mind, a good deal of pathos. It shows Johnson in the market-place of Uttoxeter, doing penance for an act of disobedience to his father, committed fifty years before. He stands bare-headed, very sad and woe-begone, with the wind and rain driving hard against him; while some market-people and children gaze awe-stricken into his face, and an aged man and woman, with

clasped hands, are praying for him. These latter personages, I fancy (though, in queer proximity, there are some living ducks and dead poultry), represent the spirits of Johnson's father and mother, lending what aid they can to lighten his half-century's burden of remorse.

I never heard of this statue before; it seems to have no reputation as a work of art, and very probably may deserve none. Yet I found it somewhat touching and effective, perhaps because my interest in the character of that sturdiest old Englishman has always been peculiarly strong; and especially the above-described bas-relief freshened my sense of a wonderful beauty and pathos in the incident which it commemorates. So, the next day, I left Lichfield for Uttoxeter, on a purely sentimental pilgrimage, (by railway, however), to see the spot where Johnson performed his penance. Boswell, I think, speaks of the town (its name is pronounced Yute-oxeter), as being about nine miles from Lichfield, but the map would indicate a greater distance; and by rail, passing from one line to another, it is as much as eighteen. I have always had an idea of old Michael Johnson journeying thither on foot, on the morning of market-days, selling books through the busy hours, and returning home at night. This could not well have been.

Arriving at the Uttoxeter station, the first thing I saw, in a convenient vicinity, was the tower and tall grey spire of a church. It is but a very short walk from the station up into the town. It had been my previous impression that the market-place of Uttoxeter lay immediately round about the church; and, if I remember the narrative aright, Johnson describes his father's book-stall as standing in the market-place, close beside the sacred edifice. But the church has merely a street of ordinary width passing around it; while the market-place, though near at hand, is not really

contiguous; nor would its throng and bustle be apt to overflow their bounds and surge against the churchyard and the old grey tower. Nevertheless, a walk of a minute or two would bring a person from the centre of the market-place to the church-door; and Michael Johnson might very well have placed his stall, and have laid out his literary ware, in the corner at the tower's base,—better there, perhaps, than in the busy centre of an agricultural market. But the picturesqueness and full impressiveness of the story require that Johnson, doing his penance, should have been the very nucleus of the crowd—the midmost man of the market-place—a central figure of Memory and Remorse, contrasting with, and overpowering the sultry materialism around him. I am resolved, therefore, that the true site of his penance was in the middle of the market-place.

This is a pretty, spacious, and irregular vacuity, surrounded by houses and shops, some of them old, with red-tiled roofs; others wearing a pretence of newness, but probably as old as the rest. In these ancient English towns you see many houses with modern fronts, but if you peep or penetrate inside, you often find an antique arrangement,—old rafters, intricate passages, balustraded staircases; and discover that the spruce exterior is but a patch on some stalwart remnant of days gone by. England never gives up anything old, as long as it is possible to patch it. The people of Uttoxeter seemed very idle in the warm summer day, and stood in little groups about the market-place; leisurely chatting, and staring at me, as they would not stare if strangers were more plentiful. I question if Uttoxeter ever saw an American before. And as an American, I was struck by the numbers of old persons tottering about, and leaning on sticks; old persons in knee-breeches, and all the other traditional costume of the last century. Old places seem to produce old people, as by a

natural propriety; or perhaps the secret is, that old age has a tendency to hide itself when it might otherwise be brought into contact with new edifices and new things, but comes freely forth, and meets the eye of man, amid the sympathies of a decaying town. The only other thing that greatly impressed me in Uttoxeter was the abundance of public-houses, one at every step or two; Red Lions, White Harts, Bulls' Heads, Mitres, Cross Keys, and I know not what besides. These are, probably, for the accommodation of the agricultural visitors on market-day. At any rate, I appeared to be the only guest in Uttoxeter, on the day of my visit, and had but an infinitesimal portion of patronage to distribute amongst so many inns.

I stepped into one of these rustic hostelries, and got my dinner—bacon and greens, and a chop, and a gooseberry pudding—enough for six yeomen, besides ale; all for a shilling and sixpence. This hospitable inn was called the Nag's Head, and, standing beside the market-place, was as likely as any other to have entertained old Michael Johnson in the days when he used to come hither to sell books. He, perhaps, had eaten his bacon and greens, and drunk his ale, and smoked his pipe, in the very room where I now sat; a low, ancient room, with a red-brick floor and a whitewashed ceiling, traversed by bare, rough beams; the whole in the rudest fashion, but extremely neat. Neither did the room lack ornament, the walls being hung with engravings of prize-oxen, and other pretty prints, and the mantelpiece adorned with earthenware figures of shepherdesses. But still, as I sipped my ale, I glanced through the window into the sunny market-place, and wished that I could honestly fix on one spot rather than another, as likely to have been the holy site where Johnson stood to do his penance.

How strange and stupid it is, that tradition should not have marked and kept in mind the very place! How

shameful (nothing less than that) that there should be no local memorial of this incident, as beautiful and as touching a passage as can be cited out of any human life! no inscription of it, almost as sacred as a verse of Scripture, on the wall of the church! no statue of the venerable and illustrious penitent in the market-place, to throw a wholesome awe over its traffic, its earthliness, its selfishness! Such a statue, if the piety of man did not raise it, might almost have been expected to grow up out of the pavement of its own accord, on the spot that had been watered by Johnson's remorseful tears, and by the rain that dripped from him.

Well, my pilgrimage had not turned out a very successful one. There being no train till late in the afternoon, I spent, I know not how many hours, in Uttoxeter, and, to say the truth, was heartily tired of it; my penance being a great deal longer than Dr. Johnson's. Moreover, I forgot, until it was too late, to snatch the opportunity to repent of some of my own sins. While waiting at the station, I asked a boy who sat near me, (a school-boy, some twelve or thirteen years old, whom I should take to be a clergyman's son)—I asked him whether he had ever heard the story of Dr. Johnson, how he stood an hour doing penance beside that church, whose spire rose before us. The boy stared, and answered, "No." I inquired if no such story was known or talked about in Uttoxeter. "No," said the boy; "not that I ever heard of!" Just think of the absurd little town, knowing nothing of its one memorable incident, which sanctifies it to the heart of a stranger from three thousand miles over the sea! Just think of the fathers and mothers of Uttoxeter never telling their children this sad and lovely story, which might have such a blessed influence on their young days, and spare them so many a pang hereafter!

But, personally, I had no right to find fault with these

good people; for I myself had felt little or no impression from the scene; and my experience has been similar in many another spot, even of far deeper consecration than Uttoxeter. At Stratford-on-Avon—even at Westminster Abbey, on my first visit—I was as little moved as any stone of the pavement. These visits to the identical scenes of poetical or historic interest inevitably cause an encounter and a shock of the Actual with the Ideal, in which the latter—unless stronger than in my own case—is very apt to be overpowered. My emotions always come before, or afterwards; and I cannot help envying those happier tourists, who can time and tune themselves so accurately, that their raptures (as I presume from their printed descriptions) are sure to gush up just on the very spot, and precisely at the right moment.

TO AN OLD PLAYMATE.

BY BARRY CORNWALL.

Dost thou still remember *me*?—
I remember thee and thine,
When the young and careless Hours
All were thine and mine :
When we hid our eyes in flowers,
Laughing at the ruling Powers,
Dreaming life divine.

Dreams of books, or barren learning,
Troubled not our summer sleep ;
Genius (just alit) was burning
In the heart's recesses deep.
O'er the sunny waters sailing,
Want, nor woe, nor friendship failing
Taught us then to weep.

Life has lost its sweeter season,
Spring has shrunk to winter cold,
And, for some bad earthly reason,
We (who once were young) are old.
Dimmed are all our sunshine glories
And our thousand pleasant stories—
All are past and told !

Yet,—Life's thoughtful angel fleeth
Through a gentler, calmer air,
And a hand that no one seeth
Shields us from despair ;
So, though autumn falls in showers,
We will trust to brighter hours,
As when we hid our eyes in flowers,
And dreamed the world was fair.

ENGLAND.

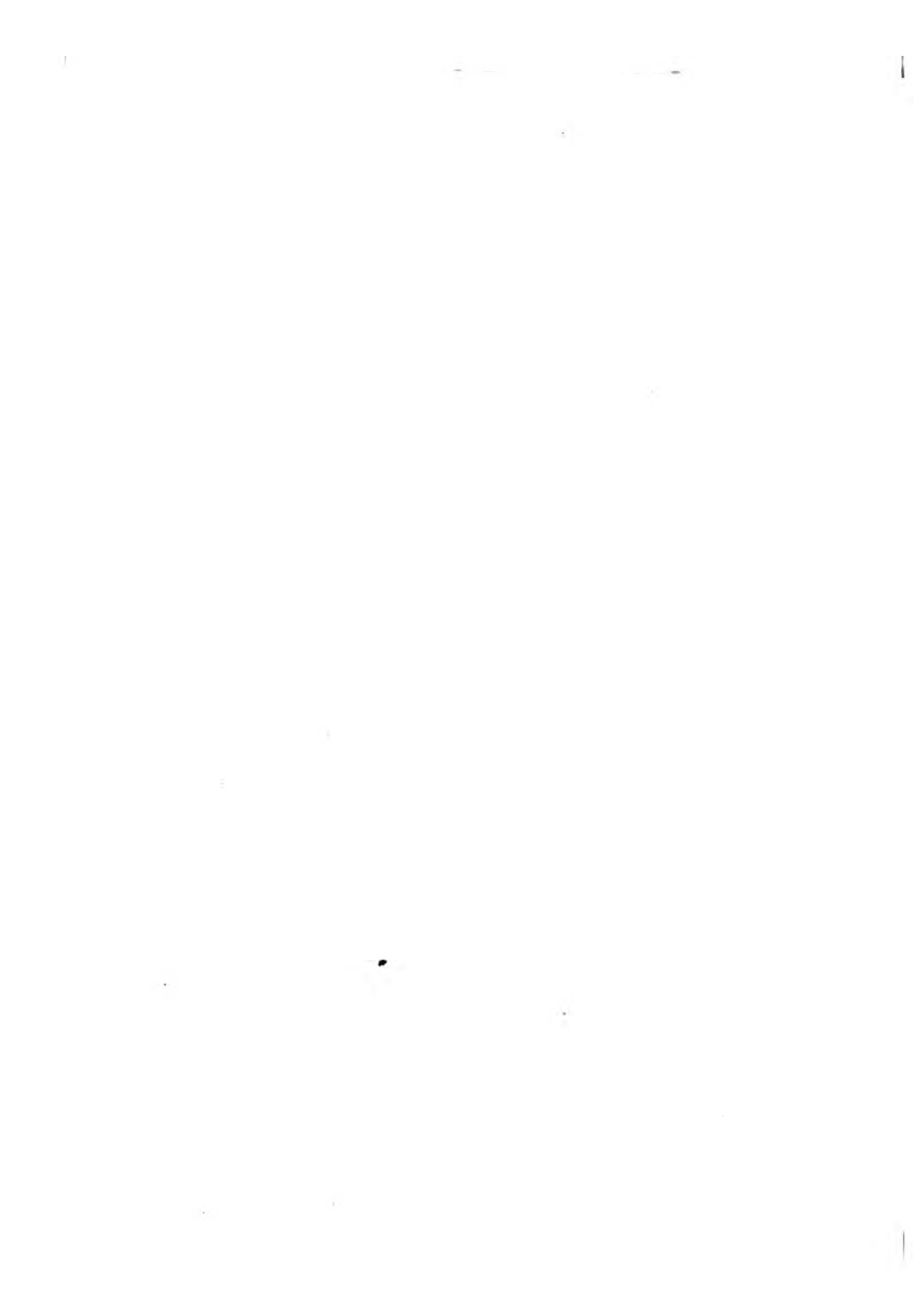
VERSES SUGGESTED BY THE PORTRAIT OF
LADY GREY.

BY FRANCIS BENNOCH.

So small! and yet so great a power!
A speck within the surging sea,
While stormy strife some lands devour,
England abideth firm and free:
For her, few charms
Have feats of arms,
Though she will not insulted be;
When roused her might
To guard the right,
She shows the world how freemen fight.

When halcyon Peace with folded wing
Makes calm the tempest-troubled deep;
And discontent and murmuring,
And all the angry passions sleep,
She showeth then,
How gallant men
Unspotted may their conscience keep—
Though great in war,
Oh, greater far,
Her marvellous peaceful conquests are.







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Beneath her sway the conquered rise
 To every blessing law can give,
 The lawless learn the law to prize,
 And, better still, they learn to live;
 With head erect
 They win respect,
 While yielding little much receive,
 And wondering see
 How great is she
 In might and magnanimity.

With settled laws come peace and ease,
 Round homes secure spring trees and flowers—
 To man unmated what are these?
 How slowly creep the weary hours!
 From distant home
 Sweet angels come
 To cheer Antipodean bowers—
 Wise men may preach,
 But Love can teach
 Some lessons far beyond their reach.

When stubborn strength exerted fails
 To force on man obedience,
 Some gentle counsel oft prevails,
 And wins a prompt allegiance;—
 To such afar
 We debtors are
 For civilising influence—
 This simple lay
 Would tribute pay
 To all! and first to Lady Grey.

THE STORY OF A LITTLE BLUE FLOWER.

BY OWEN MEREDITH.

LONG ago, in a soft, Southern land, where the days are longer and warmer, and the nights brighter, yet tenderer, than ours, there was a green and ancient garden. It was shut out from all the world by high purple hills, and lay southward, filled with the most fragrant and beautiful flowers.

For, in the first place, there were in this garden all kinds of Roses; from the deep-red Damask Rose, with its scornful Cleopatra-hues, and the pale Yellow Rose, in whose faint leaves the dews look moonlit, to the little, glewy, close Moss-Rose, that aches to the heart all day with the clinging bee.

And there were also frail and slender Lilies, with green and stately stems, and long white necks and drooping faces; and some with golden and with purple crowns, that, faint with their own strange fragrance, hung heavily in the hot noontide, above cool glassy pools.

They were daughters of a Royal Seed, and sprung of Gods and Nymphs—Lotus and Amaryllis, Iris and Narcissus. These gave themselves the most lackadaisical airs; never put their heads in the sun for fear of spoiling their complexions; sighed to the reflex of their own white beauty on the water; kept their feet in moss all through the summer, or lolled about on the green sluices and pools with a listless pleasure; and were held in high esteem by the commoner sort among the flowers, as persons of the best quality.

And there were short, curly, little Hyacinths, of every hue,

and of most sweet odour, who were, in their own way, the greatest flirts in the garden. So, at least, the Immortelles declared, who made to themselves convents below the shadows of dark Cypress-trees; and being, for the most part, shunned by all bees, butterflies, and breezes, entertained vows of celibacy, took no small pride in the acknowledged mustiness of their general scent and colour, and rebuked the gaiety of their fairer sisters whenever they had the opportunity.

And there was luxuriant and wild-wandering Honeysuckle; or Eglantine, as it sometimes claimed to be called when put upon its rights by the provoking insolence and overweening pretensions of certain flowers, whose heads had been turned by Linnæus; Honeysuckle, always fresh, and happy, and sweet, and clambering here and there, as ever some happy humour lured the joyous and caressing thing; yet for all that, and although, indeed, the poets had brought it now and then into notice, it was held, I have heard, by the chief part of its companions, to be, after all, but a country plant, devoid of cultivation, and not admissible to the best society.

And there were bright scarlet Geraniums, who, the Lilies said, painted their faces, and were people of very bad taste.

Nor these alone, but every sweet shrub and blossoming plant, and every fair and fragrant growth, starred, or belled, or globed, of hill-side and of water-side, and those that love the vales. Daisy, and Marigold, and Pimpernel; Violet, and Daffodil, and Primrose, and Wild Pink; Camellia, Syringa, and Catalpa; and Amaracus, and Acanthus, and Moly, and Asphodel, and Vervain, and Sweet Rue. And many others not less delightful. And besides these, there were curious, hairy, prickly, uncouth, antique Cactuses; and plants with names as strange as their strange blossoms, brought from Orient lands, that lived by themselves, and formed the Foreign Society of the garden.

Now in this garden, besides all these fine plants and blossoms, and shut apart from them all in a cold, dark, mossy nook, there grew a little pale-blue flower, which had been sown by a chance seed, caught up in the bosom of a winter wind, and blown there from a great way off. The sun could scarcely reach the little flower, so hidden was it in the deep sullen mosses where it grew. Other flowers, with taller stems, and brighter heads, and larger leaves, choked from its life the morning and the evening light—sunset and sunrise, the sight of the distant horizon, the sound of the distant streams, and the paths of the purple butterflies. Only the hot sun at noon fell dry, and smote it on the head; only the wild ungentle rains pierced through the outer leaves and stems, and beat and drenched it in the moss; only the silent and sad stars, from dark and windless heights above the night, poured over it the light of their cold astrology.

And amidst all those wealthy flowers this little foundling lived unbeloved. The Rose called it a sad little fright, and the Lily a creature of unknown extraction. The Cactus said it knew nothing of the world, and was quite a poor simpleton. The Cactus, as it was of great age and experience, and, moreover, the most uncivil plant in the garden, was held in high esteem among the flowers. The Jonquils, who were in bad society themselves, said there was nothing of the fashion about this little blue flower. As I have said before, the butterflies, who flirted with the Roses in a very shocking way, and are great lovers of beauty, and who, moreover, as everybody knows, are the most good-natured egotists in the world, and please themselves with perfect independence, never came near the little blue stranger. And if the wind blew it against the Lily, the Lily shrank away with a stately scorn; and if the rain beat it against the Rose, the Rose pricked it with its thorns.

So that the little blue flower was very sad-hearted. And when the wind blew cold across the distant snow-drifts on the mountain-peaks, it said to the wind, "Kill me, dear Wind, and blow me far away to that icy land in the dear and dreamed-of North, where my little blue brethren dwell, that my grave may be among them."

And when the night was set, and over all the sleeping flowers came forth the melancholy stars, and, with the weight of the day, the weight of the world's wide unkindness was lifted from the heart of the flower, and the Great Spirit of Pity looked out of heaven to see that no harm came to the world in the darkness; it looked wistfully upwards, and said, "O Great Spirit, who alone hast pity, let me die to-night, and let the North Wind, when it comes, blow me away to that icy land where my little blue brethren dwell, that my grave may be among them."

This is what the flower prayed every night; for this foolish little blossom said in its heart, "To what use have I been born into this fair strong world, which without me is complete and round, and which will lose, when I cease, not so much from the sum of its perfections as when a salt-grain from a sea-shell is melted into ocean? I, that am so frail and unlovely; I, whose life gladdens no eye, and sweetens no sense—a weed without a use!"

Ah, foolish little flower! for, praying from such thoughts as these, upon its head the tender dew slid down out of the bosom of the night, and the Spirit to which it prayed was silent.

Now every day, a little before sunset, when the tall mountain-tops stood all rosy against the dark-blue sky, and the flowers were thirsty, one and all, the lady who was the Queen of the Garden walked forth to visit her flowers. And all the flowers—for they loved her greatly—loll'd out their bright

heads upon the walks to look at her, and, if it might be, touch her, as she passed; for she was more beautiful than they.

And when she was gone away again, one would boast, "I have looked into her face."

Another, "I have touched her hand."

A third, "See here, the rosy place! her robe's edge brushed me as she went."

A fourth, "She bent down and caressed me."

A fifth, "Hush! hush! Am I not sweeter than you all? Her breath is on my bosom still."

So every day, at the time of the rosy light, she came and went among them. Pausing now to praise some special favourite: "Aha, my Rose, are you blown already?" or, "Lily, Lily! all the young buds shut?" Stooping now to upraise or prop some frail or falling plant. Now brushing off the dead leaf there; now here the pale-green caterpillar. Pausing here, and stooping there, among her blossoming bells and cups, with her sweet face flushed in the glowing reflex from the roses, and her bright hair fallen among them. But never in all her walks did she come near to that little blue flower, nor bend above its own her lovely face; for, in truth, she did not even know of its existence. Yet the poor little flower loved her more than she was loved by all the others. And long before her footsteps sounded near upon the walks it *felt* her presence in the garden from afar off, and trembled from blossom to root; and long after she was gone away, and the sun had fallen, and the dews, and all the other flowers were asleep, wide-awake it brooded, in its comfortless, cold, mossy bed, upon her absent beauty, and all night long hung down its pale blue flower, weeping bitterly.

But one day the flowers were all set a-gossiping, as you shall hear; for when their Queen came to visit them it was not alone, as her wont had been, that she came. Beside her

walked a young man, stately with all the strong and subtle grace of youth, and proudly beautiful, as she was beautifully gentle. Yet the little blue flower noted well, as it peered from its sunken bower, that when the lady, whom it loved, spoke to the youth beside her, the colour quickened in his cheek, and when he answered her his voice faltered, and came faint.

“Ah, does he love her?” thought the little flower; “love her! love her! how otherwise, alas! for she is more beautiful than all that is between the stars and the flowers; and her shadow mingles with his; and their looks are mingled; and to his the music of her voice is matched; and, oh! she leans upon his arm!”

The other flowers said to each other, “This new creature with the hair is of a fiercer beauty, and more terrible, than our Queen, and we love him not so well.”

The Rose said, “He has broken my youngest bud!”

And the Lily, “See my poor stem, how it droops! and my little white sisters with the golden tongues, all sadly bruised!”

And a Tulip, faint and angry, “Look, look, where the ground is strewn with flame! He has shattered my great crimson fire-cup!” For where he walked in his silence, there flowers had been wounded.

But the next day the young man came alone into the garden, early in the mid-heat of the noon, when the tallest Lily made no shadow on the grass, and the little birds no sound among the trees, and sat down beneath a cedar-tree, and leaned his head upon his hands; silent in the silence all day long—so silent, that the merry, bold lizards, came out and panted at him in the shiny places, and scampered and darted about his feet. And when the sun had fallen under the hills, and the air freshened, and the topmost leaves upon the trees began to be moved, he lifted up his head, and gazed long and

wistfully towards a window in the west; and at last he sang,
first low, then loud, across the flowers,—

“ Her eyes are droop'd in such a languid light
As falls through pale skies veil'd with summer-lightning,
When the warm world is rolling round to-night,
And flickering starlights o'er lone hills are bright'ning :

And through her white cheek some warm impulse glows
Which those hush'd lips to kindling whispers heaves,
As I have seen the South Wind stir the rose,
And leave a fuller crimson on the leaves.

Rise, lady, from that languid dream of love
Which, all day long, you lull with pensive sighs ;
The Poplar trembles near the Cypress-grove,
And draws a sound out of the deep cool skies :

The bee hums home from yon Pomegranate-flower ;
The hill-side darkens through the meadow-grass.
Shake down thy warm hair in a golden shower ;
Glance but one look into the liquid glass.

Oh ! never, love, on dreams a poet dreams,
On eyes like this, hath glow'd so fair a form
As that which from yon antique mirror beams,
In its own rosy ripeness brooding warm !

For on thy perfect cheek the dying West
The magic of his fading crimson flings,
And trembles down the slope of thy soft breast,
Through pale pearl beads on amber-threaded strings.

O love, the Lilies lean along the wall ;
The loaded Lilacs droop and grieve with me ;
The garden pines through its pale blooms ; and all
The heavy white Magnolias ache for thee.

The moon is on the hill. A murmur sweet
Comes blowing o'er the light of crimson seas ;
The sun burns low of his own amorous heat,—
Come down, pale Empress of the Orange-trees !

Come down, and sum the sweetness of this hour !
Come down, and be the meaning of this place !
Lean only o'er our green acacia-bower,
Or from the red-leaved lattice show thy face.

Be seen ! complete the day before it dies ;
And charm the night from dewy cave and nook.
Bend o'er my soul the light of thy loved eyes,
And fill my whole heart with one lustrous look !"

When the song came to an end, the charmed lizards with bright eyes, who love music, and who had crept near to listen to the singer, awoke from the melody, and slipped back into the trembling leaves ; and the lady with the golden hair came forth into the garden.

And the lady and the minstrel walked together, or sat among the thick bowers of Oleander and Pomegranate, till the moon in the west hung low above the mirrored moon in a distant lake, and at last slid down, and left a darkness among the hills. Then they parted ; she through the flowers to her home among them, and he across the meadow, crushing the deep cowslips in the dew, and over the mountain.

"Does she love him, too?" thought the little flower. "Why not? for he is beautiful: not so beautiful as she, but more beautiful than other things. Ah, my heart is heavy, heavy, to-night. Do not my kinsmen dwell in the dark and tearful North? And that is miles away, O my heart!"

But the next day the Lady of the Garden came forth all alone in the afternoon. Her brows were clouded, her eyes were drooped, her golden hair hung all neglected round her snowy neck. She walked silent as her shadow, looking neither to the right nor to the left. A low wind blew on before her the fragrance of her coming, and the flowers looked out to welcome her, as of old.

The delicate Aconite trembled, and turned a deeper blue. The Lily leaned full-length across the walk. The Sunflower forgot the sun, and turned his golden face. The little Roses popped up their heads, and shook them, as much as to say "Look at us, for we know we are pretty."

But the lady walked on without noticing them, and as she walked she plucked a great red Rose which had thrust its crimson bosom against her hand, and shed the leaves about her in the path.

And the little blue flower said to itself, "See! she does not even care for the beautiful red Roses, which are so worthy to be loved; and what am I but a little, frail, weak flower, dying, dying, dying of love?" And the lady came and sat down upon the moss-covered stones, close to the little blue flower; but she saw it not, though the poor thing strained its delicate thin stem to look timidly up into her eyes. And those eyes were bright with swimming tears, and her cheek was paler than the white Lotus flower. There she sat alone, and bowed her head upon her hands and wept. And a single silver tear fell into the heart of the little blue flower, saltier than the dew, yet sweeter; and it fell like a shaken star from the hair of some pale angel. For you know that this human world is so sad and strange a place, that the stars which the angels sometimes drop upon us are turned into tears before they reach us. And when the shadows fell the lady went home, musing; and the flowers said among themselves, "What makes our Queen so sad? And why did she so coldly disregard us?—unlike herself!" And a little Rosebud wept, "My mother is dead, and we are all orphans. Her body lies upon the dark cold earth. Lie lovingly upon it, you sweet dews!"

"Ah, if the blossom of her life were plucked she might weep, as I must," cried the dying Rose; "but her beauty is not less fair, though paler than it was." So is one sorrow ignorant of another. None of the flowers thought of the little blue blossom that held the tear in its heart. But the little flower was awake all night nursing the tear. And first there came a strong north wind and beat about the flowers, rocking the sturdy Hollyhocks against the wall, and bending the

tallest Lilies. But the little blue flower clung close against the sheltering stones, and stirred not, lest the tear should be blown down. And then there came a soft warm rain, and the flowers turned in their dreams and dipped their heads to the nourishing shower. But the little blue flower lay still in the moss, and drew closer round it its purple curtains, lest the tear should fall out. And at least the sun opened his golden eye, and all the flowers opened theirs to look at him. But the little blue flower shrunk far into the shadow, and lay still, lest the tear should be dried up.

And the next day the lady came again and sat down, as before, near the little flower—so near to it, that her dress almost touched its stem. Her face was pale. She held a volume in her hand—a book of the songs of another land—and there, to herself, she murmured this lyric from the book:—

“ What if I leave my home,
 And leave my land, O love, to follow thee ?
 The sea-wind blows the desolate pale foam
 Over the perilous sea.
 But if to follow thee
 I leave my land, O love, and leave my home ?—
 He only answered me, ‘ Beloved, come !
 Thy home my heart shall be.’

The North Wind in the night
 Blows cold, and cold the North must be.
 And cold the hills in Thulè, from whose site
 Thy castle darkens by the winter sea.
 What if I leave my home to follow thee,
 And leave, O love, the land of my delight ?
 He only answered me, ‘ Both heat and light
 Are in my love for thee.’

‘ Ah, brief the space ’twixt life’s extremes !
 And what are all our days but dreams ?
 Yon sun is but a waning heat :
 A fading bloom yon rose.

And June may range the woodbine neat ;
December spreads the snows ;
But summers still may fade and fleet,
And suns may rise and roll,
He said, ' Love's flower blooms all as sweet
In the sunlight of the soul.' "

And the lady closed the book and sighed deeply ; and her sad breath waved the trembling flower at her feet, and so thrilled the amorous tender life in its blue leaves, that it was, for the faintness which came upon it, constrained to unclose its clasped blossom, and gasp for breath.

And immediately the sun darted down, and caught up the tear, and dried it.

But that tear had lain so long in the heart of the flower, and so much of the life of the flower had passed into it, that as it mixed itself with the sunlight, the air was suddenly filled with a marvellous fragrance.

And turning round, to see what made the place so sweet, the lady beheld the little blue flower, leaning all pale and faint against her feet.

"O you poor little flower!" she cried, "how sweet you are! I love you, you little blue thing, and must have you to lie upon my bosom!"

So she bent down and she plucked the flower, and placed it in her bosom, and home she went with it.

The poor little blossom suffered great pain ; but it thought not of the pain, it was so happy at heart to be where it lay, rising and falling on that snowy breast, and breathing out against her cheek its dying fragrance.

Ah, foolish blossom!

That evening there was such a to-do among the flowers.

"What taste!" cried the Roses, "to wear such an ugly thing!"

"Odious creature!" cried a flat-faced Sunflower, dreadfully

sunburnt. "Such a brazen-faced thing *I* never saw! No, never! I have often watched it, forsooth, trying to attract attention; but I always took care to put my own head in the way and hide it. Dear me, some people are *so* pushing!"

"It all comes of having strangers amongst us, whom nobody knows anything about," cried the Jonquils.

"Hoity-toity!" cried the Cactuses. "*You* needn't talk so loud. *We* know something of the world, and can tell a Rose from a Jonquil, we promise you, though you *do* wear yellow satin, and think yourselves fine company."

The Jonquils hung down their heads, and were silent for a whole week after, though they were naturally great talkers.

"If that poor creature had had any proper self-respect," exclaimed the Nettle, "this never could have happened. I should like to see any one lay hold of *me* in that way!"

"Really, Miss Nettle," said a large Cabbage-Rose, who was a mother, with twelve young buds, "if propriety were as odious as *some* people would have it, there would be no living in the world. Now *I* see company pretty often, and no harm has come of it yet, that I know of. Indeed, though I keep open house, as I may say, I haven't got rid of one of my buds yet; and really my poor stem is not strong enough to support such a family. To be sure, Prince Peony is uncommonly attentive to my eldest, and Mr. Caterpillar calls every day on my youngest, but I have forbidden her to encourage the advances of the creature, for I hear that he keeps low company, with slugs and black-beetles; and Prince Peony has told me that he never lets him into his house when he can help it. The Prince is a very charming person. *You* never make friends, I know, Miss Nettle."

"In *my* opinion," replied the Nettle, "a becoming reserve is the greatest charm which a flower can possess."

"Old maids are so spiteful!" said a parasitical plant,

whose *liaison* with a plum-tree was the scandal of the whole garden. "I thank my stars *I* don't set up to be better than the rest of my neighbours."

"My dear," said the Plum-tree, "pray be calm! Don't set folks against us! I have dropped one of my plums!"

"A little stumpy thing, only three inches tall!" sighed a Lily.

"For my part," said a Butterfly, "I am all in a flutter! What do *you* think, Mr. Bumble Bee?"

"Hum!" said the Bumble Bee.

"Well," observed the Rhododendron, who was the bees' banker, and in whose red calices they deposited all the savings of their yellow wealth; "there's not so much harm done, after all, so far as *I* can see. She hasn't broken the bank, and *that's* something."

"But this is an insult to all of us!" cried a Scarlet Geranium, whose principles were known to be *rouge*; "and in *my* opinion we ought to revolt."

"Pooh!" said the Cactuses again, "*we* know the world, and have lived long enough to understand the folly of revolutions."

Whereupon there arose such a hubbub, and disputing, and nodding of heads among the flowers, that the Immortelles declared the world was coming to an end, and betook themselves to their prayers.

When the lady went home, she took the little flower from her bosom and placed it in a vase, and poured cool water round the broken stem, which was very grateful to the plant, parched as it was with a feverish thirst; so the little flower leaned over the vase, and looked about it, with a shy wonder.

The place was strange to it, and different to all that it had ever seen or dreamed of. A gorgeous room, into which

the evening light fell soft through the painted oriel and heavy crimson curtains on the shining floor.

Costly mirrors on the walls flashed to each other a thousand beautiful images; a tender silence dwelt among the dim pictures, the lute, and books which were there.

And when the light darkened, and the summer moon shone full through the window, the lady lighted a fragrant lamp, and sat down by an ivory table in the curtained oriel, and read to herself out of a clasped and painted volume a strange history of St. Joseph of Arimathæa: but at each page she put down the book with a languid gesture and a deep sigh, and glanced out of the open window, athwart the sleeping flowers, athwart the silent hills, and far away over the shining sea: and in that gaze the seven-winged angels, the silver bells in the chapel, the Holy Grail, and St. Joseph himself, were all forgotten.

But when at last a golden time-piece struck twelve, the lady rose, and the little flower saw that she had been weeping; and she loosened listlessly her slender silken bodice, shook from her warm round limbs the snowy garments, and sank upon her bed.

Her aves had not reached the gates of heaven before she fell asleep. And all night long the little flower heard her faint sweet breathing in the silence of the room.

In the early morning, before the lovely sleeper had awaked, a magnificently-painted Butterfly floated into the room, through the open window, and after he had fluttered about, and flapped his wings gallantly to certain other flowers that stood in costly vases about the chamber, he flew straight up to the little blue foundling.

“Oh, here you are, my dear! Well, you’ve no notion what a sensation you’ve made in the garden down there—wonderful!”

“ A sensation !” said the poor flower. “ Pray, do not mock me, Mr. Butterfly, for I am very unhappy.”

“ Mock you !” cried the Butterfly. “ No, indeed ; but you can have no conception how they are all abusing you.”

“ Yet I never wronged or hurt one of them,” said the little flower. “ No, not so much as a single leaf.”

“ I dare say not ; but one needs not the wisdom of a Cactus to find the cause of their abuse. The fact is,” continued the Butterfly, with a patronising air (he was a sad old *roué*), “ that you are very pretty, my dear.”

“ I never thought that,” replied the flower sadly ; “ I am afraid you are laughing at me.”

“ There is a looking-glass, judge for yourself,” said the Butterfly. “ Small, very small, I admit, but as graceful as a Lily. Well, I must be off. Any commands for the garden ? I should be charmed to take them.”

“ Oh, no, dear Butterfly,” sighed the flower ; “ but if ever in your bright wanderings (for you are free as the blessed sunny air) you should visit that distant land in the dear dark North where my kinsmen dwell, tell them that you have seen me, and that I die here, but that I die happily, though my grave will be far away ;” and it glanced wistfully at its sleeping queen.

“ That I will,” said the Butterfly ; “ but you must take heart, my child, and not talk of dying at your age. That is all nonsense ; you are very young. My poor departed friend, the White Rose, lived very comfortably for some time in one of these vases, and would have lived for ever, I’ve not the least doubt, for she was of a remarkably strong constitution, if the gardener’s baby hadn’t eaten her head off for fun. I believe she nearly choked the baby to death, which reflection has always been a great consolation to me. Come, be cheerful !”

The little flower shook its head.

“For my part,” resumed the Butterfly, “‘a short life and a merry one’ has ever been my maxim. Life is too brief to let one’s self be bored for a moment. I am going to call on the Cabbage-Rose, and then to a ball at Prince Peony’s. I shall tell them that I have seen the prettiest little blue flower that ever grew. Good bye, little one.” And the Butterfly, foppishly folding his left wing over his heart, fluttered, and flapped himself out of the window.

When the lady arose, she replaced the little blossom in her bosom. How lovely she looked, just fresh from her rosy slumber! That evening she walked in the garden, and the young man with her. They sat in the fragrant arbours, and when he spoke, and laid his hand on hers, the dying flower felt the breast on which it lay rise and tremble.

“Ah, me! ah, me! she loves him, too!” thought the flower. “And what am I but a little blossom with a broken stem, and no sweet human voice to say to her, ‘Pity me, madam, for I love you more than all things in the world!’”

“Ah,” said the young man, with a tender look, “how I envy that foolish little flower that lies in your bosom, and which has no sense to value such happiness.”

The wretched little blossom trembled with indignation. She took the flower from her bosom, and placed it in his hand. He pressed it to his lips.

As they walked home, the flower could hear the Roses laughing loud in the sun.

“I have seen many changes in my life,” said an old grey Cactus. “We shall have a king now, perhaps, as well as a queen.”

How bitterly the little flower felt that the stem of its life was broken!

When the young man reached his house he placed the withering blossom between the leaves of a book of songs, and

put the book upon a shelf. There, fading, flattened, and crushed, a long, long time, in utter darkness and in pain, dying slowly, and staining with its purple blood the poet's song, lay the little blue flower. How long a time I cannot say, for time was darkened and blotted out.

Lost to the poor prisoner were all the sounds and sights of the liberal summer days. How should it know, in its dark sorrow, if over bowery hills the young green leaves yet fanned the evening cool, or if the frost were white upon the garden paths? The waving of flowers, the singing of birds, the noise of sweet waters, it saw and heard not. To it, what matter how the white cloud came and went above the golden hills, or how the maiden sang in the twilighted valley, or the sun-burnt boys at the gay grape-gathering?

So men immured in baleful dungeons hear not afar off the trumpet on the mountains, nor the rolling of the triumph in the city gates, nor songs of peace in the brown harvest-fields.

At last the book was opened, and once more the dying flower breathed the air, and saw the light of heaven. The scene was strange and alien to its gaze. Above, a cold and crystal sky; fleeting showers streaked it here and there with purple stains, and low grey cloud-racks were drawn above the distant hills.

The book lay open on its owner's knee, and near him, among hillocks of the tanned and thymy hay (for, clear and breezy as was the atmosphere, it was that of the northern summer), sat the lady who had been the queen of the lost garden. Her fair cheek was paler than of old; her sunny tresses wore a deeper tinge; her smooth white brow was softened with a pensive mother-care; her ripe lips kept their old sweet smile. By her side played and tumbled in the hay a merry child, with golden curls, and eyes of deepest violet, strangely like these which the poor flower had so vainly worshipped.

“ And see, dearest,” said the young husband, “ here is the little flower you gave me in that happy dreamy time, in the golden garden, in your own sweet South ! I have kept it ever since. Ah, those strange dim days of hope and fear, before I had found courage to tell you how much I loved you, dear !”

The wife bent over the page her bright young head to hide the crimson light that stole into her cheek, and once more on the flower there fell a tear from her delighted eyes. But that moment a fretful little wind arose, swept through the fluttering leaves of the book, and blew away the little flower, far from the happy husband, from the pensive mother, and the laughing child, far down a dark grove of pines that skirted the hay-field.

There, as it lay, faint and weary in the rainy moss, it could just see with its dying eye that tall blue flowers, with slender stems and delicate cups, such as its own had been, were bending lovingly above it, and whispering softly to each other.

“ O Great Spirit,” cried the little flower, “ thou art merciful and tender ; for I die now in my own land, and my grave will be among my brethren ;” and with this the breath went out of her.

And the rains fell upon it by day, and the dews by night ; and it was sodden by drippings of dark gum from the black fir-trees, and stamped and trodden into the yellow clay by passing feet, and so forgotten.

Only once a thoughtful man passed by that way, and perceiving the dead flower he mused : “ Behold, how strange a thing ! This weed is dead, as we say, yet must it have life in it, else how could it rot ?”

And thereafter, the thoughts that day awakened in the mind of the philosopher at sight of the dead flower, grew till they grew into a great book upon “ Inorganic Forces,” which delighted many learned men.

And once a poet passed by, with sad brows and eyes upon

the ground, and pausing over the little withered flower in the moss, he exclaimed, "Ah, see! this poor weed is like my heart; it has been cruelly crushed, and yields up all its sweetness!"

And years afterwards this thought passed out of the heart of the poet in a golden song, which thrilled the world. Women wept over it, and strong men hearing it said, with a sigh, "We, too, have felt thus in our beloved youth!"

And all these things, whereby beauty and wisdom have been added to the world, were born out of a little blue flower. So at last, the rain having rotted away the fibres, and the wind dried up the juices of the flower, the soul of the flower passed out of it. For there lies in every flower a little soul shut up, of which their bloom and scent are but the face and language. Softly, softly rose the disembodied flower-essence, and floated over the happy fields in the liquid evening air, by blossom and tree, mingled with a thousand delicate odours, wafted with a thousand happy sounds, to the casement of that lady to whom, in life, the flower had so lovingly ministered. By that casement she was seated with her child. The boy prattled merrily, asking if the stars were not a sort of flower, and why he could not pluck them, for he tried to clutch these reachless lights in his tiny hand. Who knows? I think that the stars are nearer to us in infancy. As the mother bent down and prayed God to bless her child, the spirit of the flower mingled itself with her prayer, and floated up again—up through the silent evening spaces, beyond the silent evening stars, into that unimaginable glory and light which we vaguely conceive to be there when we think of God. Who shall say with what a fragrance that prayer filled the courts of heaven? For is it not written—"All things are double one against another?" and, "He that created all things, without use created he nothing," although "to man he imparted the five operations of the Lord that he might understand wisdom?"

And this is the end of "The Story of a Little Blue Flower."

SPIRITS.

BY NICHOLAS MICHELL, AUTHOR OF "RUINS OF MANY LANDS," ETC.

On the soft gales Morn is bringing,
By green wood, o'er dew-pearled lea,
Spirits may be ever winging,
Though our eyes no form can see.
They may hear the glad birds singing,
Mark gay flower, and waving tree,
Revel in the fountain springing,
Pure as their pure thoughts may be ;
Hanging on the golden air,
Glorying in the bright and fair,
Spirits, spirits, everywhere !

When the moon is whitely shining
On the level ocean-floor,
Stars their woof of beam-threads twining,
Thick they crowd the glimmering shore ;
In the smooth shell soft repining,
They sigh back the billows' roar ;
On the foam their shades reclining,
Ocean's Ruler they adore ;
Looking up through silvery air,
Loving the sublime and fair,
Spirits, spirits, everywhere !

All the globes with life are teeming,
 Nought is empty, nought is vain ;
 Peopling ether is not dreaming,
 Space, wide space, the soul's domain.
 Down they glide, and, round us streaming,
 Share our joy, lament our pain,
 Good hearts more than proud esteeming,
 Breathing heaven on vale and plain :
 Messages to earth they bear,
 Making human souls their care,
 Spirits, spirits, everywhere !

O'er the cradled infant sleeping,
 They their guardian pinions spread ;
 Feeble Age, slow onward creeping,
 By their pitying hands is led ;
 Lovers' hearts with bliss they 're steeping —
 As, at eve, fond beams are shed
 From young eyes that know no weeping —
 Brightening earth and stars o'erhead ;
 Hanging on the balmy air,
 Worshipping the good and fair,
 Spirits, spirits, everywhere !

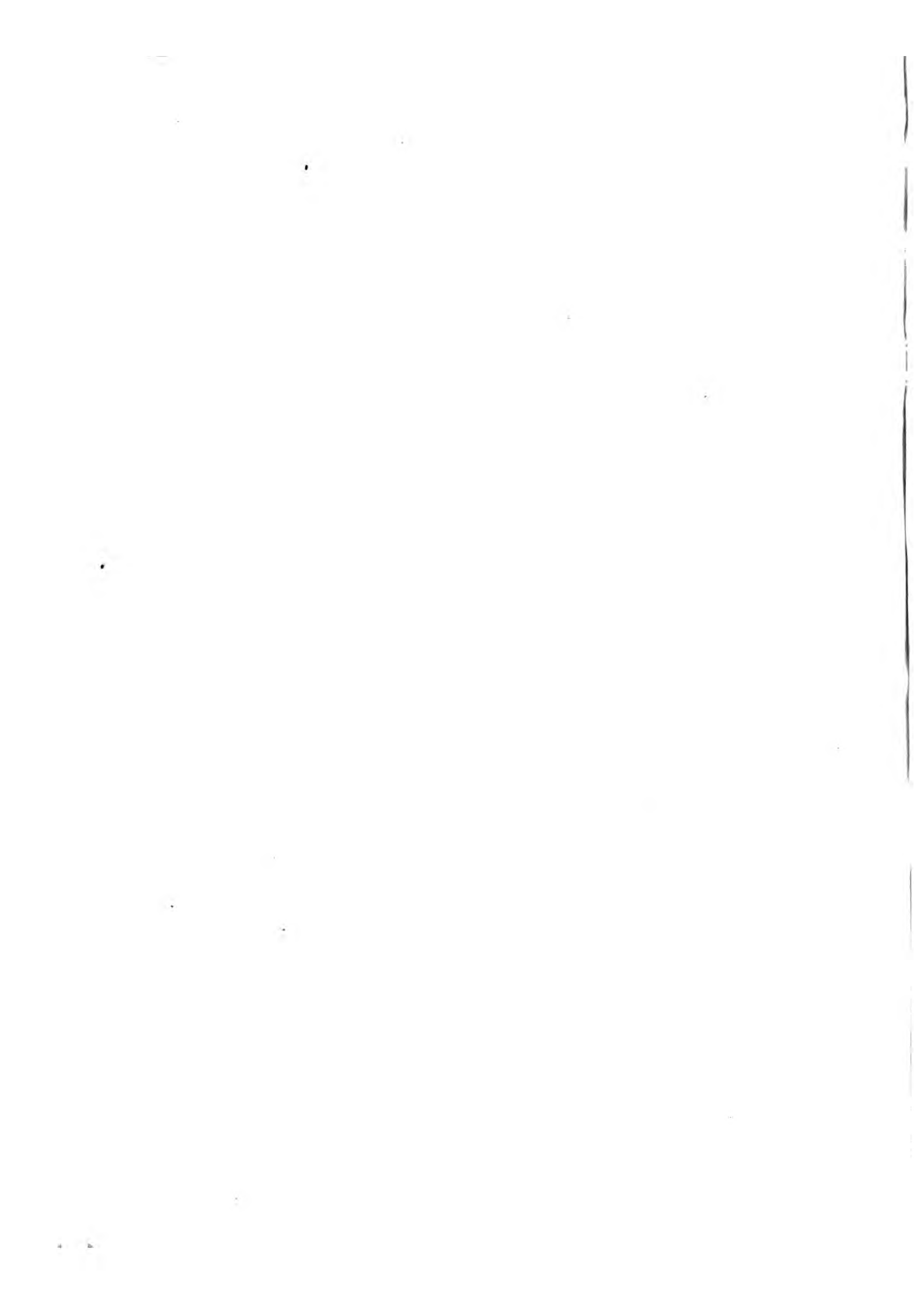
Near the student they are sighing,
 As his midnight lamp he burns,
 Into depths of mystery prying,
 He who wisdom hardly earns ;
 O'er the meek saint calmly dying,
 Bend they, as for heaven he yearns,
 Joy's far land by faith descrying,
 Till the soul her prison spurns :
 Then they waft him through the air,
 Opening glory's portals there —
 Spirits, spirits, everywhere !





J. Nash

Frederick A. Heath



“TOO LATE.”

A TALE OF THE WAR.

BY MRS. WARD.

ON one of those clear crisp days which Nature sometimes grants to the English spring, two sisters, Beatrice and Violet Aubrey, stood at the large open window of their morning-room, and looked out upon the sparkling sea. They had a mournful interest in the freighting which the ocean bore upon its bosom, for already many vessels appeared in the offing, which, on their nearer approach, were discovered to be crowded with the sick and wounded from the late scene of war; and many a fairy yacht spread her white wings, like the dove from the ark, and bent her way on a mission of mercy, either to bring home some invalid friend, or bear to the Crimean shore some loving wife or sister to those who were too ill to be removed from the crowded hospitals or noisy hotels of the East.

Violet, the younger of these sisters, drooping and despondent, yet held the “Times” newspaper in her hand, in which her sister and herself had just read the following paragraph:—

“*Paris, Sunday, March 30.*

“Peace was signed to-day at one o'clock, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.”

At their feet lay a letter received but a week before, announcing their father's death: he had perished of fever,

induced by excitement beyond that caused during the enactment of the great drama of Sebastopol. But in order to bring our readers acquainted with the heroines of our tale, it will be necessary to refer to some antecedents of the history.

Know, then, that some two-and-twenty years ago, there dwelt in one of the prettiest cottage homes in England a Colonel Fontenoy, and an only daughter. Colonel Fontenoy was a widower, and had been a most gallant soldier; but for his gallantry he had been rewarded only by promises. Alas! he grew grey while awaiting the fulfilment of them; and more favoured, but not better, men stepped over that grey head on the ladder of promotion, and *sat looking down upon him from the top!*

So, in bitterness of spirit, he retired to the village where his mother had lived in her widowhood, and where he had played at cricket as a boy. His schoolmates were mostly scattered and afar, save those who filled the little graves among which he now walked an old man; or sat down amid the tombs and tall grass, to hear the murmur of the trout-stream in which he had fished in his young days, and listened to the "wandering voice" of that mocking spirit, the cuckoo. Here the John Aubrey whom we shall introduce in our tale had wooed, and, as he thought, won Rosalind Fontenoy; but in one moment he had been most bitterly undeceived, for as he had passed through the gate leading from the meadows to the cottage-lawn, one soft summer evening, he had been startled by the sight of what to some would have been one of the most charming pictures in the world.

It was that of his cousin Harry, seated at Rosalind's feet; the healthy flush of exercise was on his fine face, and the boat in which he had rowed himself to the cottage grounds was moored to the noble elm, beneath which he had cast himself before his beautiful love; and thus, with his

straw-hat in his hand, and the sailor's knot of his cravat loosened, he looked so gay, so happy, and so assured, as made his elder cousin's soul burn within him. John Aubrey stepped on, however, desperately, like a brave man determined to face his enemy.

One look was sufficient for John, and then he cast on Rosalind such a glance of anger, disappointment, and contempt, as made her spring to her feet, and follow him to the porch, where her father stood.

For John misjudged Rosalind sorely: of a proud and suspicious temper, he at once concluded that she had been all his own *until* he had introduced his cousin Harry to her; for Harry was, though the younger, the heir to the vast estate of a distant relative, imbecile, and as unlikely to marry as such persons are, or to die young, when once they have come to maturity. Now, to do Rosalind justice, she had only lately become acquainted with these circumstances; she had never entertained a thought of the elder Aubrey as a lover; her heart was Harry's, without dreaming of future contingencies.

It was a still evening; haymakers were singing in the meadows, the brimming river murmuring where the fishermen cast their salmon-nets, the village chimes ringing curfew, as mayhap they do this day; but, above all, rose the sharp clatter of John Aubrey's horse's feet up the neighbouring hill: the echoes grew faint in the distance as Harry, after some wonderment at his cousin's angry gestures, Colonel Fontenoy's deprecatory air, and the hasty departure of John through the side-gate at which he always left his horse, now joined the father and daughter in the porch.

Various versions of this painful story were circulated in the village next day. The Wilmot girls—"girls" of five-and-thirty years' standing—discussed it with the rector's wife, and

it was decided by the junta that John Aubrey had been the favoured lover till it was ascertained that Harry, though the youngest, was of an elder branch of the family; that Miss Fontenoy knew what she was about, and that—— but, in short, "Harry Aubrey would never marry *her!* would never come back from his regiment, when once he had joined it, on the expiration of his leave!" It was surprising what satisfaction this last idea gave the "Wilmot girls."

But Harry did come back, and though, for the time, the prospects of the young couple were poor enough, Colonel Fontenoy felt happy in trusting his child to so gallant a protector; he knew that the brave are always tender hearted.

Hitherto the cousins had been in the same regiment. With the obstinacy peculiar to his temperament, John Aubrey asserted his intention to remain in the corps; Harry, of course, more alive to the delicacy of their relative positions, made arrangements for leaving it, and entered a regiment in the expectancy of an embarkation for India.

* * * * *

On his little camp-bed lay, at last, the veteran Colonel Fontenoy. His great heart, that had borne so much, had burst beneath its weight of injustice and disappointment. It seemed as though God had only spared him till another protector was found for his Rosalind.

On hearing of his illness, she had hurried to him; Harry following as soon as he could get leave.

It was a serene summer's evening: the window of the dying officer's room was open, and the sun shed its glory on the low couch, on the portraits of his wife and daughter, on "pistols, sword, and carbine," sash and cap, and the Waterloo medal, in its open case, beside the portraits.

The dying warrior closed his eyes. Rosalind thought he

was asleep; she heard the garden-gate open, and as she looked out Harry's animated eyes met hers.

He held up a packet, too; one that had been long looked for, but hope had now gone by! Rosalind stepped to the stair-head to meet her husband, and they entered the room smiling. Opening the parcel, they took from it the Cross of the Order of the Bath. It had come at last! She held it out; the sunset's glory glinted on the brilliant trifle with its gay ribbon, but the wan lips, the closed eyes, responded not—the record of past triumphs came too late. Death had set *his* seal upon the warrior's deeds, and he had joined those ranks where the soldiers of Christ walk in light among the starry hosts of heaven, where victory is eternal, and the victor's wreath a crown of glory that shall never fade.

Meanwhile John Aubrey had married. His wife, a woman of large landed possessions, had borne him two daughters, and died in bringing a still-born son into the world. Had the infant survived, some hidden spring of human tenderness might have been opened in the heart of the stern, proud man; but to him a living son was denied, while his cousin Harry had an heir!

Had he forgotten the only woman he had ever loved? Never! But he nursed the memory in bitterness of spirit. If a young laugh echoed in his ear it revolted him, for *he* laughed no more; if by a rare chance, for he seldom entered society, a girl with dark-braided hair and eyes veiled by raven lashes danced by him, he looked on her as a sweet ensnarer, a gentle fiend, and he sneered in his heart at the trusting smile of the lover on whose arm she hung; when women sang, he hurried from the room, for Rosalind had been a singer; and one day he betrayed the dark secret of his soul, when his eldest daughter Beatrice informed him, not without certain misgivings on a subject which she knew was mysteriously connected with her

father's earlier days, that she and Violet had been introduced to the younger Harry Aubrey, now an officer in the—— and quartered at a neighbouring garrison town.

Colonel Aubrey's wrath was not suddenly poured out, like the emanations of passionate but generous spirits. Grim and terrible he looked as his daughter, whose character was in its way as resolute as his own, announced the introduction through a mutual relative.

"She (that relative) had no right," he said, "to make the children of old foes acquainted. How dared she, without my sanction?" And striking the table before him with a blow that scattered the flowers from a vase, he rose and abruptly left the room.

Violet the younger burst into tears; Beatrice stepped out through the open window into the shrubbery leading to the sea-shore, and sat down among the rocks to ponder on her father's desperate humour. In her mood, the majesty of Nature responded to the strong throbbing of her heart, and soothed the irritated spirit; while Violet, terrified and dismayed, retired to her room and wept till every mental sensation was lost in physical pain. Pale and calm, Beatrice met her father at dinner; agonised with headache, Violet lay still and wretched in her darkened chamber.

A few evenings after this, as Colonel Aubrey and his daughters emerged from the shrubbery upon the shore, they were suddenly startled by the sight of a group of young officers, who had just drawn their boat up on the beach; and lo! like a vision of the past, there stood another Harry Aubrey, looking, oh, so terribly like his father, that Colonel Aubrey's brow grew contracted, and his lips white at the vision: yes, there he was, with his straw-hat in his hand, his finely-shaped throat bared to the breeze, his animated eyes turned full on his young cousins.

He had but a vague idea of any ill-feeling between the elder branches of his house; all he had heard latterly from the lady who had introduced him to Beatrice and her sister was that, to use a strong but just Irish expression, there had been "bad blood between the cousins on account of a love-affair, in which Harry's father had won the prize."

At a glance he recognised the spirit of Colonel Aubrey towards him; but whatever his feelings might be, his pride controlled them. To Beatrice's decided bow he replied by a deep inclination of the head, as he lifted his straw-hat. Violet had scarcely dared to look at him. She was incapable of analysing the motives of her father's bitterness; she was too sensitive and tender to believe in the vengeful feelings which seemed to have ripened with years; and, in fact, the predominant sentiment on her mind was sorrow that Harry Aubrey should be so treated by *her father!*

In that grave, but proud salutation to herself, in that look of unutterable tenderness cast on her young sister, Beatrice Aubrey read her destiny. "Not for *me*," she said, "is that sorrowful and earnest glance; not for *me* that flush of joy, fading to disappointment as we pass him by: the dream,—thank God it was but a dream!—is over, and my course is clear."

The hour came when the rivals met again! Money and interest had brought John Aubrey, after eighteen years' retirement, far ahead of his cousin, who was still a captain, though health and vigour had been in a measure sacrificed to foreign service, in camp and quarter. Renewed strength, however, seemed given to Rosalind's husband, for the great emergency which called the allied hosts to the East of Europe; and the two Aubreys, albeit their youth had faded from them, were as knightly champions of the right as might be seen in the

chivalrous army of old England, when at the trumpet's clang each led his band of warriors under his command.

Day had loomed heavily on the dread Crimean wastes; the muttered roar of cannon was broken sharply by the crack of rifles, which had only waited more decided light to begin their game of death;—a yell, a shout, nay, bitter laughter, told now and then of some poor wretch struck down in his prime. The very atmosphere was unnatural; now a cloud of smoke filled a space with dense vapour; anon a redoubt took fire, and as it blazed up showed the beings within, mocking their assailants with undaunted spirit, till a dreadful shower of burning spars and mutilated limbs terminated the horrible conflict, and silence and black darkness succeeded. Then would come a lull; anon keen blasts of wind, at intervals, would whistle down the chasm-riven hills, lifting the vapour like a curtain; now shrill clarions would pierce the air, and a roll of musketry respond to some stealthy advance; lo! then from all quarters would ring the stirring order, *Charge!* the steady tramp of advancing men forming a solemn and earnest accompaniment to the rumble of artillery-wheels, the clatter of cavalry, and all the dread murmur of a mail-clad host in action: while above the tumult rose, on the murky air, that indescribable war-cry, which strikes terror into the hearts of all who have ever heard the deep-mouthed *Hurrah!* of British soldiers!

Yes! they were side by side again, these cousins! How changed the present scene from the past! How violent the contrast between that dread field of action and the calm summer scene on the cottage-lawn twenty years before! Yet, strange to say—so inconsistent is human nature!—that John Aubrey, amid the desperate strife, felt his spirit in a measure melt towards Captain Aubrey, as the latter passed him by.

For a few minutes the sun gilded the brave sad show of

troops in burnished armour, standards tattered—but more precious to the bearers for that reason—steeds gaily caparisoned, and careering madly as they heard the loud cheers of the men and the glad *refrain* of brazen bands, forestalling with desperate jubilee the dread approach of Death—that grim conqueror on every field! One look Harry Aubrey cast towards John—his sword was in his right hand, and, with his old pleasant smile upon his face, he waved it in token of brotherly recognition; to which John Aubrey bent slowly and doubtfully in response, for the demon yet held him in his jealous power.

He was still sitting on his horse, directing the plan of attack, when some soldiers in the uniform of Harry's regiment halted near him, and laid their sad burden on the ground. An officer's cloak covered the dead form.

“Lift the cloak,” said Colonel Aubrey, desperately; and, leaning over his charger's head, he bent down and beheld the noble features of his former rival: the bright eyes closed in death, the broad chest dyed in blood.

Fitful clouds skurried across the leaden sky, and the pale moon in vain struggled for a wan glance upon the field of slaughter: the vast camps were hushed in comparative silence, when John Aubrey, almost the sole disturber of the dread repose, stood at the entrance of his cousin's tent. A light burned within, the shadow of a rude coffin darkened the canvas.

Captain Aubrey's servant had arranged the sad remains with that attention to decency and order which characterises this faithful class of soldiers. Fair linen cloths concealed the roughness of the hard and narrow couch on which the dead officer lay. He had perished by a gunshot wound. Every trace of age and care had vanished from the features; they were as calm and pleasant in their repose as John Aubrey

remembered them in the old school-boy days, during the blessed sleep of youth, and innocence, and health.

Then, and not till then, was the hard man's spirit thoroughly subdued. The rock was smitten, and, at the bidding of the Lord, the waters gushed forth. Like Peter, in the agony of repentance, "he went out and wept bitterly."

Ah, me! when evil passions are quenched in death, what would men give to pass that illimitable sea which severs them from those they have hated with a "mortal hatred!" In vain they "weep bitterly;" a great gulf parts them from the dead and the irrevocable past, and they stand wailing on the shore, crying aloud, "Too late! too late!"

In that determined spirit which guides high-hearted women to action, concentrating their whole energies on results, inimical it may be to their own interests or desires, but just and grateful as regards the destinies of those they would serve, Beatrice Aubrey had of late opened a correspondence with Harry Aubrey the younger, traced out the whereabouts of his mother, and addressed her father boldly, but kindly, on the subject of the family feud. Short as had been the acquaintance of the sisters with their cousin, it had been sufficient to impress all three with a tender regard for each other, which circumstances had ripened into a still more powerful interest; and the generous mind of Beatrice was now bent on reconciling all parties, and finally cementing such a happy state of things by the union of her darling Violet, her gentle, dependant sister, with her gallant and warm-hearted cousin, who from the first had loved his young relatives, and then yielded his softest affections to the younger.

"Father," Beatrice had said in her first letter, over which many tears had evidently been shed, "though this war is a national calamity beyond all that we, born in blessed times of

peace, can realise at present, believe me it is not without its good effects on us in England. All hearts are centred in one sympathy; all ranks are drawn together in one sentiment of dread and despair: the nobleman and the labourer, landlord and tenant, master and servant, *Queen and subjects*, are all united in one common tie of suffering and affection. Father, this year has aged me beyond my term of life, and I would give much to take my part with those of my sex who are permitted to minister to the need of our glorious soldiers; but since I cannot join that sweet sisterhood who are soothing the horrors of war and pestilence in the East, grant my sister and myself *our* share in woman's mission, and let us seek out Mrs. Aubrey, and be kind to one who so much needs it. Since you left us, we have again, owing to uncontrollable circumstances, met her son; he has now left for the East, and in this great emergency I have ventured to write and tell him that I will ask your permission to communicate with his mother, who is in poor health, and, as I hear from others, in straitened circumstances in London."

A fervent prayer for her father's safety, with an earnest but respectful adjuration on the subject of forgiveness, even to the bitterest enemies, closed this animated epistle, which reached Colonel Aubrey the week after the action in which his brave relative had fallen.

What he wrote in reply he scarcely knew. In a few broken sentences he bid his daughters "go to Rosalind—to Mrs. Aubrey—and," he added in a strange, irregular hand, "ask her to shake hands with me, and forgive me"—strong words these for Colonel Aubrey—"over her husband's grave. Her son is with me."

And the son of his old rival tended that hard, friendless man, through the dark valley of the shadow of death, nor left him till the dread portals had closed upon him. He accom-

panied him to Constantinople, in hopes that change of air and scene might revive him, as indeed they did for a time; but, restless and unhappy, the invalid insisted on reassuming his command amid the snowy wastes of the Crimea, and here nature gave way. Finally, he lay down to his rest beside the hillock which covered his cousin. The young chaplain, whose ministry had been blessed beside his couch, almost at the eleventh hour, placed a stone at the head of the two graves; and when men, who had heard in former days that the relatives had not been friends here, saw their names united, they understood something of that remorse felt by him who could not forgive till "too late!"

Our old friend Rosalind, with a pardonable pride, had, in answering the letters of Beatrice Aubrey, concealed from her the real condition to which she was reduced, and it was not till Harry, in writing to announce the intelligence of Colonel Aubrey's death to his daughters, again touched on his mother's desolate and debilitated state — of which he had been partially told by the kind relative before alluded to in this tale—that the young orphans began clearly to understand the motives inducing Rosalind to deprecate their aid. For how could she submit to accept such help as she needed from the family of John Aubrey? Also she had shrunk from letting her son know how completely she had stripped herself for his sake. So in the first week of the sisters' mourning there came from Harry's mother a few hasty but feeling lines, yet traced evidently with pain. The sisters' hearts yearned to her; and now that all hope was over for their father, their agent and temporary guardian consented to accompany them to London.

It was Sunday night. Over a scant fire sat our once beautiful but now wasted Rosalind Aubrey; her widow's

garb was in keeping with her desolate air in that miserable London lodging.

As yet she had not heard of Colonel Aubrey's death, for some delay had been caused in her son's correspondence with her, owing to a change in her abode. Neither had there been the expected reply from Beatrice Aubrey, to whom she had at last poured out her full heart. All looked dark and dreary, and "there was no voice, nor any one that answered."

Her humble meal of tea and biscuit had scarcely been tasted, and when the poor white slave, the Irish maid-of-all-work, came to remove the tray, the lady's eyes were closed as if in sleep, but the tender-hearted creature saw by the fire-light the tears trickling down the wan face, and the earnest "God help her!" she uttered was not lost upon the unhappy Rosalind.

Hark! the first boom of cannon! One, two, three, four!

She sprang up; she heard voices on the stairs,—merry voices! the sweet music of little children laughing, and the cry of "Peace! Peace!"

She uttered a wild cry. The guns boomed on, proclaiming peace with that deep and sullen roar which all must remember who heard it in London that night: while up and down that poor room walked to and fro a shadowy figure draped in black, crying with a loud and very bitter cry, "Give us back our dead! give us back our dead!"

Let no one deem this picture of an officer's widow exaggerated. Many scenes, sad as this, were witnessed during the winters of 1854 and 55. Children suffering from cold and hunger; mothers agonised with their cry, yet ill able to respond to it; daughters striving to earn the means of existence by labour, and sons offering to lay down their lives on the bloody field where their fathers had been sacrificed!

Alas! alas! the picture is too terrible to contemplate in a page like this.

Rosalind and her husband had loved each other all the better for the struggles they had *shared*; and, at parting, hope beat high in the soldier's breast. "He should come back," he said, "a lieutenant-colonel; his son would soon make good way, and there would be competence at last for all." He sent home nearly all his pay; Rosalind spent it in little comforts for him, which went down into the deep sea. He wrote cheery letters in the midst of suffering, and she answered them in the spirit of a soldier's wife, while she denied herself many necessaries of life to pay for young Harry's outfit.

All is over now! husband, wife, are sundered; far apart: he in those silent ranks which people the Crimean wastes with dead; she in that dismal home, trembling in agony lest her son, too, should have perished.

She had been sitting one evening, mourning over her little collection of valuables, which she began to fear she must part with to meet the demands of her landlady, when a letter, addressed in the well-known hand of her son's agent, was brought to her. He was living; he was on his way home; and when the poor Irish maid opened the door, where she had been waiting in fear and trembling for the result of the letter, she received the insensible form of Mrs. Aubrey in her arms.

Other news followed. Aubrey of Aubrey Manor was dead, and young Harry master of the vast estate! When Rosalind heard this she could not forbear exclaiming in a passion of tears, "Too late! too late!"

At last there came news from the two sweet messengers of mercy, Beatrice and Violet; their delay in responding to Mrs. Aubrey's communications being fully accounted for by the circumstances connected with their father's death; and the

blessed meeting between mother and son has scarcely passed ere the sisters stood by the widow's couch.

On the 18th of June, 1856, a group of five people might be seen on the terrace of Aubrey Manor. Mrs. Aubrey, wan and faded, sits there between Harry and Violet. Beatrice is engaged in conversation with the young Chaplain to whom we have referred. In deep thought Harry Aubrey gazes on the fair scene spread out before him, and Violet's soft eyes are the reflection of his. The place is worthy of description, it is so truly English. After such scenes as the reader has gone through with us, we think there will be something soothing in our sketch of the Manor-house.

It is one of those piles built in the sixteenth century which at first presents a vast mass of brick; the eye, however, is soon relieved by mullioned windows, buttresses garlanded with ivy, stretching down to the turfy terraces which border the moat, on which some majestic swans are sailing. The look-out tower and the drawbridge identify the house with the periods of Civil War; but now all is serene and lovely: the doves are cooing in the groves, where the sacred cedar, the oak, the elm, and the ash, "grow into a shade," and the copper beeches glow like molten lead in the sunset; afar, the cuckoo calls; along the paddock the cows wend their lazy way to meet our old friend Irish Mary, no longer the white slave, who sings a lilt as she carries the milking-pail on her head. The hay-makers are donning their jackets ere they leave their labour, and the sheep-bells tinkle an accompaniment to the lowing of the cows and the cawing of home-returning rooks. There, where the aged yews spread their dark branches over the moat, the lazy carp lift their heads, and open their mouths to the sunset breeze, little dreaming of their enemies, the two cats,

dozing and blinking above; while, to complete the picture, the pretty wife of the gardener sits within sight of the terrace, where, perched on an angle, the gorgeous peacock spreads his tail, to the infinite wonder of the baby on the young woman's knee. Imagine, too, all this charming landscape lit up with that peculiar midsummer flush, which especially beautifies England during this sweet season of the year. Is it not perfect? As though the scene was too much for her, Mrs. Aubrey suddenly rose from her seat, and, leaning on Violet's shoulder, withdrew through a glass-door into one of the drawing-rooms off the western terrace. Her son would have followed her, but she waved him away; and in a few minutes Violet rejoined the party, saying Mrs. Aubrey desired to be left alone for a little while.

"Ah!" said Harry, "her heart is breaking, and she will not disturb our calm enjoyment of this lovely scene by remaining with us. Alas!" he continued, as for a moment he covered his eyes to shut out the view of the domain, "alas! my riches come too late!"

"Hush, dear Aubrey!" said the young curate, stretching out his arms over the fair landscape, as Harry looked even despondingly on Violet; "hush! you may feel, that now you do not want this wealth, that competence would have been yours without it, and that you and your sweet promised wife would have been happier in each other, near her old home by the sea; but remember, that to you great things are given for great purposes,—Youth, health, intellect, fortune; all those attributes which bring with them deep responsibilities. Twenty years ago, had men like you, Aubrey, accepted such noble trusts from God as *loans*, and not as *gifts*, we might have been spared the horrors of war: but it was not so; and having sown the wind, some of us have reaped the whirlwind."

“But,” said Violet, timidly, as she pressed her lover’s arm, “the storm seems to have beaten heaviest on those who least deserve it.”

The curate heaved a sigh. “It is God’s will,” he said; and as Harry and Violet turned the angle of the terrace, he took up the theme with Beatrice, till the clock of the little church on Stylehurst Hill warned him by its bell that day had long been done.

Early next spring the widowed Mrs. Aubrey will, we think, retire to the old abode of Colonel Aubrey by the sea-shore. The property is Beatrice’s, in right of her mother; and we have a strong idea that the Rev. Hugh Fitzgerald will be the next incumbent of the living in her gift.

Harry Aubrey has left the army, his duty calls him among his tenantry; and although Violet prefers a retired life, we fear her husband must accept a seat in Parliament, where *we trust he will prove the best friend the soldier ever saw in St. Stephen’s!*

In conclusion, if the reader should think that our heroines are not mated as they could wish,—Violet to the country clergyman, and Beatrice, the high-hearted, to the soldier,—they must blame Nature, who delights in such freaks of fancy.

LINES ADDRESSED TO
THE REV. J. MONTESQUIEU BELLEW,

PREACHER AT ST. PHILIP'S, WATERLOO PLACE.

BY E. W.

WITH stately triumph — and with loud acclaim —
The Victor warrior from the field of Fame,
Binds on his brow — his race of glory run —
The laurel-wreath by deeds of valour won.
And meet the homage — just the tribute given —
To him, whose hand and heart and arm have striven
To beat the foeman back — and shield from stain
His country's honour on the battle-plain.
If this the soldier's meed — what guerdon due
To him, the Christian warrior? — faithful, true,
Who arms with righteous purpose, holy aim,
And fights for conquest in his Maker's name;
Storms the strong citadels of guilt and sin,
Immortal souls for heavenly realms to win.
And thus dost thou, Bellew! whose genius rare,
The human heart's most secret depths lays bare;
Startles the conscience from its fatal rest,
Or soothes with words of peace the aching breast.
Thy matchless eloquence, thy fervid zeal —
Thy thrilling accents — all who hear must feel
Own thy resistless force, thy mighty sway,
To make thy hearers listen — yield — obey.
Teacher and Guide! oh! may the Hand divine,
Long grant thy radiant "light 'mongst men to shine!"
Honour to thee, and reverence! May the dower —
The priceless heritage of mental power,
Thy glorious gift, yield to thy flock and thee,
Treasures in Time, and in Eternity!

ABOUT CHAMOIS AND HUNTERS.

BY ALBERT SMITH.

FEW of my fellow-tourists in the Valley of Chamouni have remained many days in the village without seeing a dead chamois hanging up some morning in the court-yard of their hotel; and subsequently tasting it, and pretending that it was eatable, at the *table d'hôte* in the afternoon. What its flesh would be like treated as venison—cared for, and hung, and delicately cooked,—I cannot tell. As it is usually eaten within twenty-four hours of its death-shot, it is about as unpalatable as anything I know; and pickled in vinegar for winter, as I have tasted it on the Simplon and St. Bernard, it is nastier still.

The principal game of this portion of the Alps may be divided into four heads—hares, marmots, chamois, and bouquetins. The latter beautiful animal is becoming more scarce every season, and is extinct on the Mont Blanc range: it is only to be found about the Piedmontese glaciers of Monte Rosa. There are, besides, badgers and foxes; a lynx was shot at Servoz in 1841; wolves are all but annihilated; and the last bear about Chamouni was killed nearly ninety years ago by one of the Payots,—a grandfather of the man who lost the forepart of his feet during Mr. Behren's ascent of Mont Blanc in 1851, and who now keeps the little refreshment châlet on the route to Montanvert. The animal was shot hard by the Cascade des Pélerins. There was a large rock near the spot called the *Pierre à*

l'Ours, but the guides have forgotten which it is; so I recommended them to invent one, which would do just as well as many other Alpine memorials for the ruck of tourists.

When a hunter kills a chamois, he brings it to one of the hotels at Chamouni; and receives, on an average, twenty-five francs for it. Sometimes the chase brings in a larger return. I gave old Jean Tairraz a commission, in 1853, to get me a pair alive. He and his neighbours contrived to catch two young ones about St. Gervais; but by the time they arrived in London they cost me as much as a pair of ponies would have done. Neither of them lived; one had a broken leg on its arrival, which ultimately caused its death, and the other then pined away, although very great attention and kindness was shown to both.

Colonel Colt would go mad if he saw the old carabines the chamois-hunters use, in the age of his revolving rifles. They are almost too heavy to lift, wonderful kickers, and hang fire once or twice. But this perhaps is fortunate, otherwise there would soon be no chamois left; for the fascination of the pursuit appears to be beyond that of any other kind of hunting. Gordon Cumming and Jules Gérard themselves, are not more ardent lovers of their peculiar chase, than the men of Sixt and Samoëns, and on their hunting-grounds England is worthily represented by Mr. Bagge, the member for West Norfolk.

How these hardy fellows go out alone amongst the glaciers, or rather on the high *moraines* where the rock joins the ice, with nothing but a little bread, cheese, and brandy—all of the worst description—and without any clear notion as to when they shall return; how they forget all danger in the excitement; and how their whitened bones are sometimes found under the ledge of a huge granite boulder, where they had gone to sleep, never to awake again, many able

pens have recounted. I do not know if what I have to add to these accounts is already well known or not; but it has been picked up, orally, about Servoz and Chamouni.

The chamois-hunters are singularly superstitious. This is easily accounted for. They pass hours, sometimes days, alone, amidst the remote horrors of the glaciers; and these regions abound in strange phenomena and mysterious noises, with effects of light and twilight uncertainties. They have vague recollections of spectre animals and mountain dwarfs; ghostly hunters, doomed to chase phantom game for ever; and lights indicating the locality of ice-caverns filled with grains of pure gold. It was in seeking for the latter that old Jacques Balmat, who first went up Mont Blanc, lost his life. They believe greatly in spells and enchantments. They all entertain a notion, more or less, that they shall perish eventually on the glaciers; but this seems to increase rather than diminish their passion for the sport. A young man once told De Saussure that his father and grandfather had both been lost on the mountains, and he knew that would also be his end,—indeed he called his knapsack his winding-sheet. His presentiment proved true shortly afterwards. He started from Sixt and was never heard of again.

One afternoon I had walked up ahead of the *char-à-banc* from Chede to Servoz, and I was sitting outside Jean Carrier's inn there, opposite the church, to rest and take a *p'tit verre*. There is a curiosity-shop next the inn, kept by Michel Deschamps; and "here one can see" (to quote foreign English) a stuffed bouquetin.

While I was looking at it a peasant came up, and we had a talk. He told me he lived in the valley of Sixt, and that one night on the Buet he saw one hundred bouquetins all at once. He added that they were being driven by a number of priests across the chasms of the glaciers, as easily as a boy

would drive sheep over a pasture; that they did not stop at the largest crevasses but went over them like birds; and that in the morning not a trace of their passage was to be seen. Of course this had all been next to a dream. He had been dozing with his eyes open—a perfectly possible state, that may be induced from over-watching—and whilst this actual scenery before him was printed on the retina, his wandering fancies had supplied the phantom appearances. With more foundation he told me of an orchard, close to the iron-works on the Giffre, which the devil swallowed up in one night because the priests wanted it. That this orchard disappeared, I found to be perfectly true, and there is a lake now in its place. He complained bitterly of the devil, as a great enemy to that part of the country. They had done all they could by putting up crosses and little chapels everywhere, but he was still uncommonly troublesome.

The devil is not, however, the most important of the mysterious personages who haunt the chamois-hunters: they all believe in Mountain Dwarfs, leading features in most popular superstitions. Once upon a time—I must begin the legend in the regular way—a Chamouni guide went to hunt chamois upon the Glacier d'Argentière, which lies on the other side of the tall Aiguille Verte; separated, indeed, by it from the well-known Mer de Glace. He came upon a herd of chamois, and followed them so eagerly that at last he reached quite the end of the glacier. The animals scrambled up the rocks, and the hunter, Pierre Ravenal, after them. He had hard work with his carbine, but he went up and up, and at last gained the highest peaks; and looking over, he saw below him the Jardin—the well-known plot of grass and flowers which is such a famous excursion from Chamouni—and all the chamois grazing upon it. Picking out the finest of them, he lodged his rifle on a rock to make a surer aim, and was

just going to fire, when his arm was seized as with a grasp of iron. He turned round, and saw, at his side, the most horrible dwarf it was possible to conceive—the king of all the Bogies.

“So,” said the little monster, “I have caught you at last! I thought I should find out, some fine day, who was so constantly poaching about my property. And now to make you pay for it.”

He spoke with a hoarse, grating voice, that sounded like a tin-tack between two grindstones, and appeared to set his own teeth on edge as it came through them, from the faces he made. And then he took Pierre by the collar of his coat, and lifted him up until he overhung the precipice of the rocks above the Jardin—four hundred feet of smooth granite, with jagged blocks at the bottom.

“Oh, mercy! mercy!” cried the wretched guide; “I am a poor devil with a large family, and have no choice between hunting and starvation. I did not know the chamois were yours.”

The dwarf appeared to think there might be some reason in this appeal; for he drew his victim back upon the rocks, and then relaxed his grip.

“Now look here,” he said: “if I allow you to live, will you promise me never to carry a rifle again between Mont Blanc and the Great St. Bernard?”

Pierre would have promised anything.

“Very well. Now get back to your family. Here is a cheese for you all to live upon, which will always be sufficient as long as you do not devour it entirely: be careful that there is always a small piece left. And now — take that!”

And with these words the dwarf gave him such a tremendous kick, that it might have been sent to the museum at Geneva for a curiosity. It started Ravenal on his way home,

with such an impetus that he and the cheese went rolling down the glacier, and bounding over the crevasses at a rate the chamois themselves could not have kept up with; and all this time the dwarf's horrid voice sounded in his ears, turning all his nerves the wrong way. If you have ever played with mortar, and let it dry on your hands, and then rubbed them together; or filed your teeth during a hard frost with the outside of an oyster-shell; or turned a dry flower-pot round in its saucer, with a little grit in it; or listened to a skid on a hot road; and then recalled all these things together, you will have some notion of his sensations.

When he got home, he did not mention a word of his adventure; and although rather bruised and confused — as well he might be — he was in good spirits at his escape. He told his wife that he had got the cheese in exchange for a couple of marmots he had taken, and the good woman believed it. Wives believe more wonderful stories than that sometimes — not as a rule.

To their utter astonishment, when they went to look at the cheese the next morning, the wedge they had cut out of it was entirely filled up; and this happened again and again during several weeks, until the excitement quite passed away, and Pierre got bored, and wanted to be with his rifle once more on the glaciers; and would sit for hours sighing and looking at it, hung up over the fireplace of his *châlet*.

One day as he was wandering about the woods over Montanvert, picking flowers to dry between paper for the tourists to purchase, he saw a fine chamois standing, as cool as might be, at the base of the *Aiguille des Charmoz*. All his old enthusiasm returned. He ran down to Montanvert, borrowed a carbine, went back to the spot, and, without the least trouble, killed the animal, which bounded from crag to crag down the *Aiguille*, and at last fell on the glacier. He marked

the spot and returned home, for it was getting too dark to go after the game that night; but the next day he started betimes, and took the cheese with him. He did not observe, in his renewing ardour, that the last gap made in it had not been replaced. He reached the chamois, and, being hot and hungry, with a little well of cold crystal water in the ice at his side, he sat down to breakfast, and before he reflected upon what he was doing he had finished all the cheese. At that minute a thunderclap, which he thought was an avalanche, echoed amongst the mountains, a dark mist rose over the glacier, and the horrible dwarf once more stood at his side.

“ Miserable wretch!” he cried, in the same dreadful grating tones; “ you have broken your promise, and shall suffer for it. Perish!”

In spite of the hunter’s cries and entreaties, the dwarf dragged him to the edge of one of those yawning, boiling, bottomless caldrons, known on the glaciers as *Moulins*. He held his screaming victim over it for a minute, and then let him fall right into the centre, and the whirling waters spun him round and round with a terrible roar, until he disappeared in the icy depths.

Last year that ever was there was a great to-do at Chamouni. The papers stated that the ice about the source of the Arveiron—or rather what used to be the source—had come very low down towards the hamlet of Bois, and that on melting, a human body had been found in it. The local papers said it was that of Jacques Balmat, who had been lost whilst looking for gold in the mountains, but as he had perished in the Vallée de Sixt this was utterly impossible. As well might a champagne-cork, shot into the Thames from a yacht at the Nore, find its way into the Peak of Derbyshire. If I had been there I should have told them that it was Ravenal: but they would not have believed me; and I don’t believe it myself.

MAY AND DEATH.

BY ROBERT BROWNING.

I WISH that when you died last May,
Charles, there had died along with you
Three parts of Spring's delightful things ;
Ay, and for me, the fourth part too.

A foolish thought, and worse, perhaps !
There must be many a pair of friends
Who, arm in arm, deserve the warm
Moon's birth and the long evening-ends.

So, for their sake, prove May still May !
Let their new time, like mine of old,
Do all it did for me ; I bid
Sweet sights and sounds throng manifold.

Only, one little sight, one plant
Woods have in May, that starts up green
Except a streak, which, so to speak,
Is Spring's blood, spilt its leaves between,—

That, they might spare : a certain wood
Might lose the plant ; their loss were small :
And I,—whene'er the plant is there
Its drop comes from my heart, that 's all.

FIRST AND SECOND LOVE.

BY MARIA NORRIS.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

FROM THE DIARY OF A MAIDEN LADY.

JANUARY.—I am, alas! released from my long attendance upon my poor brother Donald, and free to accept some of the many invitations which have been accumulating these five years. My first visit is to my dear niece, Patricia, and her noble husband, of whom all the world speaks well. I had scarcely seen Patricia since her early girlhood, and was not prepared to find her so truly beautiful and queen-like. My long retirement from the world has given me a good deal of nervousness and *mauvaise honte*, and when I entered the drawing-room of Glencoe Park I was nearer fainting than I had imagined possible, after all the terrible experiences I have calmly suffered. My health had given way more than I thought. This, and a long journey, added to my timidity at the idea of seeing a cabinet minister, must be my excuse. Patricia caught me in her arms, and kissing me with all her old childish warmth, led me to the Earl, saying kindly, "This is our dear Aunt Margaret, whom you must love and prize very highly." And then the dear girl went on to say such things about my love and patience during Donald's illness, as if I had done more than my duty! Thus treated, I began to feel myself much beloved, and, consequently, to be very happy. The social hour of dinner, during which we were

without any visitors, put me still more at ease ; and instead of finding myself (as in my folly I fancied I should) an antiquated spinster aunt, quite out of place in fashionable life, I was my Patricia's "Aunty Pearl," as in her baby days, while the Earl, whom I had so dreaded, at once asked permission to call me "Aunt Margaret" himself. Conversation rather grave than gay, as suited my poor spirits, succeeded dinner, and as we talked we looked over some prints and sketches which Lord Glencoe collected during his residence in Italy. One of these caught my attention. It represented a young girl with a tambourine, and though delicately drawn, evinced the style and taste of a born artist. I admired the piece, and passed it to the Earl, who, turning suddenly pale, put his hands to his face and abruptly quitted the room. Patricia followed him, and for several minutes I was in terror that I had inadvertently done some foolish thing. When my dear niece returned she apologised very sweetly for having left me, and said, "The picture was drawn by Hugh's first wife—a sweet Italian girl—and anything which forcibly recalls her of course affects him."

"His first wife, my love? Has he been married before?"

"Yes; and, poor girl, she left one sweet babe, whom I foresee you will spoil, dear aunty. Would you like to know the whole story? Hugh has it. I will ask him to let you read it to-morrow."

And Hugh consented.

I.

WRITTEN BY TERESA.

I was scarcely seventeen, when one summer evening there arrived at the gates of our Italian dwelling a young English-





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THE TAMBORINE

THE TAMBORINE

man, weak in health, depressed in spirits, and in search of a lodging. My father had some years back lost his life in a useless revolution. My mother, my venerable grandfather, and I, tenanted, in our poverty, a mere corner of our great dilapidated palace. Every day my mother grew more and more sad, as she contemplated her rapidly-decreasing funds, and the almost dying state of her father. In our deepest anxiety came this young man to our doors, admiring the situation of our house, and begging to be permitted the use of a room or two. My mother had some pride, but more tenderness, and therefore, for the sake of her bedridden parent, she consented to accept the lodger, and the handsome rent he offered. He called the remuneration a trifle; to us it was bread in need, and I at any rate looked on him as an angel from heaven.

My prayers, my little domestic duties, and my needlework, had hitherto composed both my business and my pleasure; our family troubles, including poverty and the pre-occupation of my mother's time, had caused my education to be extremely neglected. Mr. Cameron was then only a youth of twenty, but he had achieved high honours at Oxford, and he offered to give me some lessons. His free-hearted kindness touched my mother's inmost soul, and I rejoiced in the valuable culture thus afforded me. He awoke my mind from its lazy, purposeless dreams, sowed the seeds of art and literature, and chastened while he guided my taste. He told me his own touching story, and I listened eagerly to the manly music of his northern tongue, which his excellent instructions soon enabled me to comprehend. A younger son's younger son, his gentle blood, he told me, brought him little but the obligation to maintain the position of a gentleman; yet his income of three hundred pounds looked to me a plenteous competence. His father's marriage had been distasteful to the Cameron

family, who had, therefore, totally ignored the birth of this scion of the stock. The hopes of a fond father and a devoted mother had been concentrated on him, and he had worked beyond his strength to justify their high opinion of his talents, and just when he grasped the fruit of his exertions a malignant fever carried off his parents. Weakened by severe study, and exhausted by grief, he was recommended to travel, and to choose Italy as the land of his wanderings. He had few friends to leave, and readily obtained from his guardian permission to follow the advice of his physician. Thus in the course of time he came to stand, pale and emaciated, with glowing eyes and hollow cheeks, upon our threshold.

Having become our inmate, he entered at once into the circumstances and interests of the family. He shared our prayers by my grandfather's couch—though Cameron belonged to another creed—he became the confidant of my dear mother's anxieties, for, youth though he were, he had the practical good sense which marks his nation, and as my instructor he won my entire heart. Oh! the dangerous sweetness of those lessons, our eyes bent on the same book and his lips dictating the accents mine were to form! How soon I learned his wondrous language, and wondered that any should call it harsh! How soon I was able to drink in some of the beauties of his favourite Shakespeare, the mighty master of human emotions! So gently stole Cameron into my heart, through my intellect, that I believed I loved him only with a sister's love. And he had given me permission to call him brother.

Three months of this delicious student-life had softly escaped, when the long-expected decease of my dear grandfather broke up the quiet course of our existence.

My mother had long sacrificed everything to her filial duties, and this great shock—so long awaited yet at last so sudden—disturbed the balance of her reason. She became,

by wayward fits, raving and melancholy. Cameron devoted himself to her with all the affection of a son, and was the only person who could effectually soothe her in her excited moments. If I loved him before, I worshipped him when I saw his tenderness and patience towards one so inexpressibly dear. His unvarying kindness to myself, too, during that heavy trouble, made me love him with a love stronger than death.

In secret dread we were awaiting the total failure of her mind, when a kind disease spared me this last trial, and left me an orphan.

On the evening before the funeral I was alone and weeping bitterly, such deep shadows had come over my young life, and I feared to contemplate the future. For though I loved Cameron with an intensity and a reverence I cannot describe, he had never given me reason to hope that he was more than a brother to me. That evening, however, he dried my tears, and for the first time took me in his arms and fondly embraced me. He laid my defenceless head on his bosom and said quietly, "Teresa, call me brother no longer; our mother is gone, and I must have a right to protect you. To-morrow, after the funeral, we will be married."

II.

This proposal, or rather command of marriage, was welcome for many reasons, and after a six-months' acquaintance I became the wife of Mr. Cameron. I am ashamed to say, that I expected in marriage that perfect happiness which the Catholic Church had taught me was not to be found on earth.

He hired a lovely villa near Rome, and shutting up our old house at Verona, Cameron took me, for the first time in my life, to the capital. There we revelled amid treasures of art, and my taste for beauty quickened and expanded under

his direction. We ransacked together the history and the poets of the past, until every inch of Roman ground bore the impress of some great footprint, and every ancient palace echoed with classic voices. He loved music, and we discovered that I had a good voice. This gave me another pleasant occupation; he engaged a good master for me, and my desire to please him caused me to make rapid progress. Love is such a quickener of our powers!

I can scarcely now believe that the sweet domestic evenings we spent hand in hand over our English or Latin books ever really formed part of my life. They are now so far off, and yet so undimmed in their brightness.

Three months of my happiness had passed, and I had once or twice mournfully noticed a fretful unrest on Cameron's brow; when letters from England informed my husband that several successive deaths in the family brought him, unexpectedly, very near the Earldom of Glencoe, now represented by his father's elder brother. Lord Glencoe was somewhat aged, and had now no children; and it was therefore likely that, when he recovered a little from the grief and gloom consequent on the fatalities he had suffered, he would forget the family disagreements which had divided him from Hugh's father, and summon his heir to his side. I saw, with dismay, a great shadow arising between my love and me; I strove in vain to be worthy of his whole confidence, and to share his lofty ambition; but, alas! I could conceive no bliss beyond our conjugal happiness, no object of desire beyond the birth of the child that was growing near my heart. I watched with sickening eagerness the fervent countenance which bent over the English letters; its ardent expression warned me that my bliss would soon be over. I saw that the soft lassitude of convalescence was passing away, and with it the tender glow of passion. Manly health and strength revived his purely intellectual powers, and with them came English ambition of

public service, pride of race, of talent, and of position. I felt that, when once Cameron entered the harness, our classic Italian life would be to him but a beautiful dream of his youth. And when his cheek flushed as we read of Portia, I felt that I was a poor weak girl, deriving all my light from his overflowing mind, and possessing in myself no power but that of love.

Was this the stuff to make an English senator's wife?

At last came the dreaded summons. I knew that Cameron must go. The Earl expressed himself much delighted by Cameron's Oxford reputation, and assured him that the talents which had distinguished the young student would, when assisted by his position as heir of Glencoe, throw open to him the highest paths of manly ambition. Already a seat in parliament awaited his acceptance when his twenty-first birthday—now only a few weeks distant—should render him eligible. It was advisable, said Lord Glencoe, that the few intervening weeks should be passed by Mr. Cameron among his future constituents. He pressed an immediate return to England.

No human language can paint the agony with which I listened to this letter. Cameron's glowing face turned to me for sympathy; in vain I essayed to control myself, and to give him what he sought. Sobs which I struggled to suppress broke from my lips, and my hot tears forced their way. Cameron tenderly laid me on a couch, and exerted himself to soothe and comfort me. In vain! I knew that a fiat of separation had gone out against me. The Cameron whom I had married no longer existed. He would not listen to my wretched prayers that I might accompany him, but told me fondly that he could not endanger two lives so dear to him. And indeed I was not fit to travel.

Next day he left me.

III.

FROM CAMERON'S DIARY.

With mingled emotions I parted from my beautiful young wife, whose health, poor thing, was just then sadly weak. I left her under the care of a respectable woman who had known her mother, and made every arrangement to ensure my darling's comfort in her approaching trial. Yet though I loved her, as indeed I ought, for the poor girl worshipped me, I now began to see my marriage in its true light. I had not even informed Mr. Trafford, my guardian, of the relation into which I had entered; and, indeed, when I married, the affair was of consequence to none but myself. But Lord Glencoe, I could perceive from his letters, and had heard from my father, was exceedingly proud, and I felt certain would be unwilling to acknowledge my pretty simple-hearted Teresa, an Italian, a Roman Catholic (the Camerons were Scotch and Presbyterian), without a claim to high birth, or to any single thing valued by my family. My heart sank as I contemplated the task before me, and I determined that, at least for the present, I must keep secret my marriage.

I travelled hurriedly through France, homeward, and landed at Dover on a raw December night. I found myself received by several attentive persons, whom Lord Glencoe had set apart for my service. One relieved me of my carpet-bag, a second took my wrapper, while the third looked after my luggage. In a moment I was metamorphosed from Hugh Cameron, a lad of moderate fortunes, into the heir of Lord Glencoe, and some vanity swelled at my heart when

we reached the Ship Hotel, and the landlord, profoundly bowing, preceded me up-stairs with wax lights. I was lodged in the best rooms, and left on the morrow in Lord Glencoe's handsome travelling carriage, drawn by four fleet horses. The eager civility of all who served me gave me new ideas of my position, and already the days when I shared the humble *ménage* of the Mori family belonged to another existence. Arrived in London, I spent one night at the superb family mansion, and hastened to join Lord Glencoe in the country. It was Christmas time, but as the Earl was still in deep mourning, only a few very intimate friends were invited to share his hospitality; so I was informed by one of the obsequious menials who attended me.

After a long day's travelling we entered Glencoe Park, and by the dim light of the carriage-lamps I discerned that we were passing up a wide avenue. We drove several miles thus, and then drew up before a mansion flashing with lights from innumerable windows. In a moment I was surrounded by servants, and escorted to the spacious and well-lighted hall. The warmth, the glow of the lamps, and the faint odours of hothouse flowers, made my senses reel for a moment; but I collected them as I found myself pressed in the arms of an aged and handsome, but worn-looking man. Lord Glencoe hurried me into a room apart, and scanning my features for a moment, burst into tears. Visions of old days, when he, the elder brother, had looked on my father almost as a son, doubtless then came over him. And bitter memories of their long estrangement must have pierced his heart. "He is avenged!" I heard him murmur; "the name of Cameron depends on his son." And then, with a deep sob, he again embraced me. My best feelings were touched, and I endeavoured to calm the perturbation of Lord Glencoe's spirits. My voice seemed to act upon him like a charm,

and he soon overcame his outward emotion, though the tenderness of his manner never passed away. The generous old man seemed determined to atone, through me, for all the wrongs my father had suffered, and he soon won my warm affection. My election passed off without opposition, and after a few weeks, during which, at Lord Glencoe's request, I made the steward's acquaintance, and rendered myself familiar with the business of the estate, we came to town, where I was introduced to ministers, and soon selected to advocate an important question for them. I spoke, and was successful; Lord Glencoe cherished me more than ever, my prosperity seemed full.

My only other near connexions were the Duke and Duchess of Linlithgow, and their beautiful daughter Patricia. The Duchess was my father's sister, and I found myself received by her at once as a near and dear relative. The Duke was kind to me for her sake, and I fancied every one of us rejoiced in the reconciliation caused by Lord Glencoe's losses. I was often at Linlithgow House, and in Patricia's society could pour out, without let or hindrance, the loftiest dreams of my soul. Her just discrimination and fine sense, her intellect, acute enough for a philosopher, yet chastened and guarded by every gentle attribute of her sex, won my heartfelt homage. I often thought that a Falkland or a Hampden only could be her fitting partner. Alive to every interest of society, she seemed to live in a serener atmosphere than our everyday life, and shed on the commonest action the light of a superior nature. She often disentangled the involutions of party strife, and put me, with a few brief words, at the right "stand-point." No chicanery deceived, no sophistry bewildered her, she looked straight through both with the crystal honesty of perfect womanhood.

The Duke of Linlithgow had some years previously lost

his only other child, a son, whose studies Patricia had always shared. Since that bereavement she had been more and more her father's companion, and the partaker of his conversations with his gifted friends. There was a classic grandeur about her every movement and speech, and even her perfectly feminine beauty and manners had a fine simplicity rarely seen in modern times. She owed no attractions to the dancing-master and the milliner, though she moved like a cloud and was always attired in excellent taste. I mixed much in society, and saw a thousand women reputed beautiful, but none of them approached Patricia. We talked together over the absorbing questions of the day, and she gave her usually just opinions in a manner equally removed from timidity and assurance; she was not a woman trying to fascinate me, but an independent spirit communing with mine. I could only fitly eulogise her by saying that she embodied womanly *power* as perfectly as my Teresa represented womanly *love*.

Ah, my Teresa! My heart bled when I remembered her awaiting her trial in solitary mournfulness. I was alone one evening with Patricia, in her father's drawing-room, when some chance look or gesture led me to suppose that she cared for me beyond my deserts. In a moment I remembered that I stood before her in false colours. She knew nothing of the ties that bound me, and my vanity had had so little share in my warm admiration of her fine qualities that I had never reflected on the probability of winning a heart so lofty. I had that day received a hurried note from Teresa, informing me that her hour was approaching, and beseeching my prayers. The tender, clinging confidence expressed in this note, recalled her claims upon me in juster proportions than amid the hurry of my newly-found popularity I had lately entertained them. The loving, fiery-hearted, yet meek and gentle Italian, had

faded before the calm grandeur of my lovely cousin. But at that moment, when Patricia's clear calm eyes became hazy, and sank before my innocent glance, I did all justice to my poor desolate girl, and beseeching Patricia's attention proceeded to narrate to her a story embodying my secret. She listened, her breath grew thicker and her cheek deepened in its tint. For my part I could scarcely proceed; love for my Teresa, and a feeling which, had I been free, might have ripened into love for Patricia, were contending at my heart. My pure-hearted cousin became more and more distressed, and when I concluded could not for a moment control herself. But soon she rallied, and with an heroic effort to calm her troubled brow she said, with a faint smile and a manner touchingly different from her usual dignity, "My dear *cousin*," (the emphasis is hers,) "we have both been wrong. You, in concealing your marriage,—a contract made for the safety of society, and one, therefore, which you were bound not to keep secret,—and I in letting my heart follow too closely what my intellect approved. I will not say what airy dreams are dashed to the ground by your revelation." (She paused, as if in vain trying to command her voice.) "I may still offer you my friendship, and I heartily promise to smooth the way for your wife's reception. You will perhaps think me less culpable when I tell you that Lord Glencoe and my father have for months past projected a union which should unite the only scions of the old stock, and that I thought you were acquainted with the plan."

"You will believe, Patricia," I answered, "that of such a plan I was completely ignorant. Your generosity touches me beyond measure, and the only sensation in connexion with your—your—oh, Patricia, here I am no orator; I am utterly unworthy the regard of two such women. I have been dazzled,

blinded by my altered fortunes; you must despise me. I have been so forgetful of my poor Teresa, alone in her sufferings. What shall I do?"

"You must go to her, and that immediately," she answered. "I charge myself with revealing your secret to Lord Glencoe. He loves me, and will perhaps hear it best from me."

"*Can* you, Patricia, undertake this? Oh, what a noble heart!"

"Be still. I will tell him. Go instantly to this poor girl, against whom we have both sinned; and when you reach Rome you will probably find a letter awaiting you."

It was towards the close of the season, and Lord Glencoe, who was in extremely delicate health, had preceded me into the country. I hurriedly ordered my man to pack a few things, and in an hour or two I was on my way. A thousand thoughts kept me busy as I hurried towards Rome, and after a painful journey I stood again in my abandoned home. Was this hesitating voice the same that had filled the senate with applause? My whole frame trembled as I inquired of the porter the state of my Teresa's health. The man told me his lady had given birth to a girl, and was extremely weak and ill. The old nurse was summoned, and I desired her to prepare her mistress for my appearance.

"I need not do that, sir," she replied; "the Signora has expected you ever since she felt ill, and this morning she bade me dress her room with flowers, she was so sure you would come to-day."

"Indeed! Are there English letters here, then?"

"No, sir; but my dear mistress knew you were coming."

There was something in this prescience which awed me, and seemed to foretell death. I held my breath as I ascended the stairs. In a moment her loving arms enfolded me in a

hasty embrace; the next instant she held up to my kiss a rosebud of a baby, with tiny pink fingers, whose velvet touch on my cheek left me nothing to remember but that I was a husband and a father.

IV.

My poor girl did not rally as I wished, and six weeks passed away, finding her pale and weak as ever. Meantime I learned that Lord Glencoe, though disappointed at the failure of his matrimonial scheme on my behalf, was anxious for my return to England with my wife and child. Her physician, too, told me that the change of climate would probably do much towards her restoration, and by very easy stages we travelled homewards. The Duke and Duchess were at Glencoe Park when we arrived, and my heroic cousin received my poor Teresa with every demonstration of kindness and interest. The timid girl-mother, who had never seen much society, was frightened of every one but myself and Patricia, with whom she became immediately friendly. A healthy countrywoman was appointed nurse to my little girl, whose strength increased as that of her mother waned. The sweetness of my early married life seemed renewed, and yet every happy moment was a "fearful bliss." My tender Italian myrtle was sickening for death.

The existence of Patricia seemed to become almost absorbed in the care of Teresa, who had begged my generous cousin not to leave her. The high-born beauty devoted herself to the care of my poor wife, and finding her one day, with mistaken, but real devotion, telling over some beads, had tried to lift her mind to a higher conception of religion. I had never dared to approach this subject, yet how did my

heart throb with delight when I found Patricia reading our English Bible to a willing listener, whose pale cheek flushed as she heard the apocalyptic revelations of the heavenly world. I entered noiselessly by the French window. Teresa saw my shadow, and she beckoned me towards her. She took my hand, and after faintly returning my kiss, she placed Patricia's hand in mine. "God reward your goodness and generosity. God make you happy together. Patricia — my babe."

Her gentle spirit had fled. Patricia kissed the cold lips, and laid the falling head on a cushion; while I, in speechless agony, stood clenching my hands.

* * * * *

Patricia took my babe: herself she has forbidden me to see during my year of mourning, but I believe she will consent to become the wife of my maturer manhood.

My first marriage was a youth-dream of idle love; my second will be occupied with grave business. The Earldom of Glencoe, and a place high in the cabinet, have devolved upon me almost simultaneously.

THE TALE OF A MOTHER.

FROM HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSEN.

BY W. C. BENNETT.

THERE the little one lay white and dying,
And, beside its bed, with sorrow wild,
Wailed the mother, unto Heaven crying,
“ Spare my baby! spare, O God, my child !”

Then the darkness, death, arose before her,
Laid its hand upon her baby's heart ;
And, a nameless anguish creeping o'er her,
From her infant, saw she life depart.

It was dead, and fixed before her eye was
That dear face that on her should have smiled ;
But a moment dumb with grief, her cry was,
Straight, “ O God! O give me back my child !”

Then it was as if God willed to send her
Answer to the wail that from her rose ;
And it seemed as if, with accents tender,
Death breathed, “ Fate, what might have been, disclose !”

And, with anguish that she might not smother,
 Looked she through the distant years with awe,
All her child had lived to, saw the mother ;
 All its grown-up life, the mother saw.

And she saw her babe, her heart's dear treasure
 Fated, not to peace and joy ; alas !
Fated, not to know a pure life's pleasure,
 But through want, and woe, and guilt to pass.

Then the mother knew her human blindness,
 And, even through her tears, she brightly smiled
"Blessed be God !" she cried, "that in his kindness,
 Bore from earth, and sin, and shame, my child !"

ON THE PORTRAIT OF MRS. PALK.

A THOUGHT IN THE OPEN AIR.

BY A SEPTUAGENARIAN.

REVILE not thou the dance — nor speak amiss
Of gorgeous theatres, where eager throngs
Chorus with rapture proud *Cornelia's* songs,
Or *Clara's* holiest sandals kneel to kiss ;—
For God hath made the eye—the ear—the heart,
That in their glory and delight take part.

But O, the shows of Nature are more fair,
Than all the feats wizard art can do ;—
Go, listen in the starlight for the dew.
Or thy mute part in forest-concert bear,
Where leaves are choristers,—and the long lake,
Its wild and airy melody doth wake.

And those who bear their part in revel best,
Will be in meadow and in grove most gay—
The steadiest voice in blithe court-roundelay
Claims, from the crowd, completest hour of rest.
And, for thy brightness in the glittering sphere,
Thou mayest the more enjoy cool air and silence here.





L.W. Leunges.

w. H. M. te

Portrait of a Lady
and a Ribbon for the Dress of the Lady B. S.
London 1850.



LUCY'S MARRIAGE.

BY H. E. P.

“COME here, Lucy. I have something to tell you.”

I put my doll in the arm-chair I had been occupying a minute before, and thought how much more beautiful her red cheeks and flaxen curls were than any one else's; then I went to my guardian, and asked him what he had to relate.

“Do you know, my child,” he said, in his kind, benevolent way, dear old man! putting his hand under my chin, and looking straight into my eyes, “you are to be a very rich young lady, indeed, one of these days? Are you glad?”

“Oh, yes!” I answered, for I knew it was very grand to have a large fortune; and every one, when they spoke of riches, seemed to wish for them so much. “If I am rich I can do ever so many things, and have everything I want.”

“Everything, Lucy?” His hand dropped from my chin and fell, as if involuntarily, upon my black frock.

“I cannot have back poor mamma, you mean. Oh, I ought not to forget her so soon.” I had not forgotten her either; but her thin, pale face, did not haunt me then as it had haunted me a little after her death. I did not wake up crying for my mamma, night after night, and sob myself to sleep again, a poor little lonely child. I did not want to leave my new home, that was cheerful and gay—even though I had only my nurse and guardian, like the young ladies of old-fashioned romances—for heaven itself, for I loved life; and that beautiful, great, rambling house, and my handsome, kind

guardian, with his piercing black eyes and white hair. I wished to stay in the world and enjoy it, and see what the future — that I childishly dreamed about — would bring forth.

“ You don't think me very heartless, dear guardian — do you ? ” I asked anxiously, for I thought I saw a shade come over his brow.

“ Heartless ! ” he echoed ; and the bright smile that returned and lighted up his countenance was assurance enough for me that I need fear no displeasure from him. “ What a big old word that is from a little lady of nine years' growth ! I hope you always will be heartless in the way you are now, which means a bright, merry little bird. Go to your doll, my child, and we will discuss that question a great many years hence.”

So I went to my doll, and told her the news. It made her smile, I thought ; at least I smiled at her, and made her look me full in the face, and it seemed as if her red wide lips widened yet more in a sort of idiotic pleasure she was always testifying. That poor doll ! how she used to endure all my ill-humours and caprices — even when I let her fall in a fit of passion ; and where her nose had been, there was only a brownish soft space. She still laughed away stupidly, and never seemed to think herself ugly for the wanting feature.

As time progressed I learnt to value my heiress-ship more and more. I liked the deference the servants used to pay me ; I liked the consideration our friends had for my guardian and me ; I liked, when the kind old man, to gratify me, would open his rooms (the rooms which, with the house, were one day to be my own) and give juvenile balls, where I played the little hostess. To be dressed more magnificently than my companions made me feel of consequence, and to know how I could follow all my inclinations was, indeed, a delightful privilege, which I appreciated more than is usual to one of my

age, for a time. Alas! how I have repented since, when I look back on those years of misspent time, when my thoughts were let to run wild, and my spirit (never a docile one) grew more and more untamable and self-willed. So I danced through two years, wondering if there was such a thing as grief in the world; wondering, sometimes, what it was like. I soon learnt, but that was little enough in comparison with what followed.

One morning—a cold, cold frosty morning—I got up earlier than usual, for it was my guardian's birthday, and I wanted to be down-stairs before him, in order to lay my offering on his breakfast-plate, and show that I was eager to wish him all that my full heart did wish of congratulations and hopes for all the years in store. The fire seemed determined to be sulky that morning, as fires will always be, somehow, in freezing weather. I sat on the hearth-rug, and poked stick after stick among the large wood; I burned my fingers; I spread a newspaper before it to make it roar up, which it did for a time, till, unluckily, the paper caught fire too, and all, except a little bit that stayed in my hand as I attempted its rescue, was devoured in one great blaze. I remember this little bit so well. It was one of those mysterious advertisements that are so unintelligible to the uninitiated, and that always have, and do interest me, and set me speculating, with true woman-like curiosity:—"Arthur, why did you not direct your letter to John? All would have been arranged ere this.—ANNIE."

While I was reading it, I heard a heavy thump on the floor above; but one hears so many unaccountable sounds in houses, when the inhabitants are moving to and fro, that it did not strike me as being anything unusual. The fire burned at last. Hitherto the cold cheerlessness of the room had made me a little peevish and discontented; now the warm

glow cooled my temper, and I felt more inclined to speculate about the mysterious Annie, and to sympathise in her just remonstrance to that stupid "Arthur," who directed his letter to the wrong person,—not that I could understand why he should do so.

How late my guardian was! When an hour passed by, and he did not come, I determined to wait no longer, and so I walked up-stairs with wounded feelings, and knocked at his dressing-room door. There was no answer, nor a sound.

But I cannot calmly write all that followed, for I scarcely remember what I did see in that lonely room. It is like a horrible dream, but worse, for the awaking brought no relief, but an aching heart. What a night that was! the first night I passed, with what had been my dearest and best friend lying dead and cold in the adjoining room! Two days after his death a carriage drove up to the door, and a weeping lady came into the hall, and asked for me.

My nurse had told me I was to be given into the charge of my poor guardian's sister; but that, and everything but my present misery, had been forgotten as soon as heard. When she said Mrs. Carlisle was there I did not then understand who she was, but I did not care to ask, and suffered Hannah to take me to her silently, almost sullenly—for to meet a stranger was more disagreeable to me than can be imagined.

Violent demonstration—whether of grief, or joy, or love—is unpleasant to me. I hope it is not a proof of cold-heartedness, this want of sympathy; but whatever it is, I dislike it, and dislike to witness it. Thus, when the poor woman took me on her knee, and kissed and hugged me, while her tears wetted my cheeks, and lips, and frock even, calling me "darling little pet," and "poor, sweet, motherless babe," and "unhappy orphan," I thought such demonstrativeness towards

a child she had never seen before, misplaced, though the tears for her brother were natural enough, Heaven knows, and I slid off her knee, saying, "Oh, don't, please!" as soon as I could, and wiped these tears off with my handkerchief secretly, but hard. She looked a little astonished, and I heard her mutter something about soullessness, and an unresponsive heart. Then she left me.

In taking out my handkerchief, a bit of paper fell on the floor, which I took up. It was the very identical newspaper advertisement I had been reading. Oh! as my eye glanced one second only at its contents, how the past — of but two days — came over me! How strange it is how a trifle will recall so much! His birthday — my dear, dear guardian's last birthday! when I had sat by the fire, and waited for the step that could never come down the staircase again, and looked for him whose white, stiff semblance, was all that remained to me! I had never before shed a tear for him, so stony was my childish grief; then only could they come in a great, strong gush, and I was better from that day.

Mrs. Carlisle was a good woman in her way, though I never could feel any strong affection for her. She was so foolishly and intensely sentimental. She had a guitar with a blue ribbon; she used to sing to it in a little cracked, old voice; she wore low gowns long after she ought; she wrote silly poems, and painted minute flowers, of any colour but those nature had given them. These habits irritated me, but one was worse than all. Mrs. Carlisle *would* walk about (and even when we removed to London it was the same) with an odious little yellow dog, with great, prominent black eyes, and thin legs, dragging the nasty animal by a long cord. It used to get under people's feet in the crowded thoroughfares, and bark, shrilly and fiercely, at all the other dogs, and make

itself thoroughly disagreeable to us both; yet its mistress treated "Jennie" as if she were an only child, that could not be left out of sight; and when the tiny favourite died at last of old age, after biting and snapping at every one who approached, I for one, and Hannah my nurse for another, took her loss philosophically, and thought that "whatever is, is best."

In due process of time I attained my seventeenth year, and made my first appearance in the world. How well I remember every incident connected with that day! how I could not settle down to my customary avocations! how I stole up-stairs to my own room, and turned my beautiful, white, flimsy dress over and over, arranging the moss-roses and green leaves that were to deck my hair in such a manner as that the one set off the other! how I tried on the head-dress carefully and fearfully, so much so that I only stuck it on the top of my hair, where it looked ridiculous and unbecoming in the extreme; and, finally, how I took up a novel, utterly unable to fix my attention to anything wiser; and the character of the book, and its incidents, and the heroine's adventures, mixed themselves up in an inextricable confusion with my prospects for the longed-for evening!

I might have known, but I did not in my unworldliness, that the heiress to a splendid estate, and 40,000*l.* when I should attain my twenty-first year, need not fear for her success in a ball-room, and everywhere else. More came to ask me to dance than dances would allow of. I got confused in my engagements; I offended two or three, because I was engaged, in my whirlwind of bewilderment, to three for one identical valse; yet, on the whole, it was very new and delightful, and I returned home well pleased, with aching hot feet, and a headache, and tossed about my bed through the

few hours that were left till dawn, dancing wild dances to strange music in a crowd of perpetually-moving strangers, and dazzled by the lights, that hurt my eyes.

But pleasure palls after a time, and a great succession of balls, dinners, &c. found me tired, morally and physically. There was no one among the crowd that particularly interested me, for I was not of a susceptible nature. I almost wished I could fall in love, to have an excitement and interest whenever I went into society; but though there were many handsome, and clever, and agreeable, my heart stayed very quietly in its usual place, and did not trouble itself to flutter at any one's approach.

One day I received a note from one of my most intimate friends—at least, comparatively speaking, I was intimate with her, for I was on no very confidential terms with any one; for my nature was a reserved one, and I did not care to seek any woman-friendship, which is in general rather nonsensical when too violent, and prone to end in a quarrel, which I detest. It ran thus:—

“ My dear Miss Verner,

“ Come with Mrs. Carlisle to me this evening, like a good soul, if you can be content with meeting only one or two friends, and hearing some music which, though amateur, is not thoroughly despicable, as you would naturally anticipate.

“ Sincerely yours,

“ F. BERKLEY.”

I had meant to stay at home, for I was tired and, disinclined to leave a very delightful book that had just come out, and in which I was deeply interested; besides, a quiet evening with amateur music did not sound the least tempting. However, I had a regard for Mrs. Berkley, and having accepted many invitations to her dinners and balls, I thought I

must not desert her because I feared a little dulness : so we went.

I felt a good deal annoyed when my chaperon took her terrible guitar and a music-book. I confess I had a wicked desire they might both be forgotten in the carriage ; but no such good luck arrived, and I saw with dismay that they were put carefully in the ante-room, ready to go through painful service.

“ Now, this is really amiable,” said Mrs. Berkley, when we entered. “ I hope you won't be bored, Miss Verner, but I wished you to let me introduce a gentleman who has lately bought an estate near yours, a great favourite of mine, though he is peculiar. Will you let me ? ”

I assented, and the future neighbour came up and bowed. He was tall, and, at a first glance, not handsome. His hair was bright and light ; his features not bad, though his mouth was so covered with a moustache and his chin with a beard, that he was almost disguised ; he had strange eyes, such as I have never seen before or since, so changeable was their expression, for they varied at every word he uttered, alternately flashing, laughing, and growing melancholy ; he had a sweet voice, but an indistinct way of speaking ; he was oftener grave than gay ; and he did not seem anxious to show himself off, or to make himself very agreeable.

We talked together a short time, and then Mrs. Berkley asked him to sing. There was no hesitation in his manner he made no excuse, but got up, simply and naturally, and sung without music to his own accompaniment.

“ I did not catch his name,” I whispered to Mrs. Berkley. “ Tell me who he is.”

“ Sir Gerard Thelluson. I asked you on purpose to hear him sing. He will only do so when there are a select few. Listen to him ! ”

I did listen—listen as I never had done to any one before, nor even since, accustomed though I had been to the best music in the world for the last year. There was a full, solemn, liquid tone in his voice, a melancholy wildness in his song, both new and strange to me. I don't know why it was, that as I sat there so calmly, the first sorrow I had felt as a child came over me again: I thought of my mother (my father had died one month after I was born); I thought of my guardian, next to her the sole being I had ever loved, and loved with so much strength and reality that I had let no one since occupy even a place beside them in my heart. The solemn, awful scene I had witnessed seven years before returned so vividly, that I felt the cold, sickening horror that I was then, and long afterwards, again subject to, and a melancholy oppression I was not at the time accustomed to stole over me. It was half pain, half pleasure, to hear that man's beautiful, mellow voice; and when his music was ended, and he rose, I woke up from my dream of old times, and did not join in the enthusiastic praise they gave him, for no words rose to my lips worthy to express all I thought. He did not resume his seat by my side, so our acquaintance went no further that evening.

The next time we met was at the same house. He came to me, when I was resting after the fatigues of a long valse, and began to talk. He insinuated no shadow of a compliment to me, which was novel and agreeable; we left the ball-room behind, and spoke of far different scenes. As he talked, dreamily, strangely at times, always cleverly, I began to feel my own inferiority as I had never felt it before. He spoke to me of books, I knew, alas! only by name; he asked me if I had read what I ought, but never had read.

Then, when he perceived how things were, his tone changed; he was sparkling, witty, comprehensible, seeming to bring down all the strength of his great talents to my youthful under-

standing, without ever descending to what was commonplace. From that evening a change came over me; I went out less; I studied more; I sought how to make up for the time I had so sadly wasted; I had a new interest in life, though, God knows it soon became a terribly nervous, anxious, agitated one: for I loved him, as I feared, without return.

He was so strange, so unlike other men. One night he would devote himself exclusively, entirely to me; he would try to discover every place I was going to, in order to meet me: then when we did meet again, perhaps, there was not half-a-dozen words exchanged. I felt, at one time, as if he was purposely trifling with my feelings; I feared so much he perceived what power he possessed over me; once or twice I became cold and reserved; three sentences from him would persuade me I had wronged him, and then I trusted and believed he really loved me, as his eyes, not his words, seemed to say.

A month passed away thus. At last, one evening, after he had been paying me more than his ordinary attention, all I had hoped and prayed for came to pass, and I became his affianced wife.

We were to be married quietly at Ashby, my own house in the country, in the beginning of September. It was then July. I saw Gerard every day; long hours did we talk, and read, and sing together, yet we rarely spoke of the future, strange as it may seem: stranger still, we never spoke of our mutual love. Sometimes he was gloomy, silent, restless. He would tell me his head ached so fearfully that it nearly drove him mad. How I longed to relieve that pain by putting my hand on his hot brow! but I never dared, for there was so little intimacy between us, and I seemed to know him no better than than I had known him before. We never quarrelled—I often and often wished we were on such terms that we should;

for those lovers' quarrels proceed from susceptibility, fancied neglect, or slight, or jealousy, all arising from a strong affection.

I feared he did not love me—at all events, not one half as well as I loved him; yet I was far too weak to give him up, or to think his object in marrying me was selfish. Why should my fortune tempt him, whose own was much greater, who had no relation in the world, who was so sought after and looked up to that he might choose whom he would? The more I thought this, the less did I believe he had interested motives; I was not clever enough to understand him, and thus reasoning I tried to be perfectly happy and contented.

We had been about a fortnight engaged, when I received a visit from a young man whom I had met several times in society, and who had paid me a good deal of attention.

“Can I speak to you alone, Miss Verner?” he asked, after the first salutations were over, and Mrs. Carlisle sat there.

I felt somewhat astonished and displeased at the request, coming from a comparative stranger.

“There can be nothing I object to your saying before Mrs. Carlisle,” I answered.

“Pardon me,” Mr. Clyde said; “what I wish to say is of so much consequence to yourself, and of a nature so delicate, that I cannot tell it to any one else.” Mrs. Carlisle slipped out of the room. I felt vexed, and more agitated than I liked to seem.

“Pray forgive me if I annoy you; indeed I feel it my duty to give you warning of what you cannot know—what you must know.”

“Mr. Clyde,” I interrupted him, “if you have anything to say with regard to Sir Gerard Thelluson, I must beg leave, once for all, to inform you I will hear nothing you have to say of him; or yours, or any other's interference in a matter

that can concern myself alone, shall not be listened to." I was angry, and yet frightened, but I determined to hear nothing.

"Indeed, Miss Verner," he said sadly, "I have no personal motive in thus speaking. Sir Gerard is a man that I, like all who know him, respect. I should be the last person in the world to cast a reflection on a character so estimable as his; but——"

"No, Mr. Clyde," I returned, "I *cannot*, will not, hear anything. My mind is thoroughly made up on the matter: come what will, I shall keep my resolution; and your own words, so far from deterring, encourage me in the line I am taking."

"I have a regard for you both—my very regard induces me to place myself in the present painful position I have chosen to take. For God's sake," he continued, with an agitation I put down to a very different motive, "let me tell you that Sir Gerard——"

"No, no," I almost screamed, terrified in spite of myself; "don't speak—don't tell me! I will believe nothing. Only," and then a cold shudder came over me, "if there is a legal obstacle——"

"There is none in law," he returned, "but——"

I left the room, ran to my own little sitting-room, and, throwing myself on a sofa, gave way to a burst of agonised tears. I know now, and, looking back to the years that are past, I can thank God that at least my husband loved me!

After we were married he became less reserved, but the old languid melancholy often crept over him, and he would sit apart, gloomy and absent, as if a cloud were hanging over his peace of mind. Soon, however, I got accustomed to this, for I was beginning, as I believed, to know his nature well; my anxiety for him was none the less, and I longed to hear what affected him thus, and to be able to relieve him. At

last this dejection increased; on one occasion, when I was passing Mrs. Warder's room, (we lived in my husband's house, and the housekeeper had served him since he was a child,) I heard her say to herself, "Poor young lady! it's beginning!"

What was beginning? why was I to be pitied? why did that old woman always treat me with a sort of compassionate gentleness?

When I was dressed for dinner I went to Gerard's little study, and found him with a book open before him that he was not reading.

"Gerard!" I said softly, putting my hand on his shoulder to rouse him from his abstraction. He looked up with a start, and his colour changed. "Gerard, dear, do tell me what is wrong—have I offended you in any way? have I unintentionally vexed you? let me know," I asked imploringly.

He took both my hands in his own, pressing them tightly together.

"Lucy," he answered, "don't you know I love you? don't you know you have never given me an hour's pain? Oh, my child, you are not the cause of my dejection."

Strange as it may appear, it was the first time the words "I love you," had been uttered by him. They made my heart leap and then fall fluttering down.

"Must I then know nothing, Gerard?" I asked: "will you always be reserved with me?"

"Poor little Lucy!" he answered, gently, still holding my hands. "Ask nothing! I am subject to this melancholy, which will soon pass off. Is it not enough to make me sad when I think I shall have to leave you for a time?"

"Leave me!" I asked with astonishment: "why Gerard?"

"I shall not be long away,—a fortnight, perhaps,—but I must go."

"Gerard, Gerard!" I exclaimed, "you don't love me!

you cannot love me, if, three months after our marriage, you mean to leave me, without even saying where you are going! If we part thus, let us part for ever!"

Like most wives, I said more than I meant in that first outbreak of my wild sorrow. I would have given worlds to have unsaid the words a moment after they were uttered. He turned on me such a fierce, angry look, and flung both my hands from him so suddenly, that I staggered a moment and almost fell; then he told me to leave him instantly, for he could hate as strongly as he could love, and that one word could change the current of his feelings into the opposite channel.

Still I loved him so passionately and so devotedly that the terror of losing him for ever drove away the anger I had felt; on my knees I begged his forgiveness, telling him that never again would I dispute his will in whatsoever he chose to command. We were at length reconciled, but this fearful quarrel, a quarrel I had once wished for, and never wished for again, made an impression that a lifetime will not efface.

He left me: he was absent a month, during which time I received no letter; when he returned he was thinner and paler, but cheerful and well.

So time went on; my love for him was something approaching idolatry. I could not be happy while he was out of my sight, yet there were occasional hours I dared not disturb him, for he studied and read much; at which time he must be solitary. He talked of no more unaccountable absences, and I began to feel perfectly happy till our child was born. I saw then how deep his affection was for me. Many and many a night of feverish suffering I woke to find him sitting by the bed-side, wakeful and anxious; often when the baby was sleepless and cross he would walk with

her in his arms, carrying her as carefully and handily as a woman till she dropped into slumber. A murmur never escaped his lips, but watching soon had a visible effect on his health; he grew thin and sad.

One night, when I had quite recovered, he dined out at a bachelor-dinner in the neighbourhood. It was a wild evening succeeding a stormy, hot day. For the last week there had been a great deal of rain falling, and a stream to be crossed between our house and that he was invited to was so swollen, that I was almost inclined to beg him not to go, for the danger there would be in fording it.

I cannot understand how it is people like a stormy night when they themselves are comfortably housed and warm. To me the howling of the wind and the beating of the rain against the windows is so dismal, that I think no fire nor light can brighten the sadness of such sounds. I have always felt this; how much more then must I have felt oppressed when the time drew near for my husband's return, and the swollen stream presented itself to my imagination?

Gerard promised positively that he would be home at eleven, but desired I should not wait up for him even so late. My health had been rather delicate since the baby's birth; besides, a suggestion from him was tantamount to a command, so I went to bed at ten. I lay awake, listening to the dreadful wind and rain outside with a beating heart. My child slept soundly in her little cot beside me; how I envied the darling, who had no thought or anxiety yet in her baby heart. Eleven struck from the timepiece on the chimney, it struck from the hall below, lastly from the village church at a little distance, sounding plainer and more distinct to my sharpened ears than it had ever done before. I stole out of bed very softly, not to disturb my child, and looked

out of the window. There was nothing distinguishable except a black mass of foliage swaying about, and bending under the blast of the shrieking wind, as though the branches would break; the moon was behind a cloud, but she would soon emerge, and I determined to wait and watch.

I felt so nervous then, standing by the window, the faint night-lamp casting mysterious shadows round the large oak-panelled room, leaving certain nooks in complete darkness, where my eye would wander in a sort of horrified fascination, dreading I knew not what. I heard the sound of a horse's feet, coming rapidly along, in the distance; the moon burst out clear and warm from the clouds, and I distinguished Gerard, as I could distinguish him were he within eyesight. What was my astonishment when I saw him get off his horse within several yards of the house, strike it violently with his whip, and stand quite still while the terrified animal galloped madly away from his master.

Gerard took his coat off, stood in the drenching rain, and then tossed both his arms wildly up above his head! Something seemed to come and take my heart in a giant, cold grasp, and choke me. I scarcely know what impulse it was made me take the baby, still carefully for fear of awaking her, in my arms, and press her close to my breast.

The moon was hidden again: I heard a loud ring at the bell, a heavy, quick step on the stairs,—in another moment I saw my husband! My God! what a face he had!—white, ghastly, wild!—his eyes glaring, bursting almost from their sockets! I knew all then!

“Come, Lucy,” he said, “there must be an end of this. You have lived too long!” and he went for the case of pistols that lay on a table near the bed. “I give you time to say your prayers, then I must shoot you. Indeed, Lucy,” he

continued, with an attempt at coherence, "I cannot help myself—I was tempted to do it once before, but now I have made up my mind—die you must."

"Wait, Gerard!" I said, with a superhuman presence of mind coming over me, "the pistols have no caps to them: let me go and get you some. I don't fear dying."

"You will return?" he asked, half doubtfully.

God forgive me for telling him the first and last lie I ever deceived him by. I promised to return. Then, with the child still sleeping in my arms, and a dressing-gown only wrapped round me, I fled down the stairs, through the hall into the kitchen, from thence to the yard, where a light in the stable showed me some of the men were up still. The paving cut my bare feet and made them bleed; the rain poured upon me in a deluge; the child shrieked on my breast: but I cared for nothing, I thought of nothing, but her preservation. The coachman and groom were in a little room smoking.

"Your master! your master! go to him for God's sake, Jeffreys!" I cried to the former, an elderly man, who, with the housekeeper, had lived in the house since Gerard was a child.

The man staggered back horror-struck.

"Oh God! my lady—he has gone mad at last, like them all!"

I sunk down on the floor, terrified, exhausted, bewildered.

"Stay there, my lady!" said Jeffreys: "you are best out of his sight. I will send Mrs. Warder to you at once."

There I was, the wretched mistress of that house, undressed, wet, with wounded feet from which the blood flowed profusely, stretched on the floor of the stable, not daring to leave it. I should have lost consciousness for a time, I think, were it not that the poor little baby screamed in my arms, and I mechanically rocked her, and strove to soothe her. I could

not think, I could not realise one-half that had really occurred, so suddenly had the blow fallen.

I crouched on the floor, shuddering and terrified at every sound, seeking to calm my child. A footstep coming swiftly along, made me tremble yet more. Was he coming back to put his threat in execution? Oh what anguish can be more fearful than to dread the presence of one we have adored!

It was Mrs. Warder; she came and wrapped a shawl round me, lifted me from the ground, placed me in a chair, and took the child in her arms.

It is twenty years since that fatal night. Gerard sleeps quietly at last in the same tomb that his father and his only sister were consigned to, when their unquiet minds wore themselves out. I have followed my little one to her grave, with the sole consolation that she died before the fearful malady that tainted the blood of her father's family, and lurked sometimes in her dark eyes, had shown itself. Now, I am utterly alone!



J. G. Kneller

N. P. Moore

1847

1847

NOT LOST, BUT GONE BEFORE.

BY MARGUERITE A. POWER, AUTHOR OF "EVELYN FORESTER."

"The crystal bars shine faint between
The souls of child and mother."—E. BARRETT BROWNING.

CLOSE on the fringes of a little wood,
Through whose high tree-tops balm-fed breezes sighed,
In answer to the 'plaining doves which cooed
Their plaintive loves through all the summer-tide,
A little cot there stood, that sought to hide
Beneath the verdure; like a larger nest
Built nest-wise, out of boughs and mosses dried,
It ever seemed lapp'd in its stilly rest,
Sleeping in the hale ivy's brown-furred arms close prest.

Beneath the eaves the robin built and reared
His gaping nestlings, and poured forth his song
In rippling streams of sound; he never feared
From the indweller there, or harm, or wrong,
But through the warm, hushed summer evenings long,
He paid the gentle hospitality
That through the dreary winter crumbs had flung,
Recording in his strains how tenderly
Her trembling frost-chilled hands dispensed her charity.

All living things that dwelt within the wood,
 Or in the fields around, were welcome there.
 When first the mother-sparrow's unfledged brood
 Began to try their wings, and tremoling dare
 Weak, broken, giddy flights through the still air,
 She brought them to the cot, and round the eaves
 Marshalled the chirping band, arrived to share
 Its inmate's love, or through the ivy-leaves
 Stole in and out, like field-mice 'mid the autumn sheaves.

Beneath that roof a woman dwelt alone,
 Sole tenant of the peaceful solitude ;—
 The uneventful years had come and gone,
 The wintry winds the summer's leaves had strewed
 In the unveiled recesses of the wood,
 And wrought but little change in her ; her brow
 Might be less smooth, her cheek more worn, her mood
 More even ; if her smile were rarer now
 Than in her youth, her tears had also ceased to flow.

And when the passionate lark's ecstatic song
 Thrilled through the air, she stood with quiet eyes
 Watching him circling upwards, while a throng
 Of heavenward hopes and earthward memories,
 Born here like him, like him would soaring rise,
 From the low nest through the blue summer air,
 Up to the golden gates of Paradise.
 It seemed to her the aspiring bird could bear
 A tender message to a spirit that dwelt there.

It was a simple thought, but the poor soul
 Had only simple thoughts. For many years
 Her mind had been o'erclouded ; 'twas a scroll
 Whose characters had all been blurred with tears :—

She was not mad, but trial, grief, and fears
 Had done their work, and partly turned her brain ;
 Filled it with fantasies, like one who nears
 In sleep the shores of Dreamland ; visions vain,
 Yet still so sweet that he who wakes would sleep again.

In her life's April, to her had been given
 A little child, as a young seraph fair :—
 A seraph truly, for its home was heaven,
 And soon it sighed to be returning there.
 She saw it paling with a dire despair,
 And to her heart she held it, weeping wild,
 Sending to Heaven many a passionate prayer
 That God would leave to her her little child.
 In vain, God claimed His angel that had been exiled.

For many days beside the little corse
 She sat, with folded hands and tearless eyes,
 Refusing to resign it, till by force
 They tore it from her, spite of shrieks and cries.
 Then o'er her poor bewildered brain did rise
 The waters of oblivion, in whose tide
 Were drowned her agony, her tears, and sighs ;
 And when the whelming flood had slowly dried
 One vision there remained, — but one, and nought beside.

It was the image of her child in heaven ;
 It seemed removed but by a little space,
 And oftentimes in mercy it was given
 To her, in waking dreams, to see its face
 Down-looking on her from its dwelling-place,
 Amid God's angels, close beside the throne.
 And every year she saw it grow in grace,
 And seeing it, thus never felt alone,
 But to its absence now had reconciled grown.

When summer nights were long, and Dian's beams
 Shone clear, she often left the casement wide ;
 And many a time she saw in blissful dreams
 Her infant down a slanting moonbeam glide,
 And stand there smiling radiant by her side.
 She felt the glory falling on her brow,
 She felt the passionate impulsive tide
 Of an unearthly fervour rise and glow
 Through all her soul, and new-born hope and life bestow.

Beside the lowly cottage-porch there grew
 Her only garden-flower, a white rose-tree ;
 She planted it a slip, and now it threw
 Abroad bloom-laden branches, strong and free.
 The bird might perch there, and the booming bee
 Rest in the broad white cups. For her it had
 A meaning and a tender charm, for she
 In her wild dreams, poor soul, and musings mad,
 Had somewise the dear tree in her child's semblance clad.

And she had called it by her child's dear name :
 On her child's birthday, in the fragrant June,
 She 'd planted it, and when the birthday came
 Each year since then, when burst the florid noon,
 The first bud opened wide ! O precious boon !
 Ofttimes her tears fell on it, and each tear
 Hung there a living diamond, till the moon
 Smiled on, and then up-drew it to her sphere,
 Collecting the pure treasure-gems from year to year,

And set them in a radiant circlet round
 The little bright-robed angel's shining head :—
 Not one had ever fallen to the ground,
 But had been kept and duly cherishèd.

Long time a tender fancy she had fed,
That when the tree's maturity should gain
The cottage roof, her soul that languishèd
Below, should be released from earthly pain,
And soaring up to heaven, be with her child again.

And so each birthday morning she would trace
Upon the wall the stature of the tree,
And note each year, with hopeful smiling face,
How fast it grew, and fondly trust that she
Might, when it reached its full maturity,
Be carried upward to yon smiling sky,
Where her child dwelt, and where she longed to be.
And so the rose-tree grew, broad, strong, and high,
And so she fondly hoped her parting hour drew nigh.

Be sure that He who notes the sparrow's fall
Has pitying ears for every earnest prayer,
Nor scorns one simple soul's impassioned call
For strength and mercy in its heavy care.
God heard the mother, and with Him to hear
Is to accord. At last a morning broke,
A birthday-morning, radiant, hushed, and clear,
Ere the bird-welcomed dawn the mother woke,
And to her spirit-child in joyous accents spoke:—

“ My babe, my little one, mine though in heaven !
Shall not at last unto my yearning eyes
And to my ever-yearning heart be given
Thy sight, thy thrilling touch, thy joyous cries ?
O child of mine, young angel of the skies,
Pray to the Father that this blessed night
My soul may on the breath of evening rise,

And, borne by angels, take its heavenward flight,
To dwell with Him and thee for ever in His light.”

Then forth she went into the misty morn
And sought the rose-tree, but no more her hand
Could reach the topmost bough; the buds upborne
On the bent boughs hung o'er where she did stand,
And one just bursting sent forth odours bland,
And dewy tears that wept a fond adieu.
That night her spirit to the morning-land
Wended its flight up through the sapphire-blue,
Star-paven sky, to heaven, where faith is changed to view.

THE VAULT AND THE ALTAR,

A LEGEND OF THE REBELLION OF 1685.

BY MRS. OCTAVIUS FREIRE OWEN.

EVENING had begun to deepen the shadowy dimness of the interior of the cathedral. The rich tints on the great west window had already faded into a dusky hue, across which the mullions and transoms of black stone formed a fret-work, every moment stretching the skeleton fibres of its fanciful detail more distinctly in relief against the obscure beyond. The carved intersections of the roof presented a cloudy chaos of inscrutable design, in which the bosses and pendants projected irregularly; while the pillars supporting the tall and graceful arches caught ever and anon the fitful gleams of twilight, shaping the outlines of a hundred obscure recesses—the hiding-places to imagination of mysterious forms. Added to the solemnity incidental to the minds of most, upon entering one of God's temples at the close of day, a strange feeling, powerfully evoking our nature's fondness for penetrating the unseen, lurks within the ancient walls; all is so calm—so apart from the world around us. Silence, that atmosphere of thought, awakens the mind to more secret communion with itself—the death of which is the business of life; and the contrast of the two strikes on the senses, as the cold chill of stone and marble encircling us pervades the body. The “seen” about us has enough to interest and enslave,—yet the “unseen” possesses more,—while the soul fills up the vacancy: and as we tread beneath the relics of Art's master-age, long past, our footfalls wake the echo-voices of those mighty slum-

berers, by whose munificence the sanctuary was reared wherein they now repose—the famed warrior, the high-born knight, kings, schoolmen, fathers of the church, whose spirits ruled the epoch of a troubled age, and to whose triumphant deeds the earth itself inscribes an epitaph!

So many, indeed, are the crowding thoughts in such a scene, and for the most part so beneficial, notwithstanding the drawback of pain at the spectacle of ostentation intruding its falsity of praise within precincts where only truth should dwell, that the authorised preservers of these holy places would do well to permit a free entrance and exit at more frequent times: there are moments when the dove, scared by the world, longs to rest for awhile within the terrestrial semblance at least of that enduring ark, for which it pines. The sight of evidences that others died in the same faith confirms the waverer—the mourner learns to hope, the worldly to fear, that this life is not eternal; a free scope is given to the captive in the den of poverty to solace his heart awhile in the freedom of devotion, within walls whose sounds do not reverberate each moment the jarring discord of despair and guilt. At the period we write of, the troubled condition of affairs incident to the newly-suppressed rebellion presented cogent reasons for a strict scrutiny throughout the vicinity of holy buildings, which, although no longer affording, according to the strict sense of the word, the privilege of sanctuary, yet formed in their construction a secure, temporary hiding-place, for the turbulent or disaffected.

The daily service was concluded, and the doors closed; yet scarcely with their usual security on this evening. It would seem as if, in expectancy of some other duty, the old official's solitary footstep lingered—for with slow pace he continued to tread the aisle, until, after an ineffectual attempt to ward off incipient drowsiness, he finally entered the choir, and composing himself upon a pile of cushions, fell into an audible

slumber. Then it was that, gliding out from behind a monument at the lower extremity of the aisle, a dark figure crossed the space—still marked out like an extended sheet beneath the light of the broad window—and with faltering steps moved cautiously through one of the transepts in the direction of the cloister. Whatever might be the object of this person's stealthy presence at such a place and hour, fear of detection, though considerable, seemed less powerful than other emotions speedily apparent in the intruder's manner. Often stopping, and with both hands pressed tightly on the bosom, sighs deep and painful spoke of bitter anguish; while every moment an anxious gaze directed to the door of the edifice, followed by a gesture of feverish impatience, seemed to chide some vexatious delay. Again there was a rapid movement forward, until further passage was impeded by a barrier, which seemed the conclusion to the search of the muffled figure; for pausing, as if horror-struck, the hood was thrown back, and a small lamp, hitherto concealed under the heavy folds of a black robe, was hurriedly placed upon the ground. The scene was a strange one; the stones had been taken up in a square form, revealing an entrance to a vault prepared as for a coffin; on its brink, almost side by side with the spoils of death's final triumph, knelt life's brightest type, the figure of a girl in the first bloom of womanhood. Her slender figure, imperfectly seen, was draped in what appeared the sombre garb of a Sister of Charity; but the arm, bare to the elbow, the small hand and taper fingers, told of the polished symmetry of high birth and nurture. The face was pale, fearfully white as seen by the dim light still left in the cathedral, and the flickering beam of the lantern she carried. She seemed in prayer, her lips moving convulsively; at one time the clasped hands gradually fell; at another, passionately wringing them, the whole outline of her form was agitated by heavy sobs; again and again the eyes, large, dark, soul-speaking, had been raised above in

the intervals of grief, when suddenly and solemnly the bell of the cathedral tolled the hour. As the first stroke fell upon her ear she started from her knees; the vibration upon the air from the sound seemed to pulsate through her in quick and excited movement; as the last knell died into stillness, a gleam of hope shot across her impassioned features, and when a distant bell almost immediately after rang out the curfew, she raised the lamp from the ground, held it for a moment over the dark abyss beneath, regarding it with a slight shudder as it was revealed by the partial illumination.

And now a strange action succeeded, scarcely to be expected from one of such evident youth and feminine sensibility. Replacing the lamp once more upon the pavement, she drew from a basket at her side a short ladder of rope, the coils of which having loosened, she knelt down, and, with her face over the aperture, felt for a projection in the stone-work. This discovered, she slung the upper portion of the ladder over the stone, slightly securing it; and setting her foot upon the first step, descended, still holding her apparently somewhat cumbersome basket. Who had beheld that young face, glancing upwards, before successively the lower portion of her figure, then the waist, arms, shoulders, finally the head, disappeared below the stone flooring of the cloister, and doubted that almost the spirit of martyrdom, shared by some inexplicable hope, hardly so elevated as itself, shone in every line of the soft features? Whatever her errand, what a death appeared its aim! Did she seek to immolate herself for some cause incident to emotions of that world, whose heritage she was about to resign? Was she some victim to delusive self-abandonment, to whom even the Christian life was robbed of its peace and brightness, shadowed by the oppressive gloom of the conventual cell? Yet it was scarcely the ray of unmixed hope shining in the last expression of her face, something earthly mingled with the calmness of mental decision, bespeaking at

least not the *irrational* determination of the suicide. But a noise trembles through the vault below; she has reached the floor—whether unhurt is a question—for even her light form has dislodged a portion of the mouldering stone, which in its fall awakens a sullen echo, increasing, as it rolls in successive volumes of sound, through the crypts of the vast building. The old sexton, who sleeps with the watchfulness age generally engenders, starts up—fears he has reposed too long upon the canon's soft cushions—and, rubbing his eyes, drowsily leaves the choir; still, however, dallying with various little arrangements, evidently expecting some one. At length, as if warring with the heaviness oppressing him, he turns more quickly to the vault, which he has often during the day inspected; and, unconscious of its living secret, indulges in a garrulous soliloquy, fated to be soon broken.

“Won't be long now,” he mutters; “won't be long, I warrant; these things are soon done now-a-days: it's like when I was beyond seas—little was life reckoned of then or now—a chance bullet, a few spades of earth taken out of a trench and put back again, with youth and strength beneath, before an hour had gone by. How many on 'em, I mind, were out with me—hearts as brave as my lord's own—as his *was*, 'faith! poor fellow! for by this time ——”

The rest was lost; for at the moment a knocking at the great door announced an arrival, and the old man's steps were quickened by a second summons before he had traversed half the nave.

The chain was unfastened—the bolts withdrawn—and speedily the new-comers glided towards the cloisters. A procession it could hardly be called, the number being so few; yet there was some appearance of arrangement. First advanced some persons in dark cloaks, a torch borne by one or two at intervals; then followed a priest, preceding a black shapeless mass, covered by a trailing drapery of velvet, and

borne upon men's shoulders; then a workman or two, and last of all the old sexton, half afraid of being too late for the ceremony, and—his fee.

Sombre as was the scene, a spectator could hardly have forborne a smile at the unmistakable signs of fear and dismay stamped upon the features of some of the party, whose iron ruggedness contrasted strangely with the sidelong glances of superstitious awe cast upon the marble figures and stone tracery around them, during the short period it took to reach the brink of the vault. Theirs was evidently a religion of uneducated sensation, in which reason and reflection took no share; and several eyes bent with agitation upon the gloomy sepulchral recess, while the shifting position of others showed their uneasiness, in the expectancy of something appearing less tangible than themselves.

"Set it down," said he, who seemed to be the leader of the party; "let the service proceed at once. We have already lost much precious time, and the night wanes fast."

His order was obeyed, and the heavy load removed from the shoulders of the bearers, who stood erect around it when placed upon the ground. Upon the removal of the pall, a handsome coffin was discovered, studded with silver nails, but bearing no inscription. The burial service proceeded, mechanically joined in by some, but unheeded by the majority of the group. The priest, even, seemed singularly infected by the general desire for haste, and hurried over the words with almost unseemly dispatch; an incident more remarkable, from the fact of his physiognomy and bearing betokening a character at once devout and dignified.

"The old man seems marvellously brisk to-night," whispered one bystander to his neighbour. "Prythee has he some fresh customer waiting for his pious consolations; some prisoner to be as easily disposed of under the hangman's care? Eh! Lambert? Nobody knows better than you."

“ Maybe so,” replied the other, who had been one of the coffin-bearers, and who was evidently impressed with most uneasy feelings; “ it has been a bad business, and the sooner ’tis over, and you and I out of it, the better.”

“ You may say that, mate. Who knows when one’s own turn may come? so sudden—not even the show of a trial! If the king had sent us one I could name ——”

“ Heaven forbid!” said Lambert, crossing himself devoutly. “ Mention not him for your life in such a place as this. They say at Taunton the streets are running blood. Kirke and his ‘ Lambs ’ are there, and chains and quartering for the rebels, beside the hangman’s work: few enough of them, poor souls! ever lie decently in holy ground.”

“ Ah, well! as the old proverb says, ‘ He that licks honey from thorns pays dear for his treat.’ I warrant, if the Duke could have foreseen the end on’t he never would have crossed the Channel to set foot in his uncle’s dominions. But ’tis too bad, comrade, to lose one’s life here now, for having a scrap of paper in one’s house with ‘ Monmouth ’ at the bottom of it. The Duke and our young lord were friends once, but I dare believe they never met for years past; and rely upon it there was a private spite in the whole concern, and nothing short of it.”

“ ’Twould seem so, indeed, of a certainty. Considering his blood, they ought to have taken him to London, and beheaded him at least, instead of hanging him up like a dog. Did’st mind the executioner’s trembling, and how long he was securing the knot? If the mob had been more aware on’t, take my word there’d have been no hanging to-night.”

“ Small doubt of that, such a favourite as he was with all; and no wonder, so young and gallant a nobleman. And then the fair creature, his bride that was to be. Poor lady! my heart ached for her just now, I can tell you. Oh! it was small marvel they hurried it on, still less at the burial, barely

an hour after. He must have been scarcely cold, poor fellow ! when they laid him in his coffin."

"I tell you, the flush was on his cheek when they cut him down, and screwed the coffin over as fine a gentleman as ever owned King James for a sovereign. You should have seen him lie all so noble and calm in his beautiful laced hunting dress, just as they took him going out a-riding with my Lady Violet. But hush ! they are preparing to lower the coffin. I must go."

Lambert pressed forward as he spoke, as it appeared more actuated by policy than any other motive, for he cast a quick glance around to observe if he had been missed, while with a scarcely perceptible shudder he lent his aid to perform the last necessary duty to the dead.

The body descended slowly into the yawning gulf; some there were who for years after declared that when it touched the floor below a faint groan was audible, and amongst these Lambert was the one who most stoutly asserted the occurrence. If, indeed, it originated in superstitious fancy, it was strange that so many of the faces, grouped around the grave, and lit up by the torches' glare, should have simultaneously assumed the ashy tint, which startled each one as he read in his neighbour's visage confirmation of his own impression. Something uncommon there must have been, for one of the leaders listened for a moment with quivering lip before he sternly exclaimed, "Pshaw ! it was only the hollow echo of the old family vault, large enough, no doubt, for a regiment, and, methinks, but little used, judging from the space there is to spare."

The most hardy of the group now advancing, replaced the heavy stone, and a feeling of relief seemed to be experienced when the pavement again assumed its ordinary appearance, and evidently by no one more than by the aged functionary who had read the service with such hasty utterance. All

moved away with more elastic step from the vicinity of the grave, and the cathedral was soon left to its customary and solemn stillness.

The last left within the sacred edifice were the sexton and his principal; the former seemed inclined to protract the time before quitting the porch, whilst his companion paced up and down near him, watching his delay with ill-concealed glances of impatience; at length the priest spoke:—

“ I will let you out, and close all in safety. Give me your key of the side entrance; I would be, after this mournful ceremony, alone.”

The sexton looked up with a blank expression of disappointment, but there was a calm decision about the speaker's tone and features which he dared not question nor oppose, and with a few muttered words, slightly suggestive of his belief that the holy man, whose Protestant tenets had been matter of so much admiration hitherto, was becoming a sheer Papist, — perhaps indulging in confession, like any other of the king's bigots — the querulous official finally left the cathedral.

Hardly had he turned from the portal before a faint tapping, apparently proceeding from a small door on the opposite side, echoed low, but distinctly, through the aisles; as it fell upon the priest's ear, “ Thank God!” he ejaculated, fervently clasping his hands, “ they are come at last! may it not be too late.” Hurrying across the nave, he stopped before the low archway, and hastily applied the sexton's key to the lock. It was a minute or two before his trembling hand could find the keyhole; but at length the door unclosed, and three men, followed by a fourth in a dress of a superior description, entered, bearing a basket of various tools.

Having again secured the door, all rapidly moved towards the recently-closed tomb, and, without a word being exchanged, on arriving at it, set down a masked light, and, apparently well acquainted with their task, endeavoured to

remove the massive covering, and to disclose again the vaulted chasm.

For a while it resisted their efforts; and who shall describe the clouds of anguish and suspense which passed across the countenances of two of the party, until at length the ray of hope beamed forth again when at last the stone moved.

Eagerly straining his eyes downwards the moment the aperture became visible, the priest knelt down, and, placing his mouth close to the ground, whispered in tremulous and anxious accents the name of "Violet."

For a moment all was still, and then a faint voice responded, the emotion of which only rendered the thrilling accents more impressively audible: "I have the lid off, but he is motionless, motionless as stone."

"Fear not, fear not, lady," replied the cheery voice of the leech, for so it would appear the speaker was, as now, divested of his cloak and hood, he displayed some surgical instruments, and a small box containing phials; "if you have given him air all will yet be well."

The priest fixed his eyes with scrutinising earnestness upon the face of the speaker, but met there no answering glance. The little man, ordinarily fussy and excited, was serious and calm; but his hand trembled as he descended the ropes hastily adjusted by the masons, and was followed by the divine, whose steps, in truth, seemed as faltering as his own.

It was, indeed, a strange scene, one almost incomprehensible, which met the spectator's eye below! At first the dimness of the vault precluded distinctness of vision, but as the eye became accustomed to the obscurity, relieved only by the flickering of the lamp, the features of two persons, each of an almost sepulchral pallor, stood out in a kind of preternatural sharpness of contrast against the darkness of the surrounding gloom.

The cover of the coffin had been removed, and, as if in the endeavour to divest its tenant of its loathsome occupancy, the lifeless form had been partially raised from its recumbent position, and was now supported against the fragile form of the maiden. No great hope might be read in its fixed lineaments, yet had the seal of the great destroyer, if Death indeed were there, scarcely pressed with his usual ruthless touch those finest lines of life which fade the earliest beneath his finger. The cheek was pale, it is true, as the inner leaf of the white rose-bud; yet was it wholly distinct from the ivory whiteness of the brow, whereon the chestnut curls were parted, revealing its spiritual and classic outline, wet with some potent essence hastily applied. The lips were not set, as if the door of the thoughts were shut for ever when the great inhabitant is gone, but rather bore the impress of a latent sensibility of some mysterious happiness still passing through the mind, perhaps in dreams—anything other than the trace of that rigid, fearful fixedness, which might have been expected from the harrowing circumstances affecting their last expression of vitality. The riding-dress, of green velvet, closely fitted the manly and graceful form; it was richly laced, and terminated in a falling cravat and ruffles of web-like point-lace; a glove of buff-leather was upon one hand, the other, bare, was held closely to the bosom of the girl, and still bore a ring of pure brilliants, which, with the massive gold spurs, had excited the cupidity of more than one official of that summary power which had dealt so boldly and violently with the wearer.

Violet—her hood of black velvet thrown back, her cheek of marble hue pillowed closely to that of her lover, the long tresses mingling with his—evinced no other emotion at the arrival of her friends than what was signified by the restless glance of her lustrous eyes, as they turned in inquiring agony alternately from the clergyman to his companion. Wildly

pressing the insensible form to her heart, the convulsive grasp of her slight fingers upon his seemed to defy the worst, and inflexibly to claim at least the privilege of being inseparable from her lost one in death.

Scarcely, however, glancing at her, the leech proceeded, with the air of one familiarised to similar scenes, to devote his entire attention to his patient. Having opened the vest, he put aside the buff belt which had sustained the sword, and laid his hand anxiously upon the heart. Mysterious index! register of passion—mirror of hope—thou art the first agent between the soul and body, whose interpretation announces the behests of the one, and carries back in obedient reflex the action of the other! Subtle magician! as the tides obey the moon, so do thy impulses swell beneath the wild sovereignty of joy and pain, of love or hate, and anon sleep calmly like the slumbering ocean beneath the smile of holy faith. If health diffuses vigour through the body, thy placid pulsations, ceaseless, yet unfelt, bespeak the presence of the too-often-slighted visitant; but if disease intrude, the last tumultuous struggles take place in thee, the refuge-city of hope until thy toneless energy fails, thy beat at longer intervals grows fainter and all is still, as thy whisper wanes before the icy silence of man's all-conquering foe!

The action of the man of science reassured the maiden; she gradually relaxed her position, and bent her head as though to catch the respiration which the surgeon's countenance and prolonged examination induced her with a sudden transition of feeling to anticipate. Meantime the divine, with the promptitude of an energetic mind, had spread out a portion of the contents of the chest, which one of the attendant persons carried, and now permitted himself, for the first time, to gaze fully upon the features of the young pair, whose condition excited so deeply his sympathy and interest.

At a gesture of the surgeon he gently moved the young

cavalier into a less recumbent position, and substituted the support of his own shoulder for that which had formerly sustained him, and this Violet permitted without a word. The old man had pressed his hand upon her drooping head for a single instant, and there was that in the light touch and the look which followed it, as she raised her large wild eyes to his, which shone like the spring sun upon the winter of her heart, and warmed a dead world into life, as when his blessed lustre rose the morning after the Deluge!

Oh! who shall depict the mutations of hope and fear during the next few minutes? By every well-directed means the group sought to restore animation. At one moment the still features appeared to lighten up; at another the hand he chafed fell powerless as ever from the leech's grasp. What a whirlwind of distraction, what a life-history of tenderness, was then stamped legibly upon the face of Violet, until, as if stimulated by her agony, he would turn away, and hastily essay some fresh remedy to recall the breath he almost feared had fled for ever!

At length, abandoning the elixirs and pungent essences, with which the floor was strewn, the leech restored the body to nearly a recumbent position, and, kneeling down beside it, laid his face upon the insensible one so closely that the features were no longer discernible. Meanwhile the priest and the maiden, each holding a hand, bathed it with the contents of a flask previously indicated. It was easy to perceive that the souls of both were in prayer, though only ever and anon the lips moved, whilst tears raining from the depressed eyes of Violet over the hand she held, showed that the divine touch of hope—heaven's staff of promise—had struck the flinty rock of despair, and opened a fountain of expectancy, an outlet for emotion, while those voiceless words—winged messengers from the heart—were speeding to the mercy-seat.

Is she answered? With a cry which thrilled the pulses of all, so wildly concentrative was it of doubt and certainty, she suddenly relinquished her grasp, and slid her fingers over the heart of her lover. At the same moment the leech arose, and hurriedly snatching something from the ground, permitted the lifeless features to be again discernible. How had the prayer sped? In an agony of hope each eye sought the mirror now held above the lips of the inanimate youth. No!—Yes!—though visible but for a single second upon its polished surface, there was no disputing the evidence! The subtle essence of the Infinite—the breath which made of dust a living man—was there!

With low, passionate words of devotion, caresses soothing and encouraging as the mother's to her babe, Violet, the flood-gates of her soul fairly broken open, alternately smiled wildly, or melted into broken sobs over her lover, as gradually the colour floated back to cheek and lip, and each succeeding respiration declared returning consciousness and strength.

Instinctively she urged the concealment of everything calculated to recall aught of actual circumstance to his mind; and with a fascinating decision which enforced acquiescence, insisted on the workmen withdrawing to the upper air, while the priest and his companion retired in silence to the darkened extremity of the vault. Thus, when the lids first feebly unclosed, his gaze rested alone on the form of her he loved; and truly the smile which shone across the newly-animated features assured her that, so inexpressibly precious was the vision, in gazing upon it he wished to inquire no further,—had room for no other occupation or thought.

And now words came earnestly and fast, faster and more earnest still the interrogating eloquence of eyes. Soon it was apparent that the tender precautions had been thrown away as to the removal of any shock the mind might sustain.

Whether the youth had only lain thus long in a trance, or that his mental organisation, powerfully constituted, comprehended at a glance the whole circumstances of the case, somehow he evinced no surprise, though much gratitude, when, after the indulgence of a few moments, it was deemed advisable to interrupt the lovers, and recall them to the difficult path still remaining to be trodden.

“Bethink you, dearest child,” said the clergyman, as he assisted Violet to rise from the prostrate position she had so long maintained,—“Bethink you, there is yet much to be accomplished; a single moment, one solitary act of imprudence, may reduce my lord to the same fate whence he has just been rescued. Hasten, therefore, while the streets are still; a conveyance awaits you at the southern side of the cathedral, and I would fain summon it at once.”

“Are you able to walk alone?” inquired Violet tenderly, as the young man rose with difficulty, and stepped with a perceptible shudder over the side of his intended death-enclosure.

While the surgeon poured out a glass of water, dropping into it some bright red liquid, which the youth with feverish eagerness drained, the priest hastily drew from the recesses of a parcel carried by one of the attendants, a robe resembling that worn by the maiden, with hood complete; and—so elastic and buoyant is the human mind, even in such a moment and place—that more than one significant glance and exclamation of amusement escaped the lips of the party, as it was now found expedient to remove the scabbard, now to draw downwards the folds of the ample skirts, and conceal from prying gazers the buff riding-boots of the equivocal female.

“And whither?” whispered he, as at length, every precaution taken, every arrangement made, Violet nestling

to his side, they stood upon the threshold of the holy building.

“Ah, whither!” echoed she, turning anxiously to the clergyman, for in the haste and suspense of the night’s employment she had never once considered the means of ultimate escape, and now shrank affrighted from the difficulties intervening between their present position and safety. The wind blew coldly from the open door, and all eyes looked anxiously forth across the broad green surrounding them, lighted faintly by the moon.

“Danger and death lurk in every corner of this devoted city,” said the priest solemnly; “you must for awhile commit yourselves to the shelter of my roof: none will suspect, and should aught occur to menace, I have a disguise which may elude discovery until means of departure can be obtained. This evening, perhaps, I may succeed.”

“And Violet —?”

“She will return to her parents; it may be that even now her absence has excited remark. Nay,” he continued, as he watched the expression of disappointment clouding the countenance of the person he addressed, “fear not; had not the maiden decided upon the future, would she have been here to-night? I will be sponsor for the Lady Violet’s forthcoming, whenever we shall have procured the necessary papers for your safe-conduct to the coast.”

The young man turned his eyes upon her as the promise was given; fear, anxiety, and a shade of tender pity, struggled with the confidence of reciprocated affection, upon his frank and manly features. She had crimsoned for a moment, but the flush rapidly passed away, leaving her cheek of a still paler hue. Suddenly, for she felt his gaze upon her and knew what was passing in his breast, she looked up. Not a word was spoken; the vow needed no expression, no

record, beyond the calm earnestness of those truth-telling eyes. A world of questioning, of doubt, of supplication, of devotion, had spoken in his glance; the responsive one said, as legibly as if words had been written there, "It is done! the die is cast: friends, fortune, home, all are as nought! Courage! nothing shall part us more!"

There are moments when the lightning flash of thoughtful emotion as clearly, as certainly, foretells the approaching thunder-shock of circumstance, as does its elemental type. Feeling but too often is prophetic; and determination rising involuntarily in the soul bespeaks the necessity calling forth (perhaps at that very moment) its development. Scarcely had the look passed between the lovers, scarcely had Violet permitted the expression of all the confidence, the self-immolating tenderness she felt, when one of the masons who had been standing a few paces from the party, apparently observing the disappearance in the distance of his companion, hurried to the priest, and whispered a few syllables in his ear.

They were received with the greatest dismay. Transfixed with surprise, it seemed scarcely possible to persuade the person addressed of the truth of the information; and, "Are you certainly assured of this?" "Remember what issues are at stake!" were more than once replied to, in terms too fully corroborating the impending danger.

"There remain then no other means," said the priest, suddenly coming forward, after musing for a short time: "there is some reason to fear we are betrayed by one whose fidelity I trusted, but who either has or will play us false, and is, perhaps, even now on his way to inform others, who may speedily seek us in my dwelling or wherever else there is a prospect of discovering this imperilled head."

The countenances of all blanched, and a fearful stillness crept over the group. Was it indeed possible, that after so

awful a resuscitation from the horrors of the grave there were men, cold-hearted and sanguinary enough, untouched by human weakness and compassion, to give up again into the hands of the bloodhounds of crime, unlawfully thirsting for life, the object of so signal an intervention both of Providence and man?

“I fear,” continued the priest sadly, “there is no doubt that we are rightly informed; the gold which I desired might be placed in this wretch’s hands for the services of the night, could not satisfy his natural greediness. But if, as I conjecture, there are other feelings at work than those of mistaken political precaution, of wild and ferocious bigotry, we may set them at defiance, for the present at least, if you consent to take a hazardous step.”

“What mean you?” said the cavalier earnestly, approaching his counsellor, and speaking below his breath, as if to avoid her ear, though he still retained the hand of the trembling girl: “she has courage for all! what is it you suggest? Speak, I implore you; for her heart will sink under these repeated trials, this continual suspense!”

Leading them apart, the clergyman dismissed the remaining two attendants, and directed the leech to close the door of the cathedral. This done, a few moments were spent in deep and agitated consultation. At their conclusion it seemed as if all plans were arranged, doubts and scruples alike overcome or appeased, and the countenances of the whole party lightened by the resolution apparent upon each.

Silently the youth took the hand of his affianced, and lifting it to his lips, drew her up the nave along one transept, and so to the upper end of the choir.

Fitful gleams of colour passed athwart the features of Violet, but her whole bearing and demeanour declared anxiety for her lover, and determination to be his in life or

death predominant to any bashful reluctance, inopportune at such a moment. The clergyman placed himself before the pair as they sank on their knees upon the altar steps; the man of medicine, silent and interested, stood near them, sole witness of the coming ceremony.

Presently the hearts of the listeners throbbed with solemn emotion, as the first words of the marriage-service fell softly but painfully distinct upon their ears.

Strange sequel to the fearful struggle for life through which one of the party had passed so short a time before! Upon a spot, but a few paces from where his form had lain, lifeless, save for the almost miraculous endeavours of others to recall the throb of sense, stood the resuscitated aspirant for bright years of hope and joy, to gild his future with the rays of love; himself the star of destiny to his betrothed. The planet which had so lately wandered to the very precincts of life's horizon was retracing its glorious path, to shine once more, the centre of a world replete with youthful promise. Shall it be a second time obscured? Shall it be lost in darkness for ever?

The first grey streaks of daylight were struggling in the heavens when Violet, agitated yet exulting with the wildness of recovered hope, reached, by the same means which had obtained her secret egress on the previous evening, her apartments in her father's house. The mansion was profoundly still; and treading as in a dream, for it was almost impossible, now she was again alone, to realise the events of the evening, she secured her door from intrusion, and threw herself exhausted into the nearest *bergère*—to think.

The whole scheme of resuscitation had been hers from first to last. Originated in a moment of the extremest peril, its fulfilment had seemed to others impracticable, so that only

the coherency of her own projected development of it could have won from her assistants in the desperate endeavour their consent and co-operation. Yet after all it had been successful.

Means had been found, through her energy and presence of mind, to bribe the mercenary entrusted with the execution of the extreme penalty of the law; and although surrounded by keen observers, the possessor of this unenviable post had well and faithfully performed his promise. Undeterred by the dread of detection, the hangman had managed to arrange the cord so that suspended animation alone was likely for a considerable period to ensue. But when it is considered how improbable was the revival, hurry on the burial as they might, it will be plain that the whole scheme must have failed had not Violet herself undertaken the principal part of concealing herself within the vault; so that, ready to receive the body of her lover immediately it was consigned to the earth, she might remove the already loosened screws of the coffin and apply whatever restoratives lay within her reach for his resuscitation.

Hope—ethereal atmosphere!—buoyed upon whose filmy breath the perilous car of life's emotions hovers over unfathomed abysses,—hope had upheld the heroic girl through all the concentrated horrors of the last few hours. Could she have survived them without it?

He had been torn ruthlessly from her; his crime a secret, his fate mysterious. Then came information from silent, but undeniable authority, that he was to die! Instantly was formed the plan for his escape, the means provided, the preliminaries arranged. We have seen her awaiting the period of what might be her lover's end, nerved to endurance by the thought that perhaps to her was reserved the blessed lot of imparting to him a second life; that through her instru-

mentality alone, blissful years, far from the distracted country of her birth, might extend their brilliant vision, to lure them both back again to love and joy.

But not the least part of the bitter draught she had tasted was it, that in her own house, surrounded by her closest relatives, Violet had had to stand alone. She was altogether unsupported, unsolaced by those who should have mitigated the shock, or aided her wild undertaking, which appeared to hold out but one faint chance of success, opposed to hundreds of discovery and thereby certain failure.

Poor Violet! she had no brother to protect, no sister to encourage her. Age, which transforms the generous and heroic into the cold and calculating, had deprived her of those sympathies of parental tenderness which, as the offspring of an earlier marriage, she might have commanded. Although in heart a decided Protestant, the temporising spirit of the age found her father disposed to regard his secret faith as complete and potent, without incurring the peril of reprobation by its distinct profession; and this principle he consistently adopted in everything. Too cautious to compromise himself by espousing any party question, he was regarded with distrust by all; perhaps, so vacillating does even the energetic spirit become under the influence of physical and moral weakness combined, he came at last scarcely to be aware himself what sentiment he possessed, what opinions he advocated. It was a fact, that at the very time of his daughter's engagement to a lover, her equal in every point of worldly advantage, the object also, it was well known, of her entire affection, he had given to it but a wavering sanction, for the sole reason that he had been manœuvred into a tacit admission of the pretensions of another suitor, rejected by his daughter, and whom he dared not dismiss lest he should change him into an enemy.

Still more hopeless was it to think of enlisting her mother in Violet's cause. Several years younger than her husband, this lady, gay, frivolous, and unthinking, resembled the old man in toleration of, if not devotion to, the ascendant power. Energy and decision she possessed; but supremely selfish, his weakness and her egotism resulted in one and the same course of action; and the happiness of their child might have been repeatedly sacrificed without winning from the one more than a few tears of morbid pity, and from the other a lively recommendation to "let the past alone, and look out for another lover."

And yet, as far as natures so opposite to her own could command her affection, Violet loved both her parents. Though gifted eminently as well with self-control as the knowledge of innate independence, she would still have given worlds to throw herself at their feet and breathe her happy secret, with its weight of sweet responsibility, in their ears; to sue for pardon for the hasty acquiescence to her lover's persuasions, which had removed her for ever from the guidance of home.

Near at hand, upon a lectern of carved wood, lay the sacred volume. Violet turned to it with a feeling of comfort inexpressible, and breathed an inward prayer for guidance from above to fortify all that was good, and calm all that was conflicting in her mind. After some time she approached the window and looked out into the early morning. Physically, as well as mentally, she had need of refreshment, and the soft breath of nature soothed the fever upon her brow.

There is a store of mystic theology opened to the soul's gaze, when the eye of day first looks down upon the varied page of material creation; and vivid truths of no transient impress come down and walk like angels with us in the roseate pathway of the early dawn. Addressing themselves less to the intellect than to the affections, they yet bind the former as an





Margaret Gillies

Alfred T. Heath.

The Lady's Pocket

unreluctant auditor to their wholesome counsels; with which, through sensations entranced and enraptured, they influence the latter. We can take advice from the silent dew-drop on the rose; pride, which scorns rebuke, bows before the stealthy sweetness of the summer morning: who can be wilfully unquiet when the great heart of all nature beats so calmly near and around him in the pulses of the flowers? Violet felt that the witchery of the hour was potent; her heart expanded as she inhaled the fragrant air; her feelings grew distinct, even as the distant hills successively received their coronets of light from the monarch of the sky. Concealment of a thought seemed to wrong the scene where each feature of creation rose fresh, fair, and open, pencilled in heavenly azure; and she longed to realise in herself the same spirit of joyous freedom, to tell her parents all.

Filled with this impulse of generous confidence, and determined to reveal her secret to her parents, she had already turned from the window, when she was arrested by hearing the sharp click of the gate immediately below, leading to the private entrance of her father's apartments. An example of the earnest attention a pre-occupied mind often *apparently* bestows upon the most indifferent things, she leant forward to catch the lineaments of two dark figures, advancing with stealthy steps along the court-yard towards the house.

It was easy to identify one of them: the streaming grey hair, uncovered, and waving in the morning breeze, announced her father; who, too hurried to seek his beaver, had sallied forth to admit his early visitor. This evident haste increased Violet's desire to discover his companion, and what motive could induce such unusual secrecy and caution.

Alas! her suspicions were speedily confirmed; every good and affectionate impulse suddenly checked. The man she hated; the dark and scowling suitor so often repelled; the

rabid Royalist bigot, by whose instrumentality she justly conjectured her lover's arrest had been achieved, if not originally planned, was there already, admitted to secret conference with the weak old man. The subject of that conference it was easy to determine, still more easy its result. She was betrayed, a sacrifice to imbecility and cowardice. Sacrificed! No! a flush came across her cheek—she was beyond their power—she was married. A moment's consideration, however, caused it to pale again. What safeguard did a marriage in those times oppose to her fate, if once determined on by that black-hearted man below, assisted by her natural protectors? Was it not as easy an enterprise to deprive her of a husband as it had been of a lover?

Her heart fell as she thus reflected: it was not to be thought of; her secret must be confined within her own bosom. Oh, how swelled that breast with fear and anxiety! She almost counted the hours that were to bring the joyous news that the ties of home and kindred were to be severed for ever—that, far beyond the shores of England, she was to abide in safety with him!

Violet's mother had a large reception that night. The rooms, magnificently furnished, and resplendent with lights, were thrown open to a brilliant assembly, rivalling in praise and adulation to the giver of the fête; every one whispering in his neighbour's ear bitter or contemptuous reproof of the want of feeling exemplified by the unseasonable hospitality, which, nevertheless, they heartlessly enjoyed. Though absent, Violet was the object of many kind thoughts, and sincere at least were the bitter anathemas invoked upon the agents of the ruthless deed which yesterday plunged her, as many knew well, into the abysses of hopeless misery.

The night advanced, and, according to the fashion of the time, a banquet of most elaborate and substantial character

loaded the tables, while the equipage of massive plate, and rare Oriental and Flemish glass, flashed back the rays of light from the gorgeous candelabra and lamps of strange device upon the buffet. All was unthinking, superficial gaiety, and the host, who with nervous anxiety had endeavoured to become almost ubiquitous in his attention upon his guests, cognisant of the various jarring elements which slept beneath the slight incrustation of social politeness, called attention to the costly foreign wines, rare to the sight of many and to the taste of more, well pleased that here at least a safe subject was presented of general conversation. At the upper end of the spacious chamber, whose cedar panelling and silk embroidery, of quaint device, bespoke the artistic excellence of Holland and Spain, the lady of the feast dispensed her smile and compliments with the practised skill of feminine diplomacy, an art in which she excelled her sex.

The first frost of newly-paired association, incident to festivity, had thawed beneath the genial sun of hospitality, and the entertainment passing from goodwill into hilarity, had not yet prompted the cavaliers to the utterance or secret desire of banishing from their sides the fairer spirits to the lumbering coaches which, drawn by Flemish horses, were to convey the ladies from the fête, and abandon the nobler (?) order to the deep carouse usually terminating similar entertainments. At this happy moment, among the numerous domestics thronging the space beyond the tables, a youthful page of singularly elegant, though somewhat diminutive stature, glided through a panelled side-entrance immediately behind her ladyship's chair, and pausing a moment, as if to recall his senses, confused by the unaccustomed glare of light, and the crowd of strange faces around the board, approached hurriedly, and placed himself immediately at her

side. A moment after the kerchief of the lady fell to the ground; the page stooped for it, yet not so quickly as to anticipate the owner's recovery of it, who, indeed, saw not whose hand had been extended to regain it. Nevertheless, in that instant, short as it was, when a touch had lightly brushed her forehead, the mother little knew that a farewell kiss had been imprinted on the brow where never lip of child again should light; bitterly to be regretted, ay! even to the fullest measure of remorse that weak and frivolous soul could feel, in after years!

Unnoticed, however, with eyes suffused with tears, the page glided noiselessly to the other extremity of the apartment, and stopping scarcely a moment near the host, above whose silvery head a close observer might have imagined, with folded hands and upturned gaze, the youth invoked a blessing—was gone!

At the door of the chamber, awaiting the page's exit, stood a figure, muffled in dark drapery, the hand unconsciously extended, and quivering with the emotion of that life parting, was hastily grasped, and the steps supported with a care wholly unmixed with selfish trepidation through several passages more dimly lighted, until the door appropriated to the use of the master of the mansion was gained. The moonlight streaming in upon the pair as the door unclosed, revealed the features of his companion to the muffled figure, who, glancing tenderly at the pale countenance, uttered some words of hope and devotion, and with a powerful arm thrown around the slight form of the page, rather carried than supported it across the intervening space to the outer gate, in which the key was placed. A couple of steeds, concealed beneath a leafy elm, were ready at this spot, and at their heads two dark figures, one of whom soon discovered himself

by the voice as the priest, who, anxiously interrogating the fugitives as to the plan of their flight, urged, somewhat needlessly, the importance of the utmost dispatch.

“Your life depends upon your speed, my lord! We have your baggage in readiness, and Jacques will follow you with it, as also with the despatches you expect from London, and which will be here within an hour, when he has orders to start. But we are suspected. I have met the man who watched us last night, and, I repeat, speed alone can save.”

“I know it,” replied the deep voice of the young cavalier, in a tone of low determination, as he carefully enveloped his companion in the folds of his ample mantle. “Courage, Violet! my own—my wife! a few hours will place us in safety; and the waves, less treacherous than false hearts, will be alone witnesses of our tranquil joy.”

“I am ready,” murmured she; and though tears struggled in the accents, no one could doubt the alacrity with which her slight figure obeyed the impulse of his hand, which the next moment, gathering the reins carefully together, placed them in her grasp.

A few words of blessing and gratitude—the brief farewell, uttered with hasty, but deep fervor, and the next instant the true friend of the newly-wedded pair watched them with tearful glance down the broad pathway leading to the southern road, in the direction of the coast.

But the perils of the night were not yet ended, and the watcher’s heart beat anxiously as he distinguished a third rider emerge in silence, and follow the track of the fugitives with stealthy pace. To pursue on foot, for the purpose of warning them, the priest saw at once was useless; for already the tramp of the last horse’s hoofs was faint and distant, and scarcely discernible in the pauses of bustle and merriment in the mansion. At the principal entrance stood several persons,

besides the servitors of the guests, and through this group he proceeded to hurry the departure of Jacques to his master's assistance, breathing as he went fervent prayers for that safety which he was powerless further to promote.

Meanwhile Violet and her lover passed the outskirts of the city unchallenged. Few words were spoken, for the danger was yet imminent, and the smallest inadvertence so hazardous that neither dared utter more than an occasional whispered exclamation. Where there was less chance of observation the cavalier grasped Violet's bridle; but in the broad moonlight, and wherever travellers still dotted the quiet highway, they rode apart in silence. Now and then, also, a soldier was passed, and her girlish heart fluttered as each was in turn distanced, with, perhaps, a salutation, answered frankly and cordially by her lover. Once the sentinel was a personal dependant, yet, though he hesitated slightly when the scarcely disguised voice met his ear, no molestation was offered. But it had not escaped either, that the mounted figure in their rear still maintained the same interval of pursuit, and looks of doubt were more than once exchanged, while with a muttered exclamation of rage the young lord had nearly turned to ask an explanation of the unseasonable presence. Suddenly, however, as the lights of the city were fading into obscurity, they missed their unwelcome companion, and both breathed more freely, as with accelerated speed their fleet chargers bore them across the elevated expanse joining the open country by a bridge which spanned the river.

Nor did they slacken their pace upon arriving at a deep grove, which, excluding entirely the moon's rays, was yet familiar to both travellers; and feeling comparatively safe beneath the covert, where neither horse's hoof was audible upon the soft herbage, nor the features of horseman to be discerned, they flew rather than rode, until the bridge termi-

nating the glade was gained. Who shall paint their surprise at the unwelcome sight of a troop of cavalry, which, surrounding the bridge-house, appeared to await their arrival with looks of insolent determination?

The travellers, nevertheless, advanced, as if undoubtful of the issue; and, encouraging each other, were passing onward, when a hand was laid upon the bridle of each.

“You are prisoners!” said a man, bearing a striking resemblance to their late pursuer; and who, as the nobleman rightly conjectured, had left them, to make a short cut across a difficult road, to arrive before them at his present post: “resistance is madness—surrender quietly.”

“You are mistaken, friend!” replied the person addressed, disguising as far as possible the voice that might have betrayed him; “on no pretext can I be detained, or my companion, yonder page; so unhand us, for time presses.”

“Boldly acted, i’ faith!” was the insolent rejoinder: “but you are known; and we are well informed of all the circumstances of your flight. Nor, methinks, were it a difficult matter to satisfy ourselves of the identity of the fair damsel whom you have, certes, most cunningly disguised—the Lady Violet!”

“Peace, sirrah!” exclaimed the other, the blood rushing to his brow, and his voice, in spite of himself, rising to its natural inflection: “not another word! Do you think I have been silly enough to trust myself and my companion to the tender courtesies of fellows like you? If indeed you are a soldier, and have authority to examine, inform me, I pray you, how you are called; that I may judge how far I need gratify your curiosity, or stoop to parley with your insolence.”

There was so much dignity and determination about the manner in which these words were uttered, that the soldier involuntarily gave his name, and assumed a tone of respectful

deference, which surprised even himself. He commanded a detachment of the "Lambs," that terrible name carrying terror to every heart; and as Violet recognised in whose hands she had fallen, she shuddered.

"Here, then, are my credentials," said the young cavalier, drawing forth a paper, which he displayed before the eyes of the soldier; taking care, however, to preserve it from his touch: "look at this signature, which even you, methinks, will not dare dispute. So now I must pass on, nor will I brook further delay."

He had not overrated his auditor's amazement, nor the importance of the paper he bore with him. The soldier had evidently expected a totally different catastrophe; and even now, as he glanced again at the superscription of the parchment, he whispered to his comrades, and seemed to hesitate how far he might be justified in detaining the captives.

"So! you pause, eh; and insult the Colonel's name," he could not bring himself from sheer disgust to utter it, "by question? Beware, on your own head shall be his wrath, if his purposes be thwarted by impediments to my discharge of a duty under his safe-conduct. Doubt not your ill-timed officiousness will be duly rewarded by one who, as you perhaps know, never fails to recompense soldierly attention!"

The biting sneer at the merciless cruelty of one whose name made even his own soldiers quail, did more, perhaps, than a thousand remonstrances, to induce the officer on guard to change his intention. "I cannot further question Colonel Kirke's orders: there is no forgery about that signature;—so, sir, your path lies before you. That mistake, however, there is, I am equally certain; and shall despatch men at once to ascertain the truth in yonder town, that we may stand a chance of recovering the reward now, it seems, slipping from our grasp. Meanwhile, a fair good-night to both;" he raised his

beaver as he spoke: "the word is the same," he added, with a ferocious laugh, "as on the memorable sixth, 'Soho'!"

Hardly awaiting the termination of this address, and securing once more the precious document of their safety, the travellers once more pressed onward; and ere the baffled guard had reached the town, and the curses of their disappointed employers had exhausted themselves, Violet and her husband drew rein in comparative security; preparing, with the aid of Jacques, for their departure to the friendly shelter of New England.

Great, of course, was the consternation, when the Lady Violet's absence was discovered. Nothing was ever definitely known about the circumstances of her flight; it was long believed that she had thrown herself into the river, and diligent search was made for some traces of the beautiful and high-spirited girl. Parental sorrow, indeed, was soon exhausted, in times too replete with danger to allow remembrance long to bring back associations of the lost one, to hearts so weak and vacillating. Some of the dependants declared that they had recognised the dark eyes and lofty brow of their young lady's murdered lover, under the broad hat of a foreign nobleman, on the night of the banquet; and if one or two believed the rumour, and deemed it other than a phantom raised by much thought and cogitation over the events of that night, they had the wisdom to conceal either their own credulity or want of superstitious awe.

One thing is certain, namely, that the king's trusty servant, the knight who had planned and plotted so deeply for the hand of Violet, visited, with a single companion, the vaults of the cathedral, and returned from the inspection with a countenance more crimsoned by rage than whitened by fear. It was generally supposed that the disappointment of hopes, so near their accomplishment, preyed on his mind; for he did

not long enjoy the confidence of a sovereign, of whose vices he became daily a more degraded instrument.

Many years after, when Queen Anne was established on her father's throne, there arrived from abroad a noble-looking, withal handsome pair; who, with their children, took up their residence in the ancient family mansion belonging to the ancestors of Violet. The estates and name to which the young lord would have succeeded fell, by his execution into the hands of collateral relatives; and, although some fancied a resemblance between the dignified and reserved stranger and the recollection of what the murdered youth had been in the pride of manly vigour, the heir was never disturbed in the enjoyment of the titles and lands which had reverted to him, so that the story passed away, or was regarded as a vague and superstitious legend.

TO MY MOTHER.

COMPOSED DURING ILLNESS.

BY MRS. W. P. O'NEILL.

“ A strain
Wafted from childhood murmurs through my heart,
And makes it lighter.”—T. N. TALFOURD.

MOTHER mine, thy soft voice ringeth
In mine ear to-night;—
Now it speaketh—now it singeth—
Yet, in every change it bringeth
A new and deep delight.

Mother mine, thy form is bending
O'er thy stricken one ;
Softly watching—sweetly tending,
Wayward wishes never ending,
Yet *thou* bearest on !

Ah, I wake me ! I've been dreaming—
Dreaming, yet not sleeping !
And I saw thy kind eyes beaming,
Like two stars at midnight gleaming
Down through clouds,—and keeping

Tender vigil, mother mild,
Tender watch o'er me ;
As when I, thy favourite child,
Though with wayward heart and wild,
Was sweetly watched by thee !

PARTING AND MEETING.

BY MARGUERITE A. POWER.

AND now the time was come when we must part ;
She still to dwell in our familiar haunts,
To rove alone where hand in hand we roved,
To see the cruel flowers we used to tend
Shine careless through her tears, as erst they shone
Through both our smiles ; and I, a wanderer,
To follow where God led me.—She had wept
Out all her tears, and sat in stirless woe
Too far worn out by grief to fight with Fate.

I took her hand in mine, I kissed her once,
Twice, thrice, all unresisting :— then I went
Forth on my mission into the wide world,
To battle with it ; and I won the fight.
And after years of hard endurance, toil,
And faithful looking back and forward to
The memory and hope of her alone,
I came to claim her. But I came too late,
For she was wed.—Ah, well ! I left my heart
In that safe cottage-home, so I suppose
'Twas thus it was preserved ; while hers, which went
Out in the troublous world with me, had strayed
In its bewildering mazes, had been found,
And pinned on some one else's sleeve.—The thought
Is very bitter sometimes, yet I trust
I have forgiven her my broken life.

THE HEIRESS.

BY MRS. GRENVILLE MURRAY.

ONCE upon a time — I really do not know how long ago — there was a tall, straight-haired youth, named William Graham. He came from one of the northern counties, and was probably of Scotch origin. His family had once possessed a small farm on the borders, but one of them had fallen into trouble, another took to drinking, the third (Willie's father) had a very large family, and a very little common sense; so the end of it was that the small farm was first mortgaged to the local lawyer, and then sold. Old Graham's family were dispersed, and Willie found himself one gloomy morning, towards the end of October, in London, with only a groat in his pocket.

He took such good care, however, of the groat, that it thrived in his hands more than a thousand pounds would have thriven in those of anybody else. I do not believe he ever met any charitable and eccentric old gentleman in the street. Had he done so, I scarcely think that any individual, however charitable and eccentric, would have taken a fancy to him at first sight, for he was a most uncouth and awkward fellow. He was entirely the builder of his own fortune, and of all the millions of groats which sprung from the first there was not one which he ever owed to the charity of anybody.

The truth is, Willie Graham had one quality of mind, which conduces more to success in life than every other quality put together — a quality more valuable than beauty or genius, and which is better even than wealth itself. He was fond of "booing." He had none of the faults of his

father—children seldom have—he had seen their consequences too nearly. He had no idea of marrying and having a large family, and preferred going to bed without his supper rather than break in upon his cherished hoard of *groats* to purchase it. Not that he objected to supper, he had as keen an appreciation of liberal diet as other people; but he possessed a far higher notion of the importance of *groats* than probably any boy of his age in London.

Groats, like men and women, go where they are loved and respected, and avoid those who value them lightly. Willie was not long in making this discovery, and profiting by the lesson in more ways than one.

Many years before a beard had darkened his chin he might have been seen, early and late, frequenting the very busiest parts of the City; he did not hang listlessly about, leaning against posts, and dreaming of Whittington and his cat, but was constantly on the look-out for employment. His thread-bare clothes were brushed till there was not a spot on them; his lank hair was plastered down till it shone again with water from Aldgate pump; and Willie's shirt was clean, if not ironed, for he washed it himself.

So the magnates of the City began to take notice of the boy, and it was, "Graham, run down to Clapham with this note for Mrs. Dobbinson, and tell her to bring my daughter up in the carriage this afternoon, and we will go to Richmond;" or, "Graham, go to Mr. Shufflington, and tell him I shall not wait for those shares a minute after twelve o'clock to-day." And Graham, who was always willing, ready, and alert with his "Yes, sir—I will, sir," speedily acquired a large connexion among the pompous, hard-voiced, red-faced elderly gentlemen, who may almost be called *La Noblesse du Comptoir*. At length one of those persons, who had made a royal fortune in a small dirty house in an alley where the sun had never been seen to peep in, and where the pure fresh

air of heaven had never penetrated, perceived that the boy who could go on errands so speedily, and do them so well and faithfully, might be entrusted with more important duties, and William Graham became a lad about the office in the dark alley. He had no particular or fixed occupation, but he was the general fag and butt of everybody. He spoke to the youngest and poorest underling with respect, and did his bidding with pleasure; but he addressed the more important members of the establishment as superior beings. And his "Yes, sir—I will, sir," was soon reserved solely for the use of Saunders Dowlas, the great millionaire.

Such qualifications as these infallibly lead on to fortune. We will not, however, follow Willie Graham, step by step, up the hill; sufficient for our purpose to say that he was still on the sunny side of forty when he became head partner in the firm of Saunders Dowlas, Sons, and Co., from which Saunders Dowlas, his early patron, had long since retired; and from that period fortune seemed never tired of smiling upon him. The Chancellor of the Exchequer acquired a way of sending for Mr. Graham when he got into difficulties. Mr. Graham became Governor of the Bank of England; had three stars after his name in the books of the East India Company; became first a Baronet, and then a Baron. People said he was the richest man in England; perhaps he had five millions of money; perhaps he had ten; nobody knew; and Lord Bentham (for that was the title he bore) assuredly was not very likely to enlighten them. Meanwhile he had married as unlikely a person, too, as could be thought of. Lady Bentham was a tall, pale, handsome lady, whose father had been a Colonel in the Guards. He had kept an account with the bank when Mr. Graham first became a partner. Mr. Graham had been much surprised at finding that the balance of that account varied usually from 109*l.*, the quarterly amount of the Colonel's annuity, which was paid in by

trustees, and 3s. 6d., which prevented it being closed. That is to say, for four days in the year the account was 109*l.*, and during the remaining three hundred and sixty-one days it was 3s. 6d. Mr. Graham did not like this at all, and wrote to the Colonel that "Messrs. Dowlas and Co. presented their compliments to Colonel Seymour, and would be glad to see him." The Colonel came—a tall, shattered old man, but still upright and haughty. Mr. Graham felt himself over-matched. He bowed instinctively before the fine wreck of a proud and gallant gentleman—a gentleman whose valour had helped to gain the victory at Quatre Bras and Waterloo—who might be poor, but who could not be humbled. The Banker bowed and stammered; the Colonel ha-ha'd! and told a story *à propos* about nothing. The Banker hoped they might be better acquainted. The Seymour looked at him out of the corner of his eye, and smiled.

"Would Colonel Seymour honour him by dining some day at his 'little place' at Streatham?"

The Colonel moved uneasily. "He seldom went out; he lived very quietly with his wife, Lady Catharine, at Hampton; he kept no carriage, and—and——"

"Might Mr. Graham have the pleasure of taking him up?"

The Colonel thought of the old time in his early days when he was called "Handsome Harry," and had done some stranger things than ride in a banker's carriage to a banker's dinner at Streatham. So, with a charming air of good nature, which had once made him the darling of society, he accepted the invitation.

The Banker called for him, and was struck by the sober, yet refined, elegance of the poor officer's home. He thought of the three-and-sixpenny account almost with a feeling of pain, for he was neither an ungenerous nor a bad man. He was proud of such an acquaintance as the Colonel—men

generally like those whom they least resemble—and felt quite grateful when the tall, stately Seymour, came in, and taking him cordially by the hand, said, “Ha! Graham, let me present you to Lady Catharine and my daughter. I see you are early.”

Lady Catharine Seymour was a daughter of the quasi-royal house of Neville; she had married “Handsome Harry” Seymour for love; they had been happy, too—love in a cottage, on six or seven hundred a-year—a modest *ménage*, where a sole, lamb-cutlets, Bordeaux from Fortnum and Mason’s, and that kind of thing, formed the *menu* of their simple dinners.

“It was all very nice,” Lady Catharine would say, “and the Colonel was a dear child, very unlike husbands generally; only Harriette should not marry for love if she knew it, for after all it really was a mistake. Yes, it was, my dear,” (and here Lady Catharine smiled to the friend with whom she happened to be speaking), “a great mistake.”

Then Lady Catharine’s eyes glistened, and I do not think she would have liked the noble husband, who had loved her so tenderly, to hear those words. We all learn some lesson in life, either a true or a false one, and Lady Catharine fancied she had learned hers. I do not think she had. I fancy she had got it by rote from the old Marchioness of Kinsale, her aunt, who had married three husbands and killed them all—at least they had all died. Lady Catharine saw the Banker, and learned that it was not quite clear whether he possessed five millions or ten.

“Mr. Graham really must stay and dine with them; she could not hear of his running away with her husband to Streatham. Mr. Graham must join their family dinner; it would be a bad dinner, but they had some venison, which her brother had sent them. Mr. Graham must put up with that.

The Banker stammered out an apology; Lady Catharine would not hear of it. With that charming command of language and manner which is nearly always the heirloom of high birth, she determined to make a friend of the awkward, shy, lank-haired citizen, and she did so.

It was worth while hoarding up groats to be fascinated at forty-five by a duke's daughter, and to have such a blooming beauty as Harriette Seymour for the asking.

A month or two, therefore, after the period at which "Messrs. Dowlas and Co. presented their compliments to Colonel Seymour, and requested to see him," there was a great hubbub in Hanover Square, and the carriages of half the nobility in the land went rolling along to St. George's Church, to witness the marriage of a lady of the splendid houses of Neville and Seymour with the wealthiest merchant-prince in all the land. It was all very well! whilst Lady Bentham was still a girl, my lord with his grizzled locks and his peculiarly cut coat was not a bad person; but before many years had passed the fine wit of the woman perceived that her lord was laughed at; the dandies from the "Guards' Club," and the "Travellers," made fun of her husband and made love to her.

The reader will naturally expect, that when this conviction dawned upon Lady Bentham she felt a supreme contempt for the one and a virtuous indignation at the other; these are the sentiments which ought to have sprung up in her heart, but truth obliges me to relate the story just as it happened. When she arrived at the conclusion that her husband was the subject of ridicule she felt ashamed of him; purely and heartily ashamed of him. She would never go out with him, and never stay at home with him. She was indeed very naughty, and behaved as badly as possible for a year or two.

She used to go and cry to her mother, who tried to soothe her, and would say, "Well, Harriette, my love, never mind; you will be more grateful to me some day."

"Never mamma, never! you have sold me! you have sacrificed me!" sobbed Lady Bentham, to whom this form of expression had been very frequently suggested in the fashionable world for some time past.

All this time the Colonel bowed his head. He had been surprised at the marriage of his daughter, and now for the first time in his life felt humiliated. The knightly old man, who had never stooped to one base or mean action, felt disgraced in his old age. Then came a crisis, nobody exactly knew what it was; but Mr. Gunter's services were not required at No. 000, Grosvenor Square, during the whole of one season. The services of Messrs. Vellum & Co., the great solicitors, on the contrary, *were* required.

One day a lady, very pale and excited, came down to the Colonel's cottage at Hampton; it was still the old cottage; Henry Seymour's account at the bank, as far as he knew, was still the old 3s. 6d.: the pale visitor was Lady Bentham.

She had come home. Fortunately for her, she had a prudent mother. The Colonel was out, and in less than half-an-hour afterwards, Lady Catharine was hurrying her daughter back to Grosvenor Square. Then she drove to the City, where the new peer still went occasionally, although he had nominally withdrawn from the great firm of Graham, whose commercial repute filled the world.

Lady Catharine was a capital manager. She frankly acknowledged that her daughter was a goose, besought the husband to forgive her, and entreated him to remember that she was young and wanted guiding.

Lord Bentham cried.

He said he would do anything if his wife would only speak to him sometimes, but that she treated him in a manner

which fairly broke his heart. He loved her very much. Would Lady Catharine come and stay with them?

She would not, but she would talk to her daughter. She did, and all was settled. Perhaps you do not believe this, dear reader? You may think, in the first place, that a hard-voiced, grey-headed, old banker, would not whine about his wife; and that if he did, a fashionable mother-in-law—moreover, the wife of a poor Colonel—would be the last person in the world to reconcile them.

But, believe me, the most impossible people you can think of will cry like children about their wives. Some of those rough old city people, apparently so absorbed about bonds and bills, have hearts so tender and unselfish that it would surprise you to look into them. And with regard to fashionable military mothers-in-law I know, in spite of the popular delusion to the contrary, that many of those ladies have a very large share of good feeling, tact, and good sense.

Lord Bentham behaved admirably. He treated his wife with a delicate courtesy, of which nine-tenths of the officers in the Household Brigade would have been incapable, and some years afterwards he had his reward, though it came slowly. The grizzled old man, when near sixty, absolutely conquered the heart and won the affection of one of the most lovely and charming women in London. Yes, his wife loved him really and sincerely; her better instincts had been roused by his generous affection; she felt grateful to that magnanimous heart which could see no wrong in anything she did, which had forgiven so much—everything, in fact—to the caprices of her girlhood, and which had borne with her indifference and scorn so long, and so uncomplainingly.

The truth is, Willie Graham had never known but one affection in his life—and she in whom it was centred might have done what she pleased; she reigned absolute in his

heart, dominated his nature, and he knew not what resentment towards her meant.

When they had a daughter, however, and that daughter grew up, Lady Bentham nourished sentiments for the establishment of Emily precisely opposite to those which her mother had entertained for her.

Lady Catharine had been taught, by many of those humiliations which cling to the most respectable poverty, that "it is a good thing to repent in a coach-and-six." Remember, dear reader, I do not say so: I merely say that such was formerly the opinion of Lady Catharine Seymour.

Now the opinion of the wife of one of the wealthiest peers in England was likely to be different, and it was different. Lady Bentham thought, in the first place, that husbands and wives should be about of the same age, or say eighteen and twenty-five,—no greater difference at all allowable under any circumstances. She thought, also, that gentlemen should marry gentlewomen; or, in other words, that birth and education should be about equal. Then she hated and despised money with an animosity that was almost ferocious, though in other respects she had now grown very gentle. I do not care to inquire how she became possessed of these sentiments, I merely state that she really entertained them.

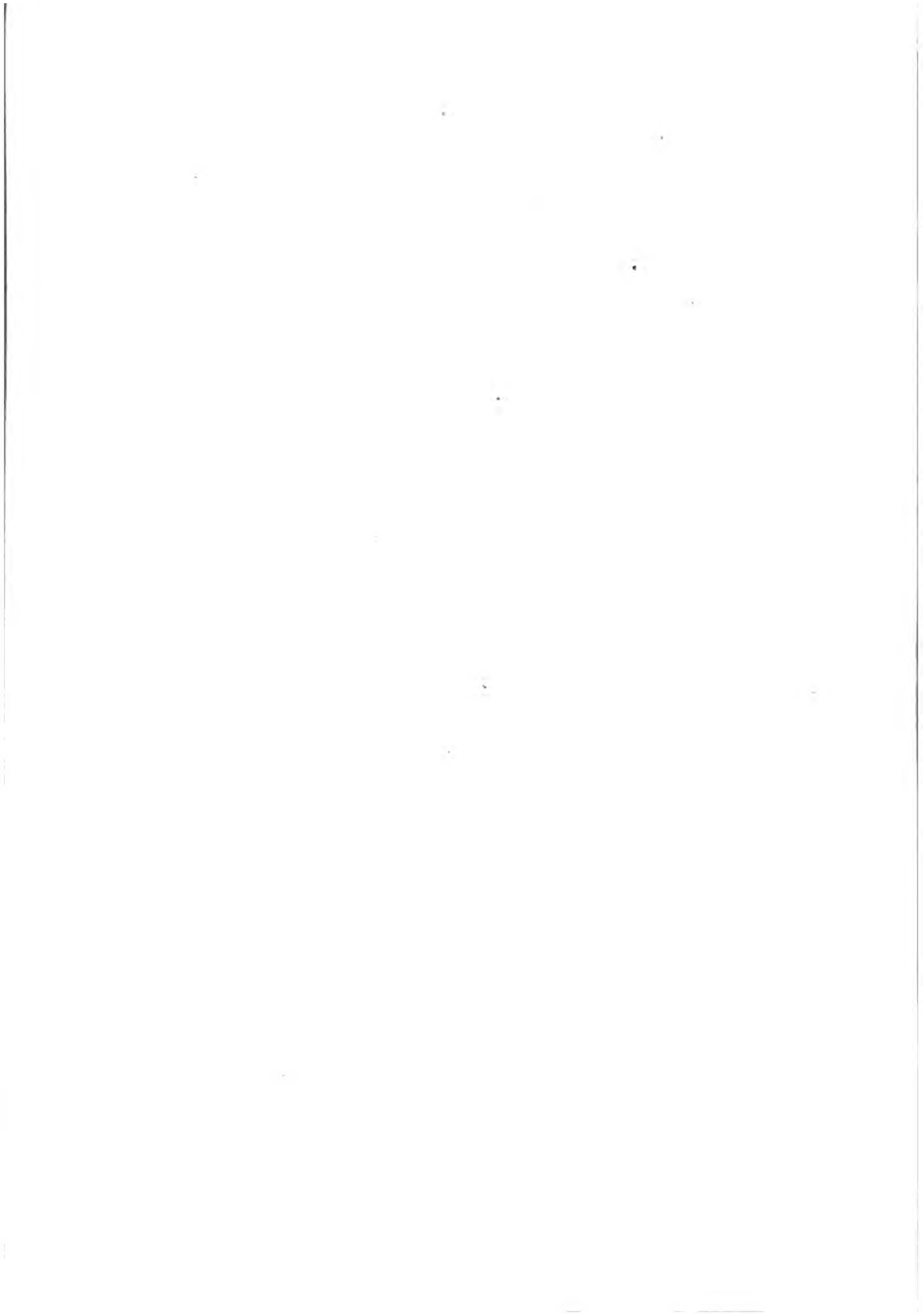
Emily at eighteen was the wealthiest heiress in England: unhappily, she knew it. Poor girl! it was almost painful to look at her. She fancied that every human being who approached her wanted her money. It is to the credit of English gentlemen, however, that she really received very few offers. Men were afraid of her. Younger sons felt snubbed when the great heiress was mentioned. There was something in every honest, sensitive heart, which made men shrink from the suspicion which clung to all who showed her any attention.

Poor child! she looked so stony and strange. Her dark hazel eyes had such a defiant expression, and her manner was short and imperious. She felt a mingled contempt and hatred for the world, and entertained small esteem for herself, for she had a painful conviction that she would probably never know the happiness of being loved for herself alone. Her mind ran to waste; it fell sick. Then she grew literary, scientific, philanthropic; and then scornfully tossed away literature, science, and philanthropy, for her old dark, wild, painful thoughts.

Poor girl!

Among the handsomest men in London, at that period, was Everard, earl of Digby, a splendid gay Lothario, as beautiful as Villiers or Lanskoï. By birth he was one of the first among English noblemen. His ancestors had been among those who had broken the Saxon ranks at Hastings; who had set up and pulled down kings in the wars of the Roses; who had fallen sword in hand at Crecy and Agincourt; who had blazed in the train of Henry on the Field of the Cloth of Gold; and the title, after remaining in abeyance for some generations, had at length been proved and taken up by a distinguished statesman in the reign of Queen Anne. Lord Digby was poor indeed, but in all other respects the alliance was unobjectionable. Emily loved him, loved him with a feeling of half hope, half fear; and this was enough for Lady Bentham.

Emily Graham, the bride, as she is presented to the reader, is being decked for the altar. The busy fingers of her maid give a last touch to the bridal costume; the veil falls lightly over the rich auburn tresses, which are drawn from the forehead to give width to a brow somewhat too low to be in harmony with intellectual beauty, and fall unrestrained in curls about her fair shoulders. Her thoughts are more bent on Brussels lace and orange blossoms, I fear, than on the holy rite about





to be performed. But it was one of the few days in her life that she was indeed a girl—a girl with all the sweet vanities and smiling hopes of girlhood.

At length the joyful sounds of village bells are heard through the oaks and glens of Bentham Park, ringing a merry peal in honour of the nuptials of the Great Heiress with Everard, earl of Digby.

They were married!

I do not think Lord Digby loved her very much, but he was proud of making the best match in England. For some time he was quite a lion. His own relations even made up to him, and were civil. People who formerly laughed at his moustachios began to think them extremely becoming. Grave old statesmen, who had always looked contemptuously at Lord Digby as an empty-pated jackanapes, grew quite cordial; and the French Ambassador asked, between an epigram and a truffle, “à propos de ce M. Digby,” whether “it were not really better to be silly than wise?”

“It all depends on the state of the market, Excellence,” replied his neighbour, a revolutionary somebody.

Now Lord Digby liked all this very well; it was new to him to feel of consequence among these sort of people. Had he possessed any real ambition, or an earnest desire to be useful, of course he would have taken up the respectable position in life which belongs to great rank and great wealth. Everybody would have forgotten that he was really a simpleton, and he might have lived to a good old age, very much to his own satisfaction and to that of other people also. Fate, however, has a perverse way of her own in managing these little matters.

It begun to be whispered that Lord Digby was gambling. It was known that Lord Digby was extensively engaged on the turf. Nevertheless, Belgravia shrugged her dear shoulders, and only said, “The poor man must do something with so

much money; and no matter what he did, he could never spend it all."

But Lord Digby was seen driving a four-in-hand, with some ladies in it, on a Sunday, and on the road to Richmond; and he was overturned by an omnibus; and there was a disturbance, and a great many improper things in the papers.

Belgravia looked grave. This might have been forgiven, however. But the worst part of the matter was that Lord Digby was never at home,—there was no cook, no dinners.

"That fellow Digby is a scamp," said Mr. Browne, who was the representative of a very large class, for he was a bishop's son, and his father had left an estate of about 10,000*l* a-year, which he had nearly doubled by marriage and management.

Mr. Browne made this remark after having called twice in Park Lane, about a marine villa which Lord Digby had one day promised to buy of him, and had forgotten it the next.

Poor Emily! She was a clever, keen-witted girl, and soon found out that her husband was a worthless trifler. Sometimes she did not see him for days; at length she did not care to see him. His alternate fits of affection and coldness were indifferent to her, and her proud, lonely heart, shrank from all communion with the empty ruffler. It fed upon itself, nursed and cherished its own sad fancies for a time, and then——she died.

None knew and none cared to know what blight had withered that young flower, or how sweetly it might have bloomed with careful nurture.

Every tale-writer is bound by ancient custom to furnish a moral. It is a kind of feudal tenure by which a literary estate is held. The custom, however, like many traditionary usages, is not always easy of observance. An author obliged to comply with it may well feel like the heir of a small copyhold, who is suddenly called upon to pay a heriot of

more value than his inheritance. Nevertheless, it is better to comply with almost any established rule than to break through it: so I will try to point my story by a few general reflections, trusting that good-natured readers will receive them with indulgence.

I wish, indeed, that I could give young ladies and gentlemen a little sound advice with respect to matters matrimonial; though it is by means clear that they would take it. It is very fatiguing to listen to advice, and young folks know every thing. They need not fear, however, being wearied with counsels, on this subject at least, by any counsellor whose opinion is worth having. The very wariest of us can only reiterate the opinion of the grotesque old French rhymester:

“ Prenez la, ne la prenez pas,
Si vous la prenez c'est bien fait ;
Si ne la prenez en effet
Ce sera réglé par compas.”

The quaint advice is addressed to a cavalier, but we have only to change the pronoun to make it suit a damsel. Who shall guide our footsteps when we enter upon enchanted ground? Shall we make love-matches like that of Lady Catharine Seymour, or money-matches like that of her daughter Harriette, or marriages of love and money, rank and youth, like that of Emily and Lord Digby? For my own part, I am half-inclined to believe that neither love nor money, rank nor youth, have anything to do with it. We are quite as likely to spill the wine of life in a golden chalice as in a wooden bowl. Our happiness depends, in a great measure, on our own conduct. Immediately after the wedding-day, then, let us sit down and learn the prettiest of all lessons, “*bear and forbear:*” we shall do very well when we know it by heart.

THE BRILL.

A LAY OF BRIGHTON.

BY EDMUND YATES.

ALL ye who know the town of Brighton,
And who knows not that pleasant place?
Which of the dwarf creates the Titan,
Which paints with health the palest face;
All ye in search of rest or vigour,
Instead of blister, draught, or pill,
To clear your brain, renew your figure,
Pay eighteenpence and take a Brill.

This Brill no flat or flabby fish is,
No toothsome meal for *gourmands* nice,
To be served up on china dishes,
Or cut up with a silver slice.
No fish, but flesh, blood, bones, and passion,
Perchance a Harry, Tom, or Will,
Who dresses in the latest fashion,
And keeps a swimming-bath, does Brill!

Yes, here's the place: the steamy vapours
Make windows and glass doors look dim;
This room, devoted to the papers,
Is filled with fogies old and grim;
Pass down these steps—this passage enter—
And now the bath itself we've found,
With fountain playing in the centre,
And dressing-boxes ranged around.

When first I saw these pleasant waters,
And plunged me in their cooling brine,
My height was three feet and three-quarters,
Of years I had accomplished nine;
But now I stand five feet eleven,
And, as I gaze on Brighton seas,
A soft hand's clasp to mine is given,
Three children cluster round my knees.

I think of those who many an hour
Passed with me here their boyhood's days,
And scattered now by Time's rough power,
Are wandering on in divers ways;
My thoughts through olden times are straying,
And drink at Memory's stream their fill—
What's this?—my eldest boy is praying
Papa to take him down to Brill.

Come, boy, we'll go and plunge together,
And there, amid the waters cool,
Awhile forget the sultry weather,
That rages 'neath the Dogstar's rule;
As quickly may we temper ever,
With calm the pangs of grief or ill,
As we shall cool our summer fever
Within the soothing bath of Brill.

FRANK LESLIE'S WIFE.

BY MARGUERITE A. POWER, AUTHOR OF "EVELYN FORESTER."

"If she be false, O! then heaven mocks itself.
I'll not believe it."—*Othello*.

I WAS travelling a night-journey by rail—it signifies very little to anybody now whence I came or whither I was going—the season was winter, the weather detestable, and the carriage in which I was seated full, with the exception of one place opposite to me.

The hour and the state of the atmosphere seemed to have produced their influence on my fellow-travellers; all of them sat huddled up in whatever wrappings they possessed: some sleepy, some sulky, some contemplative, all silent,—happily. To my mind, few things are more objectionable than communicative co-voyagers—of course, I mean the generality thereof. My habits are little gregarious; and though I do not agree with the maxim that language was given us to conceal our feelings, I do consider that it is a great misuse of it to employ it to give vent to all the crude, vague, uninteresting notions that flit through people's brains when they are out at grass, either temporarily or habitually; and I admire the wisdom of a certain little child, who, on being questioned as to the cause of her silence, replied, "Because I have nothing to say."

Now I maintain that few people coming together under

such circumstances, *have* anything to say that is much worth the saying, or the listening to; in general, incapacity on the one side, or the uncertainty of being able to hit upon what is likely to suit the idiosyncrasy of the unknown interlocutor on the other, restrains conversation to casualties of the flattest order: so that for my own part, unless I find in a chance travelling companion some decided evidence of the existence of that magnetic influence called sympathy, I eschew, as far as civility can possibly stretch her sanction, all risk of an exchange of common-places.

So that wet, windy, winter's night, after taking a stealthy though complete survey of the dim-lit visages around me, and seeing that there was not one that had in it aught to thrill, in the remotest degree the sympathetic chord, I, like the rest, rolled myself up in my wrappings, and subsided into meditative silence.

Meanwhile the train swept on, while

“ The wind like a broken worldling wailed ;”

and the rain, now sad, poured down in desolate torrents, now angry at being driven by the blast, dashed with a pattering rush against the glasses, always falling constantly and drearily.

By degrees my ideas became confused, and I found the muscles of my neck relax in a way that led me to start up every now and then, with a shame-faced consciousness of having made two or three involuntary salutes to my neighbours; a discovery which, for the moment, filled me with a sentiment of having somewhat disgraced myself, and induced me to hem, and clear my throat, and shift my position, in order to prove how utterly erroneous was any impression that might have got abroad that I had been falling asleep. At last, however, repeated observations, narrowly pursued after each of these occasions, having proved to me that the

other passengers were much too somnolently disposed to occupy or interest themselves in any way in the fact of my waking or sleeping, I cast aside my bashful presumption on this head, and worming myself as deeply as I possibly could into my corner, I resigned myself fully to my slumbers, and slept pretty well, notwithstanding the roaring, tremulous rumble, that the movement of the vehicle kept up in my head.

And so some hours passed away, and I was awoke, imperfectly by the stopping of the train, completely by the opening of the carriage-door, the sound of voices, and the entrance of a new passenger, who took the place opposite to me.

“Wrap yourself well up,” said a voice outside to the new arrival. “I’ll come to have a look at you each time we stop, and as soon as there’s a vacant place in either your carriage or mine, we can get together again.”

The door banged to, and in another minute we were once more in motion.

Surely I had heard that voice before! it was quite familiar to me,—oh, so familiar! A pleasant, frank, cheery voice; but for my life I could not put his identity on the speaker. I looked at my opposite neighbour,—a woman; her face, a young and agreeable one, bore a little indefinite expression of disappointment and anxiety, which the words I had heard, implying an unexpected separation, accounted for. That face, surely I knew it too! Where, and when, and how had I seen it? or was it only that it bore one of those strange, vague likenesses to some well-known face, so perceptible to the inner senses, so provokingly intangible to the more material faculties of the memory? Impossible to say, but the more I looked at my opposite neighbour, the more persuaded did I feel that we had met before; and the more puzzled did I become as to the circumstances of the

meeting. It was evident, at all events, that she did not know me; for though, more than once, our eyes met, no symptom of even a doubtful recognition betrayed itself in her glance.

She was a lady, that was quite unmistakable; she might have been from eight-and-twenty to thirty; with a fine, fair, open face; and rich, light, wavy hair: her figure was on rather a large scale, though not more so than became her mature womanhood; and altogether, though not a beauty, she was decidedly a fine, comely, intelligent-looking woman. But where the de . . . ,—oh pardon, reader!—had I seen her before? I *had* seen her! I knew I had! and it must have been under circumstances of some interest, or the face would not have made such an impression on me.

Meanwhile, the object of my attention had grown reconciled to the necessity that had so evidently annoyed her; for her pleasant features smoothed down to the expression of cheerful tranquillity that was evidently natural to them, and she leant back in her seat, took out a book, and placing herself so that the rays of the lamp at the top of the carriage could fall upon it, began to read.

As much as I had hitherto desired to maintain silence did I now wish to break it, and enter into conversation with my new neighbour. I felt sure she could talk well and agreeably, and I hoped that, if I could lead her to converse, I might find some clue to the explanation of this strange, mysterious, half-recognition that I had of her.

But this is always a difficult thing to do. The attempt is liable to misinterpretation, and I know few positions so embarrassing to both parties as that wherein the essay has been made and rebuffed, under a false impression of the motives of the advance.

At last I saw, or fancied I saw, the lady give a little

shiver. Here was an opening. On my knees lay a Scotch wrapper, for which I really had no occasion, and putting much humble suavity into my voice, I entreated that she would accept the use of it, assuring her, to prevent her feeling any embarrassment, how needless I found it. She smiled a frank, gracious smile, and, after a little demur, accepted it.

“Do you know at what hour we shall reach A——?” she asked. She was not, then, indisposed to talk! I was enchanted. I had not the slightest notion when we should reach A——, which was not my destination; but, in order to avoid letting the occasion drop, I hazarded a variety of more or less wide conjectures on the subject, and thus we gradually fell into conversation.

She talked well, as I was sure beforehand she would do—easily, naturally, originally, so as to indicate that the fund that lay below must be rich and liberal, when it could afford to bestow such specimens of its quality on the first chance-comer. She showed not, however, the slightest disposition to be led into any subject that was of a sufficiently personal character to throw any light, no matter how vague, on the point to which I wished to bring her, namely, the occasion, if occasion there had really been, of our first meeting; and gradually I became sufficiently interested in the present to get rid of some, even a good deal, of that irritating, haunting, shadowy memory that flitted about my brain, but would never settle down sufficiently for me to catch it by the wings, look it well in the face, and put a name upon it.

Now, reader, you believe I was approaching the shores of that well-known land whereon everybody, at some period of his or her existence, wanders alone, or in company, sometimes but treading lightly for a short space, and then passing on, sometimes exploring its every hidden nook and dell, hill and valley—I mean, *le pays du Tendre*. No such thing, upon my

honour. I have too much consideration for the sex to pay it the contemptible compliment of offering every sensible, agreeable, or even handsome woman I meet, a handful of that spurious tenderness which costs the giver nothing, and is anything but flattering to the receiver, if she be not a flirt or a fool. I have a theory of my own on the subject of friendship between man and woman, on which I mean some day, if I have time and energy, to write an essay of the most eloquent and edifying nature.

So I was not the least in love with my fellow-traveller, and our conversation was as free from any approach to flirtation as if she had worn whiskers, or I bandeaux bouffants and crinoline.

At last we stopped at a station, where we were informed we should stay ten minutes. The rain had ceased, and a few of the travellers whose limbs were cramped, or for whom a vision of food and hot liquids—albeit the possibility of imbibing such within the space of time allotted was highly problematic—possessed irresistible charms, unwound their wrappings, and in various moods scrambled out of the carriage. Faithful to his promise, up came the companion of my *vis-à-vis*, and put into the vehicle a face so cheery that it was no wonder hers vividly reflected its brightness. That face, it required no effort of memory to recall the name of its owner. Frank Leslie—dear old Frank!—one of the dearest and oldest friends I had on earth, though the world's battledore had knocked us both about in different directions for so many years that we had almost wholly lost sight of each other.

I had heard in stray ways that things had thriven with him, and that he had married: some people said an old love, but further than this I knew nothing.

The meeting was no less warm and cordial on his side than on mine.

“It is an idle form, I perceive, to go through the ceremony of a regular introduction between you and my wife; that plaid, which I know to be none of hers, betrays that you have not awaited my sanction to become acquainted—Fancy your meeting each other in this way!” and he wrung my hand again.

“I wonder if I can get into this carriage,—if any of the people mean to stop here, or would exchange places with me?”

“I say,” addressing himself to a surly-looking official, “do people often stop here?”

“Why, sir, they can’t help themselves, when the train stops.”

“No, but for good—eh?”

“Sometimes they does; sometimes they doesn’t.”

“I’ll get in, at all events. I can but be turned out if the owner of the place comes back,” and in he jumped.

Dear Frank!

Have you ever noticed the effect produced on your mind by a return of sunshine after a long period of cold and cloud? You have got so far accustomed to—though not content with—the ungenial weather, that you almost fancy that is the normal state of the climate, and you cease to occupy yourself much about the matter. Then out bursts the sun again. What a luxury it is! Now you seem to live anew! Now you wonder you were ever able to do without it! What a happy holiday-face Nature puts on! And thus it is till you get used to it; then the wonder goes by, and you continue to enjoy it, but in another fashion—soberly, calmly, as if it were as natural and necessary to you as the blood in your veins, and so you regard it till again it leaves you.

Thus I felt with Frank. At first, as he laughed and talked—half-wit, half-nonsense, all warmth, and charm, and gaiety—I seemed to be assisting at some delightful represent-

ation; I found myself noting his *bon-mots*, his expressions, his turns of voice and countenance, ever ready to cry "hear!" or "*encore!*" and addressing glances of appealing admiration to his wife, as who should say, "What do you think of that? Did I tell you too much?"—to which she replied by looks of responsive pride and delight.

Then the genial current of his nature seemed, as of old, to mix itself up quietly with mine, and I felt tranquilly happy.

Our destinations, by a happy chance, were the same. Where I was going to remain for a certain time—perhaps finally to establish myself—was situated their permanent residence, and it was soon settled that I should begin my stay at W——, as their guest. They had a charming house, the picture of comfort, joined to that peculiar, that *real* elegance, which only a refined and cultivated taste can throw about the habitation of its possessor, and with which money has very little to do—which, at all events, money alone is utterly powerless to produce. They had two lovely little children; their servants were cheerful, and intelligent, and good-looking; their garden, in the midst of winter, had such lots of shiny-leaved evergreens, such a plenty of chrysanthemums, Christmas-roses, and red-berried shrubs of one sort or another, that it did not look dreary; and a little conservatory, the pet hobby of Mrs. Leslie, won a perpetual sunshine to fall through its gold-coloured glass on flowers as bright and lovely as summer's best.

"And now, Frank, tell us how all this has come about," said I, when, at half-past ten o'clock, Mrs. Leslie had retired, leaving us to the *tête-à-tête* she felt we wished for, and having accorded a permission, only given on very special occasions, that we might smoke in the drawing-room.

"I heard your uncle had left you his fortune, and that you had married an old love. Was it really Alice Clayton?"

“Herself, by George! Well, you know all about the early history of the affair — penniless suitor — girl little more than a child — stern, ambitious father, who bullies her — separation — lover goes to seek his fortune vaguely *de par le monde* — meets a friend — yourself, old boy — and so on.

“Well, you remember when you went to Spain, and we were separated for a year and a half. During that time I received the intelligence that Alice was married, — married to a fellow with money. I knew it was her father’s doing — that she would not willingly have been faithless to me; but I did not know it *all* then as I do now, and I could not forgive her weak submission. I asked no explanation, I made no reproaches; I tried to banish her image from my heart, and I never allowed her name to pass my lips. You thought, no doubt, when we met again, that it had been a boyish fancy, that had died out, for you may remember I never spoke of her again to you.

“Do you recollect, some five years after, when you came back to England, our going one night to the theatre, which, in consequence of the appearance of an actress, — Mrs. Harmer, who had only lately come out, but had made an enormous sensation, — was so crowded that it was impossible for us to find places together?”

“Perfectly!” a trait of light suddenly shot across me, Frank went on, —

“You remember the play was ‘Much Ado about Nothing.’ We were late, and only got in for the commencement of the first scene of the third act. Heavens, how I remember it!” He went on, rather as if thinking aloud than addressing himself to me, — “The garden-scene,

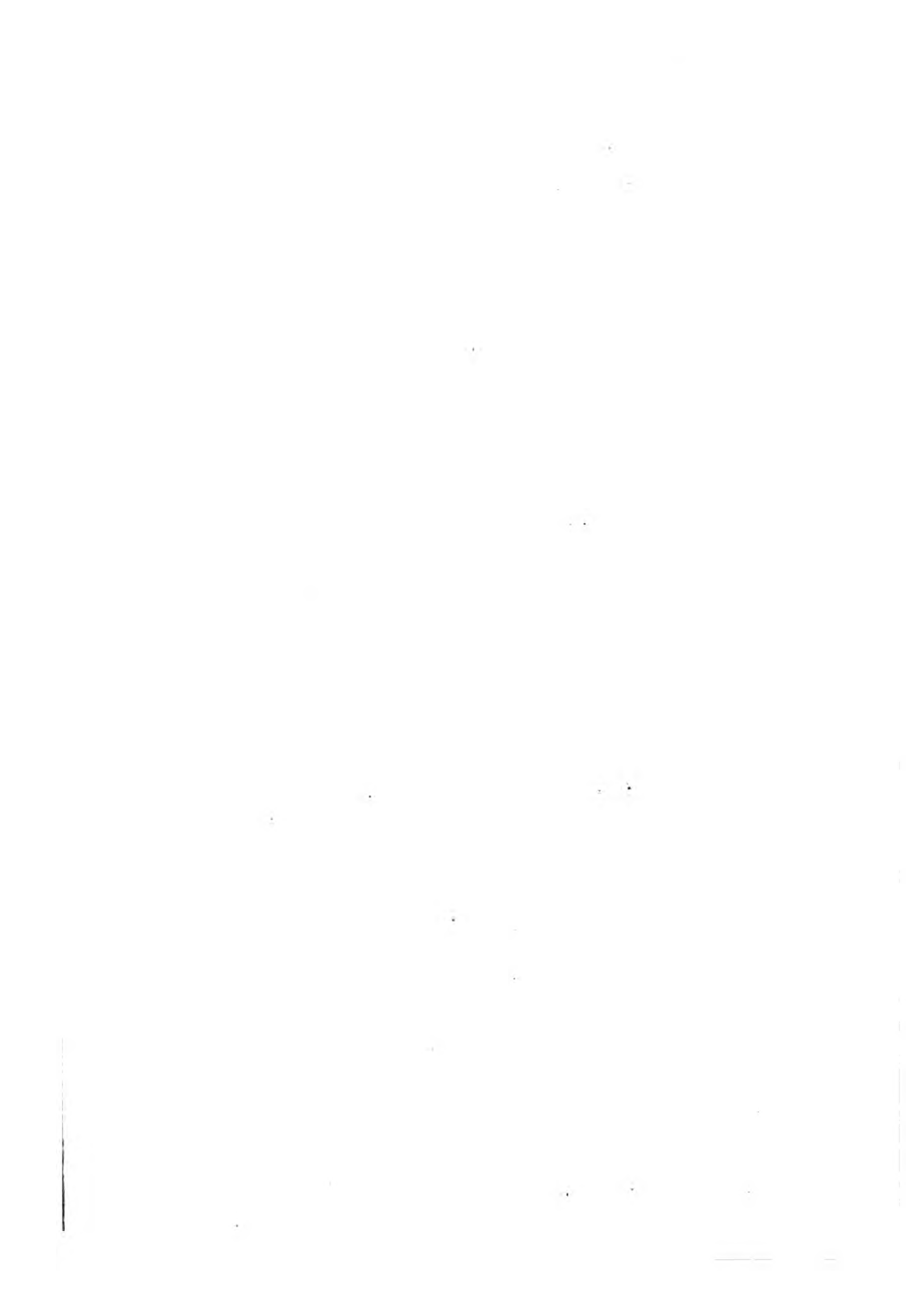
‘ ——— the pleached bower,
Where honeysuckles, ripen’d by the sun,
Forbid the sun to enter:’



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Hero and Ursula walking up and down conversing: I remember Hero's voice; my thinking her too tall for Benedick's description of her. Ursula's mincing walk,—and then—and then—Beatrice's entrance!

“She stood facing the audience, faultlessly costumed, her fair wavy air put back in large, loose masses, mixed with jewels. One hand rested lightly on the railing of the bower, the other was raised in a listening attitude:—it was Alice—I knew her in an instant; no doubt, no hesitation, was for a second possible. Alice, my affianced! Alice, another man's wife! Alice, an actress!—I left the theatre and went home, in a state of mind which even now it disturbs me to think of. Sleep, rest, were impossible. I had, knowing her youth and her father's character, been able to comprehend, if not to forgive her desertion of me; I had therefore made no attempt to have it explained. But now, how to account for, how to excuse *this* step! she, married to a man of fortune and position, to leave her station, her home, her family, to appear on the boards of a public theatre, a salaried actress! Some explanation of this, I felt I must have: it was so dreadful to me to be obliged to despise her, that I was resolved, ere utterly condemning her, to be informed, as far as possible, of the circumstances that had placed her where I had seen her that night.

“At first I thought of writing to her, but I soon abandoned that idea. No, I would seek to obtain through some impartial source an idea of her real position, before making myself known to her: it would, I knew, be better on all accounts. So next morning, as early as I thought I could decently present myself, I called on the manager of the theatre. Fortunately he was at liberty, and I was shown up almost immediately.

“I lost no time in entering on the subject of my visit. In

order that he should have no false impression as to the object of my inquiries, I told him that the extraordinary resemblance of Mrs. Harmer to a friend I had lost sight of for many years, induced me to imagine that I might thus have found a clue by which to trace her, but that I wished, before attempting to intrude on the lady herself, to seek of him any such information as might tend to confirm or dissipate my impression concerning her.

“He replied readily and politely; he told me that he knew very little of the private history of Mrs. Harmer; that he was not even aware if that was her real name; that he had been told she had formerly been in very different circumstances, but that, owing to an unhappy marriage and misfortune of various kinds, she had been induced to try her fortune on the stage. That her mode of life, her manners and conduct, were in every respect calculated to confirm this account; and that, though he had few occasions of seeing her in private life, he entertained for her the highest esteem and consideration.

“This was all I desired to know, for of her identity I had never entertained a moment's doubt; and furnished by the manager with her address, I went then and there to seek her.

“I won't stop to entertain you with a description of the lodging in which I found her: if not absolutely miserable, materially speaking, it was one of those wretched, struggling, shabby-genteel abodes, that bear in every detail the stamp of a meagre, threadbare poverty, that seeks to deny its existence by putting delf jemmy jessamies on the mantel-piece, and covering the empty grate with a cut-paper apron.

“By Jove, old fellow, how my heart beat as I followed the red-elbowed maid-of-all-work up the vile, narrow, dark staircase! At last, very high up, she stopped at a door and knocked.

“When I heard the ‘Come in!’ when the tone of that

voice made me feel that only a deal plank separated me from Alice, I felt as if I should choke. I shall never forget the next moment—Alice's look, as with an air of grave, questioning surprise, she rose and stood waiting for me to speak. Open-mouthed Abigail was still staring there, so I merely held out the card I had brought in my hand; but she did not take it. On the instant I saw the dawning recognition in her eyes, then the sudden rush of blood that crimsoned her before pale face up to the very temples; she held out her hand to me,—

“‘You may go, Betsy.’

“The door closed and we were alone; she had grown deadly pale again, and I noticed that she trembled, but she was the first to speak.

“‘It is many years since we met; I did not expect that you would seek me out, but I thank you with all my heart. How did you find me?’

“I told her, and asked her if it were possible that I, as an old friend, could in any way be of the slightest service to her. Again the crimson flush rose to her face.

“‘Thank you,’ she said. ‘No; no one but God and my own efforts can help me.’

“‘And your father? your husband? will you not, at least, treat me with confidence? Surely *I* have done nothing to forfeit *your* friendship?’

“I suppose—though, Heaven knows, I hardly did it intentionally—that there was a touch of reproach in my tone, for she held out her hand saying,—

“‘Ah, no! to you not even the appearance of blame attaches! I *will* be frank with you, and tell you all.’

“Good heavens! what a history it was! It was to save her father from ruin that she had married a man who

had the means, and who pretended to have the will, to do so.

“He was a gambler, and at heart a rascal; her sacrifice was vain,—her father died, ruined none the less; and soon her husband, plunged in disgrace and difficulties, fled to America, leaving her and her child, a son, utterly unprovided for. She tried everything; but what can the work of a woman, a lady, do under circumstances of such utter destitution, burdened more especially by the charge of a young child, requiring her constant care and presence?

“One day, when all things had failed, and she was sick of turning over in her poor tormented brain the ever-agitated-and-never-resolved question of ways and means, her child came up to show her a treasure he had found; it was an odd volume of an illustrated Shakspeare I had given her years before, and in it was ‘Romeo and Juliet;’ she had played the part of Juliet once in private theatricals, with the most singular and brilliant success; and with the recollection, an idea, a suggestion, shot like a meteor through her mind: she would try the stage,—in such a cause the attempt would be hallowed, and she had, therefore, no scruples in adopting the determination.

“In former years, M——, the great tragedian, and—as I need not tell you, for you knew him—one of the best men and gentlemen of our day, had been intimate with her father; and he, she remembered, had been among the most earnest in his expressions of admiration and approval on the occasion of her performance of Juliet. To him she wrote on the spur of the moment; the return of post brought his reply: and after a short period of study under him, he obtained for her an engagement. You recollect the effect her representations made on the public?

"I ought to tell you, that the name under which she came out was that borne by her mother before her marriage; she did not like either to appear under her own, or to adopt a wholly false one.

"Whether it was this circumstance, or another, that called her husband's attention to her, no one knows; the result was, however, that one fine day the rascal made his appearance, swearing repentance and amendment. All was forgiven, if not forgotten; and as his position required him to keep himself concealed, this served as his excuse for living in idleness on her earnings till they were pretty well exhausted, and then he disappeared again.

"At the time I saw her, she had not heard of him for a year; and she had just scraped together enough money to put her son to a good school, and lay by what would assure a little provision for him in case of her death occurring before that of her husband: for I ought to have told you, that at his death the son would come into a sum of fifteen thousand pounds, settled at the period of the marriage on the eldest child, and which no one else could lay a finger on.

"From that time I, with her permission, visited her occasionally, but only occasionally; for worlds, even had she allowed it—which she would never have done—I would not,—notwithstanding all the intense affection I bore her,—nay, for that very affection's sake, have run the risk of incurring a remark or a comment on her. Had you seen her then, Walter, what a heroine!—what a grand, noble creature she was!—how brave, how true, how resigned, how earnest!—and withal, how quiet, how simple!"

Frank paused, and looked in the fire for a few seconds; then he went on abruptly,—

"This lasted for—let me see—close on a year and a-half. One day I went to see her, and found her looking peculiarly

grave and pale. I knew in an instant that something unusual had happened, and I asked her at once if she had received any bad intelligence.

“ ‘God forgive me,’ she said, ‘if I cannot find it in my heart to call it altogether bad, and yet it has greatly moved me.’

She held out a letter, which in a few words announced the death of her husband. It was written from a prison in one of the Southern States of America, where he had been incarcerated for robbing at a low gambling-house, and where he had died just in time to escape the punishment of this and various other misdeeds, which there was no doubt would be traced to him.

“The rest of the story tells itself. In a year — she would not hear of our marriage taking place sooner — Alice became my wife. Her son’s fifteen thousand pounds — the interest of which she was to enjoy for her life — being paid into her hands on the official account of her husband’s death being obtained, she was enabled to leave the stage at once, and live in comfort and retirement till the period of our marriage.

“So there’s how it all came about, old fellow. And now it’s close on twelve o’clock, and after last night’s railroad it’s high time we both sought what Dick Swiveller calls our ‘downies.’”

And so we did, and never did I more thoroughly enjoy what the same high authority denominates “the balmy” in my life than in that delicious snug bed, albeit in my dreams there were a variety of puzzling metamorphoses going on between Benedick’s Beatrice and Frank Leslie’s wife.

FOUR SEASONS.

BY ALFRED A. WATTS.

WHEN Life was spring our wants were small,
The present hour the future scorning,
A stunning partner at a ball;—
A place among her thoughts next morning:
No fears had we that she could lose
The varied charms our fancy lent her;
Terpsichore was then our Muse,
And Mr. Thomas Moore our Mentor.

Time passed, till, though our needs were few,
Hopes rose—but 't was not hard to span 'em—
An opera bone, *paille* gloves, a new
Rig out, or ten pounds more per annum:
When deeper aspirations came
We called in aid—Imagination,
And drew on Fancy,—for our Fame,
And for our Love,—upon Flirtation!

Grown more sagacious by and by,
The wants and hopes of life advancing,
We learned to spell Love with an *i*,
And dining took the *pas* of dancing:
We smiled at Fancy;—pitied Youth;—
In Power, began Life's aims to centre,
Demurred at Faith;—and doubted Truth,
Till Self became both Muse and Mentor.

Another Season served to prove
Our false appraisement of Life's treasure ;
We found in Trust, and Truth, and Love,
The very corner-stones of Pleasure ;
That youth of heart showed age of head ;
That gaining was less sweet than giving ;
That we might live, and yet be dead
To all the real joys of living.

Our Dreams how shadowy and vain
We've found ; and turn back, truer hearted,
With humbler quest, to seek again
The simple Faith in which we started ;
And, deeper read in Wisdom's page
Know now, how we have been beguiled : who'd
Suppose the objects that engage
The hopes of Youth ; the aims of Age ;
Should find their end,—in Second Childhood ?

