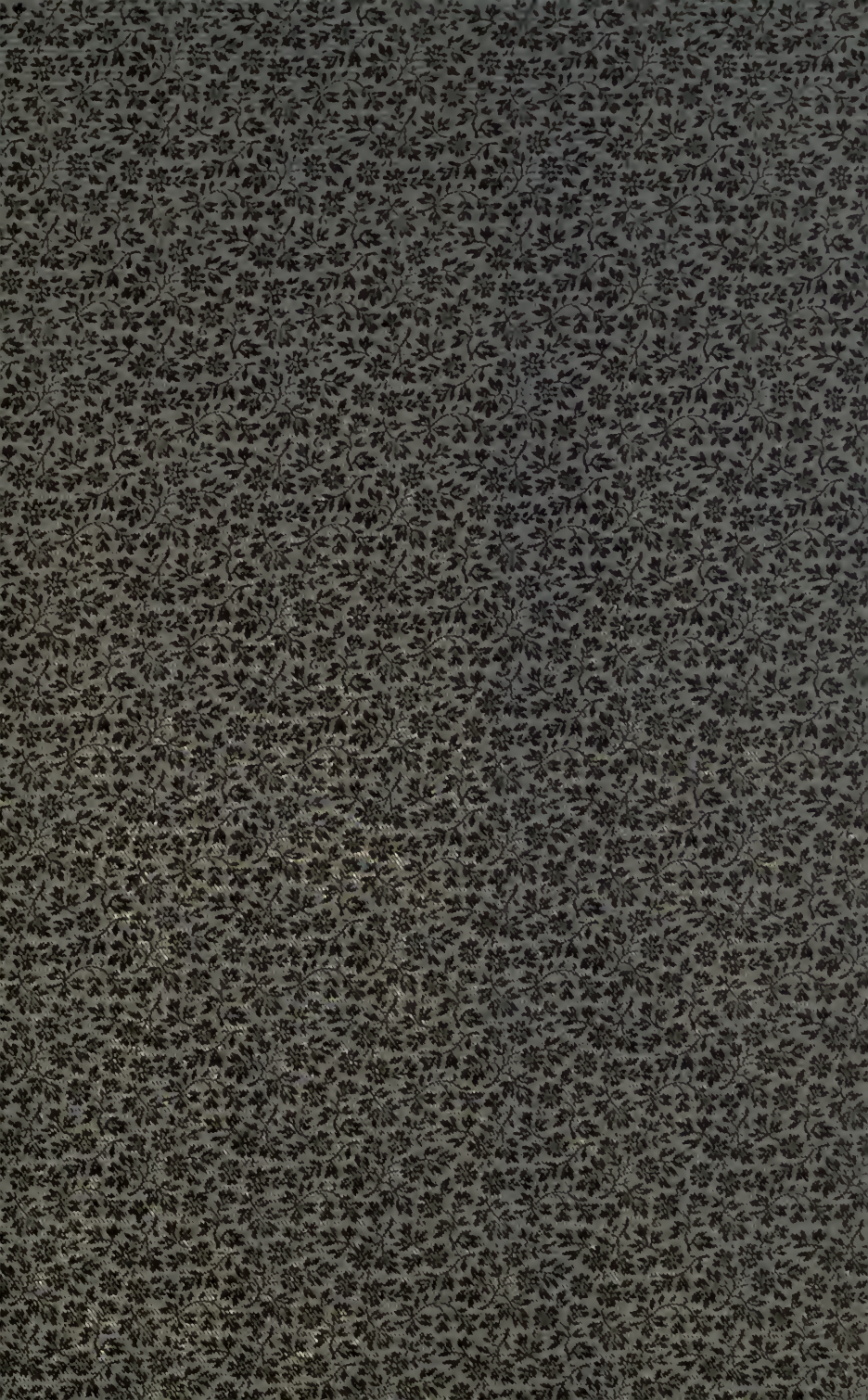


ESTHER
— THE —
GENTILE

MRS. MARY W. HUDSON.



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ESTHER THE GENTILE

BY

MRS. MARY W. HUDSON.

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HUDSON, ~~MRS~~ Mary Worrall (Smith)

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TO MY HUSBAND,
J. K. HUDSON,

WHOSE ENCOURAGEMENT AND APPRECIATION HAVE BEEN THE MAIN-SPRINGS OF
THIS EFFORT, AND IN WHOSE COMPANIONSHIP I HAVE LEARNED
THE BLESSINGS OF A HAPPY HOME—A
WOMAN'S BEST INSPIRATION.

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ESTHER THE GENTILE.

CHAPTER I.

IN an out-of-the-way community like Pineborough there are not many students of character, but there are always to be found some odd people who are interesting studies themselves, and who immediately attract the attention of men of the world when they come in contact with them.

Ezekiel Blounce, the teacher of the district school, was one of these. He had neither family nor home, though everybody was his friend. He had taught the Pineborough school for many years, and during all the time had "boarded round," in the fashion that had long before been abandoned in more enterprising districts, except one summer when he was sick and Betty Wainwright nursed him in her spare room, and one other summer when he went away on an unannounced and mysterious visit, carrying with him only a change of linen tied up in a bandana handkerchief and his staff. When his neighbors and the school boys whom he passed on the road that summer morning asked where he was going, he only answered, "On a little jaunt; I'll be back before you want to see me."

But he was gone three months, and the district

had about made up its official mind that a new teacher must be secured for the winter term, when Ezekiel Blounce trudged back again, deposited his bundle, apparently neither increased nor diminished by an ounce weight, in his small "black chist," as it was familiarly known, stood his stout staff in the corner of the kitchen which came next in turn as his home, and, at the proper time, called school as if nothing had happened.

All the surmises that had been made by the quiet country folk concerning his absence were wasted, and they had had so little else to think and talk about than the routine of the days, the weeks, and the crop seasons, that the old man's unexplained return seemed almost an affront. For a time he did not seem to be the man they had in turn imagined murdered, and drowned, and restored to a lost inheritance and a grief-stricken family. The closest scrutiny of his large-featured, unimpassioned face failed to make a hero or a martyr of him in these good people's eyes, and they respected him too highly to ask any questions. He had been the architect of every barn erected in that region since his advent there. He had estimated all the crops and introduced all the innovations in rotation that the fields thereabout had known for years, and the people trusted him wholly. But now he had presumably been out in the world where he had seen and heard much that would be new to them, but of which he told them nothing, and time alone could heal their wounded feelings.

Mr. Blounce had hardly yet recovered from this disturbance of the estimation in which he had so long been held in Pineborough, when something else occurred which made it impossible for him ever to regain his old interest in the community.

One pleasant afternoon in early springtime a young man strolled up to the little school house and stepped to the door to ask for a cup in which to take a drink from the brook close by.

A little pool had been scooped out in the pebbly bed and a rough shelter of stones built up on the sunward side so that the water was clean and cool and quiet, and as the young man stooped over to fill his cup he caught sight of his reflected self and hesitated an instant to look, perhaps to admire, when the thought must have come to him that that was a girlish trick, for he dashed the cup into the mirroring surface. When he returned to the door Mr. Blounce invited him in to rest, but he was not tired, he said, and preferred to sit outside, which he would do if it was nearly time for school to close, and if the teacher would then have leisure to give him a little information about the surrounding country. Of course Ezekiel Blounce had both time and inclination to impart any knowledge, or give any help, he could, and the stranger accordingly took a seat on a log near by and waited for the school to be dismissed.

He had not long to wait. A general shuffling of books and slates and feet, announced the day's tasks done, and a huddling group of little girls came out,

some with their sunbonnets drawn over their eyes and shrinking behind their mates, and some with their bonnets under their arms and their eyes staring at the stranger as if to make the most of a rare opportunity. Then a crowd of small boys pushed through the doorway, all at once, and, instead of huddling together, flew off in as many tangents as there were boys, shouting, tumbling, jumping and otherwise exhibiting their various accomplishments. Next came the larger girls, showing all the phases and degrees of character and culture the rural community afforded, for here came high and low, proud and humble; every family for miles around was represented in the district school. The young man watched this group with some more interest than he had the others, but yet—he had the self-possession to congratulate himself—with remarkable indifference, considering that it was composed of young ladies whose ages could not vary far on either side of sweet sixteen.

“What a wonderful difference it does make, where and how,” he was just saying to himself, in a cold and philosophical way, when he caught sight of one girl who seemed caricatured by the ungraceful garments and heavy shoes which fitted the others well enough.

“She must be astray here,” he thought; “she is like a wild gazelle in a flock of tame sheep; she is evidently not one of the natives. Which way does she go, I wonder—I”—“A fine evening, sir,” interrupted the teacher, who, together with the larger

boys, had by this time come out unobserved by the soliloquizing stranger.

"Yes, sir, it is a fine evening indeed," assented the young man, pleasantly, as he arose, and then, rather awkwardly, as if it was not the subject he intended to speak of, he said:

"You have quite a large school for so isolated a neighborhood."

"Yes, yes, so I have," a little impatiently, on the part of the teacher, and they both turned to look after the departing scholars.

"I noticed a young girl that—like a—not like the others—she was with those large girls, a tall, slender—oh, yes, there she goes down the road."

The varying shades of expression with which this disjointed sentence was delivered were appreciated by Mr. Blounce, and his amusement was so apparent when he answered that the stranger's face flushed quickly; nobody saw it, though, for the scholars were all too far away and the teacher kindly contemplated the ground.

"Oh, that is Esther Wainwright," he answered, comprehending the young man's wish; "she is not like the others, as you say."

"And that young fellow, the boy with her, is he a brother?"

"Oh, no; that is young Barbold, Tom Barbold. If you knew the old Squire, or any of the blood, as you do not, I reckon, if you are a stranger in these parts, you would know Tom by his walk. Proud as Lucifer, and not lacking, not lacking, unless it may

be in fellow-feeling. Generations of riches, you know, will dull most men's sympathies with poverty and struggle; the old Squire I was thinking of; Tom, there, is but a bit of a boy; nobody can tell what he may make, but he promises to follow in the old tracks."

"Are these families connected in any way—the Wainwrights and the Barbolds?"

"Oh, no; bless your heart, there's a gulf as deep as the Hellespont between them, and about as hard to swim, I venture."

"But you think young What's-his-name there will attempt it, do you?"

"Well, an old man's head must be whiter than mine before he can forget that he was once young, and there are no barriers inside those narrow walls," pointing to the school house, "even between Barbolds and Wainwrights. What do you think about it?" turning sharply to the stranger.

"I? Well, I have not had much chance for observation, but since you ask me, and since I have seen Hero, I don't mind telling you that I think he'll be a fool if he doesn't try it, and I've a notion to say I'll swim him a race."

"Good! you show a knightly spirit, but it might only make trouble for all. They are strangers to you and you to them, you have all the world; what brings you here?"

This abrupt demand brought the hot blood to the stranger's face, as had the old man's first question, but this time a little of anger was mixed with the

blush of youth, and he answered: "My business, sir; which for the present is merely to botanize a little among these old hills. I belong to the surveying party that is locating the new railroad down the creek valley, and I wandered off here because we were delayed in our work and had a day off duty, and now I believe I have lost my bearings. I promised to rejoin the party at Rocky-ford to-night or in the morning, and I have gone up and down hill so often I am confused. Can you give me the short cut to that point?"

"So you are somewhat of a scientist, then?"

"No, I cannot claim that distinction, but I have a taste for finding out something about the plants and trees of different parts of the country. Surveyors are apt to pick up some knowledge of that kind, as well as the geological formation of the land they measure, you know."

"Are you a practical surveyor?"

"Yes, though I have not practiced much. I was with a party out West and roughed it in the mountains and alkali deserts one summer, and I learned several things then; in fact, if the truth must be told, I am a kind of Jack at all trades, not very good at any."

"A bad recommendation for a young man. What else have you done?"

"I spent six months in a law office in H—— once, and while I was there I learned to know your handwriting very well. Mr. Blounce, I believe," the stranger said, bowing with an ease of manner becom-

ing an older man. "Judge —— did a great deal of business for the farmers all down through this country, and we handled papers of various kinds, wills and other legal documents, which you had written and to which your name was attached as a witness. I recognized your name when I was talking to the men at work in the field yonder; they said you taught the district school. If you were to take a fee for all the legal work you do it would bring you quite an income, I should think."

"Yes, yes, perhaps it would; but if I had charged a fee for all the things I might have done in this world and have not done, I should be as rich as Cræsus."

"Oh, no offense, I hope. I want to ask you a little more about that young lady, Miss Wainwright, before I go. Does she—"

"I have nothing more to tell."

"Why, what is she to you, Mr. Blounce?"

"No more than she is to you; but she is a poor, motherless girl, who might almost better be fatherless, too, for that matter."

"Does the old wretch abuse her?"

"No, no, not that; he thinks the world of her. I believe the poor fellow looks upon Esther more as an angel than as a human being. But, you see, he is a little weak here," tapping his own massive head. "Comes of good stock, too—the Wainwrights; no better to be found here forty years ago; but Elias was the—not the black sheep, exactly, for he is as innocent as a lamb, but the weakling of the flock. He did

what none of his smart brothers had the sense to do, however. He married a good little woman, who was as tough as a nut, and with wits enough for both of 'em. Some people wondered that Betty Simpson would have him, but there is a kind of fascination in an aristocratic name, even for a sensible woman; it is something like marrying a title; and so Betty married him, for that or some other reason, maybe because she really loved him. I will not say it was not that, for she was always a good wife to him. She was not a pretty girl, but she had bright black eyes and a cheery look about her. She managed the farm mainly, after they were married, and managed it well, and she saved herself and her family from a great trouble a few years ago, and their good name from everlasting disgrace."

"Why, how was that?" the stranger ventured, hoping that since the old man's tongue was loosed he might be led in this roundabout way to the subject of which he had said he had no more to tell. And sure enough he went on to say:

"When the main line of the railroad was built through this part of the country, the contractors brought a lot of Welsh people here to work at the grading. Many of these men had their families with them, and they made quite a settlement down in the bottom lands beyond Rocky-ford, and while they were there a party of immigrants, their countrymen, too, just over, joined them, and settled down temporarily in board shanties and a kind of barracks they put up, while their leaders looked about for a permanent lo-

cation. It happened that a hard winter came on early that season, so that they could not do much but huddle together to keep warm, and while they were all there some Mormon elders came among them proselyting. They had not done much at this work openly in the United States for several years previous; it was too soon after the Joseph Smith excitement. You do not remember that; but after the exposure of his depravity they let the subject die down a little in this country, and brought most of their converts from England, and Wales, and Scotland, as they do yet. But these two elders, as they called themselves, had been across the water and got a kind of hold on these Welsh people in the old country, and when they came over here they followed it up, and converted dozens of them, too, some of the wealthiest among them. One old man had £4,000 in good English money, and they got it all, and him in the bargain. To the poorest of them they promised farms and cattle if they would go out to the Land of the Honey Bee. But I am getting off my story. It got to be quite the fashion to go to the Mormon meetings. The people for miles around became curious to hear what could be said in defense of polygamy, that being the dominant idea in their minds connected with Mormonism; and when they went to the meetings, and never heard that subject even remotely alluded to, but instead listened to warm appeals to come into the Church of the Latter Day Saints, and espouse the revealed religion, and accept the great worldly advantages that would be

secured to them in Utah, many of them were converted, and among them was poor Elias Wainwright. He is just the man to be influenced by religious excitement, and if it had not been for his wife he would have gone off with them, sure. As soon as she found out that the meetings were really making an impression upon his mind, she insisted upon going with him whenever she could not prevail upon him to stay at home. But they succeeded in making a believer of him, and it was finally only her determined refusal to go with them to Utah that kept him here. There was a good deal of talk about stopping the meetings and lynching the elders, but it did not amount to anything more than talk; there was no charge upon which they could be arrested and tried. They were smart enough, too, to get out of the way before the excitement ran too high. Betty Wainwright always claimed that her husband had entirely recovered from his Mormon folly, but there are others who say he never has, and the elders claimed that no one ever does, or that if one loses faith for a time he is sure to return to it sometime; that they are like the Jews — once a Jew always a Jew, once a Mormon always a Mormon. Of course I do not believe that nonsense, but I know that when Elias Wainwright lost his good wife he lost the best half of himself.”

“She is dead, then?”

“Yes, she is dead. She took cold two or three years ago and never got over it. She was a hard worker, and thought she was proof against serious

sickness, but she proved to be mortal like the rest of us."

The old man leaned forward and rested his head on his hands as they were clasped over the knob of his staff, and seemed to give himself up to the contemplation of Mrs. Wainwright's domestic virtues and to his sorrow over her untimely taking off.

Suddenly the stranger started and uttered an exclamation that caused Mr. Blounce to look up at him in amazement.

"It must be the same," he said, "the very same man we heard travelers talking of at the little country tavern where we put up last night. There were two guests besides ourselves who seemed to have a great deal to talk about; they sat out under the trees on a rustic bench till late in the night. They seemed respectable enough, well dressed, common sort of men, who looked as though they might be pork or wool buyers, strangers evidently; but I remember now the last thing I heard before going to sleep, as I lay near an open window in the second story, was the sound of their voices, and one of them said with a good deal of emphasis, 'Well, he'll go this time. I've got him fixed. The girl is all that troubles me. She'll make a fuss, I calculate, but I guess we can manage her.' Then they went on to say that he was a firm believer long ago, and something about the New Zion, and I paid no more attention to them. I had just thought that I was about to hear some secret romance when they began to talk of religion, and I suppose I soon fell asleep. Let me see: I must have heard

them say something about coal, too. Coal, coal—yes, but the whole conversation is confused in my mind now; I was half asleep all the time.”

The old teacher looked up at the stranger aghast, and when he had ceased speaking groaned aloud as if a great weight had fallen upon him, and then said in a broken voice:

“My God, my God, they are after him again.”

His head fell upon his hands again, and the young man saw that he shook in every limb. There was nothing he could do; no consolation he could offer; he could not understand the old man’s deep feeling for this girl and her father; he could only stand and wait, almost frightened at the grief he had caused. With a spasmodic effort Mr. Blounce stood up, and with an attempt at his former abruptness, said:

“I can not talk of this to-night. I must think. Is it possible that you are interested at all in this girl? Will you meet me here in the morning?”

“Whether I was interested at all in Miss Wainwright before or not, the story you have told me of her father and the Mormons would interest me in her now. I told you I had been out West, and I know something of their doings in Utah. If I can help you in any way to save this girl you have but to command me.”

“I will be here early in the morning,” the old man said; and without a word of parting, or even so much as a glance at the young stranger, Ezekiel Blounce walked heavily down the road. So long as he was in sight his astounded companion stood and looked

after him. He moved as though he had been set going by some involuntary power, turning neither to the right nor to the left, never raising his eyes from the ground nor his empty left hand from his side, where it hung motionless. A chance observer would have thought him but a dull and weary old man, if he had thought of him at all; but the stranger whom he had left so unceremoniously knew that within that breast lay a picture so vivid that it absorbed every faculty. The old man knew not the familiar trees and meadows, nor the passers by; his vision was turned inward upon a scene so sharply retouched that it blinded him to all else; some old memory, never forgotten, perhaps, but for many years so habitually crowded down that when something forced it uppermost, it took possession of him like an evil spirit. The occupants of the house in which he had his home at that time saw him pass by, on and on down the dusty road until the woods enclosed him; but none of them thought it strange; he was accustomed to take long walks. After he was out of the sight of the stranger, that young gentleman folded his slouch hat for a pillow, locked his hands together behind his head and lay down on the log to think, also.

About the old man? Yes, for a time, for he had impressed him strongly and strangely. He tried to imagine what kind of a life he had lived, what it was that connected him with these people—the Wainwrights—and then to think of himself as a lonely old man. But he had seen a vision that makes

youth powerless to comprehend old age as applied to itself. Others, perhaps some among his friends, must live this old man's life over again; but he! he was strong, confident; he had a hundred great expectations; the world was before him, the old man had said, and he was free to choose. There was no reason why he should seclude himself in a lonely, quiet place like this, and live without home or aught that he could call his own, a wifeless and childless old man. He had never thought of that fate as especially sad before, nor thought of it at all, perhaps; but now nothing he could imagine seemed so sad as this old man's lonely lot. Surely his could never be such; he would order it otherwise. It was true he had not found the queen whom he did not seek, but who, he trusted, would some day appear, who was to be the sun which should glorify his existence, and for whose sweet sake all his ambitions would be prospered, unless—and for the first time the flight of his free fancy seemed tethered by an intangible something, an invisible cord, that would have snapped in twain with a breath, had it not passed through the hand of that graceful girl with the plain name and the homely dress. As he closed his eyes and tried to look off—as he was fond of doing, being something of a dreamer—into the unexplored fields of his after years, and to trace for himself a prosperous journey over the golden highways of his imagination, he found he must first go by way of the narrow lane in whose shaded depths Esther Wainwright had disappeared. He had seen her but a moment—he was

perfectly conscious of that—but every line of her sweet face, every motion she made, was photographed on his mind. He saw her eyes fall before his own after the swiftest stolen glance; he remembered the white parting in her hair, and the smooth waves over her temples; the oval of her cheek reminded him of the loveliest Madonna face he had ever seen.

Thus he took up the sweet burthen. Some learn to love; others see, as a vision, the bright spirit that enters in and makes home of the heart.

The stranger lay still, forgetful of all about him. The sun sank low behind the hills, the shadows deepened in the forest, and the whip-poor-will's mournful note took up his last thought and repeated it strangely, "Life is good, there is no ill except we make it." Farther and farther off echoed the weird refrain until he heard it no more.

CHAPTER II.

WHEN the young man awoke, far in the night, he knew, though he had heard it in his sleep, that he had been aroused by a human voice, but whose or where it was he could not think. He could not even make out where he was himself, for a time. But as the leaves and branches took shape around him, and the stars revealed themselves above, he recollected the incidents of the evening, and comprehended that he had fallen asleep on the log. It was as still as a night in the forest ever is; not a breeze stirred, but the little night animals ran with swift feet here and there among the bushes, all unsuspecting of an intruder's presence. A horned and tawny owl flapped its wings and circled round a tree near him, catching nocturnal insects, and as he rubbed his eyes and watched it he remembered that it was the favorite of Minerva, and that the ancient Athenians regarded it with veneration, and considered it a bird of good omen.

"So may it prove to me," he added aloud, and then started at the sound of his own voice, because there was no one to answer it.

The whip-poor-will had sung itself to sleep, and the air seemed heavy and oppressive. He was just thinking to himself that it must be the calm before a storm, when the tree frogs set up their ominous

croak, and the sound was echoed and reëchoed from everywhere. Then he knew it was time to seek shelter. He had intended to find lodging in some farm house near by, but it was too late for that now. The thunder began to roll, more under the ground than above his head, he thought. A hissing sound came from the tree tops, and they began to writhe in a sudden wind. The sultry air which a moment before had held him, with all nature, in a sort of stupor, was quickly filled with the subtle life that flashed from the coming storm, and every living thing disappeared in the thick foliage as the stars went out behind the spreading cloud.

The stranger had fairly gathered his wits by this time, and hastily found his way to the school house. He raised his hand to try the latch, resolving, meanwhile, to break a window if he could not make an entrance otherwise, when a flash of lightning just behind him showed the door wide open, and some one within. He had time neither to ask nor to conjecture who it was; the wind was driving hard against him, and great drops of rain came splashing in his face. He stepped inside, and found that the rain followed him for several feet; he moved out of its course and waited for the lightning to give him another view of the interior and of its occupants, if it really had any besides himself. He had but an instant of suspense before the light seemed to enter like a gleaming blade and sweep round the little room and out again as swiftly and mysteriously as it came. What he saw while it flashed was the old teacher

sitting in his accustomed place behind the high sloping desk, his head bowed in his gnarled and wrinkled hands, oblivious to him, to the storm, to everything outward. The stranger hesitated to disturb him, but fearing that he might startle him by closing the door to keep out the fast increasing storm, he ventured to ask if he might remain until the rain was over, and then added apologetically that he had fallen asleep where he had left him the evening before. The teacher heard the voice, but did not seem to comprehend anything it said, for he called out in a loud tone, "Who's there?"

"The stranger with whom you talked last evening. Can I have shelter with you until the storm is past?" the young man repeated, but the only answer he received was a long sigh, and "Ah, I did not expect you so soon," and then sternly, "Come again when it is broad daylight."

Evidently the old man had heard nothing, only that he had come, so he shut the door and sat down near a window, where he could watch the storm.

The lightning was now a continuous yet ever-changing glare, and the terrific force of the wind bent the great trees before it until they looked as if they must break; the tottering old chimney fell with a crash on the roof and rolled to the ground, and yet the old man moved not, nor spoke.

The stranger was fascinated by the awful scene, and strained his eyes to watch the writhings of the stiffened branches, which seemed like live things in the contest. Amidst it all he observed how pliantly

the saplings bent almost to the earth, and lay safe in their non-resistance while the fury of the storm passed over. And then he reflected that thus the storms of life pass harmlessly over youth; that pain and sorrow depress the young quickly and easily, but like the sapling they rebound with the clearing of the sky, and stand upright, ready and defiant for the next battle. Once, as he watched, he saw the tawny owl whirled from a great oak and past him in the clutches of the storm, and then came a thunderbolt that numbed him to all sense and sound. A crash that was not heralded by flash or rumble, a dart so swift and close his brain was stunned, and he neither saw nor heard.

When his dazed wits began to return he saw that the storm was broken. The thunder still muttered, but it rolled away in the distance and left him alone in the ghostly dawn, for the old teacher, too, was gone; he had fled like a dream, less real than the raging night of storm, and far less comprehensible to the young man. The stranger had discovered himself lying prostrate on the floor, and when he arose and started towards the door he found he could with difficulty support himself; he shook in every limb and would have fallen but for the support of the rude benches. The door stood open again, showing that the old man had gone out in the same state of abstraction that possessed him when he entered, and leading from it were the tracks of his unsteady feet in the wet earth. The young man sat down wearily on the threshold as if he could go no farther, but in

a moment he was aroused by the waking forest. The filmy storm fringe was rent here and there by the tarrying wind, and through it the sky of early morning was revealed, seeing which, the birds fluttered on their perches and sent up an *ave* from every tree. From far and near, and high and low, piped the sweet thrush; the linnet twittered its treble; the lark flew from its drenched couch and darted into the sky caroling its morning song; the robin chirped her domestic pip, pip; the oriole swung lightly from its suspended nest, and sent from the slender branches a shower of heavy drops with which they were yet laden; the tiny wren warbled its unexpected score; the quaint sweetness of the cat-bird's voice—the mocking bird of the north—was carried from bush to bush and echoed by its cheerful mate; the blue-bird and the red-bird fluttered from tree to tree like rays of the coming glory; the darkness and the storm were past, life and joy were resurrected, and gave new strength to him who had experienced such a strange and memorable night.

CHAPTER III.

WITH the fullness of day our young friend felt a greater return of his strength and knew that he had only been stunned, but he felt also the need of some breakfast before his interview with the old teacher, so he started off towards Rocky-ford, intending to get something to eat on the way, and then, if he felt inclined, go on and report to his comrades and return to the school house. It would be but a walk of a couple of miles, and that was nothing to him. His breakfast refreshed him greatly and he sped over the dewy fields with buoyant step.

Rocky-ford was a little, clustering village, lodged at the foot of a great tree-covered hill. It boasted a small tavern; a Post-Office-store; a smith-shop; a small red meeting house, with a modest spire set squarely in the middle of the roof, and a double front door flanked by two substantial scrapers whose goodly heap of mud chips testified to a church-going neighborhood; a doctor's sign; a low window from which hung suggestively a quarter of sole leather and a tattered boot; and the name of "Jane Winn, Milliner and Dressmaker," on the smallest and neatest house in the street. There was just room for these important business establishments on the narrow terrace which lay a few feet above the creek bottom. The comfortable houses where, presumably, the minister,

the postmaster, the blacksmith, and their principal patrons lived, were built over cellar-kitchens on the sloping hillside, higher up, and a few cabins where, evidently, that portion of the population lived from which future census returns must be mainly made up, were set in the sand on the lower flat. Even at the early hour at which the brisk-stepping stranger entered the short street of Rocky-ford these cabin doors were filled with tow-headed children. And when he looked up from them it seemed that not only the youngsters, but the whole town, was up and out doors. That was natural, of course; they were really country people and accustomed to rising early. But that knot of men in front of the Post-Office, and the women standing in the yard by twos and threes, what could they be doing? There was some excitement in the air; he felt it, and quickened his pace. There were his companions, all talking excitedly, and—could it be? Yes, there was the old teacher, looking aged many years in that brief night, and wild and haggard. As soon as his friends saw him they started toward him, and the villagers came after them with more or less alacrity, to witness the effect of the news.

“Have you heard it?” asked one of them.

“Heard it: heard what? No, I have heard nothing. What is it?”

“A party of Mormons leave here to-day for Utah. It seems nobody knew there were any about until last night, when an old man who lives out here a mile or two told his daughter they would go to-day with

the Mormons, and she took on so they had to call the neighbors in; then they found out all about it. They say she is a mighty pretty girl. The old school-master, Ezekiel Blounce, is desperately worked up about it. He says it's as bad as kidnaping the girl, but there does not seem to be any way to prevent it. The elders have been working around on the sly lately, and have a party of six or eight ready to start to-day. There was a great excitement here about Mormonism some ten years ago, they say, and these people who are going now were about half converted then. It appears that this girl's father—Wainwright is his name—was afraid she would make a fuss about it, so the elders persuaded him to keep quiet until they were about ready to start."

"Why don't the girl let her father go, and stay here? has she no friends?" asked the stranger, impulsively.

"Oh, it is of no use to speak of that, the old teacher says, and he seems to know more about them than anybody else; the girl has gone to school to him for a long time and she would not part from her father, he is sure. The father is a little queer, they say; had a severe illness when he was a youngster, that left him weak-minded. No, I guess there is nothing to do but to let them go; there is no law to prevent people from going to Utah if they want to. And, by the way, we have no time to look after them anyhow; I had a letter from the General this morning, and he wants us to hurry on down to the end of this line and get in again as soon as possible; he has a

bigger job waiting for us. We have not had breakfast yet; come and get some coffee and we will be right off."

There was no school at the little district school house in Pineborough township that day. The children came and looked at the fallen chimney, walked about among the broken trees, and went away again. But Ezekiel Blounce, the teacher who had so long and regularly met his little flock there, had a meeting that morning with but one pupil. He had guessed that Esther would make a farewell visit to her old haunts in the pine woods; he knew that she strolled over the hills alone amid the ferns and trickling waters, and often sat for hours on the overhanging crags and gazed into the peaceful valleys, at she knew not what, to be sure, but she enjoyed it, her mates did not; and her mother had always tried to indulge her quiet moods, realizing, perhaps unconsciously, that she had to deal with a finer nature than her own. Esther's complexion was not lily and peach-bloom. The winds and suns of her native hills had toned it to a golden brown and carmine; but neither time nor the elements, joy nor sorrow, could ever fade or intensify the blue of her eyes; it was the blue of deep water under a cloudless sky. All her life since she was a lisping, white-haired, dainty child, clad in a blue cotton frock and a linsey petticoat, she had gone to the district school, down the hill and across the brook, by way of the fallen tree, and then along the stage road to the old, familiar door, where Mr. Blounce always met her with a smile. It was

natural that he should be greatly interested in her, motherless, too, as she now was. But when he found her among the swaying pine trees, weeping alone in the unanswering solitude, he showed something more than a friendly feeling—a love that was greater than she could understand, but which she did not question. It was some comfort to have the good old man by her side, and in the short time she could steal from her hurried preparations she told him the farm had been sold to Col. Barbold; that the Mormons had shown her father where there were good indications of coal in a stony patch of his land that had never been cultivated, and had insisted that he ask a much larger sum for it than any value he had ever before put upon it. The Colonel objected strongly at first to paying such a price, but after a quarrelsome interview, of which she could only hear the tones and an occasional word, she distinctly heard one of the elders say that “Brother Wainwright would not take a cent less—that he was one with them now in the fold of the Latter Day Saints, and they would stand by him and see his rights protected.”

Then Col. Barbold said he would take the place, and the other elder told him sneeringly that he deserved to be rewarded for waiting so long to get hold of it. Everthing was to go, the house and all the dear belongings except Esther’s and her mother’s clothing, this she was generously allowed to retain. She grew calmer after she had told this sad story to her old friend and turned to take a last look at the picture spread out beneath them. The old man’s

eyes followed hers, and at the same instant they discovered a surveying party crossing the meadow at the foot of the hill. Quickly and involuntarily they glanced at each other, and the teacher remarked that that was the company to which the young man who had called at the school house belonged. "Last night, was it?" he queried piteously, "it seems so long ago."

"Yes, last night," she said, in a tone which showed that she, as well as her aged companion, was conscious of an experience in that brief time that had changed them both. Yesterday she was a thoughtless girl, climbing the hills and strolling through the meadows, carelessly seeing as she passed, the bursting buds, the fringing willows near the streams, and the purpling oaks on the ridges, with no care beyond her present loitering. To-day her heart was heavy with grief, but in the flash of consciousness that went from her eyes to the old man's he saw something more. It spoke in the unmistakable language of a woman's heart of a presence without which her life would be barren indeed, but which would make her dreaded journey to Utah yet harder to bear.

They said good bye to each other there under the sighing trees, and the old man's last words were like a benediction to Esther.

"God protect you, my child," he said; "I cannot go with you, but while I live I am your friend and will come if you call."

A mutual but unexpressed understanding that it was the better way, caused them to separate there,

and when he was gone Esther looked up at the scarred and familiar faces of the rocks, and at the bare old trees, until the tears flooded her eyes again and she stretched forth her arms in a long and loving farewell. It was as if an untouched fountain had broken in her heart and was washing from her eyes the aurora of youth. Once more she went back to bathe her face in the "witches' bowl." Many times she had watched for an hour the tiny stream as it fell into the rocky basin and spread in graceful, softening waves over its smooth surface; many times she had gazed into its depths to watch the floating clouds; many a bright bit of moss and water-cress she had transplanted in the crevices of its moist edge and then leaned over to see the leaves wave their answering shadows in the limpid water; often she had laved her bonny hands in its coolness for pure delight, but never before this farewell visit had she asked the "witches' bowl" to mirror her own beauty. Even under the shadow of her great, fresh sorrow she had tasted fruit of the knowledge which alone brings the fullness of either joy or woe to a woman.

CHAPTER IV.

“CERTAINLY they admit the divine revelation of the Bible, they have never denied or questioned that; in fact they teach it in common with other religious sects. Oh, my friend, you greatly underestimate the strength of the Mormon church and the hold it has upon the minds of the devotees, if you suppose it seeks to substitute the Book of Mormon for the Scriptures. All the proselyting that has ever been done by the Mormons has been begun by preaching Christ crucified and the teachings of the Bible. The name of the sect as known among themselves is the Church of Christ of the Latter Day Saints, and the faithful among them are just as firm believers in the Revealed Scriptures as you are. The colonies of ignorant foreigners that are brought over from the old countries by the Mormon elders were nearly all pious people before they became Mormons, but, being ignorant, after they were worked up to a high pitch of religious excitement they were easily led on to believe in the finding of other inspired writings besides the Bible, the supplement of the New Testament, as the Mormons call it, or the Bible of the Western Continent. There is nothing in that idea radically inconsistent with the theory of the Christian religion that I can see.”

“No, perhaps not, from your point of view, but

directly opposed to the spirit of the Christian religion, as I understand it. You seem to be familiar with this strange people; may I ask if you have been among them much?"

"Yes, I have spent a good deal of time in Salt Lake during the last ten years, and for the last five years I have resided there constantly. I am engaged in the practice of law, among the Gentiles exclusively, however; the Saints do not go to law; the Church settles everything for them, and settles it not according to the law necessarily, nor the law and the prophets, but according to the Prophet, strictly. The President of the Mormon church combines the powers of both church and state; he is elected by the whole people, and his decree is absolute in all things. Of course many questions of both a temporal and spiritual nature that affect the welfare of the people and the safety of the Church are decided without being referred to him, but they are pretty sure to be decided as he would have decided them, for all officers, priests, elders, bishops, and even the Patriarch, the highest position in the church government after President, are accountable to him. Did it ever occur to you that it was a politic idea in promulgating a new religious sect in this country to call its ruling power a presidency, rather than give it a name that would suggest a priesthood or a monarchy? Ah, there have been some sharp wits at the head of this Mormon business, there is no doubt of that. The longer you stay among the Mormons, and the more you see of them, the more interesting they

will become to you. You stop at Salt Lake, I suppose?"

"Yes, I shall stop there for a short time. But do you not see some of the Mormon people on the train sometimes? I supposed we should pick up some at these small stations occasionally."

"O yes, so we do sometimes, but seldom; the Mormons are not great travelers, they do not mix much with the outside world in any way, and then their settlements are scattered farther north and south and west, but especially south, from Salt Lake City, than east. I suppose every step in that direction seemed to them like a retrograde, a sort of compromise with the persecution and civilization they fled from. There is, however, a small party of Mormon converts, and a couple of elders, in the forward car, but they are through passengers from some place in the East. I did not pay much attention to them, but I noticed that they are Americans, or at least they speak English, and show by their dress that they do not belong to any of the classes which usually compose these parties. We do not often see any but old-country peasantry now-a-days, with a sprinkling from a somewhat higher walk as leaders. Perhaps you would like to go in and take a look at them. I do not happen to know either of the elders, but they are generally a worldly sort of fellows who enjoy a chat well enough if you can get them away from their people."

Esther and her father sat on the back seat of a car that was bearing them rapidly towards the beau-

tiful city which was to one a veritable Mecca, and to the other, she knew not what. Mr. Wainwright's face beamed with the light of the simple faith that had inspired him to take such an important step on his own responsibility, and he turned to his daughter with the assuring words that all would be well when they arrived at their journey's end. He did not allow his eyes to dwell long on her face, however, for it told a sad story, and Mr. Wainwright was evidently afraid to trust himself to contemplate it. She had endured the long journey silently and uncomplainingly for the most part, but once or twice she had said to her father in the brief moments they had been permitted to speak alone, "It is not too late yet, we might go back. Do you not think you would be happier in the old home?"

But he had shaken his head and told her it would all be right when they got there. Then, if one of the elders did not come to speak to them, he would go away from her, and for the last day he had wholly avoided being alone with his daughter and had constantly sought the refuge of the more incisive minds of the elders. Both these shepherds had looked well after their little flock during the entire journey, conversing first with one and then with another, sometimes on the preëminent claims of their peculiar religion, and sometimes on the beauties and natural advantages of the country to which they were going, but always in a cheerful and encouraging spirit. The women of the party had not afflicted much. Esther's undisguised sadness, and her

apparent distrust of the whole movement, affected them all more or less, and they seemed to avoid any necessity of explanations or exchange of opinions, though some of them were the most determined and faithful of the band. The party rode in the dingiest and shabbiest car in the train, not because they were traveling as second-class passengers, but by common consent, to more surely avoid critical observation. Esther did not know enough of herself nor of other people to formulate the idea that she was with a class who were naturally her inferiors in sensitiveness of mind, though the child had an instinctive feeling of shame, and a vague comprehension that her father was being led by the elders and was really not accountable for what he was doing, but she was helpless and powerless. When two gentlemen entered the car and took seats near them, Esther knew, though she cast but one hurried glance towards them, that they were looking at her and her father, regarding them curiously, and she could feel her face growing red and her eyes blinding with tears. She would have been glad to shrink out of sight, but even had that been possible, her place was by her father's side; that was the one thought that sustained her. After a few words had been spoken in half audible tones between the two strangers, the citizen of Salt Lake City crossed the aisle and took a seat directly in front of Mr. Wainwright and Esther. Turning to them he addressed them pleasantly and asked if they were going far.

"We have come a long way, but we stop at

Salt Lake City," answered Mr. Wainwright, and he brightened visibly at the sound of a friendly voice and looked at Esther as if he would encourage her to speak. "It has been a tiresome journey for my daughter and we will be glad when we reach the end of it. We have not many miles to go now, I believe?"

"No, it is but a short distance now. How does the country compare with the locality you left?"

"O, it is new, very new and strange, but it will all be right. I tell my daughter it will all be right when we get there, but, you see, we left as pretty a place as there is any where, and her mother died a year ago, and we are, we may say, alone in the world."

Then, glancing out of the window and back again at Esther, Mr. Wainwright seemed to understand that his answer to the gentleman had been somewhat incoherent and he repeated: "The country is strange, everything is strange, that is all; we have never been much away from home; she will be satisfied I am sure when we get there."

The only interest Mr. Wainwright seemed to have in the country was that it should please and satisfy his daughter, and he went on volubly to tell of her love for the old place and to make excuses for her sorrowful face. But he had not talked long before one of the Mormon elders arose and came down the aisle and took a seat by the stranger. As he did so that gentleman exchanged a significant glance with his companion across the way, as if to say, "You

see, the elder is afraid to trust me," but he continued to talk about the country and the climate and the people, until he had quite cheered both Esther and her father. And then came the first view of the city of the valley of the Great Salt Lake. Spread upon the mountain slope, watered by the mountain streams, fanned by the mountain winds, it appears a haven of rest to thousands of weary pilgrims who journey over land and sea to reach it. Its founder chose wisely this spot from whence the everlasting hills can be seen in such magnificance. Children that are born and bred in sight of a mountain range have more veneration in their souls than those whose lot falls on the level plain. Enthusiasts and romancists are fostered by mountain air and nurtured by the sublime spectacle that surrounds them.

CHAPTER V.

IN THE twilight of a summer evening Mr. Wainwright and Esther sat on the doorstep of a comfortable little house on an unpretentious street in Salt Lake City. They had been at home there for three months, and it was midsummer now. The warm air was stirred by a balmy south wind that came laden with the scent of the hay fields. The tree-lined street was perfectly still except for the muffled voice of the water that ran in the ditches, rubble, rubble, rubble, ever the same monotonous complaint or glad cadence, according to the temper of the listener. Esther had heard it for a long time, and to her it seemed to be beating against its narrow walls, impatient for its native wilds. They were sitting hand in hand, the loving daughter and the gentle father. Their life in this new world had been quiet and not wholly unhappy up to this time. They had seen much that was novel and interesting to both of them, and they had made some friends, but they had been comparatively undisturbed in their own home, and Esther had allowed her thoughts to dwell fondly upon the dear old hills. She pined more for them than for her old friends, though sometimes she wished for something else, she scarcely knew what, at first, but in time she found her thoughts taking shape in a pair of dark eyes and an unfamiliar name. A name

that she had heard but twice, and eyes that she had never looked into as eyes that know each other look. But on the whole she had not been miserable, and that was better than she had anticipated. Her father was absorbed in his new religion. He had given the fifth of all he owned to the Church cheerfully and gladly, and would have doubled this first tax that is exacted from every member, if Esther had not demurred. He was a daily worshiper in the tabernacle, and either a priest or an elder was always by his side when he went on the street. His faith had completely filled him, and he told Esther as he sat there with her hand in his, how sure he was that they had done right in leaving the old home for the New Jerusalem.

“I am glad for your sake, father, that it is so,” she had said, and then they both sat still thinking, until they heard the well-known foot-fall of Elder Bean coming down the street towards them. Esther made some motion as if to go in, but her father detained her, and when the elder came up he invited him to go in with them. He declined the invitation after a look at Esther, but said he would like to say a few words to Mr. Wainwright and suggested that they walk together, since the evening was so pleasant it seemed like a loss to spend it indoors. Esther brought her father’s hat and gave it to him with a kiss and looked fondly after him as he passed down the quiet street, but her heart forewarned her as he and his companion walked away that this interview meant something serious. Left alone, she went inside,

closed the door and threw herself on the floor by a south window where she laid her head on her arm so that she could look at the sky. The exile always finds some comfort in this. To look at a star and know that it can be seen from the spot where we most long to be, and by the eyes we most wish to meet, brings a vague solace to us all, but it did not prevent the hot tears from falling from Esther's eyes nor quiet the fears which possessed her. She could not be still, the air of the house seemed to stifle her; she threw open the door again and went out to listen for her father's return, though she knew he would not come so soon. No sound came from the direction in which he had gone, but she heard hurrying steps coming the other way. She had no well-defined reason for thinking they were coming to her, but her father's absence and the fear she felt, together with the uncertain light, made her tremble, and she stood irresolute whether to go in or to run away. The steps quickened and she strained her eyes to see, if she could, who came. But before she could distinguish anything a hand had grasped hers and a voice said excitedly, "I knew you almost in the dark, Miss Wainwright; do not be alarmed and do not go away; I come as a friend and in great haste. Do you remember me, I saw you but once, at the little school house, and I have a message from your old teacher, Mr. Blounce."

For answer to this hurried speech Esther burst into tears, but in a moment more she choked down her sobs and invited her visitor into the little parlor.

With shaking hands she lighted a lamp that stood on a diminutive center table, and the stranger watched eagerly to see if the face it would illumine could be as beautiful and as innocent as when he first beheld it. He almost held his breath while the uncertain flame flickered and blinded him, but as soon as the steady glow came he went to her and took her hand again. It lasted but an instant, that brief time when he could touch her hand and look deep into her eyes, but he was not disappointed; he saw there all he had dreamed of in the months since he had first discovered her one idle summer day.

"Oh, yes, I knew you at first," she said, "you came to the school house the night before the storm. Any one I ever saw there would seem like an old friend now; but are you living here?" she added hesitatingly.

"No, indeed, I am merely passing through; we are going to do some Government work two or three hundred miles beyond here and stopped off only from one train to another. Our captain had business, and I came to find you. You are contented here? and your father, how is he? Mr. Blounce has told me about you, and whether you need it or not, I came to offer you my friendship; persons sometimes do need friends in a strange land. You have both been well? Mr. Blounce will want to know."

"Will you see him?" asked Esther eagerly.

"No, not soon, but I promised to write him of you and your father if I found you, and to give you his love."

“He is very kind; I wish I could see him. Tell him we are both well; father is very happy too; he will be in soon, he has only gone out for a little walk.”

Esther did not explain that he had gone with one of the elders, but she betrayed her apprehension concerning him by nervous glances towards the door, even in the midst of questions about her old home. It was little her guest could tell her; he had not been near the old school house since the day he saw her there. He could, however, talk to her of that day and the familiar places; but not even the sense of acquaintanceship, that is always the result of such meetings in a foreign land, made it seem possible for him to lead her from the old scenes to her present life. He could only fear that she purposely avoided talking of it, while she seemed wholly oblivious to it. Their meeting was more natural and unconstrained than it could possibly have been under any other circumstances, and after two or three attempts to go the visitor still lingered at the door, and finally parted from Esther almost as an old friend. He had told Esther that he should return to Salt Lake City in six or eight weeks, he could not tell just when, but whenever he did come it would be to stay some time, and he would see her often then, he hoped.

Then he was gone.

Still her father had not come, and again she stood alone under the trees listening for his footsteps. The quiet streets grew quieter, the few scattering lights that had been company for the lonely girl went out.

and yet she waited. The visit she had had seemed like a dream as she sat and thought it over word for word. A sweet dream indeed, which tempered the bitterness of her vigil so that when at last she heard her father coming, slowly and alone, she was able to meet him calmly and to ask where he had been, as though she did not suspect anything unusual. But the first sound of his voice froze her, and she knew it must be something even more serious than she had feared that he had to say to her.

“My daughter,” he began, as soon as they were inside the door, as if afraid to trust himself to put off the fatal moment, “My daughter, I came here to do my whole duty to the Church, God helping me, and Elder Bean has made it plain to me that I must change my manner of life. It is selfish in us to live here alone in this quiet way. We have been very happy, and I would be glad if it was right for us to go on in the same way, but I must do my whole duty as it is shown to me. Come here, my girl, and sit on my knee; you know I wish for nothing in the world so much as your happiness, Esther? You do know this, my daughter?” repeated the trembling man as he put his arms about her and looked appealingly into her dazed face. He would have drawn her head down upon his shoulder and soothed her into at least apparent submission while he talked to her, but Esther would not permit it; she sat upright, and demanded to know what he meant and what Elder Bean had said to him.

“Perhaps we had better talk of this in the morn-

ing, Esther, it is late now, I will not trouble you to-night, my girl," said Mr. Wainwright, baffled in his effort to be strong and brave. Then his head fell on her shoulder, and though he did not sob nor cry out, she could feel the hot tears falling on her hands. Her hardness of heart lasted but a moment, then she strained him to her breast, as a mother would have taken a forgiven child, and said gently:

"No, no, father; do not send me away, let me know what is in your thoughts, tell me everything; I have grown older in many ways since we came here, and I can be wise. But this is nothing that will part us, father?" almost fiercely again.

"No," he hastened to reply, "not necessarily, not unless you think it best for a time." But he did not look up and Esther could feel his arms tremble.

"What can you mean, father? You would not consent to that? Why should we be separated? What reason can there be for it? No, I will never leave you, not for a single day; they shall never take you from me."

"There, there, my child, do not be alarmed, it shall be as you say, but Elder Bean says it is not right for me to be living alone," he continued, taking courage again.

"Living alone, father, are you alone while I am with you, are we not happiest as we are, and who could we have with us?"

"You do not understand, Esther, I must take a wife."

It was Esther's turn to quail now. A spasm of as-

tonishment swept over her face, and then she broke down utterly, and was folded sobbing in her father's arms. Her fears had caused her much suffering, but they had all been vague, her apprehensions had never once materialized into the personality of a wife for her father, a woman in her mother's place, and in her own place, too. That, she would have felt, if she had thought of it at all, was sacred and safe. Six months ago this frail man would have hesitated a much longer time before making such an announcement to his daughter, but his newly-found faith lent him a strength not his by nature, and the elders had so wrought upon his confiding mind that he was in actual terror of ending his existence upon earth before he had fulfilled every commandment of the Mormon church. He had also listened that very day to a powerful sermon on the duties of the elder leaders and supporters of the revealed religion, and foremost among these duties was the obligation of taking more than one wife, and as Mr. Wainwright was guilty of the great sin of being wifeless, he was a most fit subject for Elder Bean's exhortations, and came home overwhelmed with a sense of his own shortcomings. It was not his fear of her reproaches that made him bow his head and weep rather than utter the words that had hurt Esther like a stab, he was strong in his faith that he was doing right, it was his great love for her that made the task so hard. And when she clung to him, sobbing as if her heart would break, nothing but his zeal for what he believed to be exalted righteousness could have supported him.

Even then, he pressed her convulsively to him, and mingled his tears with hers.

“Father, father, you do not know what you are saying. A Mormon wife, a Mormon woman in our home, think of it! Do not let them force you to this!” she exclaimed after a little time.

But Mr. Wainwright remembered the command, “Let no man be ashamed of his faith,” and he said, with an attempt at cheerfulness, “Why, my child, I am a member of the Church myself; why should I not have a wife of my faith? I could take no other. You need a m——”

But a shudder from the girl as she rested against him checked this argument half uttered, and she raised herself up, defiant again. Esther knew it was but the echo of the advice he had received during the evening, but she could not bear it. The sacred name of “mother” had not been spoken by either of them, and she could not endure that it be mentioned in this odious connection. So the words died on Mr. Wainwright’s lips, and thereafter it was as though it had never been known to either father or daughter. They had been accustomed to talk often of the dear heart they had left resting amid the hills, but from that fateful night her name was not spoken again for many a long day.

“She is a good woman, the one Elder Bean has selected for me, a woman who has been married, like myself, and who has years and judgment sufficient to make a suitable companion for a man of my age. She has a daughter, too, Esther, a young woman

near your own age who will be company for you, if you do not choose to accept Elder Bean's offer."

"Offer! What offer, father?"

"This woman, Elizabeth Comfrey, will be sealed to me next Wednesday, and Elder Bean has proposed to me that you become his wife at the same time. It would be ——"

What it would be, in his opinion, Mr. Wainwright never expressed, for Esther sprang to her feet and stood erect with flashing eyes, while she cried in a hard, unnatural voice, "His wife! father, are you mad? His wife! has he not a wife already?"

"I—I—do not know. I suppose not; why—why—he would not——"

"He would do anything! Tell him no, a thousand times no; I will stay with you. Oh, father, can you not see what we are coming to? Let us go home to-morrow—now—we cannot stay here. Oh! why did we ever come?"

"Quiet yourself, Esther, you frighten me; go to bed now, you are excited, and I am tired, very tired. It hurts me to see you so. Say good night to me; Esther, Esther, do not look at me in that wild way; I must do my whole duty, and I believe you will yet be led in the right way."

Esther could say no more; she saw that she talked to one in a dream, and realized as she looked at her father that she must fight her battle alone. She went to him and kissed him forgivingly, but he did not take her in his arms again or notice her. She waited a minute by his side, and then, with a look of unnut-

terable helplessness in her face, went out and left him alone.

Esther had not for an instant premeditated the concealment of the visit she had received during her father's absence, but the terrible message he brought had so overwhelmed her with grief and shame that everything else seemed unimportant. There had been no time to speak of anything else, and she felt that her father could not understand, while in his present state of mind, that she could have a visitor whom he did not know, even if he was interested in the fact. So she went sorrowfully to her room with that secret in her heart, and her dreams that night, when at last they came to her tired senses, were of mingled fear, despair, and hope. Young as Esther was, she appreciated that her father was being slowly drawn into a net that sooner or later would make him wretched, and she wept for him in her sleep. But in bright relief against this dark sorrow stood the form of her new friend, and the light that bade her hope was the light of love.

CHAPTER VI.

IT seemed a hard fate that sent a timid man like Mr. Wainwright forth alone to meet his bride, but probably no amount of persuasion could have induced his daughter to accompany him, when the day came, to the Endowment House. There was not much in the way of argument ever available to him; he was a man of few resources, and when Esther told him she could not go, and begged him not to ask her, it saved him the effort of saying a great many things he had thought he might say, if he discovered in her a possibility of yielding to his wishes in this respect. He would have been glad to have his daughter stand by him while he assumed this new duty, but he did not hesitate because she refused. At the appointed hour he went prayerfully, with bowed head, along the street as was his custom, and Esther watched him as if he were going to the stake.

When he returned he led by the hand a tall gray-looking woman, not quite his equal in years, but evidently much riper in experience and knowledge of people, and some four inches taller than he. Her daughter walked behind. One may see such a person as Elizabeth many times in a crowd and make no note of her. She was thin, square shouldered, solemn visaged, middle aged, and all of a grayness, a kind of iron gray, that looked as if it would neither bend nor

break. Her eyes one could seldom see, they were so overshadowed with heavy brows, which, like the hairs of her head, were half black and half white. Her complexion partook of the same general color, like a well-toned wintry landscape, and even her expression was gray, perpetually gray. . It is a small task to put a gray gown on such a woman, though she wore it because it was serviceable, not because it was harmonious. Perhaps the theory of harmony had been reserved as a grace for Elizabeth in some future state of existence; it certainly had no place in her soul in this life. She had been widowed a long time, but she belonged to a rare philosophical genus of woman kind. She was a person who could wait, secure in the belief that her mission would be made clear to her some day. She possessed another attribute as rare among women as it is among men, almost. She could not only keep her own counsel, but she could keep secrets for others, and she never gossiped; consequently she had been made a confidante by many of the high dignitaries of the church and had proven herself a valuable ally in many important church works. It is, indeed, wonderful how much any man or woman is permitted, or, rather, obliged to know, when once it is learned that he or she can keep a secret. But few mortals carry their treasures with greater safety and less ostentation than did Elizabeth.

Esther had nerved herself to meet the bridal party at the door and extend to them some show of welcome, but the moment Elizabeth's foot crossed the threshold Elias Wainwright's daughter was relieved

of all effort in that direction. The new wife assumed her position as mistress of the household instantly; not rudely, nor by any worded assertion. A deliberate but momentary survey of the little room was all that was visible, then she untied her gray silk bonnet and removing it from her head, walked straight to an unoccupied nail in the wall on the other side of the room and hung it thereon as if she had done the same thing a hundred times before. Esther stood waiting with empty hands, and that little but unhesitating action showed her the keen perception and the self-reliance of the woman who had come into her life. Elizabeth did not choose to be waited upon; she placed nothing from whence it must be directly removed, not even a word. She both moved and spoke without studied effort or unseemly haste, and in half an hour she had impressed so inexperienced an observer as Esther with the feeling that she was as automatic, as alert, and as soulless, as a fine piece of mechanism.

If there is anything in this world that can unsteady one's faith in the good old Quaker doctrine that the "still, small voice," well heeded, will guide a mortal life through channels of usefulness, and make it at the same time joyful and joy-giving, it is such a life as Elizabeth Wainwright's. She never committed an act of which any man could say, "She knows that to be evil." She never shirked a duty, and yet she stood like a hard, unyielding, silent rock, in the midst of lives that without her would have been smooth and pleasant. Around her individual-

ism the lives of three others by turns eddied, and surged, and fell back calm and hopeless. Into her unanswering eyes three pleading faces looked day after day for something they never found. She went with her husband faithfully to church, and usually took her daughter along. When she was left behind it was because there was work to do. The household duties were shared equally by the three women and no unfair burden was laid upon Esther, indeed most of the time she felt that everything would go on quite as well without her, for both Elizabeth and her daughter were expert housekeepers, and the habits of all were so frugal and regular there was not much to do. Elizabeth had several times invited Esther to accompany them to church, but when she declined, as she always did, she was not urged. Her father said nothing, but she noticed that when she was left alone he always looked wistfully back at her, and when Elizabeth's daughter remained at home he looked pleased because she had a companion. The daughters did not become acquainted rapidly, though there seemed no special antagonism between them. Elizabeth's daughter had been accustomed from her babyhood to submit totally to her mother's direction without a thought beyond it. Esther had no treasonable designs, nor hopes even, for any one save her father, but one day when the girls had been left to a task that kept them together longer than usual, Esther sighed deeply and looked wearily out of the window. Drusilla looked up at her in mild astonishment and asked if she was

troubled. Esther, stammering and hesitating, at first denied it, because she was frightened at having her real feelings discovered, and because she was just enough to remember that this girl was in no way accountable for her suffering. But when she saw the look of incredulity on Drusilla's face she cried out in desperation, "Yes, I am in trouble, and you may as well know it. Do you think it is nothing to me that my father has left his home and his people to come away here to live with the Mormons? You are one of them yourself, I suppose, but you are not accountable for it; you were born here your mother said, and you do not know that it is considered a disgrace all over this country, outside of Utah, to be a Mormon. Poor girl, I ought to pity you, but I don't, I have grown so hard hearted. I hate your mother, I hate the whole race of Mormons, they have taken my father from me and they are taking his money and soon he will be a poor, helpless old man. I don't care for that, they can have all if they will let me have him and let us go. Oh mother, mother, what shall we do?"

The cry seemed to come spontaneously to Esther's lips, and she had but just uttered it and thrown herself into a chair sobbing out her long pent-up grief when the door opened and Elizabeth and her father walked in. No questions were asked, but Elizabeth dismissed the girls with the remark that she would prepare the supper and they might go to their own rooms and refresh themselves after their work. Dru-

silla's astonishment faded from her face and she acted immediately on her mother's suggestion.

Esther slowly lifted her tear-wet face and saw her father gazing at her with the old fond look in his eyes; she stretched out her hands to him, and before Elizabeth could turn around they were clasped in each other's arms and Esther was weeping on her father's breast. It did not last long, no tender feeling could find expression under the stony and unflinching gaze of Elizabeth, and Mr. Wainwright put his daughter gently from him and tried to speak, but his lips only quivered and no sound came from them. Then Elizabeth stepped forward and taking Esther by the arm said, "Come, my daughter, calm yourself."

The words were hardly spoken when Esther broke from her hold and turned upon her like something wild.

"I am not your daughter, woman! Do not speak to me in that way again. I cannot choose my home or it would not be with your people, but I can be true to my mother, and I can keep my place at my father's side," she said, as she put her hand on his arm and looked at him. Elizabeth turned away at this and left them alone. But the old look had gone out of Mr. Wainwright's face, he was pale and greatly agitated. Esther herself felt no sense of victory, she even trembled as the fear came into her mind that she had said too much.

Several days passed by and no reference was made to this little scene, and Esther began to be less ap-

prehensive that she had made a fatal mistake, when her father came to breakfast one morning looking as if he had had a fit of sickness, he was so haggard and white. He avoided Esther's eyes continually, and ate nothing at all. The preparations for church began early, and some desperate fear, inspired by her father's actions and his suffering face, caused Esther to resolve to accompany them. She came into the room, as they were about to start, all in readiness, and announced her intention to her father, but what was her surprise to see the agony of his expression increase tenfold, and a look of supreme fear start into his face. He begged her for his sake not to go, and Elizabeth said, "It will be better so."

She took off her hat, put aside her wraps, and saw them depart alone, not because she was not brave enough to go and make the effort to save her father from further suffering if that was impending, but because she knew she was powerless, and she had seen plainly that her presence would really pain him more. That he had gone to meet some great trial she had no doubt, but of its nature she had no idea, and after events only made it possible for her to guess at it. The next time she and Drusilla were alone the girl said to her: "I know you are one of those terrible people who think the Saints are not God's people, but I want to ask you something that I can ask of no one else: Are there many such as you? Many people in the world, I mean, who think it is a disgrace to believe in the revealed religion? And why do they think us so wicked? I know it is

very wrong for me to ask these things but I can't help it, I want to know."

"Can it be possible, child, that you do not know that the Mormons are but a handful of the population of the United States, and that in the history of the world they really have no place at all? No wonder polygamy thrives. That is the shameful part of the Mormon doctrine, that is why everybody despises them; you know what that means, I suppose, do you not?" Esther asked. "Yes, I thought you would; every man in the church, who has any position, has more than one wife. Does it not seem terrible to you? Think of it! how would you feel yourself if you were married to a man who had another wife, or two or three others!"

"But the law of God commands it, and nature has so ordered it; there are more women than men in the world, and no woman can be acceptable in the sight of God who has not borne children in the Church." Esther looked at the girl beside her in amazement. The hideous, practical details of the Mormon government, the Mormon religion they call it, had been stamped on this child's mind in all their nakedness, and she knew nothing else.

"What would you think if your father were to marry another woman?" proceeded Drusilla.

"Marry another woman!" If a knife had pierced Esther's flesh it could not have stung her more sharply, but she rallied in an instant, and said that her father had been converted to the Mormon religion by designing men, but that he was a man of honor;

he did not come there to practice polygamy, but to serve God as he believed, and she would not hear him talked of in that way. She thought for an instant that she saw a glitter and a sneer that were new to her in Drusilla's eyes, but Esther was unsuspecting, and the girl was young, even younger than herself, she reflected, and so ignorant.

In the afternoon Elizabeth and her daughter went out together, and Mr. Wainwright shut himself up in his own room, he was not well, he said, but only wished for quiet and to be undisturbed. Esther spent the time as she had spent many long days, crying in her heart, "How long, Oh Lord, how long?" and seeking for some way of deliverance. She was completely shut out from her father's confidence, but she knew he was breaking down under some new torture of mind, and her own suffering can only be realized by loving hearts that have borne the agony of suspense. The following morning Mr. Wainwright, Elizabeth and her daughter all went to church. Esther noticed that her father looked even more haggard than on the previous morning, his breakfast again was left untouched, and he still so persistently avoided her and in other ways acted so strangely that once the fear that he was losing his mind came to her. The mother and daughter, she was sure, exchanged looks that meant more than their words, and Esther felt that she was bound and gasping for breath while her father was being crushed before her eyes.

CHAPTER VII.

SIX months after the Wainwright farm had been sold to Col. Barbold, it was the scene of busy mining operations. Heaps of blue clay and slate, pools of muddy water, derricks and rough board cabins disfigured the once well-kept hillside; but the Colonel was pleased with his bargain, and surveyed it each day with increasing satisfaction. He was now on the high road to become the wealthiest man in the county—there was no doubt of that. His son was a handsome young fellow, who would make a worthy successor to the broad estate, and who would have the self-confidence to maintain the family position in the community—that was equally certain. Indeed, there was little more the Colonel could wish for, and much that he should be thankful for. He realized all this as he started out in his clean, glittering carriage one frosty morning in early autumn. He seated himself squarely in the middle of the seat, his smooth-shaven face surmounted by a tall, glossy black hat, his coat buttoned tightly over his rotund form, and respectability and importance radiating from his shining person. His well-gloved hands guided a thoroughbred team that held a different gait from the native beasts which trod the dusty valley roads and climbed the rain-washed rocky hills, year in and year out, eating their fill, and dying peacefully of old age

when they had honestly worked their score or more of years. The silky coats of the Colonel's horses shone in the sun. They sniffed the cool air with appreciative nostrils, and took long, clean strides, much to their master's satisfaction. He took out his watch just as he turned from the lane into the pike road, with the intention of timing them to the court house at the Center, and rolled off down the smooth highway. All the way there, three miles and over, they trotted evenly at a fine speed, and when the Colonel drew them up in front of the Post-Office and stepped out, all the village loungers sauntered up to shake hands with him and admire his turnout, as they were accustomed to do. It was one of the sights of the place, and the principal event of the day, to see Colonel Barbold drive in. When he had tied his horses and gone in for his mail, the men all looked after him, and one of them said: "The Colonel holds his own remarkable."

"So he does, so he does; he is well kept, and well to do," said another.

Inside the Colonel met a hearty good morning from the postmaster and received a goodly package of letters—nearly all there were, in fact, for not many of the inhabitants of that happy valley received mail every week. As he looked hastily over his letters, the Colonel dropped them one by one on the dingy counter between himself and the dignitary, reserving in his hand only one. This one was addressed in the writing of his son, who had been gone from home a few days on a little business trip. He

was old enough now to begin to take an interest in, and a part in the work of conducting the business, and his father was desirous of learning of his success in this, one of his first ventures at bargaining alone. The Colonel deftly shook the other letters into a regular pack and put them in an inner pocket. Then he took a seat near the hospitable old stove and opened the letter from his son.

Most of the letters that came to Pineborough Center were opened in the little country store that served also as Post-Office, and the high official whose privilege it was to hand them out generally knew as quickly as the recipient himself whether the letter contained good news or ill. He had watched the faces of so many letter readers during his long term of office that he knew just what the rapid, excited glance down the page meant, and that the drawn brows, and the puzzled, anxious expression of the face before him betokened trouble that the Colonel could not see his way through. His usually pleasant and ruddy countenance was blanching, and the lips were tightening spasmodically. This school of faces had also taught the official that it would be unwise for him to ask any questions, but it was not long till he was called upon to lend assistance. The Colonel felt his own danger, and turned to the man with a frightened look in his face, and asked him if he could give him something hot to drink. Fortunately a discussion of the merits of the team had kept the loafing population outside, and after the hot draught had been swallowed the Colonel was able to brace

himself and go out. The little crowd appealed to him noisily to settle several disputed points about the horses, and was closing around him when the men saw that something had gone wrong; the Colonel's manner had changed; he seemed bowed down and aged.

"He's had a spell," one man whispered; "his father died in one." "He's like to be took any minute," another muttered, and they all fell back and let him pass. Some one nearest the horses' heads untied them and partly turned them about, for which the Colonel thanked him in an absent way, and then drew up the lines and was gone. When his horses' feet again struck the pike road their gait did not seem to interest the man who drove them. They tossed their proud heads and went with the wind for a little time, and then slackened their speed as they pleased. The same hand drew upon the bit by starts, but the mind that guided them was distracted, and they quickly perceived it. It was a short journey from the Barbold mansion to the "Center," but in that short span a lofty man, in the prime of life, had been broken like a reed. As soon as the Colonel's back was turned, the lounging jockeys and small traders swarmed into the store and plied the postmaster with questions, but he could only tell them that a letter from young Barbold had brought bad news to his father. Not one in the company could conjecture what could have befallen so clever a young man as Tom Barbold. Not one had a clue to anything that would lead him into desperate ventures or

dangerous crimes. He had no habits that would cause them to suspect he had forged his father's name and run away with a large amount of money, for everybody knew he might have all the money he wanted, and was sole heir apparent to his father's fortune. He had no heart-entanglements that anybody knew of, and consequently there was no probability that he had eloped with some poor girl whom the Barbold pride would not tolerate. But they had not many days of suspense. Although the exact contents of the letter received by the Colonel that fair morning were never known outside of the Barbold mansion, it was well understood throughout the length and breadth of Pineborough township, long before the Colonel arose from what was for many weeks considered his death bed, that Tom Barbold had gone to Utah and had become a Latter Day Saint. One of the interested parties to whom this news soon found its way was Ezekiel Blounce, and the next westward-bound train from Rocky-ford carried an old man with a careworn face.

CHAPTER VIII

IT was at the close of the first chill day of autumn that Tom Barbold knocked at the door of the little house in Salt Lake City and was met by Elias Wainwright himself, now a pale and shrinking old man, but who was surprised into an ecstasy of delight and forgetfulness at seeing a face from the home country. He took the boy in his arms and clung to him with tears raining down his face until Tom asked if Esther was at home. "Oh, yes, to be sure you want to see Esther, and she will be glad to see you; I was so delighted myself, I forgot everything for a moment; I will bring her, sit here; indeed we are glad to see you, my boy. Esther, Esther," he called as he went out, "Come quick, my child, some one from Pineborough is here," and when she came, hurrying, surprised at his cheery voice, he caught her by the hand and led her in before Tom Barbold.

He would have greeted the girl warmly, but she had hoped to see her old teacher, and young Barbold's presence she could not understand. An embarrassing blush flew to her cheek and made it impossible for her to look in his face after the first glance. She gave him her hand, however, and he, like all men of his type, took the blush for more than it really meant.

"Esther is glad to see you, Tom," said Mr. Wain-

wright, "and we both want to hear all the news from home, how does it look at the old place, and how are all the folks? Your father, is he well?" And so he went on with questions which the young man answered, while he kept his eyes on Esther and addressed an occasional remark to her. Mr. Wainwright seemed to have been lifted out of his surroundings, and to see through the medium of the new presence all the old scenes of his far-off home, but suddenly he came back to the boy himself and asked where he was bound and what had brought him there.

"Oh, I have come to join the Saints," young Barbold answered fearlessly, and looked first at the father and then at the daughter for approval. The revulsion that came over Esther's face did not escape him, and Mr. Wainwright, instead of welcoming him cordially to the fold, seemed frightened and glanced quickly towards the door.

For a moment, it seemed as if the subject would not be touched upon again, but Mr. Wainwright rallied a little and said it was to him the "perfect way;" he wished Esther could see it so, and he looked at her an instant as if a faint hope had sprung up in his heart now that this young friend had come. But Esther sat with compressed lips, and young Barbold thought he could see tears glistening in her eyes. He was sadly disappointed to find this state of affairs in the Wainwright family; he had been led, not directly perhaps, to suppose that by this time Esther would be firm in the faith, and then — well, he had indulged

in a great many dreams as to what would naturally follow his appearance at Salt Lake City.

Ever since the party of converts had left Rockyford under the care of Elder Bean, Tom Barbold had been in correspondence with him, and at last he had been induced by flattery, and promises of position, and the hope of winning Esther Wainwright for his wife, to leave his father, his home, and all his bright prospects there, for the life of a Mormon Saint.

"It is just such young blood that we need," Elder Bean had said when he was talking it over with Elizabeth, "and if Esther can't be brought to see her duty in one way, perhaps she can in another."

"It is a wise scheme," Elizabeth had assented; "one worthy of your noble mind, Elder Bean; you have always the good of the Church at heart. Send for him, persuade him to come, and Esther will marry him, of course."

"I hate to give the girl up, you know that, Elizabeth, but I have used every argument I can think of; she is set against me."

And now he was here; the young man who was to solve the problem of what to do with Esther, for Elizabeth and Elder Bean, whose consciences would not allow them to rest while the girl was outside the Church. When the door of the little room opened to admit Elizabeth and her daughter, all the occupants arose and the three pairs of eyes turned upon them with widely different expressions. Young Barbold's were full of wonder, for Elizabeth walked

straight to her husband's side, and by her very attitude demanded recognition.

"This is my wife," said Mr. Wainwright, and Elizabeth held out her hand stiffly to the stranger, who took it, while he continued to look wonderingly from one member of the group to another. He had never been apprised of Mr. Wainwright's marriage, and was so much surprised that he forgot to say anything before Elizabeth turned from him and cast upon her husband a look so fraught with righteous scorn that the frail man seemed to quiver under it as though it were a north wind. Then he stepped forward and took Elizabeth's daughter by the hand and said falteringly, "This is my wife, too."

If a thunderbolt had resounded from the little white patch of plaster over his head it could not have more completely stunned the mind of this young man who was unaccustomed to out-of-the-beaten-way occurrences, and whose mind was naturally slow to grasp new situations. He raised his eyes for an instant to see that the woman before him was young, a girl like Esther in years, but unlike her in every other respect. He dared not look at Esther, but he caught sight of her flaming cheeks and he knew without seeing them that her eyes were dry now, and hot and hard looking. If he could have known the tears that had rained from them since that fatal day when her father and Elizabeth and her daughter went from the little home and left her almost wild with fear and grief, he would have wondered that they did not burn out and leave her sightless. She had borne it as best she could,

though sometimes she wondered how she did endure to see it all and feel herself powerless. Elizabeth was still sternly just to her, but the girl-wife taunted and upbraided her with living a useless and sinful life. At times she felt too much crushed to retaliate, and at others she would send the girl from her with a torrent of indignation inspired by her innocence and the knowledge of her right to her place at her father's side. It was a terrible life for a girl, and Esther could feel herself growing unforgiving. She realized that a change was taking place in herself, and that from a thoughtless girl she was being transformed into a care-burdened, sometimes she thought a hard, woman—like Elizabeth, she would say to herself; and then she would resolve anew to bear her lot patiently, and to be ever ready to give a word of love and comfort to her father when opportunity offered, and never at any time to add to his sorrow by even a reproachful look.

During all these months Esther had a secret trouble of her own, which she could explain to no one. She had neither seen nor heard from the young surveyor since the night he had been at their house. The last limit of the time he thought to be gone was long past, and yet no tidings, and he came not. While the long, beautiful summer lingered, Esther was accustomed to sit in the low door in the evening, and watch, thinking because he once came at that hour he might again. But now the wind was storm-laden, and the nights were dark and cold. Esther's life was confined mainly to the little house whose

only semblance of a home was that it provided shelter for its inmates. Their little sitting room was often cheered now by the presence of young Barbold, and although Mr. Wainwright never again forgot himself in the presence of the young man, he was always glad to see him, and soon showed an interest in his connection with the Church. Esther herself could not be indifferent to his coming, it relieved the tedium and the embarrassment of an evening alone with the family. For a time she was wholly unsuspecting of the object of his frequent visits. The license that is permitted old acquaintances in a new country, the real pleasure she felt in seeing an old friend, and the remembrance she had of his manner when a boy at school, were all reasons for this. He had the habit of assuming privileges that other boys would hesitate to take. No doubt his father's position as the largest land owner and the richest man in the neighborhood gave a lordliness to his youthful bearing that he would not have taken on under other circumstances, but "it was in the blood," the old farmers said, and it "would crop out." All these considerations combined to make Esther look upon Tom merely as an old schoolmate and friend. His conversion to the Church had surprised and pained her, but it was of so little consequence to her compared with her father's conversion that she did not dwell upon it.

After awhile it came about naturally enough that the two young people were left often alone. Elizabeth went away on a visit, a kind of missionary tour,

to some of the outlying towns in the Territory, and while she was gone Mr. Wainwright invariably went to church in the evening, with a determination, Esther thought, not to give himself an opportunity to reflect upon his own harassed life, for it was evident now that between the close scrutiny Elizabeth gave his every action, and his uncertainty as to how he was expected to deport himself towards his young wife, the poor man was at his wits' end. Still he never murmured. Elizabeth had left the command—she seldom uttered anything but commands—that her daughter should go to church daily with Mr. Wainwright, and for a week this instruction was carried out, apparently without a thought of wavering from it. But about this time, Drusilla, for some unaccountable reason, seemed to develop a mind of her own, the whole force of which new sense was expressed in a desire to stay at home, and indoors, at all hours of day and night. Bitter and hard to control as Esther's feelings toward this girl often were, she also sometimes pitied her, her life seemed such a hopeless blank of submission to a hard, unnatural mother, but when she took upon herself the part of a spy upon Esther's deportment, then open war was declared. Esther felt that she could endure no more, and after Drusilla one morning came into the room, while young Barbold was there, and took her seat with an air that said plainly enough, "This couple need watching, and I feel it to be my duty, as well as my privilege, to attend to it," Esther no longer

felt any doubt that it was to scrutinize her actions that her father's young wife remained at home.

It was during a ride they took together that same afternoon that Tom Barbold told Esther he had come to Utah with the hope of winning her love and making her his wife. It would be but a dull woman who could be wooed by a man and not know that he was trying to gain her love, and it cannot be said of Esther that she remained insensible to the meaning of young Barbold's attentions to her as their acquaintance progressed and he became a more and more frequent visitor, but when the declaration came she was surprised at its earnestness, and the young man was vastly more surprised at the unqualified refusal of his suit. He had never attributed Esther's avoidance of him at times to a sincere wish to be less in his company, or to a desire to discourage his intimacy. It was only girlish diffidence and coquetry in his eyes, and added to his admiration of her. He was not blessed with the quick discernment of some lovers, nor the sensitive nature that troubled itself with doubts about how he was held in other people's estimation. His self-appreciation was enough to blind him to the opinions of others, and the natural effect of the refusal of his hand by a pretty girl, was anger. It seemed unwarrantable to him from every point of view, and he was foolish enough to advance the arguments of policy and self-protection to Esther on the impulse of his wounded pride. This proceeding made Esther's part comparatively easy, and she told him with scorn that she

was sorry he had not learned to know her better than to think she could be won by threats of what would befall her if she did not consent. Resentful as were the feelings which this ungallant treatment caused in Esther's mind, she could not forget that she had lost a friend. Her friends were so few that she had looked forward with dread to the result of the avowal she had heard, and which she had known must come, but which she had been powerless to avoid. Now that it was made, however, she discovered that through it she not only lost a friend, but gained an enemy, if young Barbold gave up the hope of winning her. To hold out that false hope to him and thus save herself from his open enmity was an idea that had no place in her thoughts, and aside from its baseness, the continuance of his attentions after what had occurred between them would have been more disagreeable than anything she feared, and she unhesitatingly chose the result of expressing her true feelings without reserve.

But of all kinds of lovers, the egotist who thinks nothing but a passing whim could cause a woman to refuse him is the last to give up, and to her dismay Esther saw that when Tom Barbold discovered the effect of his threats he merely laughed and said he could wait, he guessed, until she changed her mind; it would not be long, perhaps.

That night Esther longed, oh, how sorrowfully, none but a deserted heart knows, to go to her father and tell him her troubles, but his own sad face and his strange, preoccupied manner forbade it. She

went to him once with an almost bursting heart, but when he had taken her mechanically in his arms she only asked if she could do anything for him, and he answered "Nothing, nothing," and hurried off to church. A great gulf had formed between them, and each carried a heart as utterly alone as if the other had been numbered with the dead.

CHAPTER IX.

SALT LAKE CITY is the great head-center of Mormondom and Mormonism, but there are scores of towns and villages in Utah and the adjacent Territories that were established by Mormon elders under the direction of Brigham Young, and later by President Taylor, where the Mormon law is as strictly and promptly enforced as it is in Salt Lake City. These outlying communities are called, in Mormon parlance, "Stakes of Zion."

It was to visit some of these that Elizabeth had been sent with Elder Bean, a man high in church authority, possessed of great wealth and the implicit confidence of the head of the Church, but lacking, somewhat, in executive power. A better combination from which to form a good overseer could not well have been made than this impulsive elder, who had the legal authority and the advancement of the Church interests at heart at all hazards, and Elizabeth, who had the iron will and the ability to carry out the decrees. They made many visits to the villages that were unquestionably loyal, as well as to some that were said to be more or less disaffected. They met with no trouble in ascertaining who were the contumacious parties in any of these places. Every man was a spy upon his fellow men, and the least sign of wavering from faith in the "New Light," or

of inclination to retrograde toward the faith of their fathers, was marked against both men and women, and reported through the proper channels to their ruler, the man of almost unlimited capabilities and resources, the man almost untaught of books and unlearned in the history of the world and the methods of other great rulers, but of more than Napoleonic strategy and shrewdness, a man with an absolutely pitiless heart—Brigham Young.

This holy pair always managed to leave with the backsliders in any village the impression that they could go on in the way they had begun with impunity. Elder Bean and Sister Elizabeth did not constitute themselves a committee to visit and remonstrate with the recalcitrant members of their flock on the error of their ways, nor did they appoint any others to perform what is considered a duty of love in other churches.

They merely came, and saw, and went.

Rewarding the most faithful with promises of increased leniency and honor after they should have passed from this earthly, working vineyard, but leaving the sinners who dared to doubt, indulging in the renewed hope that the day had gone by when the doctrine of the Latter Day Saints was all-powerful among them.

The day has indeed gone by when the awful doctrine of Blood Atonement can be openly and defiantly carried out by the Mormon priests. But if the true history of the tour of Elder Bean and Sister Elizabeth were written, it would show in every hamlet

through which they passed, in every household in which they tarried, an increased vigilance on the part of each faithful individual to comply with all the requirements of his superiors, and to spy out every shortcoming of his brethren and sisters in the church. More than this, it would bring to light a bloody vengeance upon every suspected man or woman, for Blood Atonement for the breaking of endowment vows was binding in Utah in the days when Brigham Young was absolute. It is not so now, because the encroachment of civilization upon the domain of Mormonism has made communication with United States authorities so much more swift and sure. If the awful decree is carried out now, instead of striking a man down, and burying him with a parade as a public threat to others, he must be laid in wait for and assassinated in dark and secret places, and his remains disposed of in the dead of night, or he must be decoyed away upon a long journey that promises him freedom, but which ends only in the freedom of his soul from the body. For although the criminal conviction of Mormons has been rare in the United States courts, the Mormon leaders are sagacious enough to know that if crimes against national statutes were committed in too glaring a manner, somebody would be forced to testify against them. Mormons never testify against each other in the Territorial courts, and in the overwhelmingly Mormon districts Gentile citizens would not dare if they were allowed the opportunity, which they never are. But the most terrible phase of the

doctrine of Blood Atonement is, that if the crime of breaking one of the vows which endows a man with a saintship in the Mormon church is not atoned for by one generation, it must be by the next, even unto the fifth or sixth. If it is not deemed judicious, then, that the blood of a man or a woman shall be spilled to wash away his or her sins against the Church, the blood of their children, or their children's children must atone for them. By no other means of grace can the spirits of such offenders ever reach Paradise. Human sacrifice alone can save them from eternal damnation.

Such is one of the strongest tenets of the Church of the Latter Day Saints. If Brigham Young did not complete his vengeance upon any disobedient family, it was simply because he did not live long enough. He was an old man when he died. He had taken scores of bright boys under his espionage and raised them to do his bidding. Many of them, when young men, worshipped him almost as a god, but he goaded them on to the commission of crimes so terrible, and practices so revolting to any but a nature like his own, that even a life-long faith at last gave way to conscience and reason, and many of them openly rebelled.

As a punishment, their families suffered every indignity and every torture his fiendish revenge could invent. Daughters were given in marriage to high priests and elders because they had greater license to treat their wives as slaves, under cover of the doctrine that to be the wife of an elder on earth exalts

a woman to places in heaven which she could never otherwise reach. Sons of the hated father or mother were detailed to perform acts of cruelty upon other condemned families, and forced into polygamy at the risk of their own lives. When it was evident the desired end could not be reached by threats and intimidation, Brigham Young could flatter and fawn, and even simulate love, equal to Richard the Lion-hearted, and while waiting to scourge his victim he could lure him on with smiles, and the expression of fatherly advice and sympathy, and bright promises of temporal power and spiritual reward, never betraying by a look nor a hasty word his real purpose. His most intimate acquaintances testify that Brigham Young was a marked example of the almost invariable rule, that to govern others successfully, a man must be able to govern himself. He was not given to great bursts of passion at any time, but when he knew his power, and felt it to be safe, his vindictiveness could express itself in masterly and crushing scorn. On the other hand, perhaps the most anomolous characteristic of this man, who held a kingdom in the midst of a republic, was his innate cowardice in the face of physical danger. This trait was notorious among his followers, as well as among the officers and soldiers of Fort Douglas, so long the only avenue of escape for outlawed Mormons.

It was not long before the death of the Prophet that these emissaries of the Church, Elder Bean and Sister Elizabeth, were sent out, and, as if he had a forewarning of his fast approaching end, and wished

to reinforce his army for longer survival after him, he had given orders that the inspection should be unusually thorough. Discipline was to be enforced in every instance—that was the rule always; but upon this occasion Elder Bean and Sister Elizabeth were empowered to give “counsel” in doubtful cases, without waiting to refer the facts to the Prophet. That meant a great deal. Everything was done according to “counsel,” which was in fact Brigham Young’s personal and irrevocable decree. The power of his generalship lay largely in his personal attention to details, and a case of importance was rarely decided without his intimate knowledge and his individual judgment. To empower others with the right to give “counsel” meant to constitute them witness, lawyer, jury, judge and high priest, for the time being, in both temporal and spiritual affairs, for church and state are inseparable in Utah.

After the pair had journeyed many days on their blood-righteous errand, they stopped at a little obscure “Stake of Zion,” away out in the western portion of the Prophet’s domain, and were entertained in the only “plank house” belonging to the village. The habitations were mostly “dugouts,” though there were a few sod houses and one or two adobes. It was time for the mid-day meal when they arrived, and after they were seated around the table, the “Sister” of the house served a plate and asked to be excused, while she carried it into an adjoining room.

“Is some member of the household sick?” asked Elizabeth of the woman’s husband, as she passed out.

“Yes; a young man who escaped from the Indians took refuge with us; he was hungry and we fed him; but whether my good wife will succeed in nursing him back to health, is extremely doubtful, I think; he was badly cut up, and does not seem to gain much.”

“Is he one of the Lord’s people?” asked Elder Bean in his piping voice, and Elizabeth put down her knife and fork while they waited a reply, as if to express her conviction that it was much more important than the gratification of her appetite.

“Well, no, he is not; but he is a poor, suffering creature, unable to travel any further. In fact, it was by the greatest exertion he came this far; he was almost ready to faint from loss of blood when he reached our door, and —”

The man would have said more in extenuation of an act which the scriptural injunctions he had referred to evidently did not wholly justify in the minds of his guests, but Elizabeth interrupted him with: “It was well enough to give him shelter, but if he cannot be brought to see and acknowledge that he was saved by the interposition of Providence through the Church of the Saints, he should not be pampered. Elder Bean will see this person after dinner, and advise you and our Sister-in-the-Lord in regard to him.”

The man looked in astonishment. Could it be that he was in his own house and heard such things? He would have replied with hot and resentful words, but that he was so dazed he could say nothing for a

moment, and when he remembered who these people were, and that he was in their power, he swallowed his wrath and said nothing; but when his wife returned to her place she quickly discovered the embarrassment that had fallen upon the company during her absence, and knew by her husband's face that he was angry. She dared ask no questions, however, and the meal was eaten almost in silence. When it was finished, though the husband and wife were wishing to be alone, they knew it would not be wise to show any anxiety. It was late in the afternoon before Elizabeth went out, and Elder Bean went into the sick man's room and closed the door after him that he might talk with him uninterruptedly, he said significantly, concerning the salvation of his soul. Then the frightened wife was clasped in her husband's arms, while they talked hurriedly in whispers, hardly daring to breathe for fear they should be overheard and their treason suspected, for in the short time since the arrival of the functionaries of the Church, the "Brother" with whom they sojourned had decided to escape from the kingdom of the Latter Day Saints at the first opportunity. It was not alone the indignity that had been extended to him and his household by Elder Bean and Elizabeth that caused him to reach this decision; that was only one of the numerous and multiform insults he had had to bear, and while it was not nearly so great as some others, it was the last straw, and, he said to himself, he would submit to no more.

One of the cruelest things he had been called upon

to do was to collect taxes from the poor people of his neighborhood. Nearly all the families for miles around about had traveled long, wearisome journeys to reach the New Zion, and many of them had spent their last cent long before they reached the end, but a productive year and hard labor brought something, and a share of whatever it was, much or little, must go to the church. A tenth of a man's income was invariably collected by law, but the exaction seldom ended there. Special taxes were levied upon all kinds of property and with all kinds of pretexts, and no man dared disobey. If the tithe collector chanced to be a man with a heart less hard than iron, he must necessarily suffer in carrying out his master's will, for children must cry for bread and go hungry to a cold bed rather than that the Church should call for money and the call go unheeded. At the same time the material interests were so wisely fostered by Brigham Young that if any of his people suffered for physical comforts it was for special reason, but these special reasons were not few. Heavy taxes were imposed for purposes of intimidation, for the punishment of various offenses against the Church hierarchy, and in many instances because it was believed by the egotist who ruled that it could be done with impunity; that the blind faith of his subjects was unalterable.

The man who now talked with bated breath behind barred doors, to his own wife in his own house, had taken money from poor farmers and mechanics when he knew they would rather die than go home

and tell their families that their hard-earned savings had all gone to the Church. But that was all over now; he was yet bodily in the toils, but his mind was free, and his first words to his wife were to tell her that her prayer had been answered: that he was no longer a Mormon at heart. To the woman who has suffered the martyrdom of apprehension that is inseparable from the lot of Mormon wifehood, whether her husband is a polygamist or not, no words could be sweeter than these, and his wife wept upon his breast until he had to caution her that she would not be able to meet their guests. Her tears were not of grief, but of joy; the fountain of thankfulness had broken in her heart and was washing away her long-pent agony. She felt as though she could not meet Sister Elizabeth and Elder Bean again. Their very presence was hateful to her, the air seemed poisoned by them; but her husband told her that their only hope lay in entire self-possession and apparent acquiescence in every command.

“Walls sometimes have ears,” said Elder Bean to Sister Elizabeth, late in the evening, after he had prayed that the family with which they sojourned might long be preserved to labor in the vineyard of the Lord according to the counsel of the Prophet. “We will sit in the open air for a time, Elizabeth, and advise with each other. I have some things to say, and some news that concerns you.”

“News that concerns me?” queried Elizabeth, when they had carried their chairs to an open space in the yard. “Everything connected with the ad-

vancement of the revealed religion concerns me, Brother Bean, but I have no friends here except friends in the Lord, and news of anything outside the work we have been sent to do can have little interest for me."

"Oh, we'll see. This young man, this sick person"—

"I supposed it had to do with him."

"He is delirious," continued the Elder, paying no heed to her interruption, "and he talks in his delirium of one Esther. Could it be Esther Wainwright, do you think?"

"Certainly not. Esther has no acquaintances, she was a child when she left her old home. It is not probable that such a girl would have more than one youthful admirer who would care to follow her out here. She has known young Brother Barbold from her infancy, and she is flattered by his attentions, I can see it constantly; she will marry him, of course."

As if that settled it, Elizabeth gave her head a slight upward inclination, and turned toward the elder as if she would have him proceed to more important business.

"But he talks of Salt Lake City, and makes plans for getting her away from her old father; he fears she will not consent to leave him. He does not care for the rest of the "crew," as he calls them, whoever they may be. He is too sick and too crazy to put things very straight, but I gather that he is on his way to Salt Lake City now, or rather that he was

when he was waylaid by the Indians. They came near making a finish of him."

Elder Bean ceased speaking and looked thoughtfully at the ground. But Elizabeth looked disturbed and asked if that was all he knew.

"That is all I have learned from the young man himself, but from this I have learned something more."

And here the Elder produced from an inner pocket a crumpled envelope which he handed to Elizabeth. It bore this superscription:

.....

EZEKIEL BLOUNCE,

FOR MISS ESTHER WAINWRIGHT,

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH.

.....

"Oh, it is empty," said he, significantly, as Elizabeth scanned it and hurriedly looked inside, "but it tells enough. This young man is a Gentile, a lover of Esther Wainwright's, and is going to Salt Lake City for her, if he gets well enough. I think the Lord has sent him to take her off your hands, Sister Elizabeth; she will always be a troublesome minx in the Church, make the best of her. If you are wise, sister, I say you will let him go and lay no hindrances in his way. Let him take her, and good riddance."

That Elder Bean had not felt quite sure of his logical footing, was evidenced by the fact that he did

not look Sister Elizabeth in the eye. He was trying an experiment, and he feigned to be abstracted while he gave her an opportunity to make up her mind as to what course she would pursue. He knew better than to argue a point of conscience-policy with her, but he took care to advance what he considered would be the strongest argument with her for permitting Esther to go out of the way.

“It was foreordained that that young woman should be brought into the fold. Elder Bean, I feel this in my heart, and if I was not so unworthy to be so singled out and blessed, I should believe it had been revealed to me that I am to labor for her conversion until she is safe within the fold.”

If it passed through the elder’s mind that perhaps Sister Elizabeth’s desire to be revenged upon Esther for her obstinacy, was greater than her desire to see her converted, he gave no sign of it. They never took off the mask of holiness before each other.

“No, Elder Bean, I cannot give up the girl; Providence has put her in my care, and I feel it to be my duty to save her. She will yet repent, you may trust me for that. I will live to see her a dutiful wife in a loyal household.”

Elizabeth would have continued indefinitely, it seemed, upon a theme which had evidently been much in her thoughts, but the elder broke the current of her reflections by asking her what she would do with the young man.

“He is very sick, you say,” she answered; “per-

haps it is the Lord's will that he may not recover; we will wait and see."

"I must go to him; these good people are weary watching him, and it is not becoming in us that a stranger should suffer and receive no help from us. You can retire early and rest from your journey, Sister Elizabeth, and I will watch the stranger to-night."

"Could I not see him too? I might be able to suggest something for his relief? Is there a physician in the place?"

"O, yes, there is a doctor here, and you can see him also. Between the two he is sure to be either killed or cured," said the elder; but Elizabeth, who so rarely smiled at anything, was in no mood for poor jokes, and she went grimly behind the elder to the door of the sick man's room. Within, they found both their host and hostess, who stood watching the sick man, bathing his burning head and listening to his incoherent mutterings. When Elder Bean announced that he would take care of their patient during the night the woman protested vigorously that she was quite able to do it, and said she could not think of having her guests deprived of their rest. Her husband knew that after the excitement of the day she needed sleep, and he knew, too, from the elder's manner, that they had better comply with his suggestion, but when he spoke of his wife's fatigue she looked up at him in surprise. Elder Bean spoke up then and said that Sister Elizabeth would retire immediately and that they should do likewise,

he would stay with the sick man. Elizabeth obeyed dutifully, bidding them all a grave good night, and after she was gone the wife arranged things for the watcher's convenience and went too.

"I could not have left her there," she said to her husband when they were alone, "she looks so cold and cruel I believe she would kill him if he did not say he would be a Mormon when he gets well."

"Hush! it is not safe even to whisper such thoughts; you little know, dear wife, the dangerous ground we are treading on. But while we are alone I must tell you one thing which will help to put you on your guard for to-morrow; Elder Bean and Sister Elizabeth know something of this sick man. Whether they learned some secret of him this afternoon, or whether they have known him before, I cannot tell; but they have some secret interest in him since the Elder saw him, and they know something about him. Have you heard him talk of anything mysterious?"

"Nothing at all, but I have not been thinking of that, I knew the poor fellow was delirious and did not think his ravings of any consequence. I remember he called on some one to wait, and be patient, that is all I remember that meant anything."

"Well, be careful; do not appear to watch them; be as natural as possible, and, as we value our freedom, let us see our guests off without arousing their suspicion."

Whatever may have been Elder Bean's motive—and he may as well have the benefit of the supposition that it was a good one, since we know of no

other—he worked hard to save Mark Branch, the young surveyor, for of course it was he whom the missionaries had found, and before morning there did come a little more restfulness, and a decrease of the terrible fever. It was not until about the same hour that Elizabeth's eyes closed in the fitful slumber of an overwrought mind, and her compressed lips relaxed like a weary laborer's who has laid down his burden for a brief respite. But with the first sounds of morning in the little village, she was awake and eager for some plan of active operations. In her impatience to know whether the young man was better, and his recovery probable, or whether he was dangerously worse and still unconscious, her usual equanimity failed her; and she pushed her breakfast from her, plainly unable to touch it, when Elder Bean said, in answer to her questions, that it was impossible that there should be much change in so sick a man in one short night, but that what change there was, was gain.

“It may not be permanent,” he said, when the brief meal was ended and he and Elizabeth had gone out for an interview, “but since we have checked the fever, I should not be surprised if he'd out-last it and live to make you a son-in-law yet.

The day passed in anxious watch of the Gentile, and as hour after hour went by Elizabeth showed more and more her unusual perturbation of spirit. She would announce suddenly, with great earnestness, that she must go home immediately; she knew she was needed there, and she felt it be her duty to go. Elder Bean would advise her to start forthwith,

and leave him to finish the tour alone. Then she would say that the Lord had appointed her to fulfill this mission, and she would not abandon it. So long as their patient was in such a precarious condition the elder felt sure that Elizabeth would not desert him; but the exhibition of such variable moods and such sudden changes of the mind were so rare, indeed so unheard of, in Elizabeth's history, that even Elder Bean could not wholly comprehend them. It seemed to excite her to uncontrollable nervousness to talk of the young man, yet she was constantly inquiring as to his condition, and insisted upon seeing him frequently. He gained steadily all day, and at nightfall sank into a deep, quiet sleep. Elder Bean sat a long time by his side watching him patiently, and was just about to lie down and take a little rest himself, trusting that his charge would sleep on, when the door opened and Elizabeth stepped noiselessly into the room. She had evidently tried in vain to sleep, and had sought the sick room because she could not remain longer alone with her own thoughts. She moved toward the bed, and the elder said to her in a low tone, "You see he sleeps quite naturally; he will soon be all right." Faint as the sound was it reached the sleeper, and he slowly opened his eyes on Elizabeth. They gazed at each other an instant and then the sick man cast his eyes downward towards her feet as if taking in her whole personality. He did not move or speak, but Elizabeth felt that he had seen her with his true vision. He closed his eyes again and made no further sign, and Elder Bean,

who had chanced to turn away, did not see even this. Elizabeth lingered but a moment and passed out as noiselessly as she came. In the morning the patient was pronounced much better by all the household except Elizabeth; she did not seem anxious to see him, but said with the others that she was glad he was out of danger.

There are men, particularly young men, who have lived an active out-door life, who have the power to rally from an acute attack of sickness in an incredibly short space of time, and toward the evening of the next day, when Mark Branch insisted upon getting up, everybody was amazed, but he said he had not really been sick; he was merely exhausted by fatigue and loss of blood, and now that he was rested and refreshed by their care, he was all right again. Seeing his determination, his host and the elder shared their not too plenteous wardrobes with him, and between them made him presentable. Not to Elizabeth, however; she kept her room with a nervous headache, and the little party took supper without her. The congratulations that were extended to Mark so heartily by all, made the event quite a pleasant one. The little woman who had for the last two or three days trembled between hope and fear for her husband's safety, almost forgot her anxiety, and even her suspicion of Elder Bean, in her gratitude to him.

The stranger's thanks were as genuine as their hospitality, and when they bade him good-night, the entire household looked upon him as an old friend. The elder even suggested that perhaps they might

make some arrangements for journeying together, if he were going towards the States.

"Shouldn't wonder if we might," answered Mark brightly, as if it were a happy thought.

In the morning, the host, who tapped early at his door, received no answer. He hesitated a moment, thinking the convalescent yet asleep, and was about to turn away and leave him undisturbed, when Elizabeth appeared.

"The fever! it may have returned!" she said excitedly; and at this suggestion they hurriedly opened the door.

The room was empty. The bed had not been occupied. Their patient was gone.

CHAPTER X.

MR. WAINWRIGHT failed in strength perceptibly as the autumn passed away. When winter set in, the cold of even the mild climate of Salt Lake seemed to chill him through. He lingered long about the little fire at home, and went out into the crisp frosty air as if it were a biting and bitter wind. Esther often stood and looked after him, and sometimes followed him, to assure herself that he would reach the church safely; he seemed so frail and feeble, she feared he might fall by the way. But day after day he came and went, almost as if he neither saw nor heard. It was a silent agony, that reacted upon Esther's sensitive nature, cruelly; she was wasting under it, too. And, besides this great sorrow, she had to bear the annoyance of young Barbold's attentions. His visits were quite as frequent, and his manner quite as assured, as before her refusal to marry him. There seemed to be no way by which she could evade or repel him, and she could only bear his presence and suffer in silence. She had no protector, and no friend to advise her how to protect herself, but her womanly instincts had been developed so rapidly during her life among the Latter Day Saints that she did not often feel afraid for herself. She felt sure she had strength enough to resist any power that would try to force her into a marriage

with Barbold, and she was happily ignorant of the other methods of punishment for disobedient daughters under the counsel of the Prophet; but she dreaded constantly the conflict she knew must come when Elizabeth returned. Young Barbold had as much as told her that Elizabeth had not only approved the marriage, but she had said it was greatly to be desired, and must be consummated for Esther's good. Many a time Esther planned her methods for defense and resistance, but she always discovered a weak point, and ended by trying to shut out of her mind all that was before her.

One day when she was more than usually troubled about her father's feebleness, Tom Barbold walked in and seated himself familiarly by her side. Elizabeth's daughter was with her, seated on the opposite side of the room, and just as the young gentleman sat down, Esther looked up at Drusilla. The constant watch she had recently exercised over these young people had added another embarrassment to Tom Barbold's visits, and Esther glanced at her involuntarily, as she had done many times before, while her fair face flushed with shame; but she saw something this time she had never seen before, or, having seen, she had never understood. Drusilla's cheeks were aflame, and the expression of her face as she looked at Esther told as plainly as words could that she was jealous. The revelation came to Esther instantly when she saw those flashing eyes. Her first impulse was to speak. Her father's wife jealous of another man's attention to her, his daughter! It

seemed monstrous! But some better impulse checked her, and instead of breaking out in a tirade of hot words; as she was tempted to, she rushed from the room and left Drusilla and Barbold alone. When she reached her own room she could not be thankful enough that she had held her peace. She had no respect for the mock-marriage between her father and Drusilla; why should she expect any one else to have, she queried, even Drusilla, the plural wife; she was as young and ignorant as herself, and had always been under the complete control of Elizabeth.

When Esther was gone, Barbold looked after her a moment in astonishment and then said: "Well, what does the girl mean?"

"O, she is so queer, you never know what she will do next," said Drusilla, quickly. And then Barbold looked at her, and, seeing her bright cheeks, was tempted to ask a question that had been in his mind many times, though he had never taken much notice of Drusilla. "She belongs to the old man," he would always think when he saw her, and then forget her again. This time she looked unusually pretty, and he would ask her while Esther was gone; he would not have thought of doing it while in her presence.

"How did you happen to marry the old man, any how?" he said then, looking at her admiringly to palliate his offense.

The only sign she gave of having heard was to grow redder in the face, and seeing her hesitate, he added: "Does the Church fix such affairs to suit itself? it was not from choice wholly, I suppose?"

"I never thought anything about it," said the girl, with her head still bowed down.

A confused sense of his new professions prevented Barbold from continuing this conversation, but he saw Drusilla as he had never seen her before, and perhaps had a suspicion of the same thing that Esther had discovered, for such a specimen of mankind is never slow to conclude that a woman loves him. He watched Drusilla a moment longer, while a complacent smile spread over his face, and then he remembered Esther, and wished she were a little more like this obedient daughter, and yet he coveted her the more for her willfulness. He went away half vexed and half troubled because she did not return after her sudden departure from the room.

Esther was the first real obstacle to his plans he had ever encountered, and even his dull vision was beginning to see that to win her for his wife was not merely a matter of words. Each day he became more impatient for the return of his ally, Elizabeth, for he could see that he was losing ground. And day by day he found himself oftener with Drusilla. There seemed to be no prearrangement to bring these meetings about, and yet he knew there must be. He never accused Esther of it, however, and to the greatest dullard her sweet tell-tale face showed the struggle between respect to her father and the temptation to free herself from Barbold's attentions by aiding another woman to win what poor love he had to give. That he was flattered by Drusilla's increasing admiration no one could fail to see, and Esther realized it even

more than he did himself. The subject was never referred to between the two young women, but they understood each other.

Every night Esther prayed again, "How long, O Lord, how long?" and every day Drusilla's cheeks grew redder and her eyes brighter. She was drinking her first draught of nature. This young man had crossed her barren pathway like a magnificent vision; she looked, and was charmed. Mr. Wainwright was nothing to her, and had never been a factor in her life; she had not only not been taught, but she had never been permitted to cultivate an individual conscience, and up to this time had merely been a weak instrument. Now the conquering hero had come, and the one pure fountain in a woman's heart that ever gives her full strength had been touched, and under its influence she would yet become either angel or fiend.

CHAPTER XI.

ELIZABETH reached home at the close of a bleak winter day. Drusilla met her at the door, but although she was the only member of the household who was of her own flesh and blood, she was not the member whom Elizabeth was most impatient to see. She had made the long, tiresome, hurried journey from the remote frontier Mormon settlements back to Salt Lake City, with one burning desire in her heart, to reach Esther before Mark did, and to conquer her. She could but greet her daughter, however, and having eyes, she could not fail to see that Drusilla was changed. She had left her a plain, unnoticeable girl, she found her almost a beautiful young woman. Some throb of human feeling had set a light in her face that Elizabeth had never seen there before. She could not analyze it at the instant, but she had seen a great many faces, it had been a part of her business to learn to take them at the supreme moment of triumph or weakness, as best suited her purpose. So she knew it was not the development of mere physical beauty she saw, and she realized that before her, in her own child, stood a new force, either with her or against her. Elizabeth's own thin face was blue with cold, and she shivered her way into the little sitting room, a painful contrast to the rosy and healthful creature at her side. Some-

thing of her old fire and energy were gone, but she took her place at the head of affairs and people, and struggled bravely not to let it be known that she had any new care. The especially hard thing she had to do was not to let it be known that she was looking for any one. Every day she expected Mark to appear, and her mind was so fastened upon consummating the marriage of Esther to young Barbold before he came, that she was slow to perceive the situation she had to deal with. She held a consultation with Barbold, and promised to assist him in his suit; the girl's real wishes troubled neither of them; to win her was the object they plotted for, not to woo her. The subject could not be hinted at and gain any headway with Esther; it was so hateful to her, and she held herself so much aloof from all the family, that it was only by a bold statement of exactly what she meant that Elizabeth was able to approach her.

"And you expect me to do your bidding!" Esther had risen and said. "Me, whose father's life you have blighted, almost destroyed! You expect me to marry as your daughter has done, because you say I must, and repent as she has done, when it is too late! I have borne almost all I can, but your cruelest threats cannot drive me to this. Even to marry a man I could love would not tempt me from my father; where he stays, I will stay; he has no one left but me, and I have none but him; nothing shall part us."

Esther spoke with a vehemence which showed that she believed she had divined the reason why Eliza-

beth wished to see her married to Barbold; she did not suspect the woman of a thirst to be revenged for the sake of the Church. When she had dropped into a chair, white and trembling, Elizabeth turned upon her with the announcement that the duty of the Church toward the children of its members must be done, and that as Esther knew little of its laws, it would be wise for her to beware what statements she made, and to listen to her proper advisers.

“The only proper adviser I have has been turned against me by you, and now, though I am alone and helpless, I will not be driven into the toils of the Mormon church; I can die of grief and fright, but I will not give myself to that man, nor to a Mormon elder. I am not the child I was when my father brought me here; I have been forced to see and to understand that there is nothing sacred where the Mormon religion reigns. From this time on the proposition of my marriage to a Mormon, whoever he may be, need not be repeated, I will not listen to it.” And then in her excitement she hurried from the room. As soon as she was alone she found she was shaking with excitement, and could not quiet herself. Tears rained from her eyes one minute, and the next the necessity for some plan of action would force them back, and she would stare into vacancy with a wild determination to discover some way of escape, but in every direction only an impregnable wall surrounded her. She could refuse to be “sealed” to a Mormon, but that was all she could do. Even if she would consent to leave her father, there was

no place she could go. Fort Douglas was difficult to reach, even by fugitives who had strong, determined men to guide them. What could one frightened girl do, alone among enemies?

The afternoon wore away, the hour for their frugal supper passed, and still Esther struggled alone. She could hear Elizabeth and Drusilla moving quietly about the house at times, but she did not hear her father come home as usual, and Tom Barbold did not come as he was accustomed to. She heard no conversation between the women, and at last all was perfectly quiet in the little house, not a sound but her own spasmodic sobs could be heard, until at bed time Mr. Wainwright came softly through the front door. Esther had begun to fear that he would not come at all, and horrible imaginings made her tremble with a fear greater than had ever possessed her. She knew that her father was as powerless as herself, and failing to drive her from him, she suspected they might take him from her. In her joy at hearing his footstep, she opened her door to run to him, when his hoarse voice startled her, saying, "Is it over? Has she gone?" in a half whisper.

"No," said Elizabeth.

"Is she here?" eagerly, under his breath.

"Yes, and it is time we were all abed," added his wife in a louder tone. Esther's hurried step was stayed, she waited, breathless, with her hand on the door, afraid to go on. She could not trust herself even to stand, and carefully letting go her hold, she crouched down on the floor and waited. An awful

fear that Elizabeth would appear noiselessly in the doorway, like an apparition, and accuse her of listening, made her cold, but still she dared not stir to creep back to bed. After a long time, it seemed to her, the sound of the quick breath of two uneasy sleepers reached her, and then she said to herself she must think, and think fast. The summer night was short, but it was the only time left her in which to try and save herself. All the horrible stories of kidnapping, imprisonment, and punishment, that Drussilla had told her, came swarming into her hot brain, and she knew that she must fly. Only a few hours since, she had said defiantly that nothing could drive her from her father; now, she knew that she must go, alone, in the night, a fugitive, even from him. She knew that her father's questions meant that before another night she would be taken out of his reach, and that immediate flight was her only hope of freedom from Elizabeth and the Mormons. To fly from that treacherous refuge into the dark streets of the enemy, was a hazardous venture, but it must be made, and with a prayer for the dear old father she left behind, Esther slipped from the little low window of her room and ran across the small door yard into the street.

If it had been into the mountain fastnesses where wild beasts hid, or out on the desert plains, where immigrant Mormons starved and died, she could have been brave, but here, where every shadow seemed a lurking human fiend for her destruction, she could not decide which way to go. For a block she ran

along under the trees where she could not be seen, nor her foot-falls be heard, but when she came to the open street she could not summon courage to cross it, and was just sinking to the ground with the instinctive feeling that she was less liable to be seen, while she looked about her, when a night patrol of half a dozen men appeared in the moonlight a little distance down the street to her left. Tramp, tramp, they came up the deserted street directly towards her; if they came straight on they must pass almost over her, for she was crouched at the very edge of the footpath. Her heart beat louder than the approaching steps. It drowned them completely, her brain whirled round and round, and her head sank to the ground.

The face that turned its sightless eyes toward heaven might have been dead, for aught of sound or motion that betrayed its life.

CHAPTER XII

IT suited Elizabeth's purpose to permit her husband to think that she had been instrumental in Esther's disappearance, and although she had secret agents out searching in every quarter of the city, she preserved a calm demeanor in the presence of her family, and even talked about the necessity of discipline for youthful and rebellious minds.

It required but a short time for Elizabeth to assure herself with comparative certainty that her lost charge was not at the Fort. The emissaries of the Church watched all the avenues of approach to that refuge so closely that it was almost impossible for a fugitive to reach it undiscovered, and if one did, there was always some one there who would, for a consideration, betray the presence of a renegade Mormon. Not finding Esther there, the search was confined to the city. She knew no one could leave its limits and go long undetected. A young, unprotected girl would be arrested by the first farmer of whom she asked food or shelter, and sent back for the Prophet's counsel concerning what should be done with her. Elizabeth knew this and waited through the first day, secure in her belief that Esther had fled to the open country, and that she would soon be brought back to her lawful protectors.

Every Mormon is two things, whatever else he may,

or may not, be; he is a private detective for the head of the Church, and a public immigration agent for the Territory. By some of the many eyes always on the alert to do Brigham Young's bidding, Esther would be seen and brought back to him, and thence to Elizabeth. She did not doubt. It did not depend upon the feelings, or the pleasure, of any one Esther might appeal to; no one would dare to aid her. But the second day dawned and passed, slowly, for no tidings came. Towards night Elizabeth became nervous and watchful, and her daughter asked her, abruptly, if she was sorry for the girl. The question caused such a look of surprise that it brought a revelation to Drusilla, and she exclaimed, "Oh! she has run away, has she!"

"Hush, don't speak of it; she will be back during the day," said Elizabeth.

"The day is almost gone now," rejoined the young woman, "and if Esther has gone to the Fort she'll not be back at all, you may depend upon that. Let her go, I say, she is a good riddance."

"She is not at the Fort, and wherever she is she will be found. It is my duty to take care of her, and I intend to do it."

"But, mother! mother! if you do find her, you will not insist upon having her married to Mr. Barbold, will you? Because—because—"

"Because what, my child?" said Elizabeth in surprise at this abrupt speech.

"Because, sometime, may be—"

But Drusilla's stammering tongue could not frame

for her mother the thought that had so long been in her own mind. Perhaps her burning face revealed enough, for an angry cloud overspread Elizabeth's gray face, and turned it black. Then Drusilla buried her face in her hands and a silence fell between the mother and daughter. It seemed a long time to the daughter, during which she was sinking lower and lower in despair, until the mother broke the hardening air with, "What is the meaning of this, Drusilla?"

Even the sound of her harsh voice, despite the portentous words, gave the girl courage and she looked up quickly.

"I don't know, mother; I didn't mean anything; I don't know when it happened, but Mr. Barbold thinks more of me than he does of Esther; he is glad she is gone. Oh! let her go, mother; don't try to find her, Mr. Barbold will not care," and an appealing voice came with Drusilla's words that Elizabeth had never heard before.

A practiced and un-anxious eye might have seen the signs of relenting even under Elizabeth's hard mask. If she could forgive her daughter for having conceived an idea, she could doubtless forgive the substance of that idea. Perhaps it impressed her as good, and she fell to wondering why it had not been born in her own fertile brain. Whatever she thought, she kept her thoughts to herself for a long time, and then said with a manner of forced calmness and deliberateness, "And you, Drusilla, have you committed the indiscretion of being drawn towards Brother

Barbold? You who are already sealed to another man? To be sure you were not married to Mr. Wainwright for eternity—you were so young. But this is all unexpected to me, and so sudden.” The gray woman again ceased to speak, and turned her eyes away from her daughter. That she was revolving the new idea in her mind was now plain to Drusilla, and her heart bounded with hope because her mother expressed no decided opposition. For several minutes they sat silent, the eager eyes of the daughter watching Elizabeth’s hard face for the first time in her life to see some sign of softening. Presently Elizabeth began to speak, more as if she were thinking aloud, than addressing Drusilla:

“If he fails to rise in the Church according to his opportunities, it may be better, sometime, to select a worthier member to share your future. I will consider it, but for the present you know your duty, and I am the best judge of your welfare.”

“Yes, yes, mother, I know, but is there no help for it now?”

“No help for what, child?”

“I don’t love Mr. Wainwright, and he doesn’t care anything for me, and I don’t want him to, and—O dear! I don’t know what to do.”

The sentence ended in sobs, but Elizabeth commanded quiet. She was not thinking of love, she said. When Drusilla was sealed to Mr. Wainwright, there were other considerations which a mother might have for a daughter that were of far greater importance.

What they might be Drusilla could not then imagine, and she soon ceased to wonder when her mother repeated in a solemn, but, on this occasion, to Drusilla a very comforting tone, that she would consider the matter seriously, and take counsel on the subject, and if it was found that her child's spiritual exaltation, and the advancement of the Church demanded it, perhaps they could make a different arrangement. "But Mr. Barbold," she remembered to ask, "has he expressed himself at all in this matter?"

"O, yes, he is willing; he is indeed glad that Esther has gone, and he never wants to see her again."

Drusilla would have been willing to confide more of her own thoughts to her mother, now that the way seemed open, and would have said much more concerning young Barbold, but she was dismissed by a decided motion of the already preoccupied woman's arm. As soon as the door closed upon her daughter, Elizabeth rose to her feet and began to pace the little room. Its confines seemed much too small for her expanding mind. She bent her head against her hard breast as she walked, and locked her angular hands together in a hard knot.

"Yes," she seemed to be saying to herself, "Esther has doubtless met with some merited punishment for her obstinacy; why should I concern myself further with her? Would it not be a wise thing to make some other use of Brother Barbold?"

Elizabeth's soliloquy was a long one, but before it was broken she must have convinced herself, not

only that it was wise, but that it was her duty, to make some other provision for young Barbold's advancement than marrying him to Esther Wainwright, for within a few days thereafter she made a protracted visit to the Prophet, and returned with the advice that her daughter should immediately apply for a divorce from Mr. Wainwright. This was equivalent to a release from her matrimonial relation, and made Drusilla inexpressibly happy.

It has been thought by many people that divorce was not granted in the Mormon church under any circumstances, but the idea was doubtless founded upon the supposition that, if divorce were obtainable, more Mormon wives would avail themselves of that means of release from their wretched bondage. It certainly has no foundation in fact. A divorce at that time could be obtained only upon the application of the wife. A Mormon husband could not even ask for a divorce. Now, he has only to ask, and pay the small fee,—the divorce laws being notoriously lax.

In the decade beginning with the year 1850, there was a period which cannot be exactly measured, but which reached its culmination about 1856 and '57, that is known among the Mormons as the reformation. It was begun, probably, as a determined resistance to the encroachments of the mining population, the California emigration movement, and the progress of the transcontinental railways. Brigham Young hoped that his efforts to prevent the settlement of Gentiles among his people, and the vigorous

prosecution of his foreign missionary policy, would secure the admission of Utah as the State of Deseret at no distant day, and every device of his unscrupulous mind was used to further that end. Foremost among these means was the encouragement of polygamy. Men were taught from the pulpit, by the Prophet himself, that with God they would reign in heaven, but that their celestial kingdoms must be "built up" by themselves while upon earth, and they were counseled to plural marriage in such a way that no man dared neglect to heed. Old, young and middle-aged, rich and poor, strong and weak, were alike compelled to cast about and find themselves new mates.

During this reign of terror, marrying was one of the chief employments of the populace. Some men almost abandoned their business, and traveled miles in search of a wife, fearing they might not find one soon enough to escape the anger of the head of the Church. Girls as young as fourteen were compelled to marry men old enough to be their grandfathers, and during this period plural marriage among the Mormons was enforced as it never was before and never has been since.

As a result of these hurried and indiscriminate marriages, so much dissatisfaction arose that the Church was obliged to provide some remedy, and it occurred to the Prophet, who at that time constituted the church government, that he might materially increase his revenues by granting divorce for a sum that would come within the limited means of many of his people. So it was "revealed" that for the sum of ten

dollars Brigham Young would have the power to "unseal" all marriages for time. The bill of divorce would be worthless for eternity, he said, as the vows that had been taken in the Endowment House would last forever, and no power, not even his, could undo them. All the Mormon women who applied for divorce were no doubt glad to accept freedom for the remainder of their miserable lives upon earth, and trust to chance for eternity. But there are many causes that prevent a woman from asking for a divorce in Utah, as well as many causes why she should desire one, that do not obtain in other places. We have now to deal largely with a generation of Mormons who have been born and bred in the Church, and they have been taught from infancy that a rebellious woman will be damned. Having no part in happiness in this life, Mormon women are educated to believe that their reward will be found in the hereafter, and that it will be measured according to their submission to their husbands, and the number of children they bear. A Mormon wife is expected to ask no questions, and tell no tales. It is not strange, then, that women whose part here is to suffer and be still, should hesitate to relinquish all claims to joy in the world to come.

While the Mormon wife has had the privilege for twenty-five years of asking for a divorce, she knows that the granting of her petition depends wholly upon the will of the high priest, and she must be reasonably sure of his willingness to grant it, before she will subject herself to the danger of a reprimand

from that authority, and to the certainty of being counseled to return to her home, and in the future to be more obedient and humble in spirit.

A large proportion of Mormon women among the poorer classes, who would be glad to avail themselves of divorce, and who might count with comparative certainty upon obtaining it on the plea of poverty, could not get together ten dollars in money without seeing their children suffer for bread. Greatest of all reasons why a Mormon woman would not, a few years ago, apply for divorce, is that after having secured her release, she had no place to go. She was then a "vile apostate," with no shelter, and no means of sustenance for either herself or her children. She was shunned by the Mormons and suspected by the Gentiles, or if any pitied her, they were afraid to befriend her for fear of the "Avenging Angels;" in other words, of the vengeance of the secret police of the Church. So she lived on, and suffered and died a "plural wife," in most instances. But the establishment of divorce did, of course, open an avenue of escape for some, and a convenient subterfuge for others.

It was developed ultimately that Elizabeth had herself taken advantage of her knowledge of the divorce laws of the Saints, to unite her daughter to Mr. Wainwright "for time," in order to prevent another elderly brother from having her sealed to himself. She learned that Brigham Young would probably counsel the marriage, and took that means to forestall the decree. As it was not a personal matter

with the Prophet himself, she trusted to her own influence to have the marriage with Mr. Wainwright annulled when it suited her ambition to see Drusilla united with some more favored elder or high priest. Young Brother Barbold she considered to be a rising Saint, and if Drusilla loved him, it is but reasonable to suppose that even her stern heart contained enough of mother-love to cause her to wish to see them united, after the idea took root in her mind.

Of course the decree was granted which formally released Mr. Wainwright's young, plural wife, and Drusilla was at liberty to receive openly the attentions she had long been secretly encouraging from Mr. Barbold.

For a nature as superficial as Tom Barbold's, the transfer of his affections from Esther to Drusilla was a process of speedy accomplishment. Especially as Esther was out of sight, and Drusilla was always at home when he was present, and ever ready to acquiesce in his wishes. She was growing prettier, too, each day, and Barbold wondered more and more that he had not discovered her beauty sooner. He did not know that love of him had developed it, and that each time he appeared to her, her eye sent out a new beam of the beauty born of happiness. It is but justice to him to say that he soon really loved her much more than he had ever loved Esther; Drusilla was much more nearly suited to his taste, as well as to his understanding, and they soon rejoiced mutually in Esther's disappearance.

Elizabeth, too, seemed to improve in spirit under

the new arrangement in her household affairs. The marriage of Barbold and her daughter she looked upon as an event that would bring her increased honor and power in the Church, and her daughter a loving husband. When she had contemplated his union with Esther, she had expected, besides "the performance of her duty," merely power over one helpless girl. The effect upon her mind of this change in its policy was most salutary, and, if that had been possible, would no doubt have softened the hard lines of her face. Of the household only Mr. Wainwright now remained wholly sad and cheerless. His daughter had been little comfort to him while she remained near him, but now that she was gone his feeble mind was torn with terrible fears. He asked but few questions; he had enough understanding left to know that inquiries would be useless, though it is in the Mormon tenets that the wife shall make none. Elizabeth was an exception to this rule by virtue of her extreme loyalty to the Church, and the well-known fact that she had contracted her marriage with Mr. Wainwright as a part of her mission.

That poor man tottered back and forth to the Tabernacle as regularly as ever, but sometimes he would forget to start until reminded by Elizabeth. He would sit with his head down, dozing in his easy chair, apparently oblivious of everything, until his watchful wife would tell him it was time to go. He had softening of the brain, they said, but he must not be permitted to neglect his spiritual duties. The preparations for the wedding of Drusilla and Barbold

went swiftly forward, and amidst them this broken old man seemed to be the only disinterested one. Barbold came often and stayed long, and was helpful in all the plans. The courtship between himself and Drusilla became the talk of the neighborhood, as a first marriage always is among the Mormon women; it has a tinge of human romance even among the polygamists, where there is almost nothing sacred in connection with marriage. This seemed so truly a love affair, that as it progressed, every woman looked after the happy pair admiringly, and saw in them a realization of her own dreams or her lost hopes.

It was in the midst of this glad time, when the lovers were sitting in the little parlor one afternoon, that a hurried knocking sounded on the street door. Elizabeth heard it from the back part of the house, and by the time her daughter had opened the door she was at her side. Before her stood the young man whom she had last seen at the outlying "Stake of Zion," bruised and weak from his encounter with the Indians, now strong and defiant. She saw it all in a glance. He stood a moment with expectant face, looking into hers, and then demanded, "Where is Esther Wainwright?"

"Why! do you not know?" answered Elizabeth.

"And so there is another man in the case," said Barbold coldly; "Oh ho, I see, that makes it more interesting."

This coarse speech stung the girl at his side, and she turned away to hide her rising color.

The young stranger kept his eyes steadfastly on Elizabeth, but listened in a kind of daze to Barbold's words, until it was borne in upon his mind that no one of the persons before him knew any more of Esther than he did himself.

"And you do not know where she is?" he said to Elizabeth in a tone that meant much more than his words.

It was in the woman's face, by this time, to equivocate; she would not have acknowledged her ignorance of Esther's whereabouts if she had had warning, but she answered with his eyes still upon her, "I do not, I know nothing of her. I supposed you knew."

"How long has she been gone?"

"Two or three months."

"Three months to-night," answered Drusilla.

It was not necessary to ask any proof that Elizabeth was telling the truth; the whole story, so far as she knew it, was visible in her surprised face and attitude.

Esther was lost to him, and to them. That she had fled from persecution, he knew without the telling; perhaps she had gone to save her life. He learned that she had never become a Mormon, and knew that the young man with whom he stood face to face was the same with whom he had once so suddenly resolved to make a desperate race. Now, so far as gaining the consent of the maid was concerned, he had no doubt that, given a fair field, he could win, but she seemed lost to both of them, and

he turned from the door with a feeling that in almost any other place the search would be more hopeful. The one encouraging fact in the case was, that she was not in Elizabeth's toils, and therefore almost certainly not in the hands of the Mormons. If she had tried to fly beyond the limits of the city, what might not have befallen her? If he was not spurred to his chosen task of finding her, dead or alive, by the rivalry of Barbold, he was made deeply conscious by his visit to Elizabeth that he must save her if she were to be saved at all. It was evident that all search for her had been abandoned by Elizabeth's family, and even the lover whom he had feared was diverted by a new face, and had no thought of trying to rescue Esther. He alone seemed left to look for her and protect her. His heart throbbed with the thought of how gladly he would shield her with his life, if necessary, but—what could he do?

It seemed impossible that this was the end of the vision that had urged him forward during the toilsome and hazardous journey he had just accomplished, and sustained him during the weeks when he was again prostrated with fever—the inevitable consequence of his hurried flight, and his determination to reach Salt Lake City and rescue Esther before Elizabeth's return.

Naturally his thoughts turned first to her father, and having been informed that he was at the Tabernacle, he waited to see him pass on a quiet street; but when he recognized, with difficulty, the tottering

old man, whom he had seen but once or twice before, he turned aside and let him pass undisturbed.

The happy, trustful look had all faded from his eyes, they were vacant and uncertain, and his face was full of the lines worn by the constant fear of evil. No help could be expected of him; it was better to let him go. His next step was to write to the school teacher, Ezekiel Blounce, at his old home—for if he had come to Salt Lake City, Mark did not know where to find him.

Then he walked the streets, searching day and night in places where he thought she might be, and in others where he was sure she was not. He learned that she had not been seen at Camp Douglas, and he inquired from door to door in the Gentile quarters of the city. He went into every store and shop on some pretext or other, but the weeks passed by and he found no trace of her.

Once, when he was standing near the entrance to the Endowment House watching the people as they passed by, in the vain hope that he might see the longed-for face, he saw a wedding procession approach, and as it came nearer he recognized Barbold and Drusilla, followed by Mr. Wainwright and Elizabeth. Drusilla was brilliant in her beauty, and Barbold, too, looked proud and handsome. There was no salutation exchanged between them, but Elizabeth's eagle eye saw him, and she knew that he had not yet found the object of his search. Perhaps she exulted just a little, now that her daughter was to be

“sealed” to Brother Barbold before there was a possibility of Esther’s coming between them. Mark looked on with bitterness and fear and sorrow in his soul, and when they had disappeared within those walls, which, could they speak, could tell of more human woe than any others ever erected on the western continent, he turned and went again upon his search.

CHAPTER XIII.

THERE had been a great religious festival, and the streets of the City of Zion were thronged with people going home from the Tabernacle late in a windy night. For a few blocks they nearly all went in one direction, then they scattered gradually in their various ways. While this slowly moving mass was concentrated within a short space, it might have seen, with more or less of its many eyes, two men peering into the passing faces. They stood on the inner side of the walk, unnoticed by each other, both holding to their wind-blown garments and bracing themselves against the gusts that came down the street with constantly increasing force. There were lamps here and there at the street crossings, that flickered and flared up and almost went out so often that the darkness seemed intensified, and it would have been impossible to recognize any one except in a rare lull of the wind while it took breath for a new onslaught. The two men were stationed on opposite sides of one of these flaming beacons, and were as oblivious of each other as most of the people they watched were of them. Suddenly the swirling wind took the elderly gentleman's hat from his head and swiftly and directly laid it at the feet of the younger one, as if fate had decreed that a mysterious messen-

ger should arise in the southland and fly thither for that purpose.

Mark Branch stooped to pick up the thing that fluttered at his feet as if it would claim attention, and when he raised his head again Mr. Blounce stood before him. The recognition was mutual and instantaneous. They clasped each other's hands and forgot the throng about them, and all else save the girl whose retinue of friends counted two—themselves.

Mr. Blounce guided his companion out of the throng, and, in utter silence, through the streets towards the least frequented part of the city, as fast as his feeble old limbs could carry him.

"She is safe with me," he whispered at last, in answer to Mark's eager questioning.

"Are we on the way to her now?"

"Yes; turn to the right—here."

"Then tell me about her. Where did you find her, and how long has she been with you?"

"She has been with me since she left her father's house."

"Thank God for that."

"I came here, as I told you I would, directly after you, and managed to watch her unseen, almost constantly, until she left her home in the night. I knew it would come to that, and every night for weeks I hid in the shrubbery of the little yard and waited. At last she fled, and when I picked her up she was dumb and cold with fright. She had escaped discovery by the merest chance, and I half carried her through the streets, fearing to be stopped at every

step. It was a journey of which I shall never forget the slightest incident, and my blood runs cold when I recall it. My feeble old arms could have taken her up and carried her, easily, but I knew that would attract attention, so I had to sustain her as she walked, and talk to her constantly to reassure her that we were not followed, and yet it was not safe for us even to speak a word. Her nervous feet tripped on every obstruction, and once or twice when we heard steps behind us she gasped for breath. Still she was silent. I whispered that if she failed we were lost. Then her step grew firmer and we hurried on, the sounds died away and her breath came again. It seemed a long time before we reached my little lonely house on the opposite side of the city and I could tell Esther she was safe. I told her I would guard her with my life, and whatever happened she must be still and trust me. She has trusted me ever since, bless her heart, as a child would a father. But see," he said holding up his wrinkled hand in the wan light, "I am old, and failing fast; it must soon be a trustier arm than mine that protects her."

"Here's the hand for it, with a heart in it, Mr. Blounce, if that is what you want to know," and Mark grasped the shriveled fingers warmly, and took hold of the old man's arm to help him along. They had reached, by this time, a dark, unfrequented street, and Mr. Blounce forbade any further conversation.

"I have learned to be enough of a Mormon never

to talk in the dark," he said, and he noiselessly guided the steps of the young man over the same way by which he had taken Esther on that fearful night. When they reached open ground again Mr. Blounce resumed his story. "I knew the time would come when Esther's greatest need would be a place to hide in; and I knew, too, that it would be useless to ask her to leave her father. Every night for months I waited near until I was satisfied she was in her bed, and every night after Elizabeth's return I watched for her to fly, for I knew some things of which she was spared all knowledge. How I found them out, it would take a long time to tell; in many ways. At last I learned that if Esther positively refused to marry young Barbold, she would be forcibly "sealed" to Elder Bean. I hoped that in some way she, too, would find this out, but I did not intend to trust entirely to that. The night she fled, the sound of her sobs warned me that matters had come to an issue between herself and Elizabeth, and the late return of her father made me suspect that he had been conveniently put out of the way while some plot was carried out. Then she came out into the night alone, and I followed her up the dark street, not daring to speak lest I should alarm her, and she should make some noise that would betray us. But we escaped and reached a safe hiding place; then, for many days, her remorse for having deserted her father so preyed upon her mind that I sometimes feared she would escape me and return to Elizabeth's house."

"It might not have been," she would say to herself,

Elizabeth might have repented; and she might at least have remained where she could watch her poor father, if she could not help him, she thought. "But I assured her that if she had not left her father in that way she would soon have been forcibly separated from him, and he would have grieved for her much more than if he knew the truth. That, I am sure, would have been a great consolation to him; but he probably believes that Elizabeth was instrumental in her disappearance; they would never tell him the truth, I fear. It is an anxious life we two have led in the outskirts of this beautiful city, but I have been able to keep her, to save her from them, and now you have come."

They clasped each other's hands again, but neither tried to speak, until Mr. Blounce lifted the latch of a little wicket gate, and asked his companion to come in.

"This is where we have waited and watched since that awful night," he said, and then tapped lightly on the door of the little cottage before them. It was opened immediately, and Esther's voice said, "Oh, you have come at last; I was so frightened; I cannot help being afraid when you stay so long away."

"Yes, I have come, and not alone; see, I have brought a friend," and Mr. Blounce led Mark to Esther's side and turned away from the silent greeting. She had known him again at first sight, but because her heart beat fast she shrank the more. Mark took her hand and once more looked into her pure eyes, this time with more confidence that their

answer would be plain; that he could see what he wished for, their kindly remembrance of him. There was no time there for the delays of conventional peace, the exigencies of war make all things fair in love; and if Mark took his place beside the girl he had lived to save as though he were an accepted suitor, it was not because he felt that she must of necessity choose him, nor that he believed himself to be irresistible in her eyes. To be "taken by storm" pleases all women, but the general of such a master-stroke must not be an egotist. Mark looked upon Esther as Dante upon his Beatrice, a being high above and purer than he. Yet he alone could save her, and the subtle communicant, whether it be spirit or substance, that flies from a heart to its mate, told him she would choose to be saved by him rather than by any other.

Then it was told and retold how they had fled together that dreadful night, Esther and her protector, the old teacher. There seemed to be no end to what must be recounted of the suffering each had endured in the past, nor to the plans they must make for the future.

When they talked of the Latter Day Saints, and the fears they had felt of the vengeance that might be meted out to Esther if ever she fell into their clutches, the old teacher's face wore a look like some great beast at bay, it was so determined; but when he bent his eyes upon the fawn at his side, it was all gentleness.

Esther would have been more than woman, and

less than maiden, had she not almost forgotten, for a time, the difficulties which surrounded her. In the sweet realization that she is first and dearest in the care of a strong arm and a brave heart, a woman feels so secure that all danger is dwarfed, and in the first happy hours of this security Esther felt safe. The narrow walls that held her were dissolved, and she was free in spirit, and content merely to wait for the time, which must be near at hand, it seemed to her, when her father and Mr. Blounce, her new friend and herself, should all go back to the old hills, or at least away from Salt Lake City, out of the sight and knowledge of the things that had made her old in sorrow while yet a child in years.

Mark Branch came every night to the little house as soon as darkness shielded him, for it was known to the neighborhood only that an old man lived there alone, and by invisible degrees he and Esther were drawn nearer and nearer to each other.

He talked constantly to Mr. Blounce, when they met, according to a plan of the previous evening, sometimes in one place and sometimes in another, of taking Esther away, anywhere out of the danger that constantly surrounded her there. Each time he was answered by a solemn shake of the old man's head, and the assurance that Esther would never leave Utah without her father, not even as Mark's wife. This seemed so unreasonable to Mark, since she could not even see her father, and while it was unsafe for her to go upon the streets or even be seen by any save themselves, that he could not be convinced of it easily.

“I will ask her,” he said, after a week had gone by and he had begun to chafe at her imprisonment. But the old man begged him not to mention it to her. He seemed frightened at the idea, and exacted a promise from Mark that he would at least delay. Almost every day the young man had some new plan to explain to Mr. Blounce, with the utmost faith that he, too, must believe in it, and would help put it into effect. The old man always listened, but listened in silence, and sometimes a look so sad and weary would come over his face that Mark was perplexed almost beyond endurance. With him, to plan meant to do; he had not learned that it sometimes means to wait.

“Why is it that you oppose me so determinedly in this? Have you ever asked Esther to go away? Do you know that she would not consent?” Mark asked at last, decided in his own mind that unless Mr. Blounce gave him some good reason, or explained something that he did not understand, he would that night propose to Esther that they leave her father, since they could not take him with them, and go out of the Territory.

“No, I have never asked her; I know she would not go.”

A heavy sigh, almost like a sob, shook the old man, and then he straightened himself up and looked Mark in the eye quickly and piercingly as was his habit, as if a fear had suddenly come to him. The look always seemed to allay his suspicion, however, and it was put aside. “No, I have never asked her,” he repeated, “and it is not safe that I should longer delay telling

you why I would not have you ask her. It seems a crime to calculate the love of an innocent heart like that child's, but she has nobody but you and me. You are her friend, too, no one could deceive me in this; and I would have her trust you so wholly that no shadow of a fear could enter her heart. I cannot stay by her long; old age creeps on with rapid pace, because I fear it so, I think, not for myself, but for her. The knowledge that she would be left alone, here, would stop the beating of this old heart with terror for her. I should have been mad with fear before now if I had not found you, or you had not found us. To your keeping I must some day lay down my trust; no one else wants it but to curse and torture. You comprehend me? Look into her eyes to-night; remember what she has borne; read, if you can, the purity of her soul, and be worthy of the love you see dawning in it. Give her no cause to doubt that you will stay by her."

From that hour Mark Branch understood that to suggest to Esther the idea of leaving Salt Lake City without her father, would be to create in her mind a fear that if she refused, he, her friend, might go alone. Her friend; yes, that was the only title Esther's thoughts had ever bestowed upon him; but the promptings of his own heart, his conversation with Mr. Blounce, and the extremity of Esther's position, had made him aware in this short time that he was more than friend, and that he longed to be more than lover. It is not a pleasant thing to leave out of the lives of two people so well adapted to

love each other as Mark Branch and Esther Wainwright the amenities of a courtship, but there are instances when neither time nor circumstance will permit this sweet dalliance, and this was such a one.

On the night after Mr. Blounce appealed to Mark to spare Esther the pain he was sure a proposition to abandon Salt Lake City would give her, a stranger accompanied the young man along the shaded streets to the quiet part of the city where Esther was in hiding. The little cottage was not lighted as if for a wedding, but its humble walls sheltered a bride as brave as ever man won with longer wooing, and no more solemn vows were ever uttered than the simple ones which made the young surveyor and Esther Wainwright husband and wife. They stood beside each other with no witnesses but Ezekiel Blounce and the minister, who saw them for the first time as he pronounced the bond. It was a simple ceremony, but it meant much to the three principal actors. Never since he had first recognized her as the flower of his heart, that summer morning when he was botanizing, had Mark questioned the feeling which prompted him to seek her, and to defend and protect her; and in the weary months when he had sought her, morning, noon and night, up and down the streets of that sorrow-haunted city, he had learned that his life was inseparable from hers.

And Esther's? Ah, a maiden's heart is more easily taught than a man's, and suffering had given her's a woman's strength and cleverness.

Mr. Blounce, the god-father of both, blessed them

with a faltering voice. No hand could snatch Esther from his sight now, not even the emissaries of the Presidency of the Saints could take the lawful wife of a Gentile from her home. It was no longer necessary that she should hide from her enemies, and Mark's devotion soon inspired Esther with a sense of peace and security which nothing but the support of a helpmeet of the heart ever gives.

The day after their marriage they watched on an unfrequented street for Esther's father, and it chanced that he went alone to the Tabernacle. When he saw Esther standing before him he looked dazed for a moment, and then after an anxious glance about him, fell into her open arms. But he started from her in the midst of his mingled joy and grief, and looked nervously at her companion who had approached to support him, and although Mark spoke to him in gentle tones, and tried to assure him that he would be a friend to him as well as to Esther, a look of fear came into his face, and when they asked him to go with them he passed his hand wearily over his forehead as if trying to comprehend it all, but sadly shook his head as though pained that they should remind him of anything besides Esther's presence. And when they urged him, though a look of indecision wavered for an instant in his eyes, he soon began to repeat that "he must do his duty," and in a moment more bade them good bye, and tottered on his way, leaving to Mark the care of the tender heart, which, had not love for him filled it, would soon have burst with grief.

CHAPTER XIV.

IF there had been a time in the remote past when Elizabeth labored for love, it must have been brought vividly to her remembrance when she saw Drusilla and Barbold together. They were so fond, and so absorbed in their fondness. Drusilla's face beamed constantly, and her husband looked on her dotingly. If it had been possible, with his surroundings, he would have forgotten half the services at the Tabernacle. Elizabeth did not permit that, but she looked on with approving eyes while they sauntered together, oblivious of all the world. If the depths of her bosom yet held a mother's heart, she must have secretly wished that they might fly from all that had made her what she was. She would sit and watch them by the hour, and discourse upon their devotion to the eager Mormon women whose hearts, one might suppose, had long since been drained of feeling. That, however, was the one idea that aroused them.

After all the years of oppression and deceit, their woman's nature asserted itself whenever the tender sentiment was broached; they hungered even for a sight of love-making, and when a daughter became a first-wife it was a matter of boasting and congratulation. Not that it was expected her position as an only wife would last, but it was her one short oppor-

tunity to taste the sweet romance which belongs by right to every woman, and which but few are privileged to know in that empire of legalized heart-breaking.

Drusilla accepted her happiness in good faith, it filled her so completely. It was natural, too, that she should know no grave suspicions of the institution in which she had been reared. Familiar as she was with the plural marriage system, she had never put herself in the place of a plural wife since it had become a matter of interest to her whether she should ever be one or not. She believed that she was all in all to her husband, and in trusting him she proved herself but human, and woman, not Mormon. Their lives together were like those of careless children, too thoughtless to be long secure in their own strength, even in an atmosphere where laws and customs would have helped to sustain them.

The superficial happiness was sure to be disturbed by the first temptation that crossed Barbold's path; even Elizabeth must have acknowledged that to herself, and the promptings of her motherhood caused her to shield them as well as she could from all distractions. She neither insisted that they should go to merry-makings, nor that Barbold should be more active in church work than was required to maintain the standing he had already gained. Her aggressive impatience for his advancement was all laid aside, and one who did not know her well could not have believed that she was only biding the time when her daughter's happy dream should be over; that she

could calmly sit and wait, without an effort to save them from the fate she saw so surely impending, for the time when her greatest interest in life would be to secure the preferment of her son-in-law, and through him add to her own power in the Church. She must have felt a twinge, now and then, that brought to mind her long lost conscience, but if she did she mistook her zeal for the Church of Zion for its better part, and suffered the pang in silence. During this delightful season, while the little play of love and marriage was going on between Barbold and Drusilla, poor old Mr. Wainwright was made to do double duty as a figure-head for the family at the Tabernacle. Every day he dragged his weary steps back and forth over the hot pavements, and sat with his vacant stare fixed on the priest who propounded his damnation. Sometimes he would remain in his seat after the others had gone, dozing and dreaming, smiling like a babe at his fancies one day, and weeping bitter tears that would not be suppressed another. He took no notice of the young pair in Elizabeth's house, nor showed any sign that he missed his daughter, except rarely when a door opened hurriedly or there was some unusual commotion; then he would look up quickly with a gleam of glad expectancy in his face, but when she did not appear he would immediately forget her again, and relapse into his brooding quiet.

This household, with its divers minds, was only a sample among thousands in that cruel city where women's hearts seemed the prey that all the brother-

hood of Latter Day Saints had combined to torture. Here, for a little time, a ray of the sunshine of love lighted the hearthstone for all but the lonely old man, and made a bright scene in the bigoted and scheming rule that Elizabeth had long held over it. Prayers that it might last, that Elizabeth's heart might be softened, that Barbold's shallow nature might be changed and that he might remain true to the inspiration which bound him for a time to Drusilla, would not avail; a life in that atmosphere makes one doubt that the tearful petitions which have so often been breathed in fear from trembling lips, and borne aloft on the sighs of a bleeding heart, can penetrate the hideousness. The pall is so black with blood that has been drained, drop by drop, from hoping, trusting, fearing, dying women's hearts; it is so weighted down with misery and ignorance and blasphemy, that only some great convulsion can rend it and let the light of Heaven come through, and the supplications ascend.

While there are women in America who have homes, husbands, children, love, which they call their own, can they indifferently look upon the spectacle presented in Utah? No, it is impossible. It is not in woman's heart to know that in a portion of her own fair land there is a sect, calling its doctrines a religion, which takes from a wife the husband who has sworn to protect and cherish her, the father who has set himself for an example to her children, and not only permits him to espouse another who must bear children to look with envious eyes on all that

goes to their unnatural half-brothers and sisters, but declares that God commands this sacrilege of his holy laws, this sacrifice of the most ennobling sentiment He saw fit in the beginning to implant in the soul, and be unmoved.

Call it selfish, if you like; love is the passion that, in its highest type, for a pure object, will achieve more than all others.

Fame, the reward for which ambition strives, fades into nothingness in contrast with the peace that rules over the realm of two hearts.

Genius is bungling beside it.

Avarice is palsied by the dross that clings like a magnet to its lean hands for a day, and then takes wings.

Call it unselfish, rather, this transport of the soul that will not die even under scorn, contumely, robbery, scourging, and desertion, but will live, bearing all these, to toil for the child of the father who has caused its sorrow, and wait with bursting heart and straining arms for his repentance. Call it divine, this attribute of the heart that has made Mormon women suffer as the slave women of the South never did. They were torn from their homes by masters, while their husbands mourned; the Mormon women are slaves to their husbands, concubines to their religion, martyrs to a despotism as immoral as cursed Sodom of old. A Mormon wife is set aside by the very hand that should clasp hers while all the world goes by, degraded into hopeless shame and woe, while her husband makes new vows and bestows upon another her name, the fond, proud title of wife.

CHAPTER XV.

YOU will remember, dear reader, it was the leafy summer time when Mark and Esther were wedded. Little by little he enticed her to make short excursions into the mountains, to leave the hateful city for a day or a few hours, that she might breathe the unpolluted air and walk in the sunlight that had so long been denied her. Here, along the mountain streams, with such friendly witnesses as trees and rocks and waving grasses, the riper acquaintance of this young husband and wife was made, and all unaware to herself the bloom of youth—youth's beauty—came back to her face as the love-light increased in her eyes.

The thought of her father was always with Esther, but she could do something to alleviate the suffering this thought caused her, by ministering to Mr. Blounce, and she could not but grow happier with Mark. He and the old teacher together had managed to see Mr. Wainwright often enough to impress upon his feeble mind the location of Esther's home, on a quiet, pretty street where Mark had taken her, so that if ever the time came when he could turn to her he would know where to find her. Esther rarely ventured to intercept him, because she knew so well that if ever they were seen together any subsequent meetings would be prevented, but her mind followed

him with loving compassion every day, as he moved like a spirit along the streets and was absorbed in the throng that passed into the Juggernaut of the Nineteenth Century, the Mormon Tabernacle. And every day she and Mark watched with almost equal solicitude the waning of the life of their old friend, Ezekiel Blounce. The passion of hate and the corrosions of fear had been chiseled away from his face since Esther's marriage, and a great peace had settled in their stead. The strong spirit shone unveiled by human desires; his one great wish having been gratified completely as time went on, and he saw Mark and Esther content together.

With the coming of the chill winds of autumn, a weakness overtook the old man, from which it was evident he could not rally, indeed, he had no wish to throw it off; and his two young friends could not fail to see that it was rest that was coming to him, and to realize that it would be cruel to wish him to take up again the burden of life. He had carried it so long, so heroically, alone all these many years, and if he lived longer, trouble, instead of joy, might enshroud him at the last. Now he could "lie down to pleasant dreams."

One evening when the three sat together in the twilight of one of the last warm evenings of September, the old man looked tenderly upon Esther for a long time, and then turned to her husband and said: "Perhaps you would like to know, Mark, why I have loved this little woman so long, even before I learned to love her for her own sweet sake, though

that was long ago. I have often thought to tell you, and her. I'll do it now, I may never have the strength again. I am exhaling it with every breath. You know how I taught her when she was a wee thing, how I have seen her grow from a shy and modest maiden to a noble woman; she has told you that I was her mother's friend, but she has not told you, for she never knew, that I loved her grandmother, whose counterpart in face and form and character she is. I never called her wife, she married another, but that did not interrupt my love for her, and, God help her, I always feared it did not change her's for me. It does not concern you to know how this occurred; it did, and changed the current of my life from gladness to weary waiting. Her daughter, Esther's mother, was not like the woman I loved, but her granddaughter, this child, has her image, and, I verily believe, her spirit. Do you wonder that I love her, that I want to see her loved? So many years I bore the sorrows of another in my heart; I did not care for my own, but O, the agony of knowing that the one who was to me before and above all suffered, and I dare not put out my hand to help, much less to save! It killed her at last, and I wondered for years why it did not kill me, it would have been a mercy; but now I know, and I am satisfied. I shall go soon to seek her, perhaps to find her; who knows? At any rate, I am glad to start upon the quest; everything else makes me weary, so weary, now."

The old man's head bent forward and rested on

his wrinkled hands that were supported by his staff, just as Mark had seen him that awful night in the hills, where he first made his acquaintance. "It has been my privilege," he resumed, "to take the place of a grandfather to Esther, her grandchild. I have not lived so long in vain. When I am gone you will find in my chest a small, worn book of poems, translated from the German; it was left with her by a traveler who discovered in her a poetic nature, one with which Esther's rhymes exactly. The book was a rare possession in those days, and it was read many times, both by the happy maiden, and later by the sorrow-burdened woman. When she closed her eyes and laid down to rest she sent the little volume, wrapped in a square of white linen, which her hands spun and wove, to me. They are the only visible mementoes of her I ever had, and when I am gone Esther will keep them. The image in my heart was always visible to me, and before me there was a great dial, with a long hand pointing to 'what should have been.' Do what I might, it was always turning, and if I sometimes looked away it was always there when I looked back, pointing to my lost life. It was the unrelenting hand of fate, and I its helpless victim."

"But you do not comprehend me, my children," said the old man, as he raised his massive head and saw them gazing at him, wondering at the strange tale. "God grant you never may."

Not many days after he had told this brief story of his life to Mark and Esther, Ezekiel Blounce started upon the search for his love. He entered

upon the road so often traveled, but which must yet be explored anew by every man, fearlessly and gladly.

The last returning ray to his great calm eyes carried the picture of Mark and Esther standing with clasped hands by his side, and the last conviction of his mind was that their hearts were inseparable forever.

A dull leaden pall hung in the sky and covered all the earth the day they carried him to his first home—the grave; and Esther said it was typical of his life, forever shadowed by a great grief, with not a ray of the sunshine of hope to illumine the long, weary way.

But Mark gently reminded her that one ray had come to him at last, the same bright ray that made the full day of *his* life, and would unto the end.

CHAPTER XVI.

MARK and Esther lived frugally. Mark found some local and temporary employment, and he had frequent opportunities to go out with surveying parties into the mountains, but both he and Esther knew too well the terrible hazards of such expeditions. There were not only mountain dangers to fear, there were sleuth hounds yet remaining of the Danites.

A Gentile who had enticed a Mormon from almost within the fold was never safe alone with Mormons; on such occasions they might all be Danites—no one could tell. So, on the whole, though their life was quiet and confined within a narrow space, it was full of apprehension. Mark told Esther of many things that were new to her, and made plans for future journeyings out into the world, with herself as the admiring queen who would ride in an enchanted chariot, and himself as guide and protector.

The winter came on, and a fireside was established, that magnet around which the home-idea concentrates closer than round any other. Mark and Esther sat before the fire one evening, a little more alert than usual to the noises of the street, because Mark had that day passed the house where Elizabeth and Mr. Wainwright lived, and had seen the old man supported by pillows in an arm chair near a window.

He seemed feebler and paler than ever, and Mark knew that the time would soon come when Esther must hear the tidings of his death.

She had longed so much to go to him, but Mark had always assured her that it was folly to try to gain admission to Elizabeth's house, and the old man had grown too weak both in body and mind to venture alone to the Tabernacle; hence she never saw him now.

They could do nothing more for him in life, but Esther had set her heart upon taking his body to the old home when the spirit left it, and though she had little hope that Elizabeth would comply with her request to summon her to receive the precious remains, she could not help expecting it hourly. They were not surprised, therefore, though it startled them both, to hear a knock at the door late that evening. It did seem a little strange to them that the person who thus asked for admission should come to the back door, since it opened into a small enclosed yard, almost inaccessible to strangers from the street.

Esther followed her husband closely, as he carried a light to the door at the back part of the house, and as he began to unfasten it she put her hand upon his arm and suddenly demanded to know who was there.

"Oh, Esther! let me in, quick, quick," answered a voice that Esther knew well, despite the pain and alarm that vibrated in it. Mark hastily opened the door and Drusilla staggered against it, white and wild.

"Will you come with me, Esther?" she cried,

“I have come for you; O, Esther, don’t say you can’t come, there was no one else I could ask. You will save me, will you not? They are going to make me see her to-morrow in my own house; you will not let them, Esther, I cannot bear it,” and the exhausted woman sank on the floor at Esther’s feet. Her black hair hung in long locks around her face; her cheeks, that only half a year ago were round and blooming with the roses of happiness, were colorless and hollow, and her black eyes shone with the frenzy of despair. She would have moved to pity any woman’s heart, and Esther, quickly divining the cause of her grief, stooped beside her and took the wild face in her gentle hands.

“I will do anything I can for you, Drusilla; what is it? Of whom do you speak? How did you find us?”

“I have known where you lived for a long time,” said the woman, answering Esther’s last question first, “and for weeks I have been trying to come to you to ask you to help me, to see if there is not some way to keep him from it. But at first I was ashamed, and then I was afraid, and now I fear it is too late. My husband has forced mother to help him bring us together, this other girl and me,” she added, remembering how incoherent had been her story. I know she would have saved me from this, at least for a time; I heard her pleading with him to wait a little longer. She said the Church would not expect it of him yet, he was so young, and had been such a zealous worker. But he laughed and scorned her, and

taunted her with her own words. It is all her fault. Oh! Esther, my eyes are opened now, I wish they had been torn from their sockets first. I could never tell you what I have suffered. It has all ended, Esther, my beautiful dream. I did not think of myself as a Mormon for months, though in fact I suppose I never did. Plural marriage was as familiar to me as the air I breathed; I never heard any one but you talk of anything else. And then when he came it all seemed different, I forgot everything else. I thought we were all in all to each other, like you," she said, looking at Mark and Esther.

"I did not know enough to be afraid of Mormonism until one day when I was walking on the street I met my husband with a young woman. He was so absorbed in talking to her that he did not notice me until I was just beside them. Then he seemed embarrassed, and if I had not stopped I think he would have gone by without speaking to me. I went up to him without hesitating, innocently supposing he would wish to join me and to introduce his companion. But something in his manner seemed strange and unnatural, and suddenly, at a look from the girl, he excused himself to me and I was left alone. A pang shot through my heart that no words can describe, a jealous hate filled my mind, and I turned towards home. As I walked along a numb sense of suffocation came over me, and I realized for the first time what it was to be a Mormon woman. It meant that my husband might marry another. Nothing more, nothing less, to me. Oh,

help me Esther? Mother, mother, that you should have brought me to this! How can any one be so cruel? What can I do!"

By this time Mark and Esther had taken Drusilla to a couch and were trying by soothing words to quiet her, but it was of no avail. Her bursting heart had overflowed at last, she had stifled it as long as she could; and now that she had found Esther, the only friend she knew, she could no longer control her grief.

"I had not intended to distress you so," she said, after a spasm of sobs and blinding tears; "I only meant to come to you quietly and ask you to do something if you could—anything, anything, to prevent this woman from coming between my husband and me. He is my husband, Esther; does not your husband think so? He cannot be hers. You once spoke of laws, Esther; are they of no avail here, cannot something be done?"

"Drusilla," said Esther, sadly, still holding the distracted woman by the hand, "there is one way, and only one, by which you can escape the life that is before you, with another sharing your place as wife, and that is to leave your husband and your home all to her. It is dreadful to say this to you, but I do it because this may be my only opportunity to say anything to you. No words of mine can wound you as you have already been wounded. It would be neither kind nor truthful to bid you hope; there is no hope. You come to us for help—we can but tell you the one way of escape. That would have been impossi-

ble once, but there are so many Gentiles in Salt Lake now that Mark says a plural wife can escape from her home if she wants to. You know I do not consider this a moral desertion of your husband, Drusilla, or I would not advise you to it. If he outrages your love and desecrates his home by a plural marriage, he has dissolved the bond that you believed to be holy and indissoluble between you. Is it not true? Mark, would she not be justified by all the laws we know, human and divine, in leaving her home under such circumstances?"

"Indeed she would, dear; and if it has come to that, if Drusilla is sure that Barbold will marry again, and she does not want to go back, she is welcome to stay here, and I will be glad to do all I can to defend and protect her. Curse the Mormon elders! I would enjoy it."

"We know you love your husband, Drusilla, devotedly, with all your passionate heart; but by this act he wrongs you past all redress; it would be a crime to stay with him," continued Esther, bending over the poor woman whose convulsions of grief had so exhausted her she could scarcely speak, and whose silence her friends construed into partial acquiescence with the only plan they had to suggest. She closed her eyes for a moment and inhaled a few deep-drawn breaths, then slowly rose to her feet.

"You will stay with us, Drusilla?" cried Esther, putting her arms about the woman that she might not fall.

"No! No! I will be revenged," Drusilla said in a

deep, husky voice, changed, with the drying up of her tears, from the desperate gasp of grief to the determined tone of despair.

“No,” she repeated, “I will be revenged on her; she is not like me; he said I would have an excellent opportunity to show my saintly qualities by dividing my strength with her,” and Drusilla ground her teeth together as she repeated the bitter sarcasm. “She is frail and delicate, her hair is like gold, and her eyes glitter with a red glow, like a serpent’s, in her fair face. Yes, she needs my help; she shall have it. Farewell, Esther, Mr. Branch, my only friends; you would help me if you could, I know it, I see it in your faces, but there is no hope; you cannot save me, even from myself.”

Esther strained the now tearless woman to her heart, but could not speak a word; there was nothing more to say. Mark’s eyes were dim, too, as he took her quietly by the hand.

“Put out the light,” she said huskily, “let me go out where I came in. Do not come to the door, and do not follow me; I may have to suffer much for this visit, but that is nothing, it will be a comfort to me many times in the dark future. God bless you both; go away from this wicked place, it is not fit for such as you, the curse of the Latter Day Saints is over it.”

When she had disappeared into the night, Esther and Mark stood with bated breath until they were sure she must be far on her way, and would not return. Then the door was locked again, and Esther burst into tears. Tears of anguish for Drusilla, and

of joy and thankfulness for herself. The peace of that humble home, that had never known the blight of Mormonism, made all the mockery about them seem doubly hideous. When the morning came again, after a restless night filled with troubled dreams, Drusilla's visit seemed to Esther the most horrible dream of all, and it was many days before she could shut out from her mind the vision of that frenzied face. She thought of that wronged wife as a hunted tigress, beating her life out in a vain search for help, and then settling down to the calm revenge of despair.

CHAPTER XVII.

SOME of the most touching incidents of suffering for faith's sake that have ever been told of the Mormons have pictured the plural marriage of a man who truly and devotedly loved his first and only lawful wife. That such instances are real there can be no doubt. Members of the Church of the Latter Day Saints who were not polygamists, and who openly opposed the doctrine of polygamy as one of the tenets of the Church, have been trapped with financial difficulty, and a plural marriage with the daughter of some prominent elder offered as the only possible escape from ruin. Married men have been enticed by others who were "pillars of the Church" into compromising relations with women, and have then been blackmailed by the Church itself until plural marriage was the inevitable end—the only honorable end, according to Mormon teaching. These things have been in Utah. It is true that a loving husband and father has brought to his home a plural wife to crush the heart of the mother of his children, because, forsooth, the Church—and to him the Church meant God—had so commanded him to do. But, from a point of view which commands the history of the Christian world, is it not plain that genuine instances of this kind must have been rare? Is there not in the heart of every human being born in the effulgent light of the nine-

teenth century, on American soil, a revelation which tells him that God never commanded absolute wrong to his fellow human beings?

There have been gentle, pitiable, aye, even lovable, imbeciles, who have thus been led by designing men, under the guise of religion, to commit this most heinous crime against the sanctity of wedlock and fatherhood, and hundreds of dull-minded peasantry from European countries have become polygamists through the same teachings; but American proselytes to the religion of the Latter Day Saints who have desecrated their homes by plural marriage have done so with the fear of God and man and their own consciences staring them in the face. They have hedged themselves about with a creed, and have sometimes, no doubt, hoped to shut out the inner consciousness of right and wrong with which all normal human beings are endowed as the first proof of development above bestial savagery, but they have miserably failed. The result, with men of an appreciable degree of intelligence, has always been, either total estrangement from the first wife or an awakened and relenting conscience. Sad as are these instances of plural marriage among the Mormons, still more sad, as well as more revolting, are the immeasurably greater number that occur simply because a species of wickedness, known to the Christian world as adultery, is sanctioned, advised and enjoined by the Mormon church. To be sure, the doctrine was revealed to the Prophet, Joseph Smith, to cover up his own wickedness more than to license polygamy in the

future, but the revelation answered both purposes. He legitimized his children for places of power which he foresaw were to be in the kingdom he had created in the credulity, the self-preserving instinct and the inherited superstition of ignorant men. He thus made it possible not only to wed, but to give in marriage, helpless women, as suited the whims and passions of a man of coarse mould. Joseph Smith was a man possessed of both an accidental and a designing ambition. His discovery of the Mormon idea was purely accidental, and his invention of the polygamic idea was mothered both by his individual necessities and the discovery made by his intercourse with other common men of their desires. But his naturally designing mind barely kept pace with the growth of the gigantic imposition he had foisted upon his fellows. More than once it had almost toppled to its fall, and it was not Joseph Smith, it was the horde of ignorant, stubborn men and enslaved women, that saved the throne of Zion from extinction, and drew it, with bleeding feet, across the great wilderness from the Mississippi river to Salt Lake.

The Mormon always protests against the charge that he is marrying a second wife from inclination, he always does it to please the Church. The fact that he is always prompted, either by truth or instinctive shame and a natural sense of justice, to defend himself to himself, and to hide behind the commands of the priesthood, should be proof to him that he is committing a sin by plural marriage. It often is

proof to him; but when he contemplates the fact that penal laws are made for all, high and low, Christian and unbeliever alike, and that crime often skulks away and hides its hideousness from sight in all walks of life, simply because of the attached penalties, it is not strange that there are men, who, defended by the most impregnable of all armors—a recognized religion—adopt polygamy and pretend to believe. It is putting no new thing into any one's mind to say, that there are men in all Christian churches who merely pretend to believe their respective creeds, and who commit many wrongs under the cloak of their pretended piety. But there is both a moral and a legal penalty when their misdeeds are found out. The monstrosity of the Mormon problem is, that no penalty has been levied upon polygamy that our Government seems able to enforce. The restless, ever progressive, ever encroaching, native born and rightfully dominant American citizen, is the power that is slowly and surely crushing polygamy. He has carried the home, the newspaper, the schools, the arts and the traffic of the United States into the heart of the Land of the Honey Bee, and nothing can stay their influence. Even a government that is held in leash by a lobby of Mormon elders who haunt Washington City like ghouls, and draw unlimited amounts of gold from the toilers of Desert, is powerless to retard the work it should long ago have fostered and prosecuted in its own name, but which it has just begun. American women will fail to grasp a great opportunity, and will be soul-

lessly unrequiting for the homes over which they reign secure and supreme, if they fail to assist in bringing about the day when a man, born of woman, will not dare to go to Washington as a counselor of the Nation and hesitate to make a record on the Mormon question.

Brother Barbold was one of the Saints who told his wife, when he condescended to mention the matter after meeting her on the street in company with his intended plural wife, that the Church demanded of him a plural marriage as proof of his loyalty.

It was expected, or at least it was required, that the wife should make a show of rejoicing over this event in her husband's career, which the husband himself called a sacrifice, albeit was a sacrifice he seemed usually ready to make when his superiors intimated that it was time, and, indeed, for whose suggestion as to time he did not always wait. With the contradictoriness born of a woman's pride, when the announcement was made to Drusilla, in cold blood, that her husband would take a plural wife, she raised her head, and with a semblance of her former beauty shining in her face, cast upon him a disdainful look. Her eyes were fierce and bright, her lips so close compressed that Barbold's careless look did not discover they were blanched—the ruby color he had once admired all banished to the heart he had wronged.

And when the day came that was to see the new wife “sealed” to him, Drusilla walked with them to the Endowment House in her best attire. It chanced

that Mark and Esther met them on the way, a painful incident, no doubt, to the gay wedding party. Barbold and the bride elect came together, and behind them walked Drusilla, the wife, and her mother, Elizabeth. It is enough to tear a mother's heart strings to imagine just what that mother's feelings must have been. Hardened, bigoted, selfish though she was, unless her very soul had left the body, her retribution must have been great. It would have broken any but an iron will.

Esther could only look at Drusilla in passing and try to express to her an atom of the womanly sympathy she felt. But Mark said Elizabeth's lips moved convulsively, notwithstanding her effort to hold them unflinchingly firm, and her rigid and uncompromising refusal to look either to the right or to the left. Barbold's face flushed red for an instant with honest shame, and the poor, thoughtless creature at his side looked around with a gay toss of the head already doomed to be so weary.

As soon as they had passed by Esther insisted upon going to Elizabeth's house with the hope of seeing her father, and as speedily as possible they went to that part of the city. They knocked softly that they might not too roughly disturb the invalid, and then loud and long, but no response greeted them. Though they waited, and returned again, the door remained closed and all was silent as the grave.

"Could it be," said Esther, "that my poor father would die, and I not know it? Would they be so

cruel as to put him away and never tell me?" Mark comforted her as he could, and resolved to come again that evening after the wedding party had returned and learn the truth concerning Mr. Wainwright.

In the meantime young Barbold had led another woman up the steps and into the door where, not many months before, Elizabeth had proudly led the way while he and Drusilla followed. It cannot be truthfully said that he gloated over the misery he knew he had brought upon his wife, but the not unnatural satisfaction he felt in Elizabeth's discomposure almost blotted out any thought his selfish heart might have held for Drusilla. He had heard Elizabeth plot and plan for her own preferment in the councils of the Church through his elevation, until he had acquired an appetite for some kind of retaliation. Somewhat to his surprise he discovered that he had found it when he told this zealous advocate of plural marriage that he was going to enter into polygamy; that to her daughter he would bring a helpmeet and friend to share her place as wife. Not for worlds would Elizabeth have shown a quivering lip and a dimmed eye to this brazen man, whose few and coarse conditions of mind permitted him only to rejoice in his own triumph and her chagrin. Of her real suffering he had no conception. Like a frame of iron Elizabeth moved through the fatal door when they reached it, and as they passed the portal she clutched Drusilla by the arm, else she would have fallen. No one noticed it but

the mother, and as they walked arm in arm through the desolate passages and into the cursed apartment where women are chained in the most degrading slavery ever tolerated in an enlightened land, it was supposed that filial and maternal affection drew together in this hour of solemn duty this mother and daughter in the Church of Zion.

On one side of the altar over which so many blasphemous vows have been made, knelt Barbold; on the other, Drusilla with her white face, her black hair and her dry, shining eyes; beside her the woman with the fair hair and the painted face, and eyes which bespoke a soul that had as yet sounded only the depths of a shallow vanity, a soul that happily slept undreaming of the foundations and realities of a woman's life.

Brigham Young performed the sacrificial ceremony.

Addressing Drusilla, he said:

"Are you willing to give this woman to your husband to be his lawful wife for time and for all eternity? If you are, you will signify it by placing her right hand in the right hand of your husband."

Drusilla lifted the waiting hand beside her own and laid it in her husband's outstretched palm. A noise like a death rattle sounded in her throat, but no one heeded. All unmoved sat the priests and elders whose presence gave sanction to this holocaust. Why should they flinch at a woman's stifling gasp? They had seen the part of the doomed Drusilla played so often that their hearts were steeled. No

woman's wail could ever again awaken in them a man's response.

Again Elizabeth's supporting arm guided her daughter, and, almost unnoticed, now that she had bestowed the bride upon her husband according to the rules of the Church, Drusilla was permitted to escape ere she fainted on the floor. Then, like the victims in the long procession that had preceded her, she wended her way home, with only the arm of a mother, against whom there raged a fierce fire in her bosom, to lean upon. Had she been able to walk alone she would have spurned even that support, but her pride had burned out, and she could not go alone.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ESTHER was so overcome with apprehension and grief concerning her father that her husband felt anxious for her life. He hurried home with her and tried to calm her mind and allay her fears, so that he could leave her while he returned to Elizabeth's house to find out what had become of Mr. Wainwright. Esther was at first quite determined to go with him; she felt that she must know the truth at once, and she feared to stay alone, but Mark said he would not risk having her witness a possible stormy interview between himself and Elizabeth, and he would go alone. An old woman, once a Mormon, but now a deserted wife, who supported herself by doing odds and ends of work, and who had found a good friend in Esther, lived near them, and Mark brought her to keep his wife company and be to her some slight protection until his return. Not that he thought of any real danger to Esther, but he had always a mysterious dread of leaving her even for an hour, the place was so full of mysteries, as well as of horrible realities. As soon as Esther was fully satisfied that she could not accompany her husband she was impatient for him to be off without her. Her mind was filled with remorse for the things she imagined she might have done for her father, and any fur-

ther delay in learning his real fate seemed intolerable to her. So, with many fond farewells, Mark left her.

It was then about five o'clock in the afternoon, and he said he would be back before it was dark, for the night time had never lost its terrors for Esther, nor indeed for any in that city who were familiar with the far-reaching and stealthy arms of that monster, Blood Atonement. It was like the slimy octopus, deadly and hideous in its native element, though powerless and intangible in the searching sunlight. Esther well knew that its requirements could reach her husband, though it was ostensibly for deserters of the faith, and he was no sooner gone than she forgot all fears for herself and remembered the times without number when she had begged him not to go upon the streets after nightfall. To make the time seem as short as possible, she drew a cup of tea and set a dainty bit for her old companion, but this attention had the effect of loosening a garrulous tongue that rarely knew a kind listener, and the stories of her former sufferings, and the scenes she had witnessed when she was "young and bonnie and not long o'er fra auld Scotland," but doubled Esther's fears, and she went often to the door to look for the coming of her husband. By and by the light grew dim and she strained her eyes through the gloom to imagine she saw him beside every tree and at every corner, only to be disappointed and go shivering back to her fireside. Then even the mountains faded from view, and slowly a thin gray cloud crept over the city from their tops, the stars failed to pierce it, and be-

fore an hour of darkness had passed a quiet, weeping rain began to fall. But for the old dame's restraining hand Esther would have gone through the night to seek her husband; she held her back and so frightened her at last with tales of horror that she dared not even look out. Mark had made the woman promise that whatever might betide him, she would keep Esther at home and protect her with her life until his return. One who did not know her history might think her but poor protection for a young and defenseless woman, but Mark knew and trusted her not without cause. It was not merely her imagination that enabled her to paint a lurking member of the vigilance force at every door and gateway and street corner, and to Esther's excited mind they seemed a cordon of bloody giants whose ranks she could no more pierce than she could escape them by going either above or below the earth. She was chained with terror when she would have gone through any degree of rage of the elements to save the man she loved. The hours wore away, as they will even when human flesh and human hearts seem unable to bear one moment more of suspense. Not even the wind blew to break the awful stillness; everything seemed black and dead. After nine o'clock not a footfall was heard, the streets were deserted of man and beast, and it seemed to Esther that everybody, like herself, must be hiding from the terrors of the darkness.

Pages could not tell the story of that night. It were as well to say it all passed by. The expectant

hours of early evening; the midnight milestone, beyond which it seemed to Esther she saw the blackness of despair; the long hours between that turning point and the darkest hour of all, just when the creeping light of day puts out the light of night—all these awful hours passed by in slow and solemn procession, and yet he came not.

But with the first tinge of color in the eastern sky came courage and hope to Esther's heart, and, casting from her the restraining arm of her old friend, she burst into the street and fled with winged feet toward Elizabeth's house. A heavy shawl which the old dame had wrapped about her in the night was drawn over her head, and she looked like a gray ghost fleeing from the betokened day. Faster and faster her feverish strength carried her, until she reached the door beyond which she was to learn the fate of both husband and father. It was like opening the gates of the valley of the shadow, and for an instant all grew black before her straining eyes; but that was no time to fail, the heart that had borne so much whispered courage, and Esther grasped the old familiar latch with a firm hand. It yielded quickly—indeed, it stood ajar as if for her to enter, or as if it, too, had been opened often in the night by some one who looked forth expectantly, or as if it had been hurriedly left by some one who had escaped its fastenings. Which was it? All these things flashed through her mind as she crossed the threshold, and, without pausing, hastened to her father's room.

There, also, the door stood unlatched for her en-

trance, and when she pushed it noiselessly open two pairs of eyes absorbed her as a vision from heaven, two pairs of arms were stretched to embrace her; but Mark motioned her to the saintly face upon the pillow, from which beamed the effulgence of life even through the pallor of death, the newly-awakened life of the mind kindled by the expiring spark, and fanned into radiance by the sound of the light step that had just entered.

They were alone in the room, Mr. Wainwright and Mark, the one on the pillow looking younger by a score of years, and the other older by a decade, than when Esther had beheld their faces last.

The feeble arms into which she sank closed round her with the gentle pressure which alone their fast departing strength could give, but in it she felt the transport of a father's love and the benison of a pure soul.

It was her husband who unclasped the tired arms that lingered lovingly, even in death, around the form of this sweet daughter, and laid them gently upon the couch, from which they never more need reach with hungry longing, for Esther had come. They stood a moment, hand in hand, and gazed upon the old man's peaceful countenance; then Mark said: "It was of such a face that Jean Paul said, 'It is a benediction for all mankind.'"

They covered it, and left him lying in that restful sleep, while Mark took Esther to his heart, and tears of joy rained from her burning eyes—joy that she had found him safe, and that she had met her father,

the same loving father as of old, on the border land of the great beyond, the region of hope and faith to which he was so glad to go, and from which she could not wish him back.

And then the story of the night was told, and none disturbed their vigil, nor came to pay the tribute of a look to the old man. Mark had knocked at the street door in the early evening, but no one answered him. Hearing loud noises within, he entered, and appeared unannounced in Mr. Wainwright's room, where Elizabeth and Barbold and an elder of the Church were hovering around the bed on which the victim lay, like vultures 'round their hopeless prey. Barbold was trying to stiffen the lax fingers to hold a pen, the elder stretched a legal paper near, waiting to receive a signature which even they could not ignore, while Elizabeth poured into the patient but fast deafening ear a plea for the Church. One little word, his name, she said, would give the New Zion more than all his former gifts combined. They had found more land, a neglected corner not included in the deed by which his possessions had been transferred to the Church. Surely he must remember it; it lay across the highway from the old homestead, and was rocky and barren; Barbold was sure it belonged to Mr. Wainwright; it had come to him through his wife's family, this astute gentleman presumed.

Why it had not been thought of and claimed long ago he could not now conceive, but he could tell very well that it was coveted now because discoveries had

been made which gave assurance that its hidden treasures were of great value, even richer than those found on the old homestead, and confiscated by the Mormon elders.

Whether the attempt to secure the transfer of this newly-discovered prize from the dying man to the Church was made because they thought he was past finding out their real intentions and would yield unresistingly to their directions, or whether they saw in him a gleam of intelligence, and hoped to secure the land beyond all question by persuading him to will it to them in his right mind, Mark could not tell, but he had not been in the room long when he thought he detected a look of comprehension in the old man's face, though he could see also the unmistakable approach of the end.

The men and Elizabeth were all so intent upon securing Mr. Wainwright's signature that they had no time to resent Mark's intrusion, and after a black glance from the elder, and a dogged one from Barbold, he had time to note that Elizabeth did not pierce him with her gray eye as she had done at their former meetings, and to discover also that whenever she relaxed her efforts to make Mr. Wainwright understand what was required of him a blow from Barbold's gleaming eyes would have the effect of redoubling her endeavors.

The elder finally asked him to leave the room and wait in the outer chamber, and Barbold informed him that they were in trouble, and that was no place for a stranger; but Mark had come with a determined

purpose this time, and he remained, watching the face on the pillow for another gleam of light. It came after a while, and Elizabeth plead more earnestly than before for the signature which would give so much to Zion and its people.

Mark then stepped to the old man's side, took the hand which Barbold dropped, as a man of his mould would let go even the thing he most longed for on earth at the approach of a brave spirit, and demanded to know what they wanted, and why they were persecuting, at death's door, the man they had driven there before his time? Slowly the old man's head turned on its pillow, and his white brows drew together to concentrate his gaze upon the stranger. The trio drew back a pace and gazed also. Slowly he seemed to know, and a light shone through the dimmed windows of his soul. He put forth his other hand and clasped Mark's as a long lost child would clasp a father's. After a little time he looked uneasily towards the waiting group, and said appealingly, "Tell them it is not mine, they will not believe me. I have nothing more to give; they have it all, and I am done with it."

"What is it you want?" Mark demanded again.

With a last hope of somehow securing his help, Barbold came forward with the document he still held in his hand, and which purported to bequeath the stony field, and all other possible effects belonging to Mr. Wainwright, to the Church of the Latter Day Saints.

After looking at it a moment, Mark said: "Gen-

tlements, you need trouble yourselves no more concerning this piece of land; it does not belong to Mr. Wainwright, and never did, though it belongs now to his daughter. It was bequeathed to her by Mr. Blounce. It may interest you, Mr. Barbold, to know that Ezekiel Blounce discovered the value of that piece of land many years ago, and during one summer vacation he made a journey to the West, where the owner of it had gone, and purchased it. The will he left when he died bequeathed it to my wife.

The baffled company of Mormons hesitated but a moment upon the order of their going, and then left Mark alone with the life flickering in its almost worn out socket. It was not until the door had closed behind them, and the sound of their footsteps had died away, that the old man whispered, "Esther," and almost started up from his bed in his eagerness to hear. "Safe and well," responded Mark. "I would give a world if she were here. Can I go for her? Can you wait? She will come instantly."

A look of horror spread over the old man's face almost before the words were uttered.

"Don't leave me, don't leave me," he begged, and turned a frightened look towards the door; "they would never let you come near me again, nor Esther either; I would die here alone with them."

"She will come, will she not?" he resumed pitiously after a moment; "oh, yes, surely she will come now; stay with me and wait for her." The beseeching look upon his face, as much as the words he spoke, urged Mark to consent to stay.

Though he knew how much Esther would suffer in his absence, he knew, too, that she would have him stay by her father. It was doubtless true, that if he left Mr. Wainwright to fetch Esther, neither of them would be admitted again, and the old man would die friendless. It could not be long now, but as Mark looked into the weary eyes of the old man he determined to keep the spark in the body until Esther would come, if that were possible.

He trusted her guardian to keep her through the night, but he knew she would come with the morning, and, though he suffered with her, and for her, throughout the long watch, and would have gone to her through almost insuperable dangers to himself, for her sake, and her father's, he staid, cheering, encouraging, promising the rich reward, the long night through. And then she came, just in time to hear the last fond farewell.

CHAPTER XIX.

ELIAS WAINWRIGHT was laid to rest in the old country churchyard in Pineborough township, beside Esther's mother. His children's hands bore him lovingly thither, far away from the scene of his suffering, and of the slow fading out of the faculties of suffering. No objection was made by any of his persecutors to the removal of the empty clay, it was worthless to them. They had taken all he had to give, his money and his life; what could they want more?

Much as she had borne for his sake, and great as had been the cost of his delusion to her, Esther had no resentful thoughts. She knew when she followed the silent form to the old home, that it was the spirit of a martyr that had gone before; and when she stood beneath the trees that had sheltered them both in the peaceful days of her childhood she knew that upon that place, if upon any mundane spot, his spirit looked down and cast a blessing.

Elizabeth's zeal long ago stung her to death.

Elder Bean, as a last means of grace, is generously contributing to the Mormon lobby fund at Washington.

Barbold is a shining light in the Church of the Latter Day Saints. His father disinherited him, but he has reaped rich harvests from the fields of the

Land of the Honey Bee. Each of his several wives, except the frail butterfly which his cruel breath soon withered, has a mansion of her own, goodly and fair to see externally, but black within as the ancient feudal dungeons whose prisoners were lowered into them through narrow wells hundreds of feet deep, and whose walls were solid rock, echoless, relentless. Like those victims of old, nothing but death can free them. The racks of torture, the binding corselet of steel, the scourging and starvation of the body, were slight punishments, as administered in those deep, dark strongholds, compared with the anguish of soul that is suffered by Mormon wives in the light of the nineteenth century on free American soil.

Esther is the queen of a home that has never known the blighting breath of doubt and fear. You will not forget her, dear reader, for she is happy, and all delight to know a happy woman; but oh, ye men and ye women, ye husbands and ye wives, ye fathers and ye mothers, forget not the woman for whom she prays—the unhappy Drusilla, who yet wanders in the streets of Salt Lake City, the Sodom of the Occident, where the licentiousness that destroyed the ancient city is practiced, not in defiance of the acknowledged laws of righteousness, but under the cloak of Christianity and the protection of both Government and priesthood. Outcast and yet enslaved, hopeless, helpless, this first wife is alone in a multitude of victims. The beauty that was born of love long ago departed from her face; she is gaunt-eyed and pale; and at her side totters a boy, a little

child whose soul was fashioned by the infamy of the Church of Latter Day Saints, and the cowardice of a Government that failed to govern; a child in the tiny chambers of whose heart contended revenge and hate and outraged love ere yet he breathed the breath of life. He looks up at his mother's disheveled locks flying in the western wind and wonders whither she is leading him.

Whither, indeed?

Is he being reared to curse another woman's life?

Where shall they find friends, this woman and this child, if not in you, the guardians of the happy homes of these brave United States?

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