

IS THIS YOUR SON, MY LORD?

A NOVEL

BY

HELEN H. GARDENER

AUTHOR OF

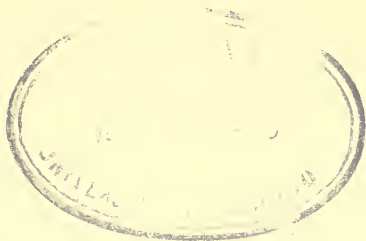
"Pray You, Sir, Whose Daughter?" "Pushed by Unseen Hands,"

"Men, Women and Gods," "Sex in Brain,"

"A Thoughtless Yes," Etc.

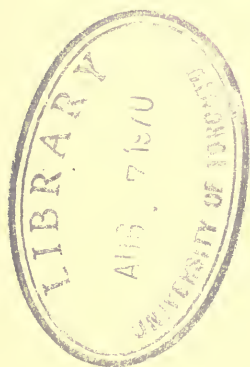


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“Is this your son, my Lord?” — *Shakespeare.*

"The shame itself doth call for instant remedy."—*Shakespeare*.

"I have told you what I have seen and heard but faintly ; nothing like the image and horror of it."—*Ibid*.

"What do we live for, if it is not to make life less difficult to each other?"—*George Eliot*.

"Our English practice of excluding from literature subjects and references that are unfit for boys and girls, has something to recommend it, but it undeniably leans to a certain narrowness and thinness, and to some most nauseous hypocrisy. All subjects are not to be discussed by all ; and one result in our case is that some of the most important subjects in the world receive no discussion whatever."—*John Morley*.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION.

I.

[This book has been taken so seriously by its critics, whether they have criticised it favorably or unfavorably, that — for the second edition — its publisher deems an explanatory preface desirable.]

It is an interesting mental condition which enables people to know things and not know them at the same time; to be perfectly familiar with the facts, and yet fail to grasp their significance until it is put before them in dramatic form. Then they exclaim: "This cannot be true or I should have known it before. If it were true, it should be understood by all; but it is not true — it cannot be — it is too shocking!"

In writing this story the author had no idea that there would be any question as to its probability. She believed that most people of mature age, in this day of newspapers, had become so familiar with the recital of kindred facts that this tale would be merely a different presentation of a known condition; that it would be from a new point of view, perhaps, but not a new acquaintance.

She was aware that the picture had usually been drawn from an angle of vision opposed to her own; but she believed that artists and public knew that there was another side to every picture and that one day it would be drawn. The relations of the sexes have been exploited in song and in story ever since the first pair found in each other interest enough to stir the emotions to the depth of pleasure or pain that finds expression in language. The outlook has varied with the nature, ability or purpose of him who painted human life in words. The method, too, has depended upon the writer. One presents his thoughts and theories, his hopes, fears, and suggestions, in the form of essay or didactic argument. Another makes poetry a vehicle, and pleads the cause of labor as he writes "The Song of the Shirt," or scores

hypocrisy and cruel injustice in a rhythmic dirge like "The Bridge of Sighs." These are not "pleasant reading." They do not amuse or merely entertain. They are not "art for art's sake" any more than was "Uncle Tom's Cabin," or "Put Yourself in His Place" or Hugo's "Les Miserables," or "The Man who Laughs (By Order of the King)." Such writers had a motive over and above and beyond the mere artistic use of language. Exploiting their own mental ability for pastime and profit alone did not satisfy them. They, and many others who use poetry or fiction as a vehicle to convey ideas to readers, had a message to give, a suggestion to make, a criticism to offer. They chose to offer it in the form of poetry or fiction. Those critics who insist that poetry and fiction should be for amusement and entertainment only would deprive us of

"One more unfortunate,
Weary of breath,
Rashly inopportune
Gone to her death,"

and give us in its stead, "A good looking girl got tired of living and jumped into the river. She had no home. She became desperate and ended it all. It would be a charity to bury her decently, and ask no questions as to her morals. Probably they were below par."

Some readers would prefer the method of the original, even though it is not pleasant to read and conveys a lesson—indeed several lessons—very pointedly.

Now, there are many novels which are written for people who read because they do not want to think about anything serious or important. They want to be amused as they fall gently to sleep of a summer day. There are other novels which are intended for those who enjoy fiction that not only entertains but stimulates and arouses thought. Between the two types there is a wide range. The latter class of readers could not be induced

to read the former class of novels—only as one might taste a confection after dinner. The former class of readers avoid the “novel with a purpose” as they would the pestilence, and since such works are fortunately not contagious, those who do not like or approve of them are safe. They can eat their confections and welcome. Bonbons may constitute their entire dinner. But what is insisted upon is that they allow the same liberty of choice to both author and reader of the more serious and purposeful fiction.

The discussion is very old. The question is where it was hundreds of years ago when the writers who touched upon religious or social questions were warned away by the sticklers for “art for art’s sake” and “fiction for pleasure only.” One point this school of critics always ignores. It is this. If they like the topic under discussion, if it presents their side, it is legitimate fiction and good art. If it presents the side they object to, it is neither the one nor the other. The stronger and more powerful the presentation the more sure they are on this point. I will illustrate. All fiction—there is hardly an exception—in Christian countries is pervaded by subtle arguments in favor of Christianity. “She knelt long before the altar and arose strengthened and calmed,” etc. There is, too, directly and indirectly, in all of our fiction argument, more or less open, in favor of certain forms of marriage, legal enactment, government control, etc. How the wife clung to an unworthy husband pervades fiction, and is good “art” and quite above reproach as fiction. We are taught in many a war story what true patriotism is and warned against the fatal results of treason, or failure in duty to a cause. Illustrations need not be multiplied. They are so familiar on so many subjects that to give a hint of one will furnish clues to hundreds of forms of argument in our fiction to

which we are all so accustomed that we do not give them a conscious thought. The influence over our habits of thought is none the less powerful because we have not stopped to analyze the motives. .

Let a new idea, or 'an unpopular train of thought be suggested more or less plainly in a novel, and at once the cry goes up, "This has no place in fiction." *Its opposite may have held place therein without a protest* until it has grown fast in our mental life.

The discussion of religion was nothing new in fiction when the protest went up against "Robert Elsmere." It was only that the point of view and method of handling the material used was new to most novel readers as an argument in fiction.

Sex relations have been the theme of song and story since the beginning of fictitious writing. Woman's relations to man have been exploited therein from the time she entered the world until she was borne to the grave. Nothing has been too secret or too sacred to be used as argument or suggestion. Even the throes of maternity have not escaped portrayal. Her foibles have met with no veil of charity, and so courtesan life (open and secret) is as familiar to the readers of fiction as is life itself—that is to say, the courtesan life of the woman. How long she would live after the "first false step"; how, and when, and where, and why that step was taken, down through all its stages until the father waves her from his own immaculate presence with "You are no longer child of mine, etc." We all know the infinite variety of forms in which it has served to sharpen and supply the novelist's pen. But beginning with the "first false step" of a boy, whether innocently taken or otherwise, and following him from the other point of view, — in man's relation to woman,—is, it would seem, not fit for fiction and has no place therein according to one class

of critics. There is nothing new in the criticism, and there is nothing new in the topic. The point of view only is unusual to these critics. There are those who think it might be well for this angle of vision to be more familiar to them.

This novel was not written as history, but there is not a material point in it which is not based on fact. Nor are they based upon isolated or particularly unusual facts, as would be well understood, were readers accustomed to comprehend what they read in newspapers and in legal, medical and historical works.

Here again comes in the effectiveness of fiction. One reads a legal or medical or philosophical essay wherein all the facts appear, but he is not stirred. His imagination is too weak or too little aroused to recognize the bearings of cold formal statement. Then, again, the readers of such treatises are, as a rule, already informed of the facts, while the great general public, which does not dream of them, never reads such essays or books.

America's most gifted orator wrote wisely when he said:—

“You can put all your ideas, theories, and fancies into the form of story. It is far better than direct preaching, because it touches the artistic sense and reaches the heart and brain through the perception of the beautiful or dramatic. . . . Pathos and philosophy in story will make all who read think, and what they think will make their heads clearer and their hearts better.”

Again he has said:—

“It was not the fashion for people to speak or write their thoughts. We were flooded with the literature of hypocrisy. The writers did not faithfully describe the worlds in which they lived. They endeavored to make a fashionable world. They pretended that the cottage or the hut in which they dwelt was a palace, and they called the little area in which they threw their slops their domain, their realm, their empire. They were ashamed of the real, of what their world actually was. They imitated; that is to say, they told lies, and these lies filled the literature of most lands.

Whoever differs with the multitude, especially with a led multitude—that is to say, with a multitude of taggers—will find out from their leaders that he has committed an unpardonable sin. It is a crime to travel a road of your own, especially if you put up guide-boards for the information of others.

No writer must be measured by a word or **line or paragraph**. He is to be **measured by his work**—by the tendency, not of one line, but by the tendency of all.

Which way does the great stream tend? Is it for good or evil? **Are the motives high and noble, or low and infamous?**

We cannot measure Shakespeare by a few lines, neither can we measure the Bible by a few chapters.

The great man who gives a true transcript of his mind fascinates and instructs. Most writers suppress individuality. They wish to please the public. They flatter the stupid and pander to the prejudice of their readers. They write for the market—making books as other mechanics make shoes. They have no message—they bear no torch—they are simply the slaves of customers. The books they manufacture are handled by “the trade;” they are regarded as harmless. The pulpit does not object; the young person can read the monotonous pages without a blush—or a thought. On the titlepages of these books you will find the imprint of the great publishers—on the rest of the pages, nothing. These books might be prescribed for insomnia.”

That is not only beautifully said but it is all true. Ten thousand essays on slavery would not stir the heart and conscience as did Mrs. Stowe’s one dramatic story. People had thought and said that they knew all about slavery—but she was abused and denounced for “having pictured horrors that did not exist,” as if it were possible to understand human slavery and do that!

The double system of morals which has legal and therefore social support—which makes of man a free and dominant human being and of woman a dependent function only and always—is not understood one whit better than was physical slavery in 1853. Race ownership with its double code of moral obligation is now illegal, and therefore looked upon as immoral and wholly pernicious. Sex ownership is still legal, and for that

reason, and for that only, is it recognized as less vicious that a double standard of moral obligation should exist between the sexes. There is but one depth of degradation *below* that which allowed men to hold in bondage their fellow men and make of them financial dependents, and legal and social and moral pensioners because they were black; and that is the depth which is touched when, by all legal, moral, social and financial conditions the marriage altar is but an auction block upon which, for the sake of the right to live, the purity and devotion and loyalty of womanhood are sold—not on equal terms—with no pretence of fair exchange—into a perpetual servitude of body and soul that knows no limit and can hope for no escape.

The black man had his food and clothes and code of morals and duties, in which he had no voice, served to him by a dominant race from which he could make no appeal. He was a dependent mentally, morally, and physically. That was the reason of his degradation. It was not that he suffered physical hardships. He was frequently better off, in that regard, than was his free brother. It was the root of the system that degraded him. He was held as an inferior with no voice in his own control and no right to his own development.

Woman stands in that position to-day. She has no voice in her own government, nor in fixing the standards by which she is judged and controlled. She is a dependent morally, mentally, financially and physically.

It is all very well—and very silly—to say that women control society and make the moral standards that govern it. They do nothing of the kind. Financial dependents and political nonentities create no standards. They receive them ready made. The merest modicum of reason will supply the proof of this.

No subject class—no unrecognized, dependent class—

ever yet made public opinion either for itself or for others. It always did, and it always must, simply reflect the sentiments and opinions of its rulers.

It is true that many a woman treats with scorn the "fallen" of her sex while receiving the companion in crime as a suitable son or husband. Who makes that sentiment? Who decides what woman is "fit to be a wife and mother"? Who makes the laws that give divorce to a husband for the least fault of the wife, but places another standard upon the loyalty of the husband?

Who talks about "making an honest woman" of his companion in guilt? Who makes *him* "honest"? Who enacted the legal standards upon which all these social sentiments rest? A man is valued of men for many things, least of which is his chastity. A woman is valued of men for few things, chief of which is her chastity. This double code can by no sane or reasonable person be claimed as woman made. Woman has had no voice whatever in its establishment. She has the same voice and power possessed by all financial and legally dependent creatures in its continuation and reflection. She is a very good mirror; but she cannot be accused of being the creator of the original of the reflection.

The willingness to accept a degraded and subordinate status in the world, and the assertion that they like it, are the lowest depths of human degradation to which human beings can be reduced. A system which produces willing legal, moral, financial and social dependents and inferiors is one that cannot fail, as all history shows, to breed crime and vice, poverty and insanity, imbecility and moral obliquity enough to make of a beautiful world a mere den of discomfort, discord, and despair.

This lesson has been taught and learned with classes and with races; but it is yet to bear but withered fruit while the mother of these classes and races is beneath

justice and outside of freedom, while she is a financial dependent (which is always a slave) a political non-existent, (which is always a creature without defence) a moral beggar at the feet of her companion in degradation and a social echo of the opinions, expressed or insinuated, of those who hold over her not only all physical, financial, and social power, but who also sway her through the tenderest and holiest ties, and scruple not, alas, to make her the victim of her own virtue.

Freedom of religion had its novelists long ago and, in its newer, broader phase, has them to-day. Freedom of political choice and action has numbered many a romancer and poet as its champion. Labor has not failed to dramatize its cause in literature and on the stage. The cause of manhood as against kingcraft, priestcraft, or slave driver, was exploited by many a gifted soul who with the dash of a poet's or novelist's pen showed more people the hideousness of the old and the hope in the newer thought than could have been induced to read or made to understand dry legal argument or sociological treatise.

Shall not woman have her novelists also?

The writer of this story does not claim to be the inspired romancer, who shall stir the world's thought aright in the greatest, and tenderest, and holiest cause that has ever yet been presented; but she may venture to hope that this volume may stir others, more gifted than she, to paint in colors so true, and with hand so strong, that the world must understand, and understanding, must with bravery and kindness, meet and solve the most far-reaching question that has ever occupied the brain of man. A sovereign race cannot be born of subject mothers. A noble race cannot spring from the mental and moral echo of a dominant past. A healthy race is not a possible product of enforced and ignorant

motherhood. A truth-loving and truth-telling race will never be borne by those who must take their opinions from others and suppress rebellion under a show of acquiescence.

Moral idiots, such as Jesse Pomeroy and Reginald Birchall in life, Pecksniffs, Becky Sharps, and Fred Harmons in fiction, will continue to cumber the earth so long as conditions continue to breed them.

The first condition necessary to any real manhood was liberty to do and be the best that was in him to do and be. Woman belongs to the same race. Her needs are the same. It is far more important that she have the soul and consciousness of dignified and independent individuality than that men have it. Why? The race is stamped by its mothers. The codes of morals that teach woman to lack all proper self-respect—to accept a status which throws to her, as quite good enough, that which man scorns to accept for himself, gives man an inheritance from his mother that keeps the world filled with sly, incompetent, subservient, double-dealing, over-reaching, or mayhap mentally befogged and morally distorted human animals, who fight with each other and scuffle like dogs in a pit for the tid-bits of life.

The battle for womanhood is the battle for the race. Upon her dignity of character and position depends the future. A slave she was, who was courted with a club. A subordinate she is, who is held as a toy. In both cases she was and is a perquisite of man. She has had no status for and because of herself. Man has. Woman shall have. It is not a struggle to dethrone man. His dignity is far greater when he stands as an equal among the free, than when he towers an owner above those whom he denies what he demands for himself. The dignity of Abraham Lincoln grasping the hand of a freedman surely stands higher than that of the kindest

“master” on earth, as his slave kneels before him. With an equal social, moral, financial, and political status for men and women, surely the relation of the sexes will be sweeter, nobler, purer, and holier than it can hope to be where Power and Patience sit by the hearthstone, and suspect each other of double dealing because they are sure that the words liberty, morality, honor, and justice have two sets of meanings according to the sex to which they are applied.

Perfect trust and perfect love never yet existed except between equals. One may trust and the other love; but an ideal marriage will never be made until legally, morally, and financially there sits at the hearthstone two who are equals and who use language and thought to mean for each what it means for the other.

The present is a time of transition. The new thought and the old training cut cruelly across each other. This is true in the religious world, in the field of economics, and in the relations of the sexes. The old conservative training fixes the old habits, the new ideas arouse thought and aspiration and sense of progress and justice.

In religion we find a consequent development of the so-called reconcilers of the irreconcilable—those who vainly try to graft the old forms of faith and expression upon the new forms of scepticism. The result is (conscious or unconscious) hypocrisy and a vast and troubled unrest.

In the field of economics, the clash of old training and habits upon the new thoughts and aspirations have filled the world with what we call the “labor troubles.”

The old training and habits as to sex relations, clashing with the new and higher conception of justice and honor, have begun to cut savagely into the heart and brain, not only of the women who, with intellects developed by study and thought, and a greater financial independence than they ever before enjoyed, reach out

for a love that shall not be mere tender patronage which shall have within it the frankness and honor of comradeship—but it also finds the younger men unprepared to meet their own awakened sense of honor.

Young manhood is beginning to demand more of itself than it once did. There are men to whose souls neither secrecy nor confession brings relief. Their past is a horror to them and their future is in its shadow. This finer sense of personal honor was once thought to belong to pure and good women only, and the cry, "I have debased myself soul and body, and I do not dare accept your love," was a cry that no "manly" soul would have made in fiction a hundred years ago. It is made in life to-day.

Since writing this book one young man said to the author, with anguish unspeakable: "If I had read it ten years ago, it would have been worth everything to me."

It was asked of another: "Do you think it overdrawn from a college boy's point of view?"

"I am twenty-three years old," he said, "and I have known at least fifty cases so nearly akin to it that any one of them might easily dread lest it is his case you have drawn." This was a college boy. The other a business man in a village.

The Nassau *Literary Magazine*, conducted by the senior class of Princeton College, in its review of the first edition of this book says: "It states plain truths, and teaches a plain lesson. *It comes very close to any college boy who has kept his eyes open.* When we finish we may say, not 'Is This Your Son, My Lord,' but, *Is it I? Is it I?*"

Many of the younger men are ready for the new message. Their own thoughts run counter to their training and to legal and social conditions. It is almost possi-

ble to guess the age of the critic by the tone of his criticism in this matter alone.

Leaving out those critics who simply do not like the book because — they do not like it — who follow Douglas Jerrold in his attitude toward Thackeray; * leaving out, too, that class whose own well-known vulnerability and unrepentant moral obliquity make them supersensitive and therefore severe as to the moral purpose of those who speak of (to condemn) that which these critics find it not “obscene” or immoral to do; and leaving out the class who hold that fiction is art and art only (except where it deals with their own side of some question) there are one or two types of critics to which it seems proper to reply here:

1st. Those who have understood the book to say what its author does not mean to have it say.

2d. Those who demand only that they be assured that such things do exist and therefore need to be presented in a manner to attract attention.

In the former class it is a surprise to find the sincere, brave, and astute editor of the *ARENA*. He, in his kind and frank review of the novel says: “That there are many timeservers among theologians is unquestionably true; that there are far more who dare not investigate is equally true, but to hold that they are as a body hypocrites, is, I think, at once unjust and untrue.”

To that the author agrees. It seems only fair to say that she believes there is far less conscious and intentional hypocrisy either in or out of the pulpit than is commonly believed. Heredity and environment form habits of thought as well as of outward conformity, and

*The extreme sensitiveness of Thackeray to criticism is well known. He once said to Douglas Jerrold: “I hear that you have been saying that ‘The Virginians’ is the worst book I ever wrote.” “I never said anything of the kind,” said Jerrold; “I said it was the worst book that anybody ever wrote.”

analytical and logical qualities of mind are rare indeed. It is only after the most unusual mental convulsions that man stops to take stock, so to speak, of his own mental attitude and belongings. He has been trained to conform to certain outward customs whose inward significance he does not take the trouble to analyze, and so we find the anomaly of giving and taking the sacrament and saying "This *is* the body and blood," etc., by those who assure us that they have no doubt, that Christ was a mechanic, as human and as fallible as any of us. If that is true, there is no logical ground possible upon which the sacrament, as such, can be given or taken. But the author does not believe that most of those who think they accept both of these points of view have discovered that there is irreconcilability between them.

There are some who have made that discovery. One such character appears in the story, but there also appears, and purposely, the Bishop with stern and uncompromising mental and moral integrity. He refuses to compromise upon a point he deems vital, even to secure a candidate who is looked upon as particularly desirable. Again, old Mr. Ball, his wife, and their clergyman were drawn with a constant recognition of their moral earnestness and lack of hypocrisy, even in their strangely contradictory mental attitudes.

In short, the writer of this book did not intend to convey such an impression, and she does not believe that intentional hypocrisy or a conscious lack of moral integrity accounts for the very prevalent scepticism that claims to be Christianity, while it yields every essential Christian principle. If she drew one or two conscious hypocrites, she drew a larger number who were not so. It is, therefore, hardly just, she thinks, to accuse her of holding or advancing the opinion that all clergymen and others who differ from her in belief are hypocrites. She

did not say so. She does not think so. Many of her best friends, including a beloved father whose earnestness and honesty of purpose no one ever yet questioned so far as she is aware, are and have been clergymen. Most of her best friends are—or call themselves—Christians. A few of them are Roman Catholics.

Were she to draw one or two conscious hypocrites in politics and then touch certain points—such as the tariff—upon which men differ, giving the side she inclines to accept as clearest and best, could the charge be made that she held that all political opponents were hypocrites? She thinks not. Surely religious opponents should be as generous and accept criticism or difference as kindly as do political or social opposites. In the past they have not. Those who have taught charity have extended little of it to those who opposed their absolute sway. In the future the author believes that discussion and not suppression will be the habit of mind that will lead to a civilization which shall be a fact and not merely a name.

2d. To those who think the picture of sex depravity in the Mansfield family is overdrawn, there is this to say. The case upon which this story was based is from life. The elder of the two is still living and is a respected member of society to-day and a deacon. In the story he is killed off. That is about the only bit of fiction in his case. He made the request of the "doctor." He afterwards paid a bank cashier to do what he is made to do in the story. The aforementioned cashier is also a prominent "society" man to-day.

That it is *not* an isolated case can be proved by many *medical, asylum, and legal records*, to which access is not general—but quite possible. TO SHOW THAT THE PRESENT LEGAL MACHINERY IS ACCESSORY BOTH BEFORE AND AFTER THESE AWFUL CONDITIONS, AND THAT THE GENERAL PUBLIC SHOULD KNOW IT, IT NEED ONLY BE SAID THAT IN ONE STATE IN THIS UNION A LITTLE CHILD SEVEN YEARS OLD MAY GIVE HER "CONSENT" TO HER OWN RUIN, WHILE IN NINE STATES THE LEGAL AGE IS TEN, IN SIX IT IS TWELVE YEARS, IN ONLY ONE IS IT AS HIGH AS EIGHTEEN. In thirty-five States and Territories

the age of consent is to-day under fifteen years, and — can words express the awfulness of it? — in “secret session” year after year it is sought to reduce this age so that men may be safe from legal penalty! These same girls may not give legal consent to honorable marriage until sixteen and eighteen years of age. They may not sell property; but, in order that men may legally send down to moral and physical death little children, fourteen, ten, and seven years is made the age of discretion in the one matter which is her social, moral, and physical death! Why is this? Does it not take as bad a man as “Mansfield” to do deliberately so terrible a legal wrong? His character is only an illustration of the logical outcome of a civilization that makes legal such atrocity as this; that leaves it a possibility in a civilized land to witness the spectacle of a legislature refusing — after debate — to raise the “age of consent” from seven and ten years to fourteen or sixteen, as was done only last year by legislators who would, no doubt, insist in public, that so low a moral type as the elder “Mansfield” is, if not impossible, at least too rare to be reckoned with. If our legislators so carefully pave the way to develop and protect such men as the elder “Mansfield” no one need be surprised when he appears to tread the path made smooth and easy for him.

“Do not put these things in fiction — legal, medical, and scientific works are the place for them,” cry one set of critics. My reply is they have had that place during 1890 years of Christian civilization and the above is still possible. If the general reading public — including the mothers — understood, the author believes the remedy would be devised. To bury such universal wrongs in technical works is to help perpetuate them. They touch the welfare of all. All have the right to know of them — *and women and young girls most of all*. To them it means everything. To our legislators it has meant a somewhat amusing and salacious “secret session.” What will it mean when the manly men are made by the dramatic presentation in fiction to see the infamy as it is? What will it mean when women and girls *know* that it exists and receives legal and therefore social sanction? That is the question now to be answered.

THE AUTHOR.

IS THIS YOUR SON, MY LORD?

CHAPTER I.

"Put on what weary negligence you please,
You and your fellows; I'd have it come to question:
If he dislike it, let him to my *sister*,
Whose mind and mine, I know, in that are one,
Not to be overruled." — *Shakespeare*.

"Sir, I had thought by making this well known unto you,
To have found a safe redress." — *Ibid*.

Soon after I began the practice of medicine, I went to a milling town in the West. I had been there several months, and numbered among my patrons one of the wealthiest men of the place, a large mill owner, whose standing in the community was second to that of none. His older children had been sent to the best Eastern schools; but the son, Preston, a well grown young fellow of seventeen, had recently been transferred to a Military Academy nearer home, where it was hoped by his parents that the too evident tendency to shirk his studies might be corrected, and at the same time a subduing process put upon his inclination to play pranks on the other boys. He was a big, good-natured, rather slow-minded fellow, who had developed few if any really bad traits, and was devotedly attached to his sister and a cousin who had been brought up as a sister in the family. These two girls were

still at school in New York, and regretted deeply that Preston had been taken away and put, as they felt, under military discipline for his antics.

The boy had not been long in the new school, when he ceased to write home with the usual regularity, and in the letters which he did send his mother thought that she discovered a different tone.

The result was that his father went to see the boy, and found him languid, unnerved, and evidently in ill health. The little sprightliness he had previously possessed seemed gone, and after a vain endeavor to learn the cause of the trouble, his father brought him home and to me.

It did not take me long to discover the origin of his malady. He had fallen into certain unwholesome practices, — an epidemic of which appeared, from his account, to have broken out in the school, where the young fellows had been too intimately crowded together, — the effects of which were painfully apparent to a practiced eye. These facts, together with the full history of his own case, I got from the boy, by degrees, and then told his father the whole story and what the ultimate outcome might be in both his mental and physical nature, if he were sent back to the school.

Mr. Mansfield was incredulous at first, then angry, and finally, after he had stormed, threatened and blustered, declared that he would disinherit the boy,

who could then, if he chose, proceed to make an idiot of himself at his leisure.

I argued the case with him, as best I could, and said that, since the young fellow had harmed no one but himself, and had not understood what he was laying up for his own future, the moral side of the question might be put quite aside and we could proceed to treat him intelligently for the physical trouble already developed. Mr. Mansfield looked at me for a moment as if he were somewhat perplexed, and then, greatly to my astonishment, brought his fist down on my desk with a thundering whack, and exclaimed:—

“Moral side be hanged! Harmed nobody else! That’s the trouble — the little fool!”

I confess that I was both puzzled and very greatly surprised. I had never seen the man before in any capacity but that of a mild, respectable patient, or on Sundays, as he passed the contribution box in the leading church of the town. At such times his conduct and language had, of course, been above reproach, and this was an introduction to a phase of his character which was wholly unexpected by me.

“I do not quite understand you,” I said.

He stopped in his impatient walk up and down the room, looked at me steadily for a moment and then said quite deliberately:—

“How old are you, doctor? Yes, yes, thirty-two. ’M-m-m! Married man, I think you told me?

Oh, yes, I remember now ; wife in Europe with her mother, who is ill. Well, by Jove, you are the very man to do it for me. I'll pay you well. Money is no object in a case like this, and all expense to you both of course I'll stand. I don't want, and by gad, I won't have, an idiot for an only son. Close up your office for a few weeks and take the boy off on a lark. Paint things red. Go to New York. See the elephant. Oh, you'll know how to pick out a good dove, hang it! You understand."

"But I do not understand, Mr. Mansfield."

He sat down opposite, crossed his legs, drew his eyes to a long narrow line, and looked through the slit at me for a moment, with infinite disgust. Then he said slowly :—

"What is the use for you to pretend not to know what I want of you in this case? You are no fool. You've lived long enough to know that men are all alike. What makes me mad is that the little idiot, that boy, has come near ruining his health and mind just for the need of some good, solid advice and a chance. Now I don't care to take him on his first round with the doves. He'd be—well, I suppose I might be a sort of a restraint on the little donkey; and if he goes by himself—well, you know, he'd most likely get into trouble. He'd fall into the hands of some low woman, who'd bleed him, or worse. Now if you go with him, you can arrange for him to meet a charmer,—one that

is as green as he is, don't you see,—and if he took a sort of romantic fancy to her, all the better, for a while.” He stopped to take breath.

“And then?” I asked. “When the romantic fancy is over?”

“What do you mean?” he replied, in astonishment.

“What is to become of the girl after you have made an outcast of her—and of your son, after you have made a libertine of him?” I began, but he broke in impatiently:—

“Oh, plague take the girl! What do I care what becomes of her? ‘Becomes of her?’ What always becomes of ‘em? They can look out for themselves. Libertine? I don’t care how much of a libertine Pres. is; but what I won’t stand—what makes me mad—is for him to be a blamed little fool;” and Mr. Mansfield took up his hat, strode out of my office, and slammed the door viciously behind him.

When I pulled myself together, I walked to the window just in time to see him turn the corner, on his way to a meeting of the school board—of which he was the honored president—the qualifications of whose teachers, mental, moral, and otherwise, were subject to his requirements.

The next day I went about my duties, as usual. In the afternoon the boy came to my office looking almost cheerful, and appeared to be mentally more alert than he had been since his return. He had

somewhat recovered from his shamefaced manner, and said rather brightly : “ Doctor, father says you are going to travel with me for a while, and that we are going to New York. I’m beastly glad of that, and ”— he caught my expression and suddenly stopped. I had looked up in blank astonishment when he made his first announcement ; but quickly decided to rectify any mistake the father had made as to the power of his money, when I should see that sanguine gentleman himself. I made up my mind, also, to find out how much Preston knew of the object of the proposed journey, and how far his father had seen fit to leave it for me to impart.

“ Why are you so glad to go to New York ? ” I asked. “ I thought you said, the other day, that all you wanted was to be let alone and not asked to go anywhere or do anything.”

“ I did say that,” he answered, flushing as he recalled the circumstances under which it had been said ; “ but I’d like to see the girls — Alice and Nellie. They don’t nag a fellow, and besides — well — I want to see Alice, that’s all ; ” he added evasively.

“ Is she your sister, or is Nellie ? ” I asked.

“ Both. That is, Nellie is a sort of double cousin ; but she’s always lived at our house, so we call her a sister too. I didn’t know that she wasn’t a real one till last year ; but as she is just my age I asked one day why we weren’t twins — how she

happened to have a birthday in April and I one in May, don't you know; and then mother told me. I'm not sure that Nellie knows yet. I guess she doesn't. Mother doesn't want her to — and I don't. I guess she never thought about that birthday business;” he added, smiling.

I had come rather to like the young fellow and to feel an interest in his future.

“Preston,” I said after a moment's reflection, “I did not promise your father to take you to New York; but,” — his face fell and began to assume again the sallow under hue which the flush of interest had driven from it for a few moments, — “but if you would really like to go, and will say so to your father, and tell him that I say I will not go unless he goes too; that I will not take all the responsibility he wishes to throw upon me, but only a part of it; he will understand what I mean, and I think he will go. Then I will; otherwise no.”

“All right,” said Preston, but his face fell again. The boy was beginning to be uncomfortable when he thought of his father. He was on the verge of realizing that their point of view was not the same, and, for the first time, the wonder was dawning upon him whether his father was just the man he had taken him to be; and the wonder was accompanied by a distinct shock of fear, the source of which was, as yet, unrecognized by the lad himself.

"Yes, Preston," I said when I dismissed him, "tell your father that I have agreed to go, on the condition that he accompanies us. Tell him I have an important reason for this. And, by the way, Preston, don't write to the girls, your sisters. Suppose we walk in on them unexpectedly at — what school did you say they are attending?"

He gave me the name of a fashionable school in the city where many of the daughters of wealthy Western families are "finished," and went away perceptibly brightened by the idea that he would create a sensation by appearing to the two girls quite unexpectedly, a few days later, when they were waiting anxiously to hear from their sick brother hundreds of miles away.

On our way to New York I found, in the few opportunities I had to talk alone with Mr. Mansfield, that he had told the boy nothing of his plan; but depended wholly upon me to bring about what he desired, in a manner which should seem to Preston to be of his own motion.

"Take him to some variety show, or any place where he can see good-looking girls;" he said. "If he hints that he is interested, or likes the looks of one of them better than the others, find out who she is, and, by Jove, doctor, money will fetch her."

"Suppose it doesn't?" said I.

He looked at me for a moment, half in scorn and half in suspicion. "You arrange a meeting with

me, if you are sosqueamish. I guess Pres. won't find a great deal of trouble with her after that. You see that she is pretty, young, and if possible, doctor, be absolutely sure that she is, — that she has, — that this is her first experience. Oh, damn it, you know what I want!" He paused for a moment, then got up, and, as he started for the smoking car, said: "You see to that part. Find out, if you can, who and what she is, and that she is, — that she is all right. Arrange a meeting with me, on some pretext or other, if she is too skittish or too smart for you. That's all I want of you in the matter. After that you can take Pres. to see her, and — oh, show the little fool the elephant generally! Initiate him. Take him around. Get him interested. Report progress to me. I'll foot the bills."

Two days after we reached New York, I called at Mr. Mansfield's hotel. He had made excuse to Preston that he had to go to Boston, and left us the night we arrived. I informed him that I had taken his son to several places of amusement, and that while we were at the Casino matinee he had turned to me and expressed a strong desire to go nearer to a certain young girl whom he saw across the house. I had succeeded in so placing him that he had an opportunity to speak to her as she was going out, and he had evidently taken a very great pleasure in the meeting.

Mr. Mansfield was delighted and told me to follow it up steadily. Shortly thereafter I was able to report progress again. Preston had bought her a bunch of flowers one day. Another day he had gone with her to a store. I had learned that she was of unimpeachable character, very pretty, and not very self controlled. I made a point of this latter fact and of her youth and unsuspecting character.

"She is a girl who would be easily led into temptation by one she cared for, or frightened into subjection by an older person;" I added. He smiled, and his eyes twinkled merrily.

"She is with Preston now. We got her to go into the hotel to see some pictures he had bought. She seems to go about a good deal alone. We met her in Broadway twice yesterday. She says she is here with an aunt who is ill, and that her sister who usually goes out with her has a swollen face, so she goes alone now. Oh, yes, she is all right;" I said in answer to his shrug. "I have made quite sure of that; but I tell you frankly, I believe that Preston will be as polite and reserved with her as if his mother were present. He will make no headway with her in the way you desire, I am sure of that, now I have watched him."

"Oh," he exclaimed, delighted, "if she is at the hotel, it is easy enough. I'll meet her as she comes out. I'll play the outraged parent act. I'll threaten to ruin her reputation. I'll — oh, it is plain enough

sailing now. But how did you ever get that sort of a girl to go into the hotel and to his parlor? But hurry, we must get there. She may think how it will look, and leave. Lord! what a fool she must be! And Pres., what a fool he is that he should need us *now*!”

He was so excited that he did not press me for replies and we hastened to the hotel. I entered the private parlor which opened into my room. It was empty. Mr. Mansfield winked at me and took a seat, motioning me to go into my own room, which I did, passing on into the one used by the boy. Presently I returned and said: “She will be out at once; as soon as she gets her hat on, and — but I tell you, Mansfield, I don’t like this business and —”

“Oh!” said he, significantly, pushing aside my last remark, “had her hat off, hey?”

“Yes,” I said, “and what is more, Preston had his arm around her.”

“Ha, ha, ha,” laughed he, in an undertone; “the young scamp isn’t such a hopeless dunce as he looks, is he? Had his arm around her, did he? Chip of the old block yet! Gad, doctor, I guess we’ve made a bad blunder in his case. He’s all right. Give him a chance, that’s all.”

Just then a small, stylishly dressed girl appeared at the inner door. She had drawn a thick veil over her face. She entered slowly, and bowed, but said nothing. Mr. Mansfield stepped briskly

forward, bowed, offered her a chair, and in closing the door behind her, touched her shoulder as if by accident, and apologized effusively.

The girl, who appeared to be struggling with some emotion, silently took the chair, and waited for us to speak. Presently Mr. Mansfield said: "Had you ever met my son, before he saw you at the Casino? Did he know you when he was here at school?"

There was a light laugh, quickly suppressed, and she nodded her head.

"So — ho! an old flame!" said he. "Oh, well, then it is all right — if —" and here he turned to me, and made an inquiry under his breath.

"Do not ask her that," said I, hastily, and in the same suppressed tone. "Wait. See her face first. Let me go to Preston's room, and you can talk to her better; but first of all, make her take off her veil. You will see her innocence in her face."

"You bet I will," he said; "I'll take it off myself, and kiss her too, if she is pretty, before you fairly get the door shut." Then aloud, to me, "Sorry you must go, doctor, but I will join you in Pres.'s room, before long."

But as I opened the door, the boy bounded in with a laugh, and then suddenly stopped, as he saw that the girl had not removed her veil. I could endure the situation no longer. I closed the door,

*

and reaching over slipped the veil from her hat. She hastily clapped both hands to her face, with a little cry: "Oh, how mean! Why, Pres., you gave me away. Papa hadn't guessed who I was yet. And he — oh, papa, '*had* I ever met Pres. before the other day at the Casino'? ha, ha, ha."

Mr. Mansfield was white with rage, and the shock was so great that he staggered, and sat down suddenly in the nearest chair. He was so overcome, for the moment, that he did not remember to visit his wrath upon me, and I silently withdrew before he recovered himself, and while the two children were still enjoying the excellent joke they thought we had played on their unsuspecting father.

That night, I wrote him a note, saying that I should not see him again while in New York, and that I now resigned to him his son's future training in the direction he had mapped out.

"I have called your attention to what it may mean from the other side — what it *must* mean to some girl, and to her father, if she has one — if your programme is carried out. If she has no father, so much the worse." I ended my letter thus: "My part is done. Allow me to say, that the boy will recover from his great mistake, if he is intelligently treated. As yet, to him, there is no moral question involved. I have talked with him. He now understands the folly, the physical, and

mental danger of his course. He is not my son; but if you — if anyone — were to take with a boy of mine the course which you propose to take with Preston, I should kill the man who tried it; that is all. I have written to the boy that I am called home unexpectedly. Remember, that upon your return, any unpleasant conduct toward me I shall resent to the utmost."

CHAPTER II.

"Sirs, 'tis my occupation to be plain:
I have seen better faces in my time,
Than stands on any shoulders that I see
Before me at this instant." — *Shakespeare.*

"Such wanton, wild and usual slips,
As are companions noted and most known
To youth and liberty." — *Ibid.*

When I reached my home in the West, I found a message which called me to the bedside of my wife's mother, then in Southern France, and I did not return to America for nearly five years.

I had not been many weeks in New York, when I met one day in Broadway a fashionably dressed, rather dissipated looking young man, whose face and bearing showed many marks of a fast life. He recognized me and lifted his hat. It was Preston Mansfield.

"Why, what are you doing here, Preston?" I asked.

"Following my respected father's advice," he replied scornfully, "Gad, how he hated you! He told me what the little scheme was afterward. Poor little Alice! she never so much as suspected anything wrong. She thought the old man was sick and blamed herself for helping to play a joke that startled him. He had to cool down and pretend that that was it. She actually bathed his feet

in mustard water, put him to bed, and sat up with him nearly all that night;" and he laughed delightedly.

"No danger of corrupting your morals now, you bifurcated young beast," thought I; but I said aloud:—

"Where is your father? Here?"

"Well, hardly;" he drawled, "the governor passed in his little checks over a year ago. I'm head of the family now, and when I'm at home I do the Board of Education racket, and cut off a big slice of staid and respectable citizen business. I haven't quite got the gall to go into the deacon act yet; but I'll get there. It paid the old man, big, and I'm a chip of the old block nowadays, I do assure you, doctor. He broke me in thoroughly, after he made up his mind to it, and found he couldn't trust you"; and he went off into a fit of laughter. As soon as he recovered himself, he rattled on:—

"But what an infernal game that was you played on the old man, any way. I believe he'd have killed you if he'd had you that night—and if he could have got rid of Alice long enough. What did you do it for, any way, doctor? Now, between man and man, what *was* your little game? More money?"

I looked at the hopeless young rascal for a moment and then said:—

"You *are* a chip of the old block, Preston. Good afternoon."

As I walked away I heard him exclaim under his breath,—

"Well, I'll be damned!"

"No doubt of it, my boy, no sort of doubt about it;" said young Harmon, with a twinkle in his handsome eyes, as he received Preston Mansfield in his arms after that astonished young gentleman had watched me turn the corner of Twenty-third Street, and was about to start on his way again. "Of course you'll be damned in time, my boy, but what's the use in standing here in front of the Fifth Avenue Hotel, in broad daylight, in the year of our blessed Lord, 1880, and telling people about it in cold blood?" Both of the young men laughed and started for the Hoffman House bar, quite as a matter of course, and not at all because either of them wanted anything to drink.

"What were you standing there for, glaring at that precious old muff's back and making remarks about your future abode, when I ran into you?" asked young Harmon, expecting and waiting for no reply. "What will you take?" and he leaned familiarly on the bar and made a signal to a waiter. When the drinks were concocted, he went through a great show of testing their quality, wiped his lips daintily with a fine cambric handkerchief and set his glass down with a resignedly superior air as if

to say: "This is really not the sort of stuff a gentleman accustomed to the best of everything can quite bring himself to drink; but—no matter. It is not of sufficient importance for me to take the trouble to speak about it and, indeed, it is doubtful if these vulgarians could comprehend me if I did." While the inside fact was that the young fellow's healthy stomach loathed strong drinks of all kinds, and he had schooled himself with patient care to be able to hold up his end as he phrased it, and retain his proud place as one of the leaders of the fast set at Harvard. Nothing gave him greater pride in himself than the belief that his ready pronunciation of the names of wines and liqueurs; his test movement of lips and throat to indicate perfect familiarity with, and infallible judgment of their quality, would convince even the most sceptical that he was a man of the world,—of the fastidious, rapid world which keeps its church pew, its English cob, and its opera box quite as a matter of course, and no less as a matter of course, frequents the Parker House and the "Parsonage" to indulge in Welsh rarebit, stimulants, and green-room gossip at 2 o'clock A. M.; that externally immaculate, cultured world which knows more or less of mixed companies of women who smoke and men who drink until daylight warns them that professors growl if lessons are shirked and stage managers storm if eyes are dull at morning rehearsal.

Preston Mansfield had left college, finally, a year before, where even his lavish expenditure of money could not blind outsiders to the fact that he was learning next to nothing of those branches for the teaching of which colleges are commonly supposed to be sustained, and that he cared to learn no more. The authorities, therefore, with elaborate display of virtuous disapproval, advised him not to return. Nothing could have more fully harmonized with his own wishes, and he promptly transferred his headquarters from Boston to New York, and left Mr. Fred Harmon to take his place as leader of the "fast set." Notwithstanding the fact that that young gentleman's supply of cash was far from limitless, he prided himself greatly because he had, in one short year, been the means of elevating the tone of their debauches to a plane upon which gentlemen should conduct such matters. That is to say, they all gambled, of course, but they did not talk about it openly a great deal, even among themselves; they continued to give suppers at which there were hardly enough sober ones to get the drunken ones home, and where those who kept their legs and senses wished it distinctly understood that they did it not at all because they drank less, but solely because, being so accustomed to it, the ability to be overcome had long since been outgrown and they, therefore, chaffed quite unmercifully the poor callow fellows

who were still unable to "carry a few bottles" of wine.

These deeply experienced youths were naturally the admiration and envy of those whose capacity still had its limits, and in whom Nature continued to assert herself when the verge of endurance was reached. They deceived young girls into compromising situations and patronized women as of old; but it was Mr. Fred Harmon's firm belief that this was all done in so delicate a manner that no one could object; and he, for his part, felt quite dainty and looked down with something akin to virtuous pity and scorn upon the crude, if not immoral, practices of his predecessor and friend, Preston Mansfield.

Mr. Fred Harmon had no doubt whatever that he was a fit associate and a most desirable husband for the sweetest, purest young girl in the world, and he had heard with deep disgust, Mansfield's remark one day, when they had chanced to meet Nellie on the street.

"Gad, Fred, I wonder if there ever was a man good enough to marry that girl! I'd give half of all the years of life left to me to be able to go to her, and feel myself fit to ask her to marry me."

Fred Harmon had no qualms of conscience on that score; and indeed, in many ways he felt himself on quite a different plane from that which naturally belonged to Mansfield, who had not had

the good taste to connect himself with any fashionable church while he was at college, and had frequently laughed outright at statements made by Dr. Highchurch in his doctrinal sermons.

"Mansfield has no sense of convention. He is destitute of traditions," Harmon would explain; "and then he clings to prejudices like a Hottentot. The night I took him to call upon Dr. Highchurch, he actually took issue with the Divine on the doctrines of original sin and vicarious atonement; and argued about it as if they were matters of vital importance. He is really very difficult, don't you know?" Fred Harmon liked to use that expression. The first time he had heard it, it had been used by the most correct Englishman he had ever met, and of course, a really correct Englishman was beyond comparison the most perfect specimen of good form to be found on this earth.

"He is a good fellow, in the main; first-rate fellow, don't you know? but, well, you know his father was a sort of — made his shekels in lumber or something of the kind, and his son's life and training in the wild and woolly west naturally makes one a little shy of going about with him a great deal."

When Mr. Fred Harmon said this he did not mean it to apply to hours between 12 midnight and 5 A. M., during which portions of the day or night he had never exhibited the least shyness or disinclina-

tion to go about, as he phrased it, in company with Preston Mansfield, and many a night they had made of it. The "prejudices" of which he spoke as among the fatal weaknesses of Preston Mansfield's character, were displayed by such silly and threadbare remarks as the one about wishing himself good enough to marry his cousin Nellie.

"Such a cad!" said Harmon to himself, as he thought of it afterward: "Such an idiotic, sentimental, narrow minded cad! As if he'd have to tell her about his little sports."

And it was certain that no one would ever have cause to complain of similar prejudices in the mind of Mr. Fred Harmon. His creed was short and clear. "Do what you want to," it said; "but do it secretly, if it is not strictly in accord with what the rules of polite society pretend to demand. We all know it is a pretence, and we have rather a hard time to keep our faces straight when we publicly look into one another's eyes and talk our conventional platitudes; but it must be done for the edification of the common people and to conserve tradition, of course. The decencies of life must be maintained."

By the decencies of life Mr. Fred Harmon did not at all mean that one's actions must be honorable and open, one's motives lofty, and one's record clean. The demand for these old-fashioned virtues where they did not touch money matters he

ranked as prejudices ; but he did demand as the first requisite of a gentleman, that his coat of pretence should be fur-lined, water-proof, and silk-stitched. He had no doubt that he should marry, one of these days, some lovely girl ; indeed, he was now a victim of the grand passion, he assured himself ; but he had not thought of such a ridiculous thing as a desire to have his whole life and nature an open book to the girl he loved. It gave him no qualms at all to pose and pretend to her as to everyone else. So long as she did not discover anything that would cause her to ask disconcerting questions, he had no prejudice whatever in favor of laying bare his soul and making her a partner in all of his life. Indeed, he would have thought it a very unwomanly thing for her to expect anything of the kind ; and if she were to show a tendency toward such unwholesome notions of what was due to women, he had no doubt that he could bring her to her senses easily enough ; and as he was quite content to keep certain corners of his life wholly to himself and to shut up a few of the rooms, not only of the past but of the present and future as well, and keep the keys in his own possession, he felt perfectly secure, and therefore entirely virtuous.

No one could love a woman more fondly, of course ; no one could respect her more truly ; but it was not a part of his creed that perfect love carried with it a "prejudice," in favor of perfect truth ;

and as to respect, surely it was far greater evidence of respect for a woman, to hide from her what she would not like in your character and life, than to hurt her feelings by letting her know it! He hoped that he had too much real respect for his betrothed, and for womanhood in general, — and that he would always retain too exalted an opinion of his wife ever to tell her the bald truth, or even let her so much as suspect it, either as it related to life in general, or to his life in particular.

In short, he had absolutely no prejudice in favor of facts where fiction was so much prettier, and more truly suited to a woman's life, and to a gentleman's vocabulary. Indeed, he had glossed over and dressed up ugly or inconvenient truths ever since he was able to talk. His training had all been in that direction. His charming mother, whose ambition was always to appear well, and to have her son do nothing that "they" — meaning that social world she stood in awe of, — would not understand at once and pronounce "good form," had begun this training at a very early age; so that at the present time, Fred was not at all conscious of the least moral weakness on his own part, nor of a shadow of cause for shame.

Public censure for any act of his would have overwhelmed him with mortification, and covered his mother with humiliation and anger; but that insidious foe of personal comfort, the loss of one's

own respect and approbation, had never attacked Fred Harmon, nor was such a calamity ever likely to overtake him. His conscience was absolutely easy. If there existed cause for him to blush, he was not aware of it. Had he not been taught in early childhood to suppress the least hint of an inclination to deviate from the paths of "good form"? And was not "good form" the only reliable moral standard?

He could remember having had certain scandalous little desires to play marbles with the grocer's boy, and to fight with the son of a butcher's cart driver; but he knew full well that, in giving the account of these exploits, it would be necessary to present his companions to his mother in the guise of "Judge Supurb's youngest," or as "Father Highchurch's nephew." Then his mother was satisfied. She would a little rather that he would let them get the best of it, too, about half of the time, because in that case no hard feelings could ensue on the part of the Judge and the Father if they found it out, and it would be quite a humorous bit to touch up daintily when they met.

When Fred was in his third year at college, one of the seniors had invited him to spend a part of the coming vacation at his home in the West, and in talking it over, his mother had said: "Certainly, my son, you may accept the invitation. It is Mr. Ball's last term and he could not ask you to take

him to call on any of our friends more than once in that time, and you could make some reasonable way out of it then. Go, by all means, dearie, and have a happy time. It will do you good. You are not looking your best. This may be the very change you need, and you can take it in the way of an experience. No doubt they are very honest, well-meaning people, in their way."

It was while on this visit that Fred met Maude Stone, and fell in love with her, thereby causing his mother to revise her views as to the honesty and well-meaning characteristics of those Western barbarians. During Fred's first year at Harvard, he had shown some symptoms of a lapse from the worship of Father Highchurch (whose social position was enviable in the extreme), and his mother had sighed deeply, and met his arguments with a sweetness and force which seemed to him at the time charming and final.

"Certainly, my son, all you say is quite true. I do not, myself, believe in those unpleasing religious notions expressed in the creed of our beloved church. You must remember that the progressive Churchmen explain them all quite satisfactorily. The ethical beauty and exquisite taste of Dr. Broadchurch's explanation of the crucifixion, you surely have not forgotten. I cannot reproduce it, of course, but I know it was most charming. My nerves were soothed and my artistic nature warmed

for days afterward. Ask him, some day, to explain these points about the vicarious atonement theory, as you call it (quite vulgarly, I think. You must have gotten that form of expression from young Ball. Be very careful not to use it again). Give up looking at it in this literal way, and accept it as the Broadchurchmen hold it, if you cannot take the High Church view. Its justice and harmony with natural laws; its appeal to one's higher nature and ideals; its display of tenderness, are all quite a poem as Dr. Broadchurch presents it. You can close your eyes and drift into a realm of spiritual exaltation where questions and doubts are impossible; where the dear Christ touches your heart and illumines your understanding. Don't ask your questions in that pointed way, however, my son. That is — don't be so — a—a—direct. Come at the point less baldly. Language should be draped to a certain extent when used to express spiritual things. Have you been reading authorities on style as much as usual lately? Never allow a day to pass without doing so, dear. Newspapers are so demoralizing that even you show the effect of having read them. It seems a dreadful thing to say of you; but I am afraid it is true. Be so very careful about it, my son.

“Yes, I know, young Ball is very clever, after a fashion: but he gives one the impression of absolute nudity, mentally speaking. He is very bad form,

poor fellow. His bearing proves him not well born. What a shame that he should be an 'honor' man and that Edward Highchurch, with his exquisite polish, should not. But of course every one will understand it. It is brute force against grace and refinement. I suppose, on examination, Mr. Ball answered the questions and wrote his thesis with a directness and force that struck the professors like a trapeze performer shot directly at them from a catapult; while Eddie made some effort to clothe the hard facts of science in a garb of poetry, and the result was a lack of appreciation on the part of the busy professors who found the short cuts of Mr. Ball far easier to follow. But, as I say, no one is deceived as to the desirability of the two methods; nor, for that matter, as to the attainments of the two men."

She wanted her son to take the theological course; but she yielded readily enough to his desire to look about for a year or two after he was graduated before he should make a final choice of a profession.

"You say you do not believe the creeds and doctrines;" she had said. "Of course, you do not in that literal sense, but there is an interpretative meaning, in which you can accept them, and be a clergyman in the dear old Mother Church, after all. If you really cannot bring yourself to be a Highchurch man, I am willing for you to follow the

Broadchurch men. Look at Dr. Phillips Brooks and the Rev. Heber Newton. Very different they are from each other; but both explain all those points you object to so entirely away, and in such choice language that the most fastidious can not fail to be satisfied. And then, always remember, my son, that the social position of the rector of a large parish is absolutely assured. There is no question. A great lawyer may or may not have an assured place. A distinguished physician's niche is open to question; but the rector of a fashionable parish stands firm on the top of the social edifice, in virtue of that fact alone. You cannot fail to see the enormous advantage this would be. Think it all well over, dear, before you allow yourself to drift too far, or commit yourself to any other position than one consistent with a final refuge in the bosom of the Church and as a ministrant at her holy altar."

Shortly after this she wrote to a friend: "You will know how delighted I am, and how thankful that Fred, the dear noble fellow, has about decided to give over his fancy for the law, or any other secular career, and devote his really exceptional talents to the uplifting of his fellowmen. From your point of view I can readily see how you advised the law, and if he were going to live for himself alone, you would be right no doubt, my dear. But his life is for others; his aim in the

world is to devote his splendid gifts to the service of mankind; and my gratitude is deep and keen that he has about decided to give his whole energy to the service of God and our blessed Church. Congratulate me, dear, even though you do not believe as I do. Surely you can be a wee bit glad when my heart sings within me for very joy."

CHAPTER III.

"The wise sometimes from wisdom's ways depart;
Can youth, then, hush the mandates of the heart?"—*Byron.*

"What mortal is there of us, who would find his satisfaction enhanced by an opportunity of comparing the picture he presents to himself of his own doings, with the picture they make on the mental retina of his neighbours."—*Geo. Eliot.*

So, as Mr. Fred Harmon leaned against the Hoffman House bar that day, while his less gifted and lowborn friend Mansfield drank with a relish, while he assumed to look with deep disapprobation upon the quality of the potation, Preston Mansfield said:—

"Been in town long, Harmon? Hear you've decided to go into the 'Good Lord deliver us,' business." He glanced significantly at the full glass by Fred's elbow. "Suppose you've cut this sort of thing and poker and the girls for good, then; but, by gad, I'll bet a shilling, Harmon, that you cut your sleeve full of trumps on the last deal, with all of 'em;" and he winked and laughed at his friend in what Mr. Fred Harmon felt to be a most objectionable manner. He disliked to have people take mental photographs when the background was not properly arranged to produce artistic effects. At the same time he did not feel equal to allowing any young man about town to think he

was a muff. It may be looked upon as strange, but it is nevertheless true, that no sense of shame is more deep than that which results from a fear that any man should suppose that you are unable to hold up your end, as Fred would have phrased it; which, being freely translated, meant that he could not bear the humiliation of having any other man suppose that he knew more by practical experience of those conditions of life, which are not usually mentioned in the presence of ladies, than were familiar to Mr. Fred Harmon himself. Therefore, he smiled knowingly, glanced about him with an air of deep weariness, as if to say, "I am beastly tired of all this sort of thing, don't you know. And what a barbaric hole this hostelry is." He had heard several Boston men say that; he knew it was the thing expected of the cultured elect. The fact was, however, that this was the third or fourth time he had ever been within these gorgeous precincts, and he was exceedingly interested in, and curious to examine its appointments. But to do this openly would be a confession to all present that he was not in the habit of drinking himself to the verge of gentlemanly inebriety within its hospitable walls, and Fred did not feel quite equal to that bit of heroism. So he smiled wearily, and said with a drawl:—

"Well, not exactly, my boy, there is more or less blood left in me yet. Suppose we dine in this

bizarre caravansary, if it won't take your appetite. — Isn't it enough to make one despair of the human race? Such taste! What are you going to do to-night? How would you like to take in one or two of the political speeches, just to see the free and independent voter roped in, and observe the kind of oratory that does the business — and then make a night of it? What do you say? Know any good places to go? Tired of the theatres. Stupid lot of heroics on now. Passion in tatters; virtue its own reward (and it doesn't get any other, I must say) and all that sort of thing. Wonder if the stage will ever learn anything?" and he strolled to a table in the café, and began to order a dinner.

As they passed the speaker's stand in Union Square, two hours later, one of the leading politicians of the day was making an impassioned appeal to the Germans not to allow themselves to be hoodwinked by the mendacious Democratic bids for their votes. The two young men stopped to listen.

"Why, gentlemen," the speaker was saying indignantly, "the very terms in which they appeal to you are an insult to every man in whose veins runs one drop of the blood of the nation which leads the civilized world to-day!" There was a movement of expectation and applause. Fred Harmon smiled at Mansfield and said: "This is good. Better than a dime museum. Wouldn't have missed it for a fortune. There he goes again. Now just

watch the gentle Teuton swallow that bare hook and take in a large share of the line."

"How does the Democratic party invariably approach you?" exclaimed the irate orator, almost choking with excess of emotion. "What does it say to you? How does it judge you? What is the standard by which it measures the g-r-e-a-t German people? Always by the one standard — *beer!*" The orator, too much choked by his indignation to proceed, paused with his arm uplifted and a deep frown upon his brow. There was a round of applause and a ripple of laughter.

"Do not laugh!" exclaimed the speaker. "It is *true!* It is the s-h-a-m-e-f-u-l truth! And it is the duty, as I am sure it will be the pleasure, of every self-respecting German, who knows, as all of you know, the magnificent history of the most magnificent people on this globe" (great applause and cheers), to resent it at the polls! What does the Democratic party know of Germany, or the Germans? *Nothing* but— *beer!* What does it know of German history? Nothing, except that it has heard that in that far-off country they drink — *beer!*

"They have the impudence to expect to catch your votes by telling you that we, the Republicans, are not friendly to your breweries, that we are for high license, that we, the Republicans, are not friendly to the Germans because *Why? why?*" he

demanded in a perfect transport of virtuous indignation. Then he went on, his voice tremulous with suppressed scorn: "Why, indeed! Simply and solely, my friends, because *we* do not agree with them that all the German cares for, that all he knows about, that all he wants, that all he dreams of is — *beer!*"

There was a decided sensation in the crowd, and some evidences of righteous wrath on the part of several rotund and red-faced gentlemen near the stand, at so low an estimate of the German character. The speaker's indignation waxed deeper, and his voice swelled out in triumphant tones.

"They forget, gentlemen, that every one of you knows the glorious, the unrivalled position that Germany holds in Art, — in which she leads the civilized w-o-r-l-d! In Science, in which she leads the civilized w-o-r-l-d! In literature, in which, with the finest encyclopædia known to man, with her Von Humboldt, her Goethe, and her Schiller, she leads the civilized w-o-r-l-d! They forget, gentlemen, that Germany and the Germans think more of these than they do of — *beer!*"

"They have the brazen effrontery to insult the representatives of a land which produced a Wagner, by talking to them eternally about — *beer!*"

Great sensation, wild applause. Indignant men who never before heard of Von Humboldt, and were uncertain where Goethe's brewery was sit-

uated, glared at their neighbors in a way that boded no good to the Democratic nominee. The orator saw his advantage and went rapidly on: — “Which party honors you the most? Which party is most likely to deal fairly with you, the one that cannot think of you apart from *beer*, or the one whose leaders extol your unapproachable poets, revere your unequalled savans, and worship your incomparable musicians to such an extent that they have given very little thought to the grosser — a — ah — to the — er — incidents, as it were, of a certain phase of your national life? Which, I say, gentlemen, do you prefer, the party that gives you nothing from morning till night but — *beer*? or the one that proposes to give you, is able to give you, and now offers you unlimited — ”

“*Taffy!*” yelled Preston Mansfield, and the laugh that followed was at the orator’s expense.

“Beer! Beer!” shouted a dozen voices.

“Taffy’s too sweet.”

“Give us a rest!”

“Beer, beer, Milwaukee beer;” shouted some one to the tune of “Rum, rum, Jamaica rum,” and the tune caught the fancy of the crowd which proceeded to yell itself hoarse and thereby cover the speaker still farther with confusion. He sat down amidst uproarious laughter, while Preston and young Harmon, chuckling to themselves, stepped into a cab and drove rapidly away.

They were both Republicans, but they enjoyed the joke, and were in excellent spirits and on the best of terms with themselves all the rest of the evening.

That night, or rather the following morning, when Fred Harmon reached his hotel he found a letter from his mother, whose theory was that Maude Stone, the sweetheart he had found in the West, and her father, were making a violent attempt to ensnare the young and tender feet of her son. "Be careful to give neither her nor her designing father, any hold upon you in writing; then they can have none whatever upon you, either in law or equity, and any talk which may have passed falls to the ground without harming you.

. . . The girl can have no proper respect for herself, and your whole life would be utterly ruined by such an alliance in any permanent way. . .

The only time I ever saw the girl she showed that she had no respect for herself, and therefore none for you. She allowed you to keep your hat on out on the porch steps, you remember, and she was dressed in evening toilet! When I spoke of it to you afterward you said she did not care, that she felt like standing with bare arms in the cool air for a while; but was willing for you to keep your head covered if you felt chilly, and if you wanted to. What sort of self respect is that? What can such a girl think of herself? Look at

it reasonably, my son, and mount to a true man's ideal of the stainlessness and dignity of a woman — of what she must be who can hold the admiration and homage of husband and sons through a lifetime, and give no farther thought to the matter. . . . You are too sensitive by far. No conceivable compromise of the girl holds you to anything. . . . Have no words in writing and you are all right. If her father storms — as of course he will, in the hope of capturing such a matchless prize for his daughter — do not yield by one hair's breadth."

Indeed, Fred's mother held the conventional opinion that it was the duty of a young girl to form and maintain, not only her own character and basis of action, but that she must hold her lover to a given line of conduct, failing which he was privileged to take advantage of her love and confidence, with no shame whatever to himself.

If he were not a gentleman, it was her fault. If he took advantage of her tenderness and confidence in him, it was her fault. If he swore to her by all that was holy, and she believed him, and acted upon his word, and the results were disastrous, it was her fault. In short, her son's standard of action toward the girl might be the limit of possibility, and there was nothing to make him blush; but the girl must be too wise, too firm, too well poised, too immaculate either to make a single mis-

take herself, or to "allow" him to make one in her presence.

The one whom Mrs. Harmon was pleased to look upon as the weaker and less perfect vessel, must fail in nothing, while her son's standard of manliness, of rectitude, of honor, for himself, might have its limit only where possibility of accomplishment ended. In short, Fred was aware that his mother looked upon marriage as a sort of reform school for men. Notwithstanding this fact, Fred had read her letter with some displeasure. He was not yet willing to give Maude Stone up, albeit he was not unmindful of the great truths so forcefully set forth by his mother, and he tried to look down the vistas of time to see whether Maude would be able to retain his full respect and devotion; and truth to tell, he had his misgivings. She certainly did lack finish, and she had allowed him to be very familiar with her, indeed. And—well, he would think it over very seriously before he married her.

Meantime, he wrote a note to Maude who was visiting her aunt in Brooklyn: "I have slipped over to New York for just one day to see you;" he wrote. "How long are you going to stay at your aunt's? When do you go back West? Is your father here? I have a thousand things to ask you. Can you take a walk with me to-night? The moonlight is glorious on the bridge. I hate the house such nights. A stuffy city house would

not seem like the cosy library or breezy parlor at your pretty home out West. It would spoil the illusion. . . . If willing to go to-night, go to the corner room at nine o'clock, light the gas, letting it burn dimly, pull down all the window shades, except that nearest the corner and leave it to within a foot of the window sill. . . .” “What a comical thing to do,” thought Maude, when she read the note; “sort of telegraphic communication by window shade line,” and she laughed at the idea. But her heart beat wildly, for had not Fred come over from Boston the moment he knew she was here! And she was to have a walk with him in the moonlight! It would be ever so much nicer than to stay in the house. She did not think that her aunt would care, only dear Fred always had said that auntie did not like him, and no doubt that was the reason he wanted her to slip out, so that their first meeting might not be spoiled after so long a separation, by even the cloud of her aunt’s mild dislike. Anyway she would go with Fred. He was always so “proper,” as she called it, and he would not ask her to do anything if it were not all right. He knew far better than she how to make things easy, and what was best. She would go. So after dinner Maude went to the corner room. She pulled all of the shades down except one, and that she left a few inches from the sill. Then she ran to her room to put on a street dress, and at nine slipped out of the side door.

"Fred," she said softly, and then there was a muffled sound of kisses and murmured words that are not spelled with letters, and Fred Harmon tucked her hand under his arm and they passed quickly up the street.

If Maude Stone was indiscreet, it is only right to say that she was very young and "in love" and that she had been brought up where every one in the town knew her and hers. She had had her own way and was not exactly in "our set"; though the latter fact was due to no fault of her own and many girls in "our set" were far less genuine, perhaps. Maude's home was in a small town in the West, where every one respected her and her father and her mother for what they were; where no one thought it at all out of the way if the girls met one, or a dozen, young men on the street and stopped to talk and laugh over their various innocent amusements; as innocent on the part of the girls as if they were babes in long gowns, and fully understood to be so by all the young men who, while far less innocent themselves, were still able to look any honest girl in the face without an accusing conscience so far as she and her type were concerned.

They thought of these as quite apart, and of totally different natures from "the other kind," and any one of them would have fared badly enough at the hands of his fellows if he had so much as hinted at anything to the discredit of Maude Stone.

They often laughed, it is true, at the absurdly plain things she said, over the indiscreet things she did, and at the oddly unsophisticated ways she had; but nothing short of her own declaration would have convinced any one of them that Maude was not, as they said, "all right, and the very best and jolliest girl in the world."

"She is so chummy," said one; "she never expects a fellow to make love to her and she likes all the things any other fellow does. I'd give ten dollars to see her in the country, if she didn't know anybody was about. She'd skin up a tree like a cat. Last summer she sat on the fence and talked with that boatman up at Lake Petosky, an hour at a time, and she took in more legendary lore about those wilds than would have filled a good sized school history. She could tell the whole conversation, too, when she came back to the hotel. She kept us all in a roar one evening rehearsing it. She is the best mimic I ever saw, and she never misses a point. But she wouldn't let any of us guy the boatman. She said he was interesting and funny to study; but she wouldn't allow fun made of him in any way that would hurt his feelings. She was furious at me one day when I laughed at him because he asked her, with all the elaboration resulting from the most careful previous preparation; 'Will you have your eel skun, Miss?' She had hooked an enormous eel while we were out fishing,

and he had evidently spent a good deal of careful thought on his question so as to have it in the most approved style. It sounded so deliciously absurd that I burst out laughing. There he stood holding up a great squirmy eel and inquiring gravely as to her wishes in regard to depriving him of his ulster. Maude looked at me with fire in her eyes, I tell you; and then she turned around and said deliberately: 'Does he have to be skun? Oh, yes, please, if that is the way they fix eels; do have him "skun" for me and sent up to the hotel. I think papa eats them. I don't know that I can, they look so dreadfully snaky.' The boatman was delighted to be able to serve her, and she hardly spoke to me that evening. All next day she actually made me giggle like a fool, to make the boatman think I had fits of that kind and mustn't be held to account for them. I think he made up his mind that I was a little crazy. If I caught a fish I giggled, and if I didn't catch one she'd glare at me to let me know it was time to giggle again. If she said it was hot, I laughed uproariously, and if her mother asked me to bait her hook, I exploded. I knew it was that, or war with Maude, for she was intent on healing the lacerated feelings of that poor, abused, insulted son of the oars. Mrs. Stone has set me down as weak minded ever since; but Maude and I are chums again, so I don't care. I tell you she's a brick."

"You bet," said one of her other admirers who had heard the story; "she's a whole hodful — cream tinted, fresh Milwaukee bricks, at that;" and the young fellows laughed, with no sense of discourtesy to the girl in their free handling of her name, albeit there were several listeners on the hotel veranda who were strangers to Maude Stone.

One of these was Fred Harmon, who was spending a part of his vacation with Harvey Ball, and he made up his mind, then and there, to have some fun with that girl. All these village boys were evidently in love with her. His spirit of investigation was aroused. It would be easy enough to meet her. His host, Harvey Ball, had known her ever since she was born, and an introduction was to be had for the asking.

It did not take young Harmon long to fall in love with her, himself, and honestly to feel that he had met his fate. He had no intentions, either honorable or otherwise, when he decided to ask Harvey Ball to take him to call upon her. He felt only the curiosity inspired by the talk he had heard, and a glimpse of her fine figure and fresh, young face, as she had passed the hotel. But he prolonged his visit in the town, and by the end of the summer they were betrothed, and as happy and hopeful as two such children usually are when they think that they have settled, for life, the most

momentous question of their existence, by the light of their inexperience and faith.

Maude was rich in her own right, or would be when she should be of age. An aunt had left her a fortune, and her father, while he had made some pretence of being a lawyer, was in point of fact a collector of rents, and an owner of pine lands which gave him a large income and promise of vast wealth in the not far-distant future. It is only fair to Mr. Fred Harmon to say, that he was not aware of the fact, if the wealth of Maude, or that of her father, had influenced him in the least. He believed that he loved Maude for herself alone; but it is not always easy to say just what does or does not influence a young man who has been steadily trained from his infancy to think first of all of results from "their" point of view; to make new friends, or to avoid knowing people, after due deliberation, on these questions: "Will it be judicious? Will they be of advantage to me socially or otherwise? Have they a country place where I should like to be invited? If they have, can I afford to go? That is to say, will 'they' find it out, if I do, and will 'they' frown upon me? Or, if it is where 'they' will know nothing about it, will there be any danger that any member of this country family will ever take it into his ridiculous head to come to Boston, and expect me to go about with him?"

I say that it is very difficult to determine just what considerations do or do not form the basis of any action after twenty-four years of this sort of training; and so when I assert that Fred Harmon firmly believed that he loved Maude for her own dear, frank self alone, I am aware that I am running more or less risk of attributing to him a far greater simplicity of motive than might be quite fair to one of his complex and highly civilized mental and moral condition.

Fred was poor. That was one reason why his mother had trained him so carefully not to allow himself to step one inch outside of the well-established channels of thought and action. She held that a rich man might possibly risk it, and recover his ground afterward; but a poor man, never. Fred was conscious of certain rebellious ideas of his own, which he would like very much, indeed, to dare to express. Maude was rich.

In his inmost soul Fred had often chafed at the repressions and eliminations to which his position had always condemned him. Maude was rich.

Once or twice before he had been in the West, where he was so situated that he had dared to say and do what he had liked best; to express his real thoughts and feelings (so far as he could be sure what they were in their embryonic and tentative state), and it had been a great luxury. He had felt like a new being, taller and stronger

and firmer on his feet, until his mother had convinced him that he had been temporarily out of his mind, and that it would be utterly impossible for any sane man of his position and culture to hold such revolutionary views, none of which were indorsed by Father Highchurch, or even by the esoteric Buddhists of her acquaintance. Fred had therefore learned to distrust his mental operations, and really to question his own sanity, when he found himself holding opinions on any subject whatsoever which had not the indorsement and seal of those whose intellectual garments had always been given to him, ready made, with the injunction that not a stitch, not a button, not a raveling could be altered without utterly ruining the fit and bringing disgrace and shame upon his own undraped and nude mentality.

One or two of their friends had taken the social and religious bit in their teeth, it was true, and they had come to no grief; but Fred's mother had pointed out that in each case they were rich, and, well, Maude was rich!

CHAPTER IV.

This is not right, is not just, is not true to the best that is in you. . . .

So the maiden went on, and little divined or imagined what was at work in his heart. . . .

Let us, then, be what we are, and speak what we think, and in all things

Keep ourselves loyal to truth. . . .

"'Twas but a dream,—let it pass,—let it vanish like so many others!

What I thought was a flower, is only a weed, and is worthless;

Out of my heart will I pluck it, and throw it away."—*Longfellow*.

Ah, well! ah well! who is to say what Mr. Fred Harmon's motives were, and what they were not, when he sat down that delicious summer to think it all over, and finally decided to ask Maude not to expect him to announce their engagement to his mother, just yet? He asked her to keep it a secret between themselves and her family. Maude's father did not like this; but he gave it no great thought at first, and as the young fellow had come very openly and said that he loved Maude, and wanted his consent to marry her when he should finish college and have a profession, Mr. Stone had replied that it was for Maude to say whether she was willing to be betrothed under those conditions. That had settled it. Fred knew, of course, what was right. His mother was an invalid, and he did not want to trouble her just now. Of course, a mother would dislike dreadfully to have her only son love any girl and want to marry her, especially

if she did not know the girl beforehand. They would wait until he had established himself in something, if need be, though Maude told him that she had enough for both and that he need not worry about that.

"Yes, of course, Fred," she had said, "you will want to do something. Any manly man would; but what I meant was that you need not worry over it as if I had nothing. You can take time to think and choose to suit yourself. Don't be a clergyman, Fred," she had added. "I would be such a guy as a clergyman's wife. I do so love to dance and have fun; and then, Fred, I never could, would, nor should keep my face straight to see you trailing around in a Mother-Hubbard."

Fred laughed. He wondered what his mother would say if she heard the gown she so worshipped, on Father Highchurch, called a Mother-Hubbard by the girl he loved.

"And then, Fred," Maude added, quite seriously, "you say, yourself, that you don't believe the creed and the thirty-nine articles, and you believe that Christ was the son of Joseph, and you don't believe in the justice of the vicarious atonement, and — oh, I'm sure, Fred, from what you said to father that night on the veranda, that a man who had the least self-respect, couldn't be an Episcopal clergyman and think as you do. Why, Fred, there weren't three grains difference

between your belief and father's, and he isn't even a Unitarian. He's an Agnostic."

Fred beheld the vision of his mother again, horrified and indignant. According to her belief Agnostics and Anarchists were about the same thing, and neither were persons one would ever care to meet out on a dark night.

"You are so literal, Maude," he said, playing with the ring on her finger. "You are such a downright literal little sweetheart, don't you know, that you don't see those things in exactly the same light that I do — that such men as Heber Newton and Phillips Brooks, for example, see them? They are broad enough to please even you, I should think. If I were to take orders, I should not be a High-churchman, but a Broad-churchman such as they are. Mother would agree to that so long as I wore the vestments at all, although she will remain rigidly High-church, herself."

"What has your mother agreeing to it, or not agreeing to it, to do with the case, Fred, if you don't believe it?" she asked quite simply. Fred was astounded; but she went on without noticing his expression. "You have to be true to your *own* opinions and conclusions, in a thing like that, don't you? You surely can't believe this and disbelieve that because she or any one else tells you they will agree to it — to your going just so far in your mind and no farther, — can you?"

She laughed. Her sense of humor always relieved her intensity of conviction.

"I think I can see you, Fred, with your black Mother-Hubbard on, skipping across the platform to get at the middle pulpit, and then shying out through a door to take that one off and put on a white polonaise with black trimmings — or is it the other way?—I always forget which costume comes first,—and suddenly coming back and bobbing down at the side pulpit. Oh dear! I never can help wanting to laugh. A man looks so ridiculous. He always looks as if he felt like a fool, and I should think he would, especially if he is large, like you. But when you come to take orders, as you say, the Bishop will ask you solemnly, 'Do you firmly believe that twice two are five, and that under theological conditions, three times five are twenty-one?' If you are going to be a Broad-churchman, as you call it, and answer him according to 'the higher criticism,' you will say, devoutly, that you can agree to both very readily, with certain mental reservations. Then the Bishop will look at you with grave suspicions and request you to state those reservations in italics, and to do it pretty quick, at that."

She paused and looked at him in a quizzical way. Then she said: "Young man, you're going to be scared. You're going to discover that those mental reservations take in the whole state. There

won't be a county intact; but you'll find one little polling district, as they say, when they talk politics, and you will think it is a good one to bring forward to show that you are orthodox; but, my son," said the girl with a shake of the head, "that Bishop will go behind the returns. You will say that what you really believe is that twice two are four with the next number above it five." Fred laughed and kissed her; but she freed herself from his detaining arm, and went on.

"After due deliberation the Bishop will tell you that since you are a very desirable candidate, he is willing for you to believe it that way, *provided* you keep it to yourself and teach your parishioners only the — er — a — simpler formula, which is far better suited to the ordinary mind; but as for the other proposition that three times five are twenty-one, it is absolutely essential that you believe that personally. You'll try to squirm out of it; but he will be obdurate. He will send you away to think it over. He won't say so exactly, but he will mean just about this: 'Young man, when you come back here, you say that three times five are twenty-one, and receive a good parish, honors, some money, social position, and no end of praise; but return to me with any other statement, and you will not only fail of these, but you will feel, besides, the heavy hand of power laid somewhat ungently on your youthful head.'"

She brought her hand down on his well kept hair, and allowed it to rest there as she went on.

“Well, you will go off to think it over. You like ease. Praise is a delight to you. The pulpit of a rich parish is the very easiest way on this earth for average ability to get itself worshipped as genius, papa says. Now, Fred, you have one weakness,— oh, yes, you have! You like to be worshipped. I don’t blame you,” she laughed, “so do I.—No such thing. ’M-m-m!— Oh, stop, Fred! I’ll take your word for the rest of this particular demonstration of the degree to which you adore me. I really must finish my story. I’ve got you in an awfully tight place, and I want to get you out. Willing to stay there? Why, Fred, you are *not*! It wouldn’t be honest. Well, here you are, and here is the Bishop.” She struck an attitude and looked very severe as she posed for that august personage. When she was Fred, her meekness and conciliatory tones and pose were very amusing to the young fellow, who greatly enjoyed her power of mimicry.

“‘Your reverence,’ say you, ‘I am now prepared to accept that other canon of belief. I believe, fully, that if five were seven the result could not fail to be exactly as you say, and that, since,—’ ‘Depart, ye cursed, until you make up your mind that three times five are twenty-one, pure and simple, without frills or tucks, sir!’— and you depart.”

She laughed gayly again, and held his hand to her soft cheek, stroking it up and down slowly; then she dropped it and began afresh, standing up to emphasize the effect, while she again acted the parts of the unrelenting Bishop and the ingenuous applicant for holy orders. —

“Well, as I remarked before, you depart. You come to me. We get our little slates and we figure, we multiply, and we add, and we fail to get his result. You go to the leaders of the Broad-church. They put their whole minds on it for awhile. By and by, they say: ‘Simple as can be, my son; give it to the Bishop this way.’ It reads: three multiplied by five *plus* six are twenty-one. When you show it to the Bishop, he waxeth wroth and demandeth sternly: ‘What does this mean, sir? I thought I told you to get it without any extras.’”

Maude scowled fiercely, and then, suddenly changing her manner to one of propitiation, went meekly on:—

“If you please, sir, we of the Broad-church do not count the six. It is thrown in for good measure, and nobody ever notices it any way. I do assure you that is my very best, Bishop, and after learning to duplicate the explanation, as made to me this morning, no one in my parish will ever notice the *six*. We write it very small.”

Fred had entered into the fun of it, and Maude did act so well. He sprang to his feet, and caught

her in his arms, covering her lovely face with kisses.

"How comical you are, Maude!" She broke away laughing, and seated herself at the piano.

"All that you can do, Fred, if you choose to eat humble pie; but you *cannot*, you *cannot*, you *cannot* think their way if you don't, and that's all there is of it;" and she ran her fingers over the keys, while their young voices simultaneously rang out in a love song from Siegfried. Theology was forgotten. From the stern orthodox Bishop with his effort to maintain his mental integrity; from the Broad-church leaders with their bold eliminations and substitutions, — their premises, which, as Maude said, were not even blood relations to their conclusions; from the timid, eager, hopeful novitiate; Maude had passed into the beautiful, loving, trusting girl, happy in her splendid lover and radiant in her happiness.

But the world is small, and Mr. Fred Harmon had not reckoned on one thing. About this time Harvey Ball wrote to a college chum, and lo! the engagement, which was to be kept for a time from his mother, was the talk of Boston.

It was done quite innocently. Harvey knew of no reason why he should not speak of it. It was no secret here at Maude's home. All the boys congratulated Fred and envied him, in a certain sense. They were glad of Maude's good fortune;

for the glamour of "our set" quite surrounded the young fellow from Beacon Hill, and his very reticence and caution told strongly upon their more open, bluff, and simple natures. Fred's mother heard. She called him home at once. She sent for a doctor; then she told Fred that he was insane again. She reminded him of several previous mistakes in his judgment, which he could not deny. She bade him write to Maude and break the engagement at once, on the ground that he had not been in his right mind; and — shall I tell the truth? — he promised, but did not do it.

It is true that he wrote to Maude, and appeared to blame her because she had let the engagement be known. His letter conveyed to the girl's wounded heart the impression that he thought she had been so elated, that she had been unable to conceal her exultation because of her supreme good fortune.

Once under the old spell again, he felt anew the power of convention, and reflected that Maude *would* gain a vast deal by her elevation to the charmed circle of exclusive, social Boston. He recalled her humorous representation of the Bishop in his "Mother-Hubbard," and of him, the young novitiate, nimbly presenting his various evasions of fact in the hope of hitting on one that would "take;" and, as he reflected, he decided to let his mother believe what she had unhesitatingly announced from the moment she had heard the dreadful news,

—that Maude and her people had deliberately laid a trap to ensnare her son for their own glory and aggrandizement. Fred did not say that she was right in this version of the affair; but he let her repeat it, and did not insist that she was wrong. To his father, Fred had said nothing. Indeed, there was scant need that he should say anything for that gentleman had long ago made up his mind—or whatever served him in that capacity—to accept, without question, the social dictates of his ambitious and socially skilful wife. He had taken this course long before the marriage of their daughter, and had not she been piloted into a most brilliant and desirable union with a scion of the house of one of the elect? It is true that Clara was looking somewhat pale and sad, of late; but one could not ask too much of matrimony—and happiness, it is to be supposed, is not the sole aim of existence.

But all this trouble arising in Fred's betrothal to his pretty western sweetheart had been long ago, and Maude had covered her heartache and said nothing to her father about it lest he blame Fred; and after all, Fred had written nothing to be blamed for. He had seemed vexed, it is true, and his letters had lacked the tone she had longed to find in them; but he had said nothing unkind, and perhaps,—oh, perhaps,—lovers did not write just the words and in just the tone that her heart hungered for, especially if the lover had had the advantage of training in good

form. So Maude hid her pain, and by and by Fred's letters were full of other things again, and he said no more of the worry about their engagement being known at his home; but she would have liked very much to receive a kind letter from his parents. She was glad that Fred had always been charming with her father and mother; but she would have loved to show her heart to his people too.

Maude had always thought that she would never allow her pride to stand as a barrier against a close and loving relationship between herself and her husband's family.

She would so enjoy conforming to their ways and showing them how much she loved the man she had married and those who were near to him in blood and thought. But she waited and waited, and no message came from his family and he said no more about it. He only wrote charming letters. Maude could not help feeling at times that they would have been equally interesting and delightful to anyone else, except for the "darling" at the beginning, and "your Fred" at the end.

She put a good deal more than that in hers; but then, Fred had always been used to self-repression, while she, oh, she had worn her heart on her sleeve all her short life, and said what she felt and felt what she said. So it was different, of course.

But all this, as I say, had been in the past, and now Maude had gone to visit her aunt in Brooklyn,

and Fred had come to New York, as he told his mother, to look about him and make up his mind what to do next, now that he had been graduated. His mother firmly believed that he had broken with Maude, and wrote to her friend a letter which ended thus: . . . "The girl has an uncle, I am told, who is in disrepute, and she, herself, must be an unwholesome creature, mentally. Fancy a woman who buttons her gloves after she is on the doorstep, married to Fred! . . . But the dear fellow has quite recovered from his infatuation now, and I breathe again. Be thankful with me! Be grateful to our blessed Christ that He did not permit this sacrifice. Oh, it seems to me that I cannot thank Him enough that my splendid son has escaped from the wiles of those designing people. The girl—the—I can think of no word with which I would willingly pollute my tongue to describe the bold creature—is, they tell me, very pretty, and, of course, that goes a great way with an inexperienced young fellow like Fred. And equally of course, she knew how to play her beauty off on him to the best advantage.

"Ah, well, he is safe again; but, dear, do you know I thought, at one time, that I should be compelled to have him adjudged insane by Dr. K——? You know he did that for Father High-church when Eddie married the poor, displeasing creature he did, and the court annulled the marriage on that

ground. It was all done secretly; but a few of us knew of it.

“By the way, did I tell you that Eddie is to marry my niece in the fall? I am so glad and proud, for Eddie is to take his uncle’s place in the parish when he is a little older, unless all signs fail. He is only an assistant rector now; but his place is quite assured, and his abilities remarkable already. It is really quite a feather in Dell’s cap, too, for the Forrest girls threw themselves at his head and — well, let us draw a cloak of charity over Mrs. C——’s conduct with Kate.”

Maude sent the note from Fred — the telegraphic note as she called it — to her father. She never thought of not sending it, poor child, for her first idea was to have him know that Fred had come to New York as soon as he had learned that she was there. She had found herself frequently, of late, trying to defend Fred from thoughts she sometimes had, and in her fear, imagined her father might have also. But Fred’s note produced quite a different effect upon her father from anything Maude had expected. He wrote a letter at once to that young gentleman, and as he did not want to send it to Maude, and did not know Fred’s New York address, he mailed it to Boston and marked it “forward.” A part of it read thus: —

“It may be Eastern style, it may be High-church, or Broad-church, or bon-ton etiquette, to write to a girl

to fix her window shades so and so if she is willing to go out with you for a walk ; but it isn't Western, and, by Heaven, sir, you can't do it with my daughter !

" If you can't treat her in the East as you treat her at her own home ; if you can't walk in and show yourself, and be open and above board, I'll send Maude to Europe, or somewhere else, if it kills her, before you shall see her again. What do you mean, sir ? Window shades, indeed ! Don't try any of your filagrée-work, comic opera business, on my daughter, or you'll hear something drop — and it won't be I, either. I've written to Maude that in my opinion, she had better give you your walking papers ; but in the meantime, I'd like you to explain this note to her and to me, and if you have any prejudices, as you call them, in favor of a whole skin, you'd better do it pretty damn quick, at that."

When Mrs. Harmon, Fred's mother, opened and read this letter,—as I am bound to say she did,—she decided not to send it to Fred ; but she wrote him instead :

" Fred, dearie, I have received the most impudent letter from that man,—the father of the — I don't know what to call her — who set that trap for your dear feet. He has not given you up yet. He dares to threaten you ! I told you how it would be. They mean to try to force you to marry her. Well, remember, my son, that you are a man now, and remember, too, that you are a *gentleman*. . . . Such

a letter! Such a vulgar, low, blasphemous letter as he wrote! It would kill my refined, high-strung boy to be associated with such common people. . . . Now, my dear, don't pay the least attention. They evidently don't know where you are. Don't let them. Break off all communication, if you have not. They cannot frighten me into telling where you are, and no one else knows.

"Take a trip out to St. Louis or Chicago and don't allow any of them to get your address. . . . Let them have nothing in writing. If possible get your letters from that—girl—and burn every one of them. Never again sign *anything*. . . . They can't hold you in law. If they try it, or even threaten to, Dr. K—— says he will say that you were out of your mind, as of course you were, or it never would have happened. . . . Now go, son, the moment you get this, and write only to your loving mamma.

"P. S. Remember what a glorious future is before one with your rare mental and social gifts, if only you keep yourself free."

Fred read this letter, and then a note from Maude. He was not particularly disturbed by either. He was not sure that he fully understood what was behind the words Maude wrote; but his guess came very near the truth. Her note began: "I had a cruel letter." Then she had drawn a line over it and begun again: "I return all of your

letters and ring. I do not know what to think. I am bewildered and pained. I leave town at once. Papa has sent for my aunt to take me away. I do not understand; but no doubt you will—you and your mother. Good-by.”

The fact was that Fred’s mother had written to Maude a long, cunningly-worded letter, in which she had appealed to the girl to give her son his freedom. She argued so effectively, and appealed to the girl’s pride in such a way, that Maude had hastened to comply with her request, even to the last detail that she say nothing to Fred of the maternal letter. It is to be doubted whether Maude would have complied so readily, without first hearing from her lover, if she had not received a note from her father which spoke rather severely of Fred and of his recent conduct. It was all rather blind to her; but she could see that the accompanying letter from her father to her aunt—which was a long one, and which, contrary to the family custom, had not been given her to read,—had produced deep wrath in the bosom of that lady; and she announced that they would leave at once, for Maude’s home.

It had all taken such a little time. Aunt Stone was a person of quick decision and prompt action, and now the trunks were packed, and Maude locked her door and flung herself, face down, on her bed, and wept and moaned for all the dreams that were past.

CHAPTER V.

"And in the world, as in the school,
I'd say how fate may change and shift,—
The prize be sometimes with the fool,
The race not always to the swift;
The strong may yield, the good may fall,
The great man be a vulgar clown,
The knave be lifted over all,
The kind cast pitilessly down."—*Thackeray*.

"It is probable that the great majority of voices that swell the clamor against every book which is regarded as heretical, are the voices of those who would deem it criminal even to open that book, or to enter into any real, searching and impartial investigation of the subject to which it relates."—*Lecky*.

Late that evening Fred stepped into a Club on Fifth Avenue. He felt tired, unsteady, and worn. He did not know what next to do, or where to go. He assured himself that he had been very badly treated and that he was most miserable. He chewed his mustache, and scowled in melancholy silence as he took a seat where he could hear without being expected to participate in the conversation of a group of well-known men. Even in his desolation, he did not forget that it was well to be associated in the public mind with the lions of the day, and the group was clearly seen from the street. He had noticed that as he came in. Early in the evening he had gone to the house in Brooklyn to ask — so he told himself — for an explanation of Maude's note; but he had been met at

the door by the butler, and told that the ladies were at that moment on their way to Europe — that they had sailed early in the afternoon. No, he could not remember the name of the steamer, and no word had been left for anyone. “How long?” He really did not know, but had heard some talk of a year in France, and then a tour in some place or other; but really he did not know much about it. None of which was true, and Fred was not at all sure that he believed it; but he went away, and Maude did not know that he had made even this feeble attempt to see her, and the night train for the West had pulled out with much puffing, and backing, and whistling, all of which tortured the girl who sat with closed eyes, as if it were a part of her sorrow, and contrived for her benefit alone. When Fred Harmon entered the club room, several of the younger men in the far corner bowed to him; but, as I say, he had selected his seat from the outside, and he took it now with an easy assurance that started little streams of envious thought in minds less diplomatically gifted than his own.

The death of a novelist was the bit of news under discussion by the distinguished group of whom Fred was now — from the street, at least — a member. The rightful place of the departed in the world of letters aroused a warmth of expression which Fred felt was distinctly *not* of the Back Bay. But then of course New York was not —

that is, one could not expect the same degree of culture — well, it was quite a distance from New York to Harvard, and most of these men were thorough New Yorkers. Indeed, one of them, at least, was even more unfortunate. He was from the West. Fred thought he held his own remarkably well, under the circumstances. He could not help smiling, in spite of his forlornly unhappy state, as he thought how lucky it was for this Western man that none of his opponents were Bostonians.

“You cannot call that sort of writing Literature;” said a tall, fine looking man, whose rank as a novelist was, as he felt, quite assured. “It would be like calling a chromo Art, or the jingle of a hand-organ Music.”

“But he made more money than any of you high-toned fellows,” asserted one of the dead author’s admirers, “and after all, that is the main thing with all of you. You’d do it quick enough if you could. Don’t talk to me about genius and all that sort of thing; if he had the genius to touch the popular heart, you can’t deny that he got away with most of you, after all.”

“Oh, when it comes to that,” said another man of letters, whose heavy articles charm a few, are read as a duty by some, and avoided as a pestilence by the many,—“when it comes to talk about touching the popular heart, that is best done with a pair of shears and a paste pot. I know a publisher who

understood the trick perfectly. He knew that anything that had Mother in the title — no matter if it was the veriest twaddle on earth — would sell. A certain number of idiots would have that book or die. He estimated that about one hundred thousand fools out of the sixty million in this enlightened country would nibble at that bait. He thought that about the same number would buy anything with Home in the title. Heaven would bring down a like number, and a combination of the three would fascinate almost anybody.” Fred was getting interested, and a general smile of amusement went around the circle and somewhat dissipated the air of hostility that had begun to show itself a moment before.

“Well, that man took a pair of shears and a pot of paste, and he clipped and pasted and pasted and clipped all the odds and ends he could find that he could by the widest stretch of his fertile and elastic imagination bring under any one of these heads. He got a lot. Then he issued the book, and put ‘Mother, Home and Heaven,’ in large and duly impressive gilt letters on the cover; and what do you suppose was the result of his venture?”

“Didn’t sell ten copies,” laughed a young artist.

“Sold like hot cakes until the disjointed and worthless nature of the work became known,

and then some of his victims walked in one day and scalped him ;” suggested a well-known army man from Arizona, who was the guest of the evening.

“Died of remorse before the first edition of five hundred was sold,” ventured an actor who had just made a hit in tragedy at a Broadway theatre.

“Not a bit of it!” said the pessimist of the heavy literature. “Not a bit of it! He sold, for hard cash, just four hundred thousand copies of that unadulterated trash to a like number of delighted imbeciles, who call it literature, and pride themselves on the fact that they and theirs are readers!”

A general laugh mingled with his groan of disgust, and then a tall, gray-bearded editor of kindly heart and caustic pen, took up the cudgel for suffering literature.

“Of course,” said he. “What better could you expect? Look at the half educated idiots the public schools turn loose every year on a long-suffering and sorely-tried community! It makes my hair curl only to think of it. They are under the impression that they are educated, and they know just exactly enough to make them perfectly hopeless cases to deal with. But the ‘Mother, Home and Heaven’ crowd is not half so bad as the other one;” he added, and then paused.

“Which other?” inquired the tragic actor. “The Father, Club and Hell set?”

Every one laughed again except the gray-bearded, sweet-natured editor, him of the trenchant pen. He was in earnest, and as the army man remarked, "on the war path."

"No!" said he, indignantly; "the 'Elmina Stabbed the Count,' crowd. The woods are full of them! Don't talk to me about literature! Why, do you realize, my Christian friends of the book-making fraternity, that there are sixty millions of people in this enlightened land of ours, and that only three millions of them ever read books, magazines, or even newspapers? Go to! Literature, indeed! What we want in this country is what people will read, isn't it? Well, that is 'Mother, Home and Heaven,' two parts, and 'Elmina Stabbed the Count,' three parts; well shaken together, and served hot. Oh, no, my friends, don't fret about the dear departed. He knew what he was about;" and with a groan of pent up indignation for suffering literature with a very large L, he jammed his hat on his fine, well-poised head, and started for his office "to write," cynically remarked the tragic actor, "a glowing editorial on the high grade of intelligence possessed by the American people in general, and the high-school graduate in particular."

Fred followed him somewhat aimlessly from the room, and out into the street. Then he called a cab and drove to his hotel.

"Call me for the midnight train, on the Pennsylvania Central;" said he to the clerk, and went to his room to pack his "traps," feeling that the world was very hollow, indeed, and that women were at the bottom of it all.

When Preston Mansfield, homeward bound, reached the waiting-room in Jersey City, he was surprised to see Fred Harmon strolling gloomily up and down the platform.

"Hello, old man! Chicago?" said Preston.

"No. Yes. I don't know," replied Fred, somewhat impatiently. "West, somewhere."

"Better drop in on us while you are cruising around. Small place. Not a great deal to see. Nothing to do; but I have to go home once in a while, and look after the folks—and do the leading citizen act. Drop in on us if you're our way. Take you hunting. Lots of game. By Jove, a porcupine waddled into our back yard the last time I was home!"

"No!" exclaimed Fred, deeply interested. He was a born hunter. Bringing down game gave him the keenest pleasure.

"Fact," said Preston. "Oh, we're primitive out our way. Most of our callers are bear or Indians. We like the bear best, they don't smell so bad. Wah! did you ever get on the lee side of an Indian in good and regular standing? No? Well, don't. Good by! this is my buggy;" and

Preston sprang upon the step of the sleeping coach just as the train pulled out. Fred, with his usual reticence and caution, concluded quietly to wait for the next train. And Maude never knew why the section across from hers was left vacant, for she had heard the conductor insist that it had been taken and paid for. But New York has attractions for even a broken-hearted young collegian, and it was more than a month before Fred stepped aboard a west-bound train.

It was five weeks later when Harvey Ball took his seat at the military dinner given in St. Louis in honor of the arrival of General Sherman. He did not know why it was, but he observed that a feeling of bitterness hovered about the head of the table, and that it was intensified the farther it travelled toward the foot.

"Isn't it shocking?" whispered the lady at his side.

"If you say so, yes, but what is it?" laughed young Ball.

The lady, somewhat mature in years, but with the complexion of an infant and the manner of a school girl, glared at him for a moment, but seemed to remember that he was only an ordinary civilian, and therefore not to be held accountable for an otherwise inexcusable depth of ignorance. Then she sighed and spoke across him to the lady on his right, the poise of whose head and neck boded war on the morrow.

"How dared she seat the senator's wife above Mrs. General C——?"

"Well," replied the irate matron; "that is not the worst of it. Did you notice that, as we came in, Mrs. Captain D—— preceded the colonel's wife?"

"Horrors, no! Then she was ahead of me! Well, of course, that settles it. Somebody has got to teach her her rank. Look at the bold creature talking to General Sherman. But he only tolerates her, as you can see. How on earth was such a mistake made about seating Mrs. General C——? I should think Mrs. Senator M—— would feel how dreadfully out of place she is and offer to change."

"Oh, my dear, you forget that she is not of the regular army! I really doubt if she has the least idea how outrageous it is. She probably feels quite at her ease. Just fancy!"

At this juncture the young captain opposite Harvey Ball, who had been his schoolfellow in years gone by, asked:—

"Do you keep up your interest in sociological studies, Ball? What did you think of Herbert Spencer's last? Don't you think he made a bad break in that unknowable, with a big U, argument?"

"Why, Captain, you don't read Spencer do you?" exclaimed the major's irate sister, in shocked surprise. "How dreadful! But it is a loose age and of course *your* church has no views on literature."

Harvey Ball was amused and curious. As a civil engineer he felt that it was his duty to take a survey of this new phase of mentality. He turned to her and said:—

“I shall have to confess to the same breach of decorum, I fear. I read Spencer at odd times too, and I never before knew that it was looked upon as an offence. Tell me about it. I am only a poor, uninstructed civilian. Is Herbert Spencer below the salt in regular army circles?” But the lady on his other side broke in:—

“How terrible! Do you know I heard two women admit reading him not long ago. I can’t call them ladies, of course; but—”

“Now don’t say too much, my dear,” said the major’s sister; “for I had heard so much talk about his writings—and of course our Church does not approve of reading such things—but feeling myself strong I made up my mind to read just one and see if it would undermine my faith, and really and truly, I think that the Church places too high an estimate upon the power of his writings. I read the book through carefully, and I do assure you that it did not disturb my faith in the least!”

“Oh!” gasped the other lady, “I should not care to try such a dangerous experiment. What a risk to run, my dear, what an awful risk to run!”

“Which one of his works did you read, may I ask?” inquired the young captain opposite, looking

straight at Harvey Ball who was struggling with a twinkle in his eye, and did not dare to look up.

"The Faerie Queene," she replied triumphantly.

The young captain looked suddenly at his plate, and Harvey Ball searched in vain for a napkin in his lap. Presently he said quite soberly: "You did well, indeed, madam, if you read that incendiary work all through and kept your faith in gods or man intact. I congratulate you. I assure you that it is the man's very worst production. I have sometimes thought that he laid himself out on that book."

"Did you confess after you read it, may I ask?" inquired the captain, dryly. "Yes, I did, and I went into retreat the next time two days longer than usual, too," she said. "Do not imagine, Captain, that it had power to corrupt me in any way whatever. I am a Mountbuford. No one of them ever slighted or left the true faith. Lydia, are you *sure* that Mrs. Captain D —— came in before me? Where is she now? You know I am a trifle near-sighted. Impossible! What does General Sherman mean?" And she of the family of incorruptible Mountbufords took Harvey Ball's arm and strode majestically out of the room—sad to relate, once more, *after* the captain's wife, who was chatting gaily with General Sherman, who had her on one arm and on the other Maude Stone, interested if not happy.

Maude's father stood near the door. She smiled at him as she passed, and then puckered her pretty brows into a playful frown. He knew that she wanted him to offer his arm to some lady; but looking over Harvey Ball's shoulder an hour later as they waltzed past, Maude saw her father still standing alone near the door, looking at her gloomily. He brightened when he saw that she was laughing. Harvey was rehearsing the precedence incident to her and just ended with the Faerie Queene *faux pas*.

"It isn't true, oh, it isn't true, Harvey," laughed Maude; "but it is a good story, all the same, and I shall tell it when I get home."

"I assure you it is true," said he. "I never did come so near laughing in a lady's face in all my life, never. That is the one, over there. That one, who looks like a drum major. I pity the captain's wife to-morrow."

"What a petty life!" said Maude, gravely, with her eyes on the pretty young woman, who had married the captain. "I should not care to marry an army man, and be forced into it, should you?"

Harvey smiled. "Well, no, I don't think of any army man just now that I would care to marry; but you—don't brass buttons and position in society attract all young ladies? They say so."

"Which position? Above or below the senator's wife? Oh, how comical!" And they strolled out

into the hall for fresh air and rest. But Harvey Ball looked no cooler, certainly, when the young captain found them a little later in a quiet corner of the great rotunda, and Maude was flurried and ready to leave. Harvey Ball had never tried to make love to her before. Did he know of her broken engagement? Poor Maude, poor Maude; she was glad enough that the captain came, and she asked him to go with her to find her father.

“Even she likes brass buttons,” thought young Ball, bitterly, as she disappeared on the arm of the captain, laughing as she had not laughed with him, he thought, since they were children together.

CHAPTER VI.

"O wad some Pow'r the giffle gie us
To see oursel's as others see us!"—*Burns.*

"It follows, that, until a man can be found who knows himself as his Maker knows him, or who sees himself as others see him, there must be at least six persons engaged in every dialogue between two."—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

"Don't be deceived by a facile exterior."—*Emerson.*

"I'll make it fifty more, to draw cards."

"Raise you the limit."

"You drew one card? Well, I'll see you. By Jove! if you didn't fill! H-e-l-l-o! There is Harvey Ball, going in the elevator. What is all this infernal noise in the hotel about, anyhow? What is up?" demanded Fred Harmon of the bell boy, who had left the door open, while depositing the wine on the table. Fred had arrived on the late train, and was finishing a little game with two commercial travellers whose acquaintance he had formed *en route*.

"Military ball, sah. Gen'l Sherman heah, sah. All de swells in de city, sah, an' fum de hole surrunden' kentry. Some fum In'nap'lis an' some fum Sain-Jo, an' all de small places aroun'. Dey's two registred fum Chicago, even;" said the bell boy, with unconscious local sarcasm.

A moment later Maude passed the open door on the arm of the young captain, closely followed by her father.

"Wh—e—w!" whistled Fred, and stepped back while he pocketed his winnings. Maude paused opposite to say good-night to the captain, and then Mr. Stone rang for the elevator.

"Had a good time, Maude?" asked her father, looking at her very hard. "Y-e-s," said Maude; "oh, yes, of course."

"You little prevaricator;" said Mr. Stone, in the most tenderly sympathetic tone, as he stooped to kiss her forehead just as a big tear ran down her cheek. He straightened up quickly and stepped in front of her as the elevator stopped.

"Rather rude man;" thought a lady inside, as she moved back for Maude; but the girl understood her father, and while his broad back had shielded her, she had regained her self-possession and the trace of the tear was gone.

When they reached the door of her little parlor she said, "Come in, Popsie," using the name she had invented for him in her childish years. "Come in. I'd rather talk to you than to anybody—you dear old thing!" and the girl pinched her father's arm and laid her cheek against his sleeve. "It isn't late, Popsie mine, and I'm not at all sleepy; come in for a while and make love to me. I'm lonesome;" she added, trying to laugh and look saucy.

"All right, you little scamp," said her father. "I'll come in; but from the looks of things down-

stairs I don't think that you're exactly suffering for anybody to make love to you ;" and he turned on the gas and dropped into a chair by the table. Maude had seated herself on the sofa. She began taking off her gloves and pulling their long soft wrinkles across her knees to smooth them. She did not reply or look up and her father went on :—

"But I don't blame 'em. You were the prettiest girl there and,"—Maude tried to look up and smile, but only succeeded in starting a tremulous little quiver which died on her lips. "And you're the best, too, you dear child," added Mr. Stone.

The girl flung herself down, buried her face in the pillow and began to sob convulsively. With that astonishment which seems to be a part of all large natured men, who think they understand the women nearest them, her father looked at her a moment, in half bewilderment, and then walked to the window and stared helplessly out across the street at the brilliantly lighted cigar store where young men and old were moving about and puffing at the weed. He stood there whistling softly and wondering what to do next, and how to make Maude believe that he did not know she was weeping about Fred Harmon.

There was a rap at the door ; but the noise of the street drowned it for the ears of the father, and Maude sobbed on unheeding. The door had not been securely closed and had pushed open a mere

crack ; then, suddenly, as the man who had rapped heard the sound of weeping within, he stepped quickly inside and with long strides reached the lounge and flung himself on his knees by the girl's side and said, in a choked and penitent voice :—

“Maude, Maude, darling, may I come back?” •

The girl sprang to her feet with wide, tear-stained eyes, into which there came a sudden rush of tenderness and joy.

“Fred! Fred! Fred!” she cried, and lifting his face in her hands she kissed his forehead, and he was forgiven; and being forgiven felt that he had acted sublimely.

Mr. Stone had turned from the window when he first heard the young man's voice, with a face white with anger. At sight of his daughter now, he groaned aloud, and set his lips so firm and close that they were but a purpling line in his unhappy face.

“Forgive me, Maude; it was not my fault. Truly, as I live, it was not. I want to tell you everything, everything, everything;” the young fellow said, still on his knees and with his arms about her waist. There were tears in his fine eyes, and he did not try to hide them. He felt that he was a hero, and he was sincerely moved by the contemplation of his own lofty conduct. Maude took her dainty lace handkerchief and wiped his eyes, with that reverent awe that women feel for

tears in men. Then she slipped the bit of lace, made holy by his tears, into the bosom of her gown and pressed it to her white and dimpled flesh with something like the ecstasy and yearning with which a mother holds her first-born child. Fred's tears! They were the first she had ever seen him shed, and they should be the last. Her love should make his splendid eyes the home of smiles and joy forever, and she kissed them both reverently, to consecrate the silent vow.

Fred had meant to tell her everything as he said; but when she took it for granted that he had followed her here for that single purpose, his well grounded habit of evasion and concealment decided him not to offer, just then, the explanation that was on his lips when the first rush of tenderness had swept over him, as he heard her sob and saw her lying there, wretched, he knew for him.

He had seen her father kiss her, at the elevator; he had seen how bravely she had tried to master herself. He had heard her father's roughly tender badinage. He had followed — and now? His instinct and training of caution and evasion were beginning to overwhelm him again. He would not tell her, just yet, the truth about why he had come West, and that his heart had conquered only when he saw her again and saw that she was not happy. She believed that he had simply followed her first to her home and then here. Why tell

her otherwise? And then, her father might not place so generous a construction on this sudden change of purpose, if he told the simple truth. Then, too, Fred knew that it was crude to be too baldly direct — and to be crude was to be a cad. No, he would not — he would omit that part of his confession, just now.

Mr. Stone stepped toward them. Fred had not before noticed him, and felt a distinct sense of relief that he had not been too precipitate about that confession. Taking Maude's hands from her lover's face, he drew her to a seat beside him and putting one arm about her said, in a voice that struck Fred as peculiarly unsympathetic:—

“Well, sir?”

It was like a cold plunge to Fred, and he hated cold plunges.

There are several ways of saying “Well sir”; but Mr. Stone's voice did not lend itself to any of the more attractive tones, and there was a distinctly chilly note in it just now, Fred thought. Then back in the shreds of ideas that crowded about in his brain the absurd one occurred to him that it was a very deep and unpromising “well” for this particular “sir” to clamber out of. The notion amused while it steadied him. He got upon his feet rather shamefacedly and took a chair by the table. He wished that Mr. Stone would say something else, or that Maude would give him a start.

It would be easy enough to explain it all to her; but her father — that was another thing, and Fred was beginning to feel about as uncomfortable as he had ever felt in his life. He bit his mustache and looked hard at the table and then at the floor.

“Well, sir?” repeated Mr. Stone; and in spite of his distress, Fred could not keep the ridiculous idea out of his mind that the well had been sunk several feet deeper; but he said very humbly, and without looking up: —

“There has been a terrible misunderstanding, and in one sense I was to blame; but I have come to — if — I — could — if I might talk to Maude alone I am sure — I feel certain that she would forgive me, and that I could make it all right with her.”

He had brightened perceptibly, as this idea had worked itself out in his mind. Maude made a movement to release herself from her father, so that he might go; but he did not move. She looked up and was surprised at the expression on his face. She did not wonder that Fred was awkward and confused — Fred who was always grace and ease itself. She began to speak, but her father checked her.

“No, sir,” said he, addressing Fred; “you will make your explanation to both of us. If you were the man you ought to be, you would have tried to make it first to me alone, instead of to her alone; but now that we are both here — go on.”

Fred flushed. This was a rather ungentle way to behave and talk. "The man he ought to be," indeed! And this uncultured Western man, who was not even a graduate of a "one-horse" Ohio College, had the presumption to say such a thing to Mr. Fred Harmon, late of Harvard, idol of Beacon Hill, highpriest of culture! But after all, how could he expect anything better? His mother had told him how it would be; but his overwhelming love for Maude would undoubtedly enable him to endure even this sort of thing; but why couldn't Maude have been born on the Back Bay, or at least, on Murray Hill? And why, oh, why need she have a hopeless cad for a father? Fred felt like a Christian martyr, and he even doubted whether Maude could fully comprehend the depth of sacrifice he was making for her dear sake. But he would force himself to bear it all, for she was to be the reward, and Maude was far more beautiful in this exquisite ball dress than he had ever before seen her. It was strange, Fred reflected, that these Western girls knew how to dress so well. So he told a very pretty story, indeed. He warmed to it as he went on, and did not fail to blame himself in this or that, with well chosen words, and as if the pain of it were great.

Did he tell the truth? Most assuredly.

The whole truth? Most assuredly not, nor the half of it, nor the quarter, nor the tenth part; but

the truth he did tell, as it behooves a gentleman, and Maude and her father listened with widely divergent emotions. She felt that the nobility of soul that enabled him to lay bare his whole life, and even seem to blame the mother he adored, was magnificent. It thrilled her into silence.

Her father's silence was pitched in a different mood. His keen eye saw, his shrewd sense compared, his experience and observation lent wings to an imagination already aroused by fear for his daughter's future.

When Fred finished and dropped his head on his arms, which were outstretched on the table in an abandon of self reproach and supplication, Mr. Stone spoke for the first time.

"Sit still, Maude. Wait. I have something to say first. When I am done, if you want to go to him and 'comfort' him, you may." He laid rather unpleasant stress on the word "comfort," Fred thought. It was one of Mr. Stone's vulgar habits to italicize his spoken words. People on the Back Bay did not do that. They spoke of the last murder, or even of a terrible calamity in their own families, with the same placid sweetness of inflection as if it were a stage presentation for their entertainment. Fred wondered vaguely how long it would take Maude to learn that art.

"But, my daughter, my darling, I am afraid that your blunt old father will hurt you a little. I have

heard him, now he must hear me; then you may take your choice between the two stories. He has told it his way. I will tell it mine."

Maude smiled up at her father. If that was all, she could wait; and Fred, too,—he could not object to that. She pressed the bit of lace that had touched her lover's tear-stained face, close to her bosom, and did not struggle again to free herself from her father's arm. Mr. Stone went on bluntly.

"You were born of a mother whose ambition for position for you has been the whole thought of her life. She has sacrificed everything for it, even herself. And you let her. You nursed it from her breast. Before you could walk, you understood that you must pretend to certain things, if you did not feel them, that you must evade other things, if they were not looked upon as good form, as you call it, that is, if they were not strictly conventional, the way the people acted whom you have been trained to copy."

Fred made a movement to speak; but Mr. Stone checked him.

"Wait till I'm done. I'm not going to say anything disrespectful of your mother. I have no doubt she is a very good woman, from her outlook. I don't blame her, and I don't blame you." Maude stroked her father's hand and began to brighten again. Fred cleared his throat and

looked more cheerful than he had since he entered the room. The sailing was not going to be so rough after all.

Mr. Stone began again very calmly: "I say that I do not blame your mother; but that does not change the result of the training on your character, young man. You have laughed, and told me, yourself, that when you had certain boyish desires to play with the grocer's son, you either had to pretend that you hadn't the desire, or else gratify it on the sly. Why? Not at all because he was a bad boy, and would teach you to lie, or steal, or be unkind, or a little imp, generally; but solely because his father sold dried apples and codfish. You might play with another boy all day, not because he was frank, and kind, and honest, but because his people went in a certain set. You learned, before you were ten years old, two lessons that show in everything you do or say, to-day. One was to evade all unpleasant facts in your own nature by covering them from the eyes of others, not at all by correcting the fault. And the other was to value people wholly by surface measures, and never by their real worth. Another thing you have learned: to demand or expect everything, and to return only so much as you see fit. You have no conception of reciprocity in anything. The world is your fish, and you bait your hook with a manufactured fly. Now, when Maude was ten years old, she judged her playmates

wholly by the way they behaved — by their truthfulness and kindness. If she wanted to play with the washer-woman's girl, no one objected in the least, after we were sure that the child was honest, and kind, and good. Maude liked her playmates for what they were. Who they were had nothing whatever to do with it. So you see that at that early age there was a basis of character formed in each of you that is totally unlike — and not only that, but wholly antagonistic."

Fred smiled across at Maude and she shook her head; but her father appeared not to notice either, and went on.

"As you grew up, — you have told me many things that show it, — all your valuations of character, acts, and people were made on this basis: 'Are they good form on the Back Bay?' Then there was another test you learned to make a little later on: 'Will it be found out? If it is kept secret, or found out, by the Back Bay *men* only, will it make any difference in my social standing?' Even after you loved my daughter, it never occurred to you to be troubled because you could not offer her as clean and pure and holy a life and love as she was giving you." At the word "holy," from Mr. Stone's lips, Fred looked up. He had no conception of the word apart from certain phrases of theological import, and he knew that Maude's father gave scant heed to these. Had he, at last,

caught this man in the act of juggling with words in regular conventional fashion?

"You have absolutely no comprehension of moral values apart from creeds, social requirements, or custom. You have no prejudices, as you call them, in favor of one line of action rather than another, unless it is laid down in the Blue Book, and warranted to wear an evening coat, or go to the Episcopal Church, in whose creed you have no more belief than I have, and yet you are willing to vow devotion to it, and profit by the result. In any other business in this world, that would be called obtaining money by false pretences."

Fred moved uneasily, and Maude said reproachfully: "Why, papa!"

"Wait," said Mr. Stone, "I am not through yet. I want to state the case fully, and in plain English. I said awhile ago that I do not blame you. Neither do I blame your mother who made you that way; but for all that, young man, I am compelled to say that the more I've thought of it lately, — and I've thought of very little else, you may be sure — the more I don't like the job she turned out. I can't have a great deal of confidence in a man whose character is all on the surface. I like a little foundation. I'd like a few prejudices in favor of the realities of life for their own sakes. I should not object, if you were an Episcopalian, mind you, or any other sort of a Christian, if you were honest in it; but I have no

use for the layman who holds his creed for revenue only; and for the clergyman who accepts a salary from honest believers for mystifying and explaining away all there is of real meaning in the plan of salvation, my contempt is simply unbounded." This was a new theory to Fred, and it struck him as worthy of some thought; but he smiled as he thought how this man of uncouth speech expressed what he had been taught to call "the higher criticism of progressive theology." Obtaining money by false pretences, indeed!

"I'd like to feel that the man who marries my daughter will keep clear of dishonest and dishonorable people — whether in or out of the pulpit — on some more important grounds than the sort of coat they wear, or the brand of their cigars. I'd like to go to sleep nights feeling confident that he wasn't thrashing her, not simply because it isn't good form, or might be found out. In short, I'd like my daughter to marry a man who is honorable and noble and true from the inside out and not from the outside in. I'd like him to be his own severest judge, and not do this or that to fit the opinions and dictates of somebody else, simply because they are the beliefs of somebody else who is fashionable. No man, sir, is fit to get married, no man has any right to ask a girl to believe in and rely on him, until he believes in and relies on himself. I don't want Maude to marry an echo, and more

than that, sir, she *shall not* until that echo has, at least, a true ring!"

He brought his fist down with a bang. Fred made a mental note of the expression, which he thought quite effective—from a purely artistic outlook. He was not at all touched by its bearing upon himself. Indeed, life was to him almost entirely a succession of mental gymnastics; but he was missing the next act,—Mr. Stone was still talking:—

"—and while the echo of a good man whose own life rings clear and true to himself, might not be so bad, by gad, the echo *of* an echo of a theological trimmer and a social shadow is more than I can stand, and more than I will have!"

He had grown excited as he talked, and now he sprang to his feet, and began pacing the floor, still keeping his arm about Maude. He almost carried her with him, and as she passed Fred her soft silk drapery caught his knees and roused him far more than her father's words had done. He had been vaguely conscious that a wonderful photograph was being taken; but he did not think that there were many features turned to the camera that were a discredit to himself, after all. At least, he comprehended that there were angles from which Maude might like the picture a good deal less if her father had only known it and had turned the light that way. As for himself, life was more or less given

over to a contest of wits, and he had not had his trained for nothing. Knock-down fists were one thing; but the dexterous use of foils was quite another, and Maude's father could not hope to cope with him there — and Maude was very beautiful; it was worth while to —

As if reading the thought before it was formed, Mr. Stone broke out again, as he turned to retrace his steps :—

“Do you know why you love Maude? Because she is beautiful.”

Fred smiled up at her with no sense of failure in his valuation. “Simply and solely because she is beautiful to look at. She pleases your artistic sense. The soul of the girl, her honor and truth, her mental and moral needs, her ideals and longings, are nothing to you, less than nothing; they are prejudices, to be got rid of.

“Her true ring on every subject means to you lack of training. You think when she is your wife that you will show her how uncouth it is to be natural, how vulgar to be real. No doubt you would, and the result would be a blasted, wretched, disappointed life for the poor child who, if she dropped her ideals and followed your lead would scorn herself and you at every step, or else she would learn to be as hollow, and vapid, and characterless as you and your conventional set are, and learn to blame her father and be ashamed of her mother for having made a true

woman of her, instead of a fictitious copy of somebody else."

Maude had taken his hand in hers, and she lifted it to her lips and kissed the great palm tenderly, and, with tears on her cheeks, laid her flushed face in his hand as she had done years ago to sleep, and said brokenly:—

"Father, please — please let Fred go now. I want to think. You have put words to — I have had thoughts, at times, — O, father, I am so tired to-night, won't you both go now, and — No, not together. Good-night, Fred," and she let him kiss her cheek as he passed.

When she heard the elevator door close behind him, she took her father's wretched face in her hands and tried to comfort him. "Dear old father," she said, "dear old father, go now. Good-night, don't be afraid you have hurt me, I can talk to you to-morrow; but not now, not now."

He gathered her up in his arms as he used to do and held her against his heaving breast. His voice was husky, and had lost all the harshness that vexed the ears of his would-be son-in-law.

"Little girl, I didn't want to hurt you; but — oh, it would break my heart, daughter, to see you deceived and unhappy. I thought it best to speak now."

"Yes, yes, father," she said, with her great eyes shining and intense. "Yes, yes; but go to bed

now — go. I must think. It is all so terrible. I must think, to-night.”

Down stairs the last strains of music were heard, as Mr. Stone closed the door of Maude’s room behind him, and the major was asking the young captain: “Where is that lovely girl I saw with you a while ago? Miss Stone, wasn’t her name? Where is she from? Oh, I see. She and her father and Ball were all your guests then. You came from Grand Rapids yourself, didn’t you? Well, I envy you. It lightens one’s heart only to see such a girl, and hear her laugh. How happy and bright she is! The days of youth are the days of light hearts, hey, captain?”

“Yes. Oh, of course,” replied the captain, somewhat abstractedly, “To be sure. I should say so decidedly. Quite a success — the ball. Brilliant affair. Good-night.”

As the captain turned to leave the rotunda, he met Fred.

“Beg pardon,” said that gentleman with a smile. “I was looking for two gentlemen. I am a bit short-sighted and I mistook you for one of them. But perhaps you will go with me, or at least put me on the right track;” and he asked for the most fashionable gilded house in the city, quite as simply as he inquired his way to the leading church two days later. Fred had no prejudices. He went to both. *He believed in sustaining all well-estab-*

lished institutions. He looked upon these two as quite essential in a Christian civilization, and regretted that our unformed American conditions did not, as yet, recognize that both should be attached to the State. He thought it was far better in the countries where the devotees of the one and the inmates of the other were required to take the sacrament at stated intervals in order to retain their status in the community.

“But no doubt America will come to it in due time;” thought he, “and one must not expect too much from so young a country as ours.”

CHAPTER VII.

"Surely, surely the only true knowledge of our fellowman is that which enables us to feel with him—which gives us a fine ear for the heart-pulses that are beating under the mere clothes of circumstance and opinion. Our subtlest analysis . . . must miss the essential truth, unless it be lit up by the love that sees in all forms of human thought . . . the life-and-death struggles of separate human beings."—*George Eliot.*

"How perilous, after all, is the state of man. It is the work of a life to build a great and splendid character. It is the work of a moment to destroy it utterly, from turret to foundation stone. How cruel hypocrisy is!"—*Robert G. Ingersoll.*

"*All phenomena are necessary.* No creature in the universe, in its circumstances and according to its given property, can act otherwise than as it does act."—*John Morley.*

When Preston Mansfield reached the little station known as the "depot" at his old home, he looked about to see if a carriage had been sent to meet him. Presently he saw a smiling face lean out of the family trap, as he called it, and in another instant he was sitting beside his cousin Nellie and had the reins in his hands.

He had not kissed her as he used to do, and Nellie had not asked why he did not, nor offered to kiss him as she would have done three years before; but they were unmistakably glad to see each other, and Preston looked happier than he had looked for a long time.

"How are the folks? How'd you happen to come alone, Nellie?" he asked all in a breath, and then regretted his last question; but she appeared not to hear it, although her color rose somewhat.

"They are all well, except Julie. She, poor child, seems half sick all the time. I think she needs a change. I wish she could go to New York with you next time, Preston."

"She can if you will go, too, Nellie;" he said, and then they both blushed furiously. He noticed, with a sinking at his heart, that she changed the subject immediately.

"Isn't that the doctor who used to live here, Pres., when we were children? The one you liked so much? I heard he was in town. I wonder if he has come back to live."

"I don't know," said Preston, answering the last question first. "Yes, it is the same old chap. I saw him in New York a while ago. He is a queer lot;" and he bowed somewhat moodily as he drove past, just as I was opening the door of my new office; for I had decided to establish myself again in this town after my return from France.

"How, 'queer'?" asked Nellie, bent on keeping the talk going; but the question seemed portentous to the young fellow, who was in no mood just then to recall the past nightmares of his life. The present was too perfect to mar with memories.

"Oh, I don't know," said he. "When I met him in New York a while back he did not speak of coming West. How long has he been here? What did he come for?"

"I don't know," said Nellie, "I only heard of his return the other day. I'm not sure I should have recognized him. Did his wife die that time? Oh, no, I believe it was her mother. But there is little Julie coming to meet us. Hop in, Julie. You couldn't wait for him to get home, could you?"

"Hello, old girl," said Preston, kissing her as she put her foot on the step. "I hear you're not well. What does this mean? Can't have that sort of thing, you know."

It might have been two weeks later when, as I was driving alone one day, I took it into my head to turn into the cemetery—a place I generally avoid, on the ground that I shall no doubt be obliged, later on, to pass quite enough time within its quiet precincts. The place had greatly changed in these last few years. Pretentious shafts had taken the place of simple slabs, and everywhere were evidences of the wealth that had come to many of those who in the not very distant past were fettered by poverty. I drew rein in front of a magnificent monument, a-top of which was an angel pointing heavenward, and on one side of the tablet I read: "Not dead, but gone before." On another side: "He giveth His beloved sleep;" and then—could my eyes deceive me?—the name of Joe Furgison!

In spite of myself I laughed aloud.

"I don't wonder you laugh, doctor;" said Preston Mansfield, coming up from the other side of the buggy. "Joe was shot by a woman in a row at the Chippy Dance House. He was buried from there; but the Furgisons' are rich now, and — oh, well, you know how those things go."

"Yes, I know;" said I, looking up at the angel; and I laughed again. Joe Furgison figuring as one of "His beloved" struck me as peculiarly droll.

"But get in, Preston, and drive around with me. If there is anything else as interesting as that, I don't want to miss it. Show it to me." Then with sudden compunction I added, "But what are you doing here? Perhaps you are in no mood for idle gossip."

"Oh, that's all right;" he replied without a tremor, and climbing into the buggy, he took the reins. "I'm just fixing up the old man's grave so it will look as ridiculous as Joe Furgison's. We are all alike — only in my case I have to do it to comfort mother and the girls. Of course they believe in it and in him, and God knows I wish I did; but every man in this town feels about father's tombstone just as you and I do about that angel business on Furgison's. If there's anything at all in religion, it's an infernal outrage for the preachers to help this sort of thing along as they do; for there isn't one in this town who doesn't know all about it.

And if there isn't anything in religion — well — in either case what do you think of the morals of it, from your outlook ? ”

“Your father had many good characteristics, Preston ; ” said I, evasively, “and it really seems— Do you think you are quite fair to him ? ”

He turned upon me almost savagely.

“I should think you would be about the last man to ask that question, doctor. Fair to him ! Was he fair to me ? Look what he has made of me —look ! I don't know what your religious notions are, doctor ; but at least I do know that you didn't agree with him in his moral training of me. Well, I don't, either. He has ruined my whole life, deliberately.”

I made a movement of protest, but he went on bitterly :—

“You know that it was deliberate ; for you gave him a pretty severe object lesson with Alice. Well, he didn't take it. I wish to God he had, for I really had no tendency to be a—to go to the devil. Strange to say, I hadn't inherited a drop of that kind of blood, and I believe that I might have grown up so that I could look any decent woman in the face without remembering that if I married her I would have to lie to her every hour of my life as long as we both lived. I hate to lie. I always did. It gives me a sense of disgust and physical discomfort. It may be silly ; but it is a fact, and

one reason I prefer to stay away from home is that every act, every word, every look of mine has to be a lie. Mother and my sisters and — and the rest — believe in me. I know what they think of other fellows who are not so bad as I am, not half so bad as father was. Well, how do I keep their respect and confidence? How did he? By lying. Now, do you know, doctor, I've got a prejudice, as Harmon says, against a marriage that isn't equal; that is built upon false pretences on one side and ignorance on the other; that depends for future happiness wholly on the continued and successful mendacity of one party to the contract. I don't know where I ever got such an idiotic prejudice; but I seem to have been born with it, and he—damn him!" said the young fellow, with his face livid and his lips trembling as he pointed to the grave of his father, — "he, damn him! has robbed me of myself!"

"Preston, Preston!" said I, shocked and surprised beyond words to express, "give me the reins again. Let us drive on. This is no place for you just now."

"Just now!" he exclaimed bitterly, still holding the reins. "Do you suppose this feeling is new to me? I have cursed him with every breath I have drawn, ever since I knew what love is. If I had been differently made I suppose I wouldn't care; but — I believe I was made to be an honest

man, doctor, and now,—look at me ! I know there are at least two children in New York that belong to me. I know that their mother is as good — better than I am — for all she makes her living on the street now. I know that if any good girl in all this world could see my whole life laid out bare and true — just as it is, and has been — I know she would as soon marry a leper. Whose fault is it? His! Well, what is to be done? I asked Harmon that question the last night we spent together—you remember Fred Harmon of Boston? — ‘Don’t tell her,’ said he. ‘Women don’t understand such things, anyhow. Then, if she ever finds it out—which isn’t likely—it will be easy enough to confess some little part of it and plead for mercy. Women like to be merciful. It is their forte.’ Well, now, that satisfied Harmon. He would feel no sense of degradation in living on the benefits of deception. It doesn’t hurt him in the least to pretend and lie to the girl he says he loves. Talk about striking a woman! He’d call a man pretty low down who would do that—if he used his fists. Men generally would. They call it cowardly—taking advantage of her weakness and of his strength. Well, suppose we just leave the fists out, what then? Does he any the less take advantage of her? Doesn’t he take it in a thousand ways where she has no defence, whatever, not even that of the police court, which she would have in the other case?

“No, doctor, I don’t want to marry any woman, and know that I’ve got to take advantage of her. I might be willing to steal from, or lie to, or systematically deceive a woman I did *not* love; but — ” He sprang out of the buggy and threw the lines to me. Five feet away stood the splendid granite shaft he had erected to the memory of his father. He lifted his arm, and clinching his fist shook it first at the monument, and then at the sod beneath, and from between set teeth said with a ferocity and intensity terrible to witness: —

“Damn him! damn him! damn him! He has robbed me of myself!”

A moment later I heard the sound of weeping, and of childish voices engaged in some sad argument.

“Get back into the buggy, Preston,” I said. “Some one else is here and there are children crying.”

But the young fellow stepped across the path, and looked over a box-wood hedge from behind which the voices came. I waited in silence, surprised that he would listen. In a moment he turned and beckoned to me. I went to him noiselessly. Lying behind the hedge, flat on his back, with hands crossed on his breast and eyes closed, was a small boy, and by his side a smaller one, weeping and pleading.

“Oh-o-o-o, don’t die, Willie, don’t die! Open your eyes! Oh-o-o-o, please, please, please don’t die! Oh-o-o-o wah-o-o!”

The corpse revived sufficiently to talk, but the eyes remained closed and the hands clasped.

"I must. I have to, ah! ahou-o-oh!" said he mournfully, and in utter hopelessness. He closed his lips again, albeit in his vain effort to hold his breath he puffed both cheeks out in a manner most unseemly in one about to pass the golden gates, whose body was even at that moment disposed for the journey.

"Oh-o-o! ohou-o-o-o-o wh-o-o-o!" sobbed the smaller boy, throwing himself across the body of the would-be suicide whose superfluous breath refusing to be held under such trying conditions, burst from his lips explosively, letting the inflated cheeks down with a sudden collapse.

"Uh-m-m-wah!" he groaned, pushing the smaller one off, and carefully disposing his limbs again, meanwhile keeping an eye on his toes to be sure that they pointed up in proper style.

"Uh-o-o-m-m-m, oh-o-o! I must, I must! Don't bother me. I've got to die, oh-o-o, me!" His voice was very doleful, indeed, and his whole appearance was indicative of the utmost dejection.

I glanced at Preston Mansfield. His face was still very pale; but a sense of the absurd twinkled in his eyes, and held his attention in spite of the recent storm within his own breast. Meantime the smaller boy wept on and pleaded with his brother to reconsider his ill-advised resolution prematurely

to withdraw from the joys and sorrows of this life. He begged to know why he was tired of the world. At last the six-year-old sat up and explained his case.

"Oh-o-o-o, dear, oh dear! I can't live. I've got to die, I'm so ashamed! I didn't have but four cents, and I tried to buy a five-cent pistol with it — oh-oh-o-o!" He threw himself face down on the sod, unmindful for the moment which way his toes should point. From within encircling arms, his voice piped out again: —

"He thought I had another cent, oh-oh-o-o! I wouldn't mind it if he hadn't known me. But he did, oh-oh-o-o-o! And I had to tell him I didn't have only four cents, oh-o-o! And he said, I guess you'd better run home, Willie White, and not try any of your tricks on me,' oh-o-o!"

Overcome with shame, he once more stretched himself out, and folding his hands on his breast, essayed to hold his breath until death should relieve him of his sorrow and disgrace, and the three-year-old beside him began anew his pleadings that his unfortunate brother try to start in life again, and not allow himself to be crushed by his present calamities.

I glanced at Preston, and then pitched a cent over the hedge. It fell on the face of the recumbent figure. Both children looked devoutly up to heaven, said "Now I lay me," and scudded out of

the enclosure to buy the coveted pistol and re-establish their blasted reputations.

"I suppose that little devil was as unhappy as any of us, while it lasted," said Preston, as we got into the buggy.

"No doubt, no doubt," I replied; "and is it not a good thing, after all, that we can't hold our breath long enough to stop it altogether, whenever we take the notion? If we could, there wouldn't be people enough left to beg the others not to die."

"Do you mean that everybody is at times so unhappy, doctor?" he inquired, presently.

"Ask them," said I, smiling. There was a long pause. I drove rapidly up to the gate of his home. As he took my hand to say good-by, he held it a moment, and then said, as he dropped it suddenly, "Are you?"

Before I had time to reply, little Julie ran out and clasping her brother about both legs with her short fat arms tried to lift him from his feet. Before he regained his equilibrium I drove away, asking myself, "Am I?"

CHAPTER VIII.

"Perfect scheming demands omniscience."—*George Eliot.*

"Of course the young lady had beaux by the score,
All that she wanted,—what girl could ask more?
Lovers that sighed, and lovers that swore,
Lovers that danced, and lovers that played,
Men of profession, of leisure, and trade."—*Bret Harte.*

"There was an idea in the olden time—and it is not yet dead—that whoever was educated ought not to work; that he should use his head and not his hands. Graduates were ashamed to be found engaged in manual labor in ploughing fields, in sowing or in gathering grain. To this manly kind of independence they preferred the garret and the precarious existence of an unappreciated poet, borrowing their money from their friends, and their ideas from the dead. The educated regarded the useful as degrading—they were willing to stain their souls to keep their hands white."—*Robert G. Ingersoll.*

Fred Harmon's mother believed that that gifted young gentleman was travelling in the West with an eye single to two things: first, to free himself, and keep his whereabouts a secret from a certain designing girl and her family who looked upon him as their prey, and, secondarily, to "look about" as a prelude to a final settlement in life. Incidentally he would visit several people, more or less desirable and useful to know. She had not given up the hope that after he had had his fling, he would return and study theology and take orders; but that part could wait. Meantime she economized and planned and figured in all conceivable ways to make both ends meet and at the same

time supply him with money to make a creditable appearance. Once or twice he had protested, feebly.

"I have an offer to go into business with Barlow," he wrote. "You will remember he was a senior when I was a soph. . . . He is, as he expresses it, 'in leather,' here in Chicago. I don't see how it is possible to keep this up, sail as near shore as you and father may. You must need all the little money you have, and father is too old to hope to continue in practice many years. I am half inclined to accept Barlow's offer. It would give me an immediate income, and leather, you know, is looked upon as respectable, even in Boston."

Then followed a description of a social call he had made with Barlow the night before. The reply came promptly.

"My son, do not think of such a thing as committing yourself to Mr. Barlow, or to anyone, in any business, whatever. As you say, leather is an exception, here; but — oh, my son! I so depend upon you to distinguish yourself, and how could you do that in leather? Do not give business a thought. Not one. I cannot have you prostitute your splendid abilities and training to such base uses. . . . Your description of your call amused me greatly. What uncouth people one does meet in those border places! He was governor, or judge, or something from Illinois once, I think. Imagine it! But

keep the full account to amuse me when you come home. One cannot be too careful what one writes, since the awful Carlyle revelations. Even family letters take on an added horror. . . . And now, my son, my gifted boy, have a good time. Visit where you think it is judicious; but remember, dear, not to accept many favors from anyone who is likely to come here often. By the way, dearie, Pauline Tyler of Madison Avenue, New York, niece of Mrs. S——, you know, is visiting in Chicago; I enclose her address. Call upon her. You know she is recently back from abroad and is, — never forget, son, *who* she is — her grandmother was a Presidio. Be attentive. Your mother is thankful — oh, so thankful to God, on her knees, that you are free again from those terribly vulgar people. Dear Pauline has not been in Boston much of late, but she is never vulgar. Her mother was a well born gentlewoman, and although her father was a New Yorker, Pauline has had many Boston advantages.”

By all of which it will be seen that Mr. Fred Harmon, late of Harvard, had so far improved upon his early training as to keep a few things even from his mother. He did not tell her of his meeting in St. Louis with Maude and her father — any more than he had told Maude that he had dressed her father up in a new name when last he wrote to his mother, and accentuated his attributes

so as to make it a very funny sketch indeed of a Western man. He had made this gentleman use bad English and angle openly for the attentions of certain irresistible young college men who had failed to pay court to his numerous buxom daughters, several of whom stood near the door and exclaimed "La, me!" in very loud tones to everything these same irresistible young swells had said, as they stood with their legs very wide apart, at approved Harvard angle, and paralyzed the entire company by their exquisite manners.

But then, Fred Harmon looked upon letter writing as one form of fiction, and he meant to be a master in fiction yet, whether he took holy orders or not. The night after Fred received his mother's letter, he, as became a dutiful son, called upon Miss Pauline Tyler at the handsome residence of her uncle on Michigan Avenue. He found that young lady much annoyed and so tremulously disturbed and vexed as to be almost on the verge of tears. She was delighted to see some one who could appreciate her emotions. Of course no one in Chicago could be expected to do so. Her uncle was kind and good, but — "it can hardly be necessary, Mr. Harmon, for me to remind you that this is *not* Boston, nor even New York, and my unfortunate uncle has lived here for so many years that he has grown to be like — ah, well, you can

fancy my distress, in my utter mental and social isolation."

"What can it be, Miss Tyler? If I may be permitted to ask — if you are willing to confide in me. I trust that I do not need to assure you that I shall be only too happy to serve you. My mother would be delighted to know that I could be of even trifling use to you in any way, and —"

"Oh, there is nothing one can do so far as I see," she sighed. "That is the difficulty. That is one reason it is so painful to me, for you must know how painful, how shocking, such reports necessarily are to a young girl, Mr. Harmon."

Fred had heard no reports at all, and was, therefore, in a position, as he believed, to comfort her. He told her she must be distressing herself needlessly, for he had not been away from Boston very long; he had stopped in New York, and in several cities this side, and he assured her that no report of any kind whatever had reached him, although he had met old college fellows in each place, and had had frequent interchange of communication with friends in Boston, all the while. But she could not be comforted. She was indignant, lofty, humiliated, crushed, or defiant by turns.

"And to think," she exclaimed, "just to think, that it should of all persons, be I, who am always so careful not to give the least clue, or hint, or cause for such gossip — oh, it is cruel!" And she

held her feather fan up between them, until a lace handkerchief found its way to her eyes, and she could venture to take both down and go on again.

“Marry Count Cioli, indeed! I never dreamed of such a thing. Why, he was never with me once, without mamma being present, and he was only ordinarily attentive to me, so far as I noticed. Of course I did know toward the last that some of those Americans (you know there are always Americans that one does not remember over there) — I did know that they noticed his attentions to me; but —”

“If that is all, Miss Tyler, I do not see that you need be troubled; and beside, if you wish it, I shall take it upon myself to deny the rumor upon all sides.” She was overcome with gratitude.

“Oh, if you would! I — I do not know how to thank you and — your mother — she knows everybody. I wonder if —”

“Certainly,” said Fred, “just let me know what you want denied, and I am sure it can be done quite effectively.”

“But you see, I do not want to deny anything myself,” she pouted. “It would look — people might say —”

“Do not distress yourself,” began Fred, “I” — But she broke in: “If it were only the Count — but — you know all that talk — about Prince Walsag —

was the cruellest, most dreadful gossip. There was really no ground for it at all. The day he had us dine at his castle he was more or less—he was polite, of course; but—” She tossed her head, and moved her hands quite impatiently. Fred looked at her sympathetically, but said nothing. Presently she began again:—

“I do not like to put all this on you; but I do wish you would deny about Judge Vandergraft, too. We were not betrothed before I went abroad and that was *not* the reason I went. It must annoy the Judge dreadfully, all this talk, and—”

Fred had heard no talk whatever about any one of these three interesting cases; but he began to think that here was really a much sought after young woman—and the color of her hair was pretty. He took up a book and turned the leaves. Presently he said: “It must annoy you greatly; but why be so beautiful? Why have such divine hair? The wages of sin is death, they say, but no more truly than that the wages of such glorious beauty as yours is—well, let us say—distracted lovers in all lands, and more or less talk. But I have not heard a word of it, not a line, not a letter,” he added, with less sophistication than might have been expected. This last was due to Fred’s youth, and Fred was young, although he tried to think that his experiences covered vast areas of things not down in books.

"You really haven't?" she exclaimed. Then she took a new tack. "Ah, but I know you have. Your kind heart and courteous instincts want to save my feelings. I understand. I know you have heard; and that I refused Governor Talbor, too. Absurd! He—but why go into that old story, or the one about Major Ben Gifford. Why, I only met *him* three or four times and—love at first sight is not fashionable in these days, is it, Mr. Harmon?"

The question surprised Fred, who was trying to keep count of her lovers—that is of the ones she wished to have him say something or other about in connection with her. He evaded her question somewhat dextrously, therefore, and smilingly said:—

"I believe you are going to have to give me a list, if you keep on. Write out their names and titles. I'll forget half of them, and then my denial of your engagement will not do the least good, will it? People will just say it is one of the others," and the young fellow laughed outright: but Miss Pauline took it quite seriously.

"Take this," she said, handing him an ivory tablet.

"Count Cioli." Fred wrote the name. "Prince Walsag, Judge Vandergraft, Governor Talbor, Major Gifford—Have you got Major Gifford?" she asked, still quite seriously, and looked steadily

into the fire as if trying to collect farther evidence. Then suddenly, as Fred was folding up the tablet:

“Oh, yes, I forgot about that horrid old affair that nearly broke my heart last year. They actually coupled my name with Senator Baldy. Just fancy! Why he only—but—no matter about details. Put him down and deny that I am engaged to any of them. And please have your mother say how distressed I am by such reports. She might say that I came West to get rid of—but—she will know how, in her dainty way, to say just the right thing in the right place without a hint from me.”

Fred thanked her for the compliment to his mother and rose to go.

“But you have told me nothing about yourself,” she said. “Don’t go, or—What am I saying? I—” and she blushed and turned half away.

Fred promised to call again very soon, and withdrew. Once in the street he smiled and bit his mustache.

“Whew!” “‘Considerable train load,’ as the brakeman said yesterday. But mother will believe every word of it so long as it is dear Pauline, and she will—oh, well, the Count and the Prince and the Judge and the Governor and all the rest will find themselves famous, soon, because they are *not* going to be married to Miss Pauline Tyler;” and he laughed again.

As he turned off the gas that night, after writing a long letter to his mother, he chuckled to himself in the darkness, and said: "And to think that I, Fred Harmon, late of Boston, and of the D. K. E. Club, actually swallowed it till she got to the Major! Frederick, my boy, you have one or more eye-teeth to cut yet; and 'dear Pauline,' do learn to be more artistic and less comprehensive, as it were, in your scope;" and the young scamp rolled over and slept as peacefully as a babe, and with as comfortable an estimate of himself.

CHAPTER IX.

His soul to his soul is a law, and his mind is a light to his mind.
The seal of his knowledge is sure, the truth and his spirit are wed;
Men perish, but man shall endure; lives die, but the life is not dead.
He hath sight of the secrets of season, the roots of the years and
the fruits;
His soul is at one with the reason of things that is sap to the roots.

He can hear in their changes a sound as the conscience of consonant
spheres;

He can see through the years flowing round him the law lying under
the years.

Who are ye that would bind him with curses and blind him with
vapor of prayer?

Your might is as night that disperses when light is alive in the air."

Swinburne.

"My dear father," — wrote Harvey Ball from St. Louis, some weeks after the military dinner, "when you ask me again to help decide on a profession for Albert, or at least on the college best suited to develop him in a direction fitted to his ability and tastes, I find myself at a loss. I do not want to seem to lack interest. You will know it is not that, and I am always glad to relieve you and mother, if I can, of uncertainty and from perplexing questions; but the choice of a life's training or profession is a serious thing. You and mother did so well by me, that I do not see how I could do otherwise than say that Albert is in the best hands in the world, and I am tempted to let it go at that. But I know how earnest you are in wanting my

opinion, and that I have no right to evade your need of me as you grow older, by paying you compliments however well deserved — I know father.

“You seemed surprised that I wrote you so vigorously a while ago against West Point, when Al. took the soldiering craze; and now that he is nearly through his preparatory work, and thinking about what next, you write me to cast a vote again, and you say that his notion now is Theology. I cast it against his choosing that, for the same reason that I objected to the Army.

They are both dying professions.

I do not mean to indicate that I think either one will be dead in my time, or in his; but they are on the down grade, looked at from a sociological point of view. Training men for a life of battle — to learn how to kill each other fastest and easiest — is surely of the past.

“Of course there is the other side,— defence. But after all, you see, the profession is that of warfare — of fighting. Well, the days of warfare, let us hope, are numbered. Did you ever stop to think what an absurd contradiction of terms is the expression “civilized warfare?” Can you put two words together that are more antagonistic? Just in proportion as we are civilized, we will *not* fight,— and we are steadily approaching civilization. That is why I said to Albert, ‘Do not be a professional

soldier. A soldier is always a relic of barbarism. Useful he may be, yet; necessary he is, at times; but still he is a relic of barbarism. Don't join a dying profession. Take one on the up grade. Take one that you will have to hurry to keep up with. Don't choose one that you must needs loiter behind, and hold back, if you stay on speaking terms with it. Select as a life's work something that is of the present and the future; don't nail your flag to a sinking ship.' That is what I said to him about the Army.

"Now as to his more recent notion, — Theology. Here are exactly the same objections. War and Theology belong to the same age. They belong to the infancy of the race. The former is civilized by progress to the extent of gatling guns and torpedo boats; the latter to the verge of sealing hell over, and reading the vicarious atonement and original sin out of good society. But in the nature of things, Theology *must* get its light from the past. It is based on a revelation long since closed. It cannot say, 'We expect to revise this until it fits our needs,' — as in law, or medicine, or journalism. The religious law — revelation — is sealed. A clergyman who is honest, — and let us hope Albert will be that, no matter what he undertakes, — must go to the records of the dead past for his light, his inspiration, his guidance. The final appeal of any Orthodox clergyman *must* be the Bible. He cannot

doubt the justice of Jehovah, and be an Orthodox clergyman. He cannot question the goodness of the Jewish God, and be true to his ordination vows. He cannot throw over what may shock or pain him in the New Testament; he cannot maintain his mental integrity in discussing the miracles, and be an honorable minister. In short, father, if Albert ever outgrows the creed of a dead age, he will either have to stifle his manhood and his mental integrity, or he will have to throw over his profession, — one or the other. Every one knows how hard this last is for a minister to do. It means a loss, a struggle, a painful break with many years of his life, with many loved and loving friends, and — often it means a vast deal more than that to a man so unhappily placed.

“This is true in no other profession. He could take up Law, and if for any reason whatever his maturer judgment should take issue with his youthful choice, he could change without suffering contumely and without moral or social violence, and the training he had received would not unfit him for other things, whereas a theological training does — must. What I say of Law is true of Medicine, or Journalism. All these are professions of the present and the future. They all look brightly forward. They acknowledge no final appeal. They know no wall back or in front of which they may not go. Faults they have. They say so, and every

man is at liberty to try to offer a better way, a newer method, a truer system. These I say, are professions of the future. They have not crystalized. They acknowledge their need and intention to learn more, to get nearer to the truth as knowledge widens. A thousand years hence, they will be stronger, better, firmer than they are to-day. A thousand years hence War and Theology will be dead.

“Talk about doing good; look at Law. Where has a man a better chance to serve his fellow-men? If his idea is to serve them singly, so to speak, he has in his practice ample opportunity. He can take the honest side. He can defend the weak. He can throw his energies and influence on the side of the honest administration of just laws. Or, if he seeks a wider field, he can work to get better laws enacted, and bad ones repealed. He can discuss their defects with legislators and judges; call attention to needed revisions; in short, in a hundred ways he can make this world better for his having lived in it. He can leave his mark of progress on the age. He can help push the car along.

“Or if he choose Medicine, what field could be broader, what opportunity greater, what inspiration grander, than to relieve those who suffer? To help them by all the methods known to-day, with always an eye fixed on a better way, a newer discovery; with always an ear open to catch the first sound of hope

for the crippled, maimed, heredity-cursed creatures all about him?

“Why, father, while people *talk* so much of the clergy doing good to their fellows, living for them and to save them, the honorable, progressive physician is actually, quietly doing it. If there is a heaven, and crippled souls go there, surely, surely, there will be a Great Physician able to heal them — if He made them.

“It is *here* that sorrow, suffering, and pain need looking after. Man’s highest duty is here. Do you know it is always an absurd idea to me that people who really believe in a personal God — and don’t simply pretend to — seem to think that the Almighty made a mistake in locating them? He put them *here*. It seems to me that is a pretty strong hint that right here is the place where their energies are needed. If He had wanted them to look after some other world, don’t you think He would have put them nearer their post of duty? But it is so much easier to attitudinize and pose for some far-off place and time than it is to take up the duties that are plain, and common, and tedious, right here and now. In short, father, it seems to me, that if a man is a good healer of bodies, he is in a far nobler business than if he is a talker about souls.

“Now I have come to Journalism, and, to be quite frank, I think it is the greatest opening of them all,

for ability and for progressive and far-reaching practical good. The field for all these is simply immeasurable. For stimulating and rewarding the weak and worthy, for succoring the helpless, for defending the oppressed, for hunting down crime, for restoring the lost, for giving credit to the virtuous and blame to the vile, its opportunities are boundless.

"The Press is the guardian of free speech, that first and most important of all requisites of a true manhood and a real civilization. In all these and in a thousand other ways, Journalism is the best field for the best energies of good men. And in the main, the present tendency of the Press, aside from politics, is upward and forward, and light is ahead. A fearless Press is the hope of this nation. No people can be free without it, and no other agent on earth is so dreaded by wrong and vice. What wrong-doer fears the Pulpit? *All* wrong-doers fear a fearless Press.

"If Albert would be a progressive man, there is no better, broader, surer way than this. If he would be an inspiration to the weak, a guide and guard, a comforter, a friend, where could he show it as here? How find such scope for his energies, or so large an audience?

"Or if he means to be a scholar only, a literary man, to devote his life to the artistic rather than to the progressive side of the profession — still

here is a field which has its equal nowhere else, in the matter of opportunity; and, if he ever should want to leave it, no harm is done. A kind good-by is given, and he takes his way unmolested, and with a training of incomparable value in any other walk of life.

“No, father, do not let him commit himself, in his youth, to any calling which will bully him if he changes his mind, and hound him if he makes his changes known.

“And as to West Point training, as I told you, I have no doubt that it is good, as purely arbitrary training, but unless he means to stay, I should not advise him to go into the Army; and I do not believe that Albert would ever be satisfied to be a professional fighter. If not, then, at the end of five years, he is adrift again with no practical experience and five good years gone. How strange it is that almost every boy thinks first of these two professions,—War and Theology, twins we have inherited from the ignorance and brutality of the past! These two who were born of the same parentage and are destined to sleep in the same grave! Of the two, a soldier; but of the two — neither. That is my vote.

“Now, father, this is a long letter, and there is no room for anything else; but I shall be home again soon and we can talk all the other things over. Kiss the blessed mother for me, and give yourself a hug.

Good-by. Remember me cordially to the Stones. Always tell me about them, — *all* of them. — Harvey."

When Harvey's father read this letter to his wife, they decided to go over and read it to Mr. Stone and take him into their counsel, as had been their habit for years, in matters of moment.

"What do you think of that letter, John?" asked Mr. Ball, abruptly, when they were comfortably seated in the library of their neighbor. "It is from Harvey, and it has a good deal in it that makes mother feel uneasy; and I can't say that I like it myself."

Maude looked up surprised, and her father started perceptibly. The girl was pale, and unlike her old bright self.

"Maudie, I did not know you had been sick, child," said Mrs. Ball, in a sweet motherly way. "Come over here and tell me about it. I declare you look right bad. If I had known, I would have brought some of that calf's-foot jelly you are so fond of. Dear me, how you and Harvey used to eat that jelly! I never could make enough; but this time Harvey has been away, and you have not been very neighborly since you went East last year."

Maude brought a hassock to Mrs. Ball's side and sat down, laughing a little. She knew what the last sentence meant.

“Now don’t suppose I learned any new tricks in the East, Auntie Ball. If I had I should not have tried to utilize them here — certainly not with you ;” and the girl stroked the old hand as she had done hundreds of times before, and ended with a little loving pinch at one finger.

Maude could not remember when Mrs. Ball had not petted her, and exchanged household recipes with her mother. “Uncle Ball,” as she had always called Harvey’s father, had carried her on his shoulder many a time when Albert had objected, with more vigor than gallantry, to the usurpation of his prerogative by this small thing in petticoats. Albert wore something very like petticoats himself in those days ; but he knew that they were a little different from hers and that it would not be a great while until his would develop into those wonderfully superior garments worn by his brother Harvey. His emancipation, therefore, was to be only a question of time, while hers — well, her clothes would only grow larger, not different. And this small philosopher, with eyes fixed on his big brother, and heart set on trousers, swelled with pride, and he consoled himself, even if his father did take delight in perching Maude Stone on his broad shoulders, letting her pick peaches from the tree, away up nearly in the clouds. She wasn’t going to have trousers by and by, any how. Those days seemed very far away

now to Maude; but not so far to "Auntie Ball" and "Uncle."

"Here, Maude," said her father, handing her the letter, quite as a matter of course, "I haven't my glasses. You read it aloud to us all. Anything Harvey has to say interests you and mother."

But a new feeling had begun to assert itself in Maude. She was not so sure about reading the letter. Harvey Ball had not written it with that expectation, and since the night of the military dinner in St. Louis, Maude had begun to feel that Harvey might object to having her read his home letters. She hesitated.

"Yes, yes, child, read it;" said Mr. Ball; "you always could read his outrageous handwriting better than anyone else. I declare I never saw such pothooks. Why, in my time, if a young man hadn't been able to write better than that before he left the log schoolhouse, he would have been kept in and perhaps flogged every night of his life. Now look at that," said he, opening the letter; "just look at that word there. I'd never have made it out only by the sense, and that is a pretty uncertain way to read letters, when you do not know what sense they intend to convey. Now I called that word 'practice' when I read it; but it looks a great deal more like 'panics.' Now, where is the 't,' I should like to know? Good deal more like

an 'n.'" Maude looked over his shoulder and laughed.

"Oh, uncle, there is the cross; see?"

"Where? Where? Away over there? Well, what in the name of goodness does an 'h' in the next word want with a cross? Go 'way, child, don't try to defend Harvey's writing, even if it is the same style as your own. You and Harvey always were two of a kind, though;" and the old man laughed and pinched Maude's cheek, which may have accounted for the sudden flush that came into it. "Now, father," said Mrs. Ball, reproachfully, "don't abuse the boy's handwriting. If that is the only thing that he does wrong, we ought to be able to stand it;" and the good, anxious soul sighed heavily. Mr. Stone noticed that Maude looked up, startled by this new note of anxiety in the voice of Harvey's mother, and that she began to re-fold the letter that had been left in her hand.

"Well," said he, stretching his legs out under the table and ramming his hands into the depths of his pockets; "well, if there ever was a boy that hadn't anything wrong with him *but* his handwriting, that boy is Harvey Ball. I'd be satisfied with him if he was my son, Aunt Martha, I can tell you that. He is one in a thousand. I —"

"Wait till you read that letter, John," sighed Harvey's mother. "I don't know what to think.

Father says it will be all right; but — well we never were very particular about sending him to Sunday-school, and maybe it is our fault. But it certainly *is* a queer letter. I think you will say so yourself, John, and I'm not so sure that you will want Maudie to read it, after all. Dear, dear, just to think that I should ever say that about one of Harvey's letters;" and the perplexed mother shook her head and looked at her husband.

"Nonsense," said that gentleman, forgetting for the moment his own position in the matter. "Stuff and nonsense. Mebby we can't agree with him — and he knew it when he wrote it, like as not — but he knew that we asked for his honest opinion, and he gave it. He doesn't make any explanations or apologies to us, either, for writing as he does. He seems to take it for granted that what we wanted to know was what he really did think — and not what we would expect him to think, necessarily. I take it as a great compliment that he does not feel called upon to apologize since he thinks that way; but what troubles me is that he seems to be so settled in it, that he talks as if it was self-evident, and not open to question even."

"Well, why should a man apologize for telling the truth — for giving his honest opinions?" asked John Stone, combatively.

"That's what I always told Harvey," broke in that gentleman's father, apparently on both sides of

the question. "Say what you think, my boy, I'd tell him; and it don't make a mite of difference if it isn't the way I think. Why, before he was knee-high to a grasshopper we took different sides in politics. Gad, it did me good to hear the little imp argue! Don't you remember, mother, that time he got the best of me about the Chinese question?" And the old gentleman slapped his leg and laughed heartily at the recollection, albeit with an unaccustomed note of uneasiness. "Read it, Maude, read it," he added. "I guess you don't want to force Harvey to think your way, or else hide what he does think, hey, Miss?" Mr. Ball always appeared to take it for granted that Maude had a part of the training of his son Harvey, devolving upon her. The girl used to accept the responsibility quite seriously, and dispensed wisdom to the young man, either at first or second hand, with the utmost freedom; but now —

"Shall I, aunty?" she asked, rather dubiously. "Maybe Harvey would rather I shouldn't, if it is about — if it is so important, and so —"

"I'll risk Harvey," broke in Mr. Stone. "Harvey in full regimentals, Harvey in fatigue, or Harvey in — in his shirt sleeves, mentally and morally speaking, won't be far off the track, I'll stake a fortune on that. We may not agree with him — and I do think he is away off politically; but, by Jove, you

can bet every time that he has got a good, sound, clean, manly reason for his opinions, and that he doesn't think it necessary to ask anybody's leave to think his own way. Read it, Maude, and let's see what is the matter."

Mrs. Ball sighed, but nodded to the girl, who crossed the room and seated herself by the student lamp. "'M-m," said she, smiling a little, as she opened and smoothed it out one page at a time. "Regular American poet, this letter, isn't it? Longfellow!"

Everybody laughed, and Maude's father pretended to faint.

"Maude, if you do that again, you sha'n't read it," said her mother, looking proudly at Mrs. Ball. "I thought you said you had reformed."

"Well, I have," said the girl, "but a little relapse like that once in a while doesn't count. Hear ye; hear ye; hear ye. Now if you speak again, mamma, I'll clear the court. I shall now read the evidence—deposition, or whatever you call it, (isn't that, it papa?) of the absent witness;" and the girl, struggling hard to be her natural self and to make merry for the four older people who loved her, struck what she assumed to be a heavy legal tone and attitude, and began reading the letter.

She had not read far when she dropped her serio-comic manner and read on quite soberly,

stopping from time to time to be sure of a word. Once Mrs. Ball essayed to expalin and soften a passage, but her husband checked her.

"Wait, mother, let Harvey present his whole case first. Don't try to prejudice Maude's jury. It is a good idea of hers to put it that way."

"We may hang, or we may disagree —" began Mr. Stone.

"Or convict?" asked Harvey's mother, a little anxiously.

"No danger of that, I guess," laughed Mr. Stone.

"If this jury does not stop disturbing the court, I'll—I'll elect a new foreman," said Maude, reaching over and poking her father with her fan.

"Oh, am I the foreman?" asked he, straightening up and taking his long legs in. "Well, your honor,—or whoever you are, who appoints foremen to suit yourself,—now that your instructions are more fully understood, proceed. We're dumb. Let me see, you had got to 'of the past'—go on."

When she had finished and begun folding the letter, Mr. Stone got up and deliberately took her in his arms and kissed her. Then he went abruptly out of the room and closed the door behind him.

"Your father always takes everything about Harvey so to heart, Maude," said Mrs. Stone. "Go after him." The girl left the room at once.

"I am sure the boy meant no harm," began his mother. "He did not think how it would sound. It sounds a little harsher than he must have intended; but writing you know is not like talking. It is always unsatisfactory. If he were talking about it he could stop to explain points."

Mr. Ball had stepped to the window and was looking out into the night. He was deeply perplexed in spite of his talk of Harvey's honesty of purpose. He saw Maude and her father walking up and down the porch. He opened the window and stepped out, closing it behind him. The two figures were at the farther end now. Mr. Ball went quickly to them.

"Are you disappointed in the boy, John?" asked he, feelingly.

"Disappointed! disappointed!" exclaimed Mr. Stone, more excited than his old friend had ever seen him. "Disappointed! why, Edward, if that boy were mine—if—Edward—sometimes I've thought that no man could have so great a curse in this world in these days as a son, but—"

Old Mr. Ball began to protest, and Maude let her father's hand drop. "But, Edward," he continued, struggling to control his voice, "your son is enough to redeem a regiment. I'm glad I've lived to know him. He's pure gold through and through,"—and Mr. Stone took his old friend's hand in his and each of them put an arm about Maude,—

“and, Edward, he is the only young fellow I know who is worth more than the powder and shot it would take to kill him. By Jove, I wish he was my son. I’d trust him with — I’d trust Harvey Ball with my little girl,” he said, lowering his voice tenderly and drawing her up against his breast, “and be happy. And, Edward, I’d rather see her dead than married to any other young man I ever saw. There, that is my verdict on Harvey.”

“What is yours, Maudie?” said Mr. Ball, taking the girl’s hand from her father’s shoulder and using the pet name of her childhood. “What is your verdict, little girl?”

“About the letter? Or about Har—about Mr. Ball?” asked she, slyly imprinting a kiss on the lappel of her father’s coat under cover of the darkness.

“Mr. Ball!” exclaimed the old man in blank amazement. “*Mr. Ball!*” but Maude had slipped herself free and in through an open window, threading her way through the furniture in the dark and on up the stairs to her own room. She locked the door, and threw herself face down across her bed, and buried her cheeks in her hands.

“O papa, papa,” she remonstrated under her breath, “O papa, how could you say that out loud?”

“No, not that I necessarily agree with all that he wrote,” Mr. Stone was saying as he and Mr. Ball re-entered the library. “It isn’t that; but it is

the *tone* of all that Harvey says, and does, and is. He doesn't pose. He's real. You want him to use his own head, don't you? Well, suppose what he says does seem a little unusual to you and Aunt Martha, you see the motive in it, don't you? Don't you see your good, true, open-minded son? Now what is the object of training children? To make 'em all alike? Not a bit of it: but to make them the best it is in them to be;—or make them see the importance of being earnest and honest, and then let each one come out with a different plan of salvation or system of government if he's a mind to. That's what I say. That's been our plan with Maude." Mrs. Ball murmured something about Maude being a girl. "Yes, that's so," assented Mr. Stone. "It is some different. Girls don't have quite so many temptations,—of course, I mean girls who have good homes,—and there are more safeguards kept about them. Everything holds them back from going wrong, and pretty nearly everything pushes boys to the devil, as if it had all been planned beforehand. Why, the very fact that a girl knows that any really wrong step made by her is her ruin in the eyes of society, is a tremendous safeguard, however unjust it may be; and the very fact that a boy knows that this is not true in his case, is a constant temptation to him to do the prodigal son act, just for the fun of it, even if he has no real inclination that way. That's why I've always said I am

glad I have no boys. I'd hate to have a blackguard or a booby for a son, and the way things are, it's a mighty slim chance that he wouldn't be one or the other. You're in luck, Edward. You've got a boy to be proud of, and by Jove, I'm glad to see that he has backbone enough to base his opinions and his splendid personal character on a firmer foundation than the shifting sands of dogmatic belief and theological speculation."

"Why, John!" exclaimed Mrs. Ball, but he went on.

"Look at that college mate of his; the one that was here — Fred Harmon. He was trained to believe in traditional religion, as expounded by his mother and her rector. Well, he was made to base his actions on that belief. Good or bad was weighed by their theological scales, and cut down or trimmed off to fit their pattern. The scales, of course, were hung on the Bible. Well, that boy had not gone far in his college course, till he found his science and his Scripture conflicting in places. Six periods of time might go down as what was originally meant by six days, if it wasn't for the context. Morning and evening of the first day — and all that sort of thing — rather gave the professor away. The boys who were bright, badgered him until he showed pretty plainly that he was working for a salary. Well, they inquired into the sun standing still, and the Red Sea's antics, and the boys, who

weren't fools, made up their minds that a salary was sometimes compensation, not only for instruction in certain topics, but for the mental integrity of the instructor as well.

"That was a lesson a good deal easier learned than unlearned.

"It wasn't long until these promising young sceptics got to badgering their mothers. Then they were turned over to the rector. If he happened to be a 'reconciler' he manipulated, evaded, and patched up, and jumped over, and construed, until a good many of the boys were completely mystified. Well, when anybody is completely mystified by a man, they think he is a small god. 'Great mind!' they say; 'wonderful insight!' They know that they tried their level best, and could not follow his arguments to the conclusions he reached. They think that it is because they missed a link, and that he had it all there, only they were not clever enough to see it. Now, Fred Harmon wasn't built that way. He saw very distinctly that the link was gone. He followed it up, and chased it around, until he settled in his mind that what are called the advanced ministers didn't believe, and didn't *have* to believe the creeds they had vowed to teach.

"The underpinning got knocked out from under his morals right there.

"He knew that those men lead the Protestant church to-day. He knew that the people followed

them like sheep. He knew that they had sworn to teach a creed that they did not believe in any sense that carried par value to words. His morals were based on those creeds. Well, the result was, the moment his belief in dogmatic religion was shaken, he had no foothold. Natural morality had no meaning to him. Goodness had none, apart from its creed-bound, society-defined limits. The outcome is, that he absolutely doesn't know the moral difference to-day between a lie and the truth. He doesn't have the slightest prejudice, as he calls it, in favor of one line of action above another, only on a strictly commercial basis. 'Will it pay, socially speaking?' that is his test of conduct, of opinion, of morals. And he is one of thousands. I tell you, Edward, it won't do, it isn't safe, to base morality and goodness on such shifting sands. Harvey is right. It belongs to the past, and its present pretence of readjustment to the needs of this generation is simply turning out a lot of Fred Harmons — and worse — if that is possible."

Maude had pushed aside the portières, and entered the room a few moments before. She stood behind her father. Her lips were white and a little drawn. She slipped out again and sat down on the porch. No one had noticed her. Late that night she wrote to Fred.

"I promised you in the note I left for you, the morning after the Military Ball in St. Louis, that

if I had anything definite to say to you at any time in the future — after I had thought over what my father said — I should write again. I have something to say now. My father was right. Our lives and training have been so unlike, our ideals based upon such totally different, and, as he says, antagonistic thoughts and needs that our, — that is, if we are still engaged, — I write now to say, that it is best to end our mistake at once.

“ You were different from any one I had ever known. I admired you, your polish and self-poise and — all I saw of you and comprehended was very pleasing. I thought that I loved you. Perhaps I did — but — perhaps it was rather what you represented to me, or what I thought you, or that I so loved to be loved myself and was a little proud that you should care for me. I am not able to say now what it was. I — I do not understand it at all; but I do know now that I should be afraid to trust myself to marry you and — I could not marry without perfect trust. I had that. I have it no more.”

Maude wrote a little unsteadily, and she closed her eyes and laid her head back wearily on the chair, still holding the pen over the paper. She was very pale. Presently she began again.

“ I know that you will believe me when I say that I hope you will be much happier in the love of some one else, and — that she will be happy in

your love. I shall send this to the Chicago address that you gave me four months ago. Please let me know that you get it. Good-by. I am so sorry, oh, so very sorry, that all of it — that any of it — has happened. Good-by again. Maude.”

She folded the note and addressed it: then she threw herself on the bed. After a long time the door opened softly and her father's face peered in. The gas was burning brightly, and he saw his daughter lying face down with a handkerchief in the hand which was thrown above her head. He went in quietly, and closed the door behind him. Then he seated himself in the chair which she had left by the table and waited. A little sob came from the bed. He saw the note, but he did not touch it. After what seemed to him a very long time, he stepped to the bed, and lifting the girl in his arms, as he had done when she was a little child, carried her to the chair and sat down, and clasping her to his breast, kissed her hair, her eyes, and lips, with tears on his own cheeks. Neither of them spoke. At last Maude said: “Did you read it?” He shook his head.

“Reach;” she said, holding fast to his neck so that he might free his arm. He took the note, and holding it behind her shoulder read it through. Then he sealed it, and put it in his breast pocket. “I will mail it,” he said softly, as one speaks at a grave. Then with a great wave of feeling, — “O

my daughter, my precious daughter, your father's heart is glad. I could give you to a good man and bear it; but darling, Maudie, my daughter —" He pressed her closer to him, and tears dropped on her shining hair.

Two hours later they were sitting there. . . . She was asleep, and the gaslight fell on his rugged face made radiant by its love and joy. John Stone felt as one might who snatches from the jaws of death his only treasure.

CHAPTER X.

"Heaven forbid I should fetter my impartiality by entertaining an opinion. . . ."

"To have a mind well oiled with that sort of argument which prevents any claim from grasping it, seems eminently convenient sometimes; only the oil becomes objectionable when we find it anointing other minds on which we want to establish a hold. . . ."

"Men and women make sad mistakes about their own symptoms, taking their vague, uneasy longings, sometimes for genius, sometimes for religion, and oftener still for a mighty love."— *George Eliot*.

Fred Harmon read Maude's note with conflicting emotions.

"I should hope that she considered our engagement — if it might ever have been dignified by that name — broken long ago. I certainly did. But I suppose it is very hard for a girl like that to give up a —" he did not say brilliant match, but that is what he thought. He did not take the trouble to let her know that the note had reached him. Why should he? Of course it would reach him. She must have known that, and, after all, his mother was right; it was a good deal better to put as little as possible in writing, especially with people like that." He had fallen into his mother's mode of thought again.

Then he began to have a sense of loss and of moral collapse. He felt very hardly used indeed,

and strolled along the Boulevard and took his hat off in so impressive a manner and with such abandon of self abnegation that the ladies, as they drove by, wondered if there had been a death in his family or whether perchance he had taken his ordination vows in secret.

Barlow noticed his abstraction and gloom and chaffed him a little, but Fred let him see, at once, that it was far too serious a matter to trifle with, and Barlow changed the subject.

"Excuse me, Harmon;" he said. "I did not dream there was any real trouble. I thought you were only mooning a little."

Fred sighed heavily; presently he said,

"Yes, I am in serious trouble, Barlow. I have had a terrible grief; but — it is best not to talk of it. Don't say anything more about it to me, or to anyone; it is always better to bear one's burdens silently, I think."

Barlow promised and offered sympathy, which Fred accepted gracefully, leaving the impression that it was wholly inadequate, and that his heroic sufferings had probably never been equalled. That night he wrote to his mother.

"Of course I realized, long ago — when I broke the engagement — how incompetent such a girl would be to fill the position my wife will occupy — especially if I take orders; and the more I think of it the more I am inclined to do so. . . . Your

Indian Princess must be very amusing; but really, mother, I do not see the need of so much fuss about such people. A good enough fad, of course, and I don't mean to discourage it; but — such cattle! What difference can it make what becomes of their girls? I don't at all doubt that what she says is true. From the little I saw last year in Alaska, — and in the camps a good deal nearer home, for the matter of that, — I should think her account not at all overdrawn. The white men and soldiers certainly do make them drunk, and carry the girls off. Ugh! Such taste — and I suppose they keep them as long as they want to; or as long as they can for their own safety; and what else can they do then but send the disgusting creatures back to the tribe? They have to. How did you ever happen to get interested in such a ridiculous fad, anyhow? Is Mrs. W—— in it? I suppose so. Oh, well, of course it can't do you any harm. . . .

“What a delightful girl your ‘dear Pauline’ is? Don't be surprised, — but this is a little premature just now. Whist!”

Mrs. Harmon read the letter and smiled. Fred in Holy Orders, and married to Pauline! Ah, life is very sweet, and compensations come to those who plan and wait!

As Mr. Fred Harmon, late of Harvard, stood before his mirror the next evening in the Grand Pacific Hotel and gave the last touches to his white cambric tie,

he smiled approvingly at the reflection, and decided that even the splendid vigor of Barlow did not appear to conspicuous advantage when contrasted with the perfection of detail presented here. But it was a little early to make a call. People in the West took dinner at such heathenish hours, and ate so fast, that it would be a long time before he could present himself at the home of Miss Pauline Tyler's uncle on Michigan Avenue. The question now was how to put in the intervening hours. Perhaps if he started out aimlessly he might have the good fortune to run into a political meeting or a Salvation Army band. Almost anything afforded Mr. Fred Harmon entertainment. He was wont to pride himself on this fact. It was the chief distinction between the college-bred man and another, he said. College training enabled you to be interested in all things, from a bug to a bombardment; from the cry of the night-hawk to that of a woman in distress, and it appeared to be about the same sort of interest in each case. It was the alert attention of the anatomist to his subject.

Fortune favored the young man. He had not strolled three blocks from the hotel until he saw an arrest made. There had been a street fight. He followed the officers to the station, and watched all the proceedings with the attention of a trained observer.

One of the young men, a German, appeared to be the victim of a brutal assault. He had received a ghastly wound on the head and it was feared that his skull was fractured. Fred's cambric tie, which showed above his light top-coat, had led the officers to think him a clergyman, and they had admitted him without a question to the examination. When the final collapse came and the young German sank into a comatose state, one of the officers turned to Fred and said:—

"It's your turn now; we done our part; doctor's done hisen; now you kin have your innin's if you're a mineto."

Fred smiled, but kept his eyes on the figure before him. He did not fully understand the policeman's mistake; but he saw at once that he was supposed to have some right there and, putting his faith in silence, he continued to smile vaguely and watch the wounded man. Presently he turned to the physician and said:—

"Extremely interesting, isn't it? First case I ever saw. Final breakup was like a climax in a play. How long will he continue to breathe now?"

The physician looked at his questioner for a moment before he replied. "Possibly for several hours; but probably not so long. The skull is undoubtedly fractured and — If you have any interest in him, you best lose no time. Get his friends here.

He will never be moved alive. Poor fellow, he appears to be a victim of his inability to make his broken English understood. It is really an unusually sad case, I infer from what the officer says."

"Very sad, very sad indeed," murmured Fred abstractedly, and went his way, congratulating himself on having had the good fortune to witness the effects of a pistol-shot wound in the head, fracture of the skull, and the various physical phenomena which follow.

"Pore feller," said the policeman ; " I wish I had got there a little sooner. I might'a helped him."

"Poor fellow," thought the surgeon, "all we can do now is to quiet his pain. Poor fellow, he has a good face."

"Exceedingly interesting case," said Fred Harmon to himself, as he strolled up the street. "Very pleasing and well-ordered sequence indeed. The way his legs tottered, the way he bore the pain of examination at first, the giving way of his legs, and then of his stomach, and then his nerves when he began to cry—very interesting—quite a bit of experimental knowledge added to my store. Well, I am glad I started out aimlessly—and above all I'm glad that I am able to engage my mind with all such little things. Intellectual training is a vast gain. Now those men—the officers, for instance—took no intelligent interest whatever in the development of the case as a means of edu-

cation ;” and so Mr. Fred Harmon philosophized and congratulated himself, until he came suddenly to the entrance of a large hall into which numbers of men were pouring.

“No women ;” thought he. “’M-m-m ” — then stepping up to a gentleman he inquired what was going on inside.

“Young men’s prayer and experience meeting,” he said, ” won’t you come in? All are welcome.” Fred thanked him and went in. He took a seat near the door, intending to go out again in ten minutes ; but the hymns and prayers entertained him, and when several got up and spoke one after another, he found himself held and attracted by the variety. He wondered each time if the “experience” would vary much from that of the man who had gone before. Several had begun by saying that they felt themselves the chief of sinners, and had then gone on to develop the idea that since a given date they had cared for nothing, loved nothing, wanted nothing, but God. Fred noticed that one of the men on the platform who had said something of this kind was the commercial traveller, his erst-while companion at poker, the night of the Military Ball in St. Louis. The thought sent a flood of memories through his brain. He felt chastened and depressed. Life had dealt hardly with him of late. He was both lonely and aimless. It was suddenly borne in upon him that his name had

been spoken. He looked up. The commercial traveller was standing and had evidently spoken to him. There was a slight movement and a ripple of curiosity in the house—“and if the gentleman, our distinguished guest from Boston, who, with his characteristic modesty, is near the door, will step this way, we will be happy to give him a seat on the platform. Come this way, Mr. Harmon.”

Fred shook his head; but his commercial friend urged him. Fred thought this in very bad taste. At last he arose, looked about him and said, “However much I should like to accept your cordial invitation to occupy a seat upon the platform, I am compelled to decline. Unfortunately I have another engagement. I came in for only a few moments. I shall have to go soon.”

“Before you go, we shall be glad to have you stand where you are and give your religious experience for the help and comfort and encouragement of others who may be strangers and whose names I may not know, all of whom are welcome here as they will be welcome over there;” and the chairman waved his hand toward the upper part of the front of the house, in which he appeared to locate a celestial abode of the future. Fred thought all this very droll indeed. He ran hastily over what he could best recall of his “experience” and nothing that occurred to him at the moment appeared to be especially suited to the occasion, or likely to

help the strangers about him to a cheerful view of the Christian life. He shook his head. He had not had time to suspect that his friend on the platform was having his little fun out of the situation. This thought began to assert itself just as he heard that gentleman's voice say solemnly, —“our misfortune ; but I am sure that his eloquent voice will not decline to lead us at the throne of grace. Let us pray. Mr. Harmon, please lead us in prayer.”

The whole audience arose. It was not the first time that Fred Harmon had prayed in public. His choice of language was rich and forceful. Indeed he had been told that he was “gifted in prayer.” He felt no sense of inappropriateness ; but the tinge of humor that had begun to creep in caused him to open his eyes as he went on, and as he did so he saw that the gentleman who had urged him to offer the prayer was shaking with some suppressed emotion, and that his hand, which was over his eyes, had a wide space open between two of the fingers where an eye, which was not closed, appeared and distinctly twinkled. Fred's voice shook a little. “Amen,” he said reverently. “Amen !” went up from the audience. “Amen,” said Fred's friend from the platform ; “Amen, praise the Lord ! Thank you, brother Harmon. Come to our meetings again.”

Fred bowed, and went out. In the lobby he stopped to button his coat, and light a cigar. A hand fell on his arm.

“I heard that you were going to take Holy Orders, and I thought you might as well get your hand in on our crowd;” said his commercial friend, who had hastened out after him. “They will take ’most anything. They know that some of us are more or less — irregular — don’t you know, but they don’t mind it. Stopping at the G. P.? Yes? Well, so am I. Room 98. Come in any time, up to three o’clock, and have a quiet little game. Ben will be there, and — oh, well, if you rather, bring your own deck, of course; but — there, they need me. That’s my hymn, and then I have to give them a little talk on the beauty of holiness. See you later.” He waved his hand, and disappeared. He had no sooner re-entered the hall, than his strong, inspiring voice swelled into the melody of “Nearer My God to Thee” at the third line, and so enthused the whole body, that they arose with one accord, and gave forth a fresh volume of ecstatic and enthusiastic vocalization.

Some of them believed that their emotions were caused by religion; some of them thought very little about it, and simply went with the swim; some of them knew that they were utilizing, for business purposes, purely physical sensations; but one and all went away feeling that the evening had been well spent, and that at least no harm could come to any man so long as he was in no worse a place than that. If there was one man in the room

who felt that he had added to the sum of human misery, or degradation, or sorrow, it certainly was not Mr. Fred Harmon, nor was it his friend, the commercial traveller.

Later that night, they laughed over it a little, it is true, but neither of them doubted for a moment the wisdom of his own course, nor the wickedness of those who openly questioned a morality built upon conventional observances, and an eternal reward contingent on faith.

If Mr. Fred Harmon was expert at poker, he was not invariably a winner, and although he always said that he played a very small game, as became a gentleman who indulged in the sport merely for pastime, still it sometimes came about, if jackpots were shy, or flushes unduly abbreviated, that his exchequer, at no time plethoric, became reduced to the verge of collapse. At such trying times he reported to his mother, as a dutiful son should, that he had met with a misfortune. Once or twice this had taken the shape of an ordinary pickpocket, and the young man so blamed himself for his carelessness in carrying money where it could be so easily abstracted from his pockets, and for his stupidity for falling asleep on a street car in broad daylight, that his devoted parent consoled and excused him, with ingenious thought of his active brain, which she had no doubt needed the sleep, and sent him all the money she could get from

the indulgent but far from opulent head of the house. But just now it occurred to him that the "street-car, overworked-brain, pickpocket racket," as he smilingly called it in his own mind, could hardly be presented so soon again. The impulsive relieving of a sad case of destitution was equally threadbare. He thought of a public subscription for Foreign Missions, but decided against it. Such lists were published, — a vulgar and inconvenient custom, but still so universal that he gave the plan only a moment's consideration.

The leather trade presented attractions again; but after mature deliberation and a careful weighing of points for and against a step which might smirch his whole future, even though temporarily resorted to, he decided to accept the long-since forgotten, and now providentially recalled, invitation of Preston Mansfield to drop in on him and take a hunt or a rest in the quiet and seclusion of that young gentleman's not far distant home. There could be very few calls for money in such a place as that. Hotel bills would cease and—well, Preston Mansfield was not a bad fellow to know—in the West. So Mr. Fred Harmon made up his mind to hibernate, as he phrased it to himself, until the next regular time came around when he might expect money from home. He could then bloom once more afresh in the world he loved to grace,—the world which rewarded his exceptional ability so poorly

that he was barely enabled to live as became a gentleman on the higher planes of thought and action, giving scant heed to the grosser necessities of life, such as money making,—where he could devote his rare talents to those purely intellectual processes, commonly called education, in which his life had thus far been spent.

This training had resulted, as we have seen, in the young man's proud ability to interest himself in any thing, from a globule to a geological period, or a gun-shot wound, without those disturbing elements of emotion,—love or sympathy or fear or regret,—which militate so grievously against the unprejudiced planes of thought whereon civilized and cultured collegians were at that time struggling desperately to maintain themselves. It is true that comparatively few of them succeeded. Their home training in most cases was against it, and the rare combination of home, church, and collegiate discipline which had focused in his case, and developed the nature of Mr. Fred Harmon into that much envied being,—a successful conventional leader, free from all sentiment and full of all sentimentality,—had been almost perfect for the purpose from his earliest infancy. He knew before he was ten years old, that it was vulgar to differ from social and religious leaders in one's opinions on any subject whatever, and that it was quite unpardonable to give utterance to such differences.

He knew, too, that a gentleman might be wretchedly poor, might accept the bounty of those who labored, but if he engaged in any kind of business his claims to position were at once gone. He had never forgotten the impressive lesson on this point that he had received very early in life. His uncle had come to talk a matter over with his sister, Fred's mother. It was soon after the civil war, and it appeared from the account that this uncle had lost his all, and was left without means of support. He had been offered a very fair and tempting salary if he would take charge of certain business matters for an elderly gentleman of his acquaintance. The position was that of a sort of upper clerk, or manager.

"You must not think of it," said his sister indignantly. "It is an insult for him to suggest such a thing to you. You manage his affairs, indeed! Be a head clerk in a mercantile house! Never! Go to the poorhouse like a gentleman, if you must, Cuthbert; but never forget, brother, that you *are* a gentleman."

Fred had thought a great many times, in his brief career, of going to the poorhouse like a gentleman, and in his childhood had vaguely wondered who supported the superior beings whose pride reduced them to such straits as this. He learned later that it was done chiefly by the cruder class, whose pride and breeding and culture did not stand between

them and money-producing occupations of various degrees of vulgarity. So, although Fred did not, by any means, suppose that going to visit Preston Mansfield would be quite like entering an eleemosynary institution, still he looked upon it somewhat as the genteel resort of a man of culture in reduced circumstances, to tide over,—not at his own expense, for he did not permit himself to think of it in the affirmative formula—a period of financial depression, of greater or less duration. That it was a very great compliment to Preston Mansfield, he realized; but he had his satirical doubts if that young gentleman would comprehend it as fully as he should. That Preston would be pleased to see him, that he would be hospitable and cordial, he did not doubt; but would Preston have the insight to appreciate the honor of it? That was the question; and he smilingly decided that it was altogether unlikely that so emotional and coarse-grained a fellow would be endowed with sufficiently fine instincts to do so. He decided to make a study of the case, and had already thought out a humorous letter he should write to his mother, giving the curious details of life in such a family, and the relish with which he discovered his own ability to keep himself so well in hand that not one of them should discover that he felt himself to be doing an exceedingly gracious thing in giving them the benefit of a social example as simply as if he were on their own plane.

He prided himself on the simplicity and charm of his manner towards his inferiors. He thought it very likely that servants were human, — from a strictly anatomical outlook, — and he felt it only right to recognize that fact, from time to time. Never by taking an interest in their affairs, of course ; but — well, he had spoken distinctly to Thomas who served him at the hotel, at least twice, in the weeks that he was there, and he had stepped aside for the chambermaid one morning, in such a way that she must have known that he saw her and therefore knew that she existed. He thought such little things kept servants devoted to their superiors, and it was not a great sacrifice for a gentleman to make, if he once made up his mind to it ; but the intolerable impudence of the serving class, he felt, made even such slight concessions somewhat dangerous, unless one were really heroic in his devotion to principle.

He had heard the Reverend Highchurch discourse upon the subject, “How shall we treat our servants ?” And he knew that the entire congregation had felt that the Christian beauty of his advice was the result of an exaltation almost divine. He had distinctly advised moderation in censure, and said that even a word of praise judiciously offered might not always be a bad plan where servants were faithful and devoted, and had grown gray in one’s service. But such as these were, of

course, rare enough to make this radical advice innocuous, even if followed.

It is due to Mr. Fred Harmon to say that he did not give the thought that Preston Mansfield had several pretty sisters any consideration whatever. He knew that he could make himself agreeable to almost any girl or woman, if he saw fit; and if he did not, — well, it was easy enough to drop a vague hint of a wounded heart in such a way that gentle sympathy and thoughtful kindness would be drawn out, and no complications result; for his new friends would not know who the lady was, and no one could doubt the ease of a role like that if he once tried it. Fred smiled to think how often it had worked in his own brief career. Before he was fairly out of knickerbockers, his mother had added jelly to his toast, and sent it to his darkened room, with a tender message for the stricken heart of her son. That time it was one of his teachers. She was a very pretty girl indeed, and not more than ten years his senior. She had married well, too, a man much above her, Fred's mother thought, — the young rector in a town near by. Fred was desolate, — and enjoyed the fruits of his woe in the shape of jelly and long naps in the morning, and gentle words and tones, until the sharp edge of his heartbreak wore off. So with ageing melancholy he cast his eyes alternately upon Bertie Fairchild and the Church. He was confirmed shortly there-

after. Then he felt better for a time. Fred always thought of holy orders at such crises as these, and had even gone the length of pondering over the growing ranks of monks then attracting attention in ritualistic Protestant circles because of the recent conversion to their order of a certain conspicuous young churchman who had taken the vows of chastity and poverty. Fred thought of this again when his mother first objected to his betrothal to Maude Stone, and he had read up on the requirements of such a position in the English Church in America. He knew it would give him great prestige to be a convert, and renounce the world so conspicuously; but—it was uncouth to be in haste about anything, and there was ample time to think it over.

The inclination had almost faded out, until his last misfortune with the jackpot (whoever heard of two such hands being beaten, one right after the other?), and then it swept over him anew. It was always a splendid possibility for the future. But he decided against haste, as before. He would visit Preston Mansfield, and give himself time to think in dignified seclusion from the world. Then, too, Pauline Tyler had left Chicago three days before.

She confided to him, before she left, that there was absolutely no truth in the report that she was to marry Chicago's mayor-elect; and as to banker Hartley—well—she had met him only

three times, and the absurdity of such a thing was quite manifest. Fred agreed with her perfectly, and wrote for her a somewhat touching denial of these rumors to the society columns of the papers, whereupon the reporters called upon Miss Pauline, who peremptorily refused to see them; sending down word that she was prostrated by the publicity given to her affairs.

The postman's indignation was aroused the next day and the next and the next, by the armful of newspapers he was called upon to convey from the house of Miss Tyler's uncle to the post-office. He noticed that they were addressed in a feminine hand and were sent to other newspapers, as well as to private persons all over the country, and not a few were sent abroad. He concluded that they contained marked notices of a wedding or a death, but he did not see why one of the servants might not have made a large package of the whole lot and gone with them himself to the post-office.

But Pauline was gone now, and those terrible Chicago reporters would trouble her no more. But stay — would it not be their fiendish work, after all, which would follow her? And would not all those other papers copy from them and bandy her name about as if she were some vulgar woman who had done something — written a play, or acted one, or some such bold thing as that? And poor Pauline drew her veil down, laid her weary

head back on the car seat and sighed heavily. It was the penalty of distinction. Pauline thought how hard it must be for great men to bear it. And, — women, — but the bold creatures who got their names in the papers outside of the society columns no doubt liked it. Of course, to be in the society column was quite different. One's personality was subordinated there to one's clothes; but to have one's name mentioned in print as having been so pronounced as to do anything, or say or think anything whatsoever, apart from costumes and church charity, was outside the pale of serious consideration by womanly women at least. Pauline had said all this and more a great many times. Pauline was orthodox in all things.

CHAPTER XI.

"Durable morality had been associated with a transitory faith. The faith fell into intellectual discredit, and . . . morality shared its decline for a season. This must always be the natural consequence of building sound ethics on the shifting sands and rotting foundations of theology."—*John Morley*.

"Men talk of 'mere morality,'—which is much as if one should say, 'Poor God, with nobody to help him.'"—*Emerson*.

"Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. For I am come to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother."—*Jesus Christ*.

When Harvey Ball came home he was greatly surprised to find his mother still somewhat disturbed by the letter he had written about Albert's choice of a profession. She had never been a very strict church-member, but had usually gone to hear a sermon, each week, all her life, and her husband frequently went with her. There had been but little talk about it in the family, and it was simply taken for granted that the liberal teachings of the broad-minded, cheerful, kind man who filled their pulpit, were axiomatically correct, and that Harvey and Albert were mentally in accord with it all.

Harvey had always been such an upright fellow. From his very infancy his sense of justice had been strong, and any inclination to be untruthful that he may originally have had, or imbibed from others, had nothing to feed upon at home, for he feared no one. If he made a "bad break," as he called it, he

usually told his father or mother quite frankly, and they helped him out of it. Not by trying to conceal or distort the fact that it was a mistake, or even a wrong; but by explaining the other side to him, meanwhile keeping a fast hold of the boy's love of their approbation. He had lied one day, when only a very little fellow, about the quantity of candy he had. It seemed to him that it would be easier to do that than to give up any more of the sweet stuff; so he had hid it, and said there was no more, when his mother asked him. His father had seen him slyly abstracting a piece from the box which he had concealed behind a trunk.

"Bring it all out, Harvey," he had said, with not the slightest hint of disapproval in his voice; "you can get at it better out here, and you won't feel so uncomfortable. Telling what is not true to your mother, or me, makes you feel rather uneasy, I notice. It is always that way. When I have tried it I always feel worse afterward; and then it does not pay to let other people get the idea that you do not tell, and do not care for, the truth. Would it make you uncomfortable or unhappy if you thought that what I say to you is not true?"

"No sir," said Harvey promptly, with a mouthful of candy. His imagination was too weak just then to grasp the idea.

That afternoon Mr. Ball promised his son a drive in the country. Harvey was filled with

delight. Shortly afterward, as the little fellow stood on tip-toe watching for his father, he saw him drive past and disappear. The boy ran out to the gate, but his father did not come back. He wept, and raged, and sulked within himself. That night his father said, "Oh, did you expect me to take you?"

"You know you *promised* me;" sobbed Harvey, "and there was room, and you *said* you would take me."

"So I did, so I did," said his father; "and you believed me, didn't you? Well, Harvey, I told you a lie just to show you that it would hurt somebody. Now it hurt you, didn't it, son? and it hurt me too. Then it did another thing: the next time I tell you I will do anything, you will not know whether to believe me or not, will you?"

"No sir," said Harvey, with wide eyes and a sense of loss.

"You would a great deal rather feel sure, would you not?"

"Yes, I would, papa."

"Well, that's the way it is," said Mr. Ball, taking the boy up in his arms. "It is just that way about everything. Unless people know that a man tells the truth, as a rule, nobody will know whether to believe anything at all that he says. Very soon they will not believe him, even when he

is honest. Nobody will deal with him, and he will cause so much confusion and want of confidence, that he will harm a good many people beside himself. So, don't you see, Harvey, people must tell the truth for the safety and happiness of themselves as well as of others? Don't you see that it is a great deal to one's own advantage to be truthful, and that it is necessary for children to learn the lesson pretty early? That is the reason why there are laws against lying. Did you know there is a law —"

"Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor," piped up the boy, who had gone to Sunday-school from time to time.

"Yes," said his father, "that was built on the very experience I tell you about. Men found out that it would not do to lie; it would interfere with everything; and so, long after they found that out, some one stated it in that way. But, after all, that is only one side of it. That is the perjury side,—the side the law takes hold of. But just suppose it was the rule to lie. You would take ten cents and go to a store to buy marbles. The man would tell you they were two cents each. How many would you get?"

"Five," said Harvey, promptly.

"Well now, suppose you handed him your money, and when you got out of the door you found that he had given you only four?"

"I would go back and make him give me the other," said the boy, savagely.

"But suppose you could not? He is the larger."

"Then I would tell you!" Harvey was triumphant.

"Well, but suppose I myself had lied to that man the day before — had sold him a horse as good and sound, when he was blind in one eye? Don't you see, Harvey, it would not work? Don't you see that people could not get along? Don't you see that everything would get so tied up and confused that business would stop, and nobody would believe a word that anybody else said? Don't you think that would be pretty bad? Business would be impossible; homes would be impossible. Everything would go to pieces. It could not be done. Well, now, that fact became known by experience, and so, for self-protection, people had to tell the truth, don't you see?"

"I thought it was because God said —" began the boy, with his catechism still in his mind.

"Oh, to be sure, to be sure, they say God said it. That is, some people do — and no doubt He did — but don't you see how they got the idea first?" asked his father, quite inconsistently. "They found out how it was — what was necessary — and you know when men find that out they always think and say that it is God's way. Their necessi-

ties are God's wishes, and so God's wishes are different in different countries, and at different times."

This was rather deep, and rather puzzling theology to the boy; and very inconsistent religion in the father; but neither of them knew the latter fact, and the lesson went home to the boy's mind strictly as a rational and utilitarian view of the command to be truthful.

Mr. Ball himself had no idea that his explanation was a trifle unorthodox. He had based his life on reason, and then he had gone occasionally to an Orthodox church, because it was the custom, and he liked the preacher personally.

He did not think it exactly right or safe, however, to have Harvey base his ideas of right and wrong on the catechism, and so he took him out of Sunday-school. At the same time he had intended the boy to return later on, when his moral ideas should be founded on reason, so he had told himself. But Harvey had never asked to go back. He had liked to stay at home or take a drive, far better, and as a consequence, his religious instruction had never gone very far. Sometimes he had attended church with his mother; but he usually went to sleep, or got so interested in watching the people and thinking about them that whatever of dogmatic theology the Rev. Carr had preached, had escaped Harvey. He liked Mr. Carr very much

indeed. They always had a merry chat when they met in the street. The clergyman seemed to take a deep interest in marbles, and later on in baseball, so they were the best of friends, and neither of them realized how wide apart their points of view had grown as the years went by. Even in Harvey's college days, in the vacations, when he was at home, he had always enjoyed meeting Mr. Carr.

When Harvey first entered college, he found his father's lessons and character a firm foundation. All about him was different. Temptations had new forms, pleasures and vices new faces. Some of the boys lost their heads. The boundary line of moral actions wavered or got rubbed out. To those who lost their absolute faith, the belief in a certain phase of life as the only right or decent one; to those who found for the first time conflicting dogmas held as equally good; to those who met new questions and scientific facts with undeveloped and illogical minds; to those who were suddenly awakened to the knowledge that their religion was not universal, or even approximately so,—to the fact that more millions were without it than with it, and that morality had no necessary connection with religion,—to all these, college life was a dangerous awakening. Some of them kept their feet fairly well; but for the most part they became, either openly or in secret, addicted to vices which they no longer measured as

such, because their standards of measurement had ceased to be useful. These boys had no other moral standards, and they found themselves adrift without square or compass. Some of them added to their other vices that of duplicity. They professed to accept and use their old creeds; they concluded that this was universal; that no one believed what he pretended to, on any subject whatever. Virtue and candor were for women and children — to be talked about in public; but the men, who believed in either, were ignorant fools or milk-sops. Educated men knew better. It was all a gigantic, roaring farce, and they took their cues with spirit. A few kept their feet, but were discouraged and dazed. A small number underwent no revolution. A wider view they saw; but it was part and parcel of the well-known field of natural experiences,—the same measurements lengthened, the same calculations multiplied, the same rules developed,—that was all.

Fred Harmon had gone down with those who still outwardly conformed. In him duplicity and reticence, in all things, had held such sway that he did not himself know their boundary lines.

Preston Mansfield flung everything to the winds with the first revelation made to him by his father, and was openly and boldly a man of the rapid world, who did not care to hide the fact except from those of his own household. Even at home he made

no pretence. He simply held his tongue and rested on that miraculous capacity which each man's women-folks have for accepting him at, or even above, his own valuation, while a certain discount system is applied to every other man of their acquaintance. Preston's mother had sometimes had vague doubts of her husband, in spite of his conspicuous position in her beloved church. Of Preston she had no doubts at all. To her he was still a lad, pure, simple, direct and clean-minded. His sisters estimated him even higher, nor had a quaver of doubt ever come to them of the absolute moral integrity of their father. All this hurt Preston Mansfield, and he chafed under it whenever he was at home. He said that he hated to cheat women. It went against him to be the receiver of stolen goods — whether these were the confidences of those who loved him, or the proceeds of a less material, more dangerous, and more manly robbery.

"I always feel like a thief at home," he said; "a sneak-thief in an orphan asylum at that; not a brave highwayman, who takes his chances and risks his own skin with men." So Preston stayed away from home all he could.

Fred Harmon had no such inconveniently primitive prejudices. His mother knew that he did not believe — "in that sense" — many of the things to which he subscribed outwardly; but she did not know that he had still a third set of opinions and

actions which he did not care to submit even to her lenient inspection. The basis of his moral and mental attitude she knew, and had helped, she proudly felt, to form; but the full development of her teachings she did not suspect, nor could she have believed, if the results had been pointed out to her, that they were anything short of the imaginings of a madman, or the machinations of an enemy.

Duplicity she had translated into tact, and had lived the translation. Her son "reverted," as they say in evolution, to the original type.

Selfishness she framed and draped as the just sense of one's duties in ideal self-development. She always held that this was for the benefit of others, for the Race. Fred wrote "race" with a small r and "Self" with a large S, and he eliminated "others" altogether.

His mother believed that the Episcopal Church held the highest ideals in morals, religion, art, and music, to be found in this world. Fred believed that it was the organization of greatest power and influence to which a gentleman of culture could belong, and that it was a social lever and a moral screen that no man in his senses could afford to ignore. Fred was under the impression that his mother secretly agreed with this opinion. He had no doubt that the Broad Churchmen all did, and that the High Churchmen were clinging to the old

beliefs, either through fear, or ignorance of the tendency of the times. In short, it simply was not within Mr. Fred Harmon's comprehension that any one was ever real, and frank, and direct in anything whatsoever, unless he were either weak-minded or without the adequate culture to cover his tracks. Therefore Mr. Fred Harmon did not feel in the least like a sneak-thief in an orphan asylum, nor at a disadvantage morally with any one. When his artificial ethical legs were once knocked from under him, he had no doubt whatever that everybody else had stood on exactly the same kind, and that they, too, had cast them in due season.

Preston Mansfield looked upon himself as the victim of a deliberate piece of peculiar and unaccountable villainy. He hated his father dead, as he would have hated him living, and he believed that few other sons had ever been so cursed. He thought that he had been deliberately crippled in life, maimed in his self-esteem, and robbed of the chance to be honest.

"I don't doubt I'd have made a fool of myself often," he would say, grinding his teeth; "but I don't believe that I would have turned out a brute."

He was talking to Harvey Ball about it, once, and Harvey had said: "Oh, well, Pres., so long as you look at it that way, what is to hinder you from turning over a new leaf, as they say? Start over."

“Start over? Where? New leaf! Look here, Ball, you’re not a hypocrite, at least. Now tell me frankly, openly, squarely; if you had a sister whom you loved, would you be willing for her to marry me?”

“I’d a great deal rather she would marry you than a good many other fellows that I know;” said Harvey, evasively, thinking of Maude Stone.

“Humph!” said Preston. “In other words, you prefer Mephistopheles to the Devil. You do not want to be killed; but if you have got to be, why you would take to a gun-shot rather than to a hempen rope. Well, so should I, but I did not ask you any such question. I asked” — He paused. Presently he said: —

“Never mind that; that is the view of her brother or father. Now, suppose we take her personally. What do you think *she* would say or feel, if she knew the truth? Well, do you know, Ball, I’ve got a prejudice somehow,” — he pronounced the word “prejudice” scornfully, — “against tricking a good woman into marrying me. I think it is a damned low piece of business to deliberately deceive a girl to her ruin, whether it is for once or for a lifetime. If a grown-up woman, who knows what she is about and what it all means, makes up her mind to go to the devil, I suppose my conscience is as easy as anybody’s about helping her along; but I’ll be hanged if I’ve got the heart to

cheat a young girl into a *liaison*—whether it is temporary or permanent, in or out of marriage—when she thinks it means one thing and I *know* that it means another. Well, if any decent woman knew the truth about me, do you suppose I could get her to live with me? Then my married bliss would have to depend upon my cheating her successfully all my life, wouldn't it? Now look here, Ball, how do you think you would feel, to wake up and remember, every morning of your life, that you had got to deceive that woman all day—about things that would break her heart?"

"I don't believe that I'd like it," acquiesced Harvey.

"Like it!" exclaimed Preston, bringing his fist down with a bang. "Like it! If you had any respect for her,—not to mention love,—if you had a decent instinct,—not to mention self-respect,—you simply could not do it, that's all. And I have been robbed of my chance in life—Damn him!"

He said the last so fiercely,—he said it with such bitter vehemence, that Harvey Ball stood up startled.

"You wonder who it is I hate like that, Ball;" said the young man, ramming his hands into his pockets and pacing up and down the floor. "Well, I'll tell you. I'll tell you because you read me that letter from your home, and I just thought if I had had your chance, by gad, I would have been your—"

equal, he was going to say, but he stopped and then said: "I'd have been able to feel as you do. It was my father I was talking about just now."

Harvey stared at him in consternation.

"I do not wonder you are shocked and surprised. I know the kind of father you've got and what you think of him. Well, mine's dead. I'm glad of that at least, for I believe I would kill him if he wasn't."

"Don't, Preston," said Harvey Ball, putting a hand on his shoulder. "Don't say that. You're all worked up about something. You'll regret it after a while."

"No, I shall not," said Preston, savagely; "but I just tell you what it is, Ball, you don't know what you owe your father. It seems to me if I had had such a one, I'd rather die than hurt him. My God, I wanted to love my father; but you do not understand it, and I can't tell you any more."

The memory of this conversation swept over Harvey Ball the day he came home to talk over Albert's career, and his recent letter which seemed — he could not imagine why — to have caused such a commotion.

"Don't you believe in the Bible, son?" his father had asked, and his mother's face was troubled and anxious. "Don't you think your mother's religion and mine is good enough for you and for Albert?"

"Don't put it that way, father," said Harvey, touched and surprised. "I do not believe in the Bible in any sense that means it is different from any other old book, and as to the religion of you and mother being good enough for me" — the young fellow paused. Then he went on slowly, "Father, did you ever have a University education? Did mother?"

"You know, my son, that I never saw the inside of a school after I was fifteen;" said his mother a little reproachfully, and old Mr. Ball looked at his son with surprised eyes in which a shadow of disappointment began to find place.

"Well, then, mother, do you think it would be fair to ask me, because I wanted to go to college, and father could afford to send me — do you think it would be fair to reproach me by asking if the education which was good enough for you and father, was not good enough for me? I do not believe that you and father think that I have shown disrespect to you because I learned geometry and you did not. Certainly I never looked at it that way."

"Of course not, son," said his mother, puzzled. Harvey turned to his father.

"Now, father, why not put it the same way in religion? I have not come to the same conclusions you say that you have, — though from your life and training I am sure I can't see that we can be very

far apart in reality. But suppose we are,—suppose I have drawn wholly different conclusions from yours and mother's; suppose I do not believe what you and mother do about the Bible, is that disrespect to you? Is it fair to state it as you did? Look here, father, I would rather do almost anything than hurt you or mother. I think you are the two very best people in this world, and I love you the best, you know;" he did not think it necessary to mention Maude Stone just then; "but father, I don't believe as you seem to expect me to, and I am sure you cannot want me to lie about it. You have given me a good many advantages that you never had yourself. I have read and studied and thought in new lines and channels that were not open to you. I have tried to make good use of the opportunities you gave me, and, father, it really seems to me that this is a far higher compliment to you and to mother, than for me to have stopped where you did,—where you were forced to stop,—because you had no further opportunities to go on."

Mr. Ball moved the book in front of him, but said nothing, and Harvey began again:—"Would you think it showed more respect to you if I had refused to go to school after I was fifteen, on the ground that I thought my mother's education was good enough for me? Now, what you taught me of religion—if we can call it that—I think was

the very best part of your belief. 'Be honest and kind' was the creed. And, father, you know it was always on *natural* grounds you taught me this."

The old man moved a trifle uneasily, and Mrs. Ball murmured something about its being all their fault.

"Fault!" exclaimed Harvey. "Why, mother, it was right. Your love and instinct led you to give us the very best training that two boys ever had. I never realized it until I went to college. Then I knew the worth of it, and thanked you both every day I lived. I was master of myself, no matter what changes of opinion swept about me. I had a solid footing, and, father, I'm sorry to say that very few of the fellows had. I owed it all to you and mother. I knew that, and I thank you now, on my knees, that you trained me as you did;" and the young fellow slipped down beside his mother, put his arms about her waist, and kissed her forehead, lips, and hand. His father reached over and laid a hand gently upon his shoulder. Presently Harvey went on:—

"My reasoning and information led me to form certain conclusions about the Bible and religion. Was *that* disrespect to you? Or was it only that I told you what I thought? You taught me to tell the truth. Which would have shown more respect to you: to refuse to use the brains and opportunities you gave me, or to use them and

then refuse to tell the truth about my conclusions, or to have striven to blind myself and you to what I grew to think? Does it show more respect for one's parents, more love for them, to decline to go beyond them in education, prosperity, or religion? Father, I cannot believe that you think so. Do the men who talk about holding this or that belief, because their mother's religion is good enough for them, talk the same way about her education, her financial condition, her views on politics, or any other subject on earth? Don't you think, father, as you recall the men who talk that way, that you recognize some other motive than that of simple devotion to their mothers' belief that goes the length of identical thought? Do you want me to think exactly the same thoughts you do? If I cannot, do you want me to pretend to?"

The young fellow's lips were white, and he still held his mother about the waist. She bent forward and kissed him.

There was a long pause. The old man moved uneasily in his chair, but no word escaped his lips. At last Harvey's voice broke the strained silence again.

"I cannot understand this change, father. You have always expected me to be simply and openly frank with you. It is not—it never has been—a question of whether we agreed in opinion. Since we differ—if we differ—am I to be untrue to

myself? Am I to pretend to hold your exact views, if I do not? Such servility as that is demanded nowhere else in life except in religion, and only in the one religion that claims to make men true to themselves, to the highest that is in them,—the religion that claims to bring peace and goodwill on earth. Peace!” he added, sorrowfully, “Peace, and goodwill, and joy, and unity! Is it peace that simply seeks to silence opposition by force, physical or mental? The kind of peace that demands subjection on one hand, and asserts the right of arrogant authority on the other, is not worth having. It is not peace at all. It is the most abject slavery. It is tyranny unspeakable. I cannot think you want that, father; it is not like you. It is opposed to your whole life and your splendid character. Father! father! what does it all mean? Are we to wreck our confidence and unity, and wound our love for the sake of this shadow? Suppose you are right and I am wrong, still, what is it you want? Silence? Deception? Why? What is gained by either? And think—oh, *think*, father, of all that is lost! Is it well to build a wall between us on any subject? Is a religion,—can *anything* be good that demands either silence or subjection? O father, I am stunned, and perhaps I am talking wildly. Perhaps I shall wound you. Perhaps I have said too much, and yet—forgive me. I love you too well to be able to give up, without a

struggle, our life-long confidence and harmony, our frank and open comradeship.

"We have differed often,—always in politics—but this is our first"—he was going to say "break," then "quarrel" came to his mind; but after a pause he said, with unsteady voice, "misunderstanding. And it is like a blow in the face. It staggers and blinds me." His mother drew his head up against her breast and held her trembling hand on his cheek, kissing his hair.

"My son, my blessed boy," she said, trying vainly to check the tears as they fell from her eyes, "I am sure your father was wrong to say that. I do not want the husk of your devotion to me and to what I think, or believe. I want my honest son. I want the boy who shows his love not by *talking* about my religion being good enough for him and so shifting the duty he owes himself to think *for* himself on one who has had far less training in thought. I want my brave, honest, candid boy. He will think nobly, although he thinks differently from his mother." She ended with a little sob and kissed him again. Harvey sprang to his feet and went rapidly out of the room. His father followed him. He found him in the hall, with his hat on, leaning against the stairs.

The son looked at his father doubtfully.

"Harvey," said the old man huskily, "Harvey!" and he held out both his arms. "I was wrong. I was not fair to you, my boy."

"Hush, father, hush," said Harvey, from his father's shoulder; "do not blame yourself. I understand. Let me go now. It makes me feel as though I had quarrelled with you and mother. O father, could anything on earth do that, but religion? Isn't it all wrong some way? Isn't it cruel, this forcing people to think one way, or else sacrifice either candor, or confidence and harmony? I'm going to see Uncle Stone, father. I feel sore and strained. Will you go?"

The old man put on his hat and took Harvey's arm, and they passed out of the door.

"I shall talk to John," he thought, "and let Maude cheer Harvey up. I'm an old fool. I have shut the door of the boy's heart toward me for the first time in all our lives. For what? For what?"

CHAPTER XII.

"The first condition of human goodness is something to love."—*George Eliot.*

"There is a sort of wrong that can never be made up for."—*Ibid.*

"We wretches cannot tell out all our wrong
Without offence to decent happy folk.
I know that we must scrupulously hint
With half-words, delicate reserves, the thing
Which no one scrupled we should feel in full.
Let pass the rest, then; only leave my oath
. . . man's violence—
Not man's seduction, made me what I am."

—*Elizabeth Barrett Browning.*

"Truth's a dog that must to kennel."—*Shakespeare.*

"Doctor," said Preston Mansfield, coming into my office suddenly, one day, "doctor, I'm a pretty fellow to be playing the role of virtuous protector of endangered innocence; but I suppose a man never gets so low down that he doesn't plume himself on that noble quality in his nature, provided the endangered innocent happens to be a member of his own family, or if he isn't the man from whom she needs protection. The most expert horse thief makes a good lyncher, and the only member of a vigilance committee I ever knew had committed murder in another State." He flung himself into a deep armchair and put one leg over the arm. Then he went on satirically:—

"Not that we care a fig for justice to girls, not that we feel for the woes of the outraged; but

simply and solely that, being a part of our own families, wrong to them will cause us personal distress and inconvenience."

I began to protest, but he held his hand up to check me and went rapidly on:—

"Hold on a minute till I give you my proofs. Don't make up your mind that I'm a dime museum freak until I state my case. I try to protect my sisters from other fellows; other fellows are trying to shield theirs from each other—even Fred Harmon would fight to the death for his if he had one; well now, why? If it were a manly desire, honestly felt, to protect the helpless and innocent or inexperienced; if it were from a sense of fairness; if it were innate honor; if it were because we believe that we have no right to allow the ruin of the life of another being whom it is in our power to shield, why, don't you see, doctor, we wouldn't have to watch each other at all? Our sisters would all be safe; because every man would do his level best to see that every girl had a fair chance to grow up and make her own choice of her own life when she was old enough to understand; but you know that it isn't so. You know that nine-tenths of the girls that go wrong are tricked or bullied into it, in the first place, by some scoundrel who knows perfectly well what he is about. What does he care for her ruined life? What does he care for justice or honor toward the helpless? She isn't

his sister. It won't react on him if she is disgraced. I tell you, doctor, men are a bad lot. You know perfectly well that there is a tacit understanding among them not to give each other away. They all watch women and shield each other. They don't even want a woman to tell the truth in books. They pretend the conditions do not exist, that women are morbid and erotic. I don't believe that they know the meaning of unselfishness. Every act of their lives is for themselves. They howl about wanting their families to be happy; but it is all because it would be less comfortable for themselves if they were not. My proof? Why, we all constantly do the things secretly that we know would make our families most unhappy if they knew it. Don't we? No evasion, now; *don't* we? My God, doctor, I'm beginning to wish that I'd been born a decent horse or a good dog. I'm disgusted with the human race. One half knaves and the other half fools. I'm ashamed to belong to either one, and the worst of it is, in my case, that I don't belong to the fools — and I don't want to."

"What is the matter, now, Preston?" I asked. "Can I do anything for you?" The young fellow's bitterness had, in these days, become quite familiar to me, and he appeared to take comfort in coming to me from time to time to berate himself and men in general.

"Matter enough," he replied, savagely; "but I don't see that you can do anything about it. I don't know why I came to you — only — it is a little habit I have," he added, laughing. Then looking steadily at me for a moment, his eyes actually filled with tears as he said, huskily: "I wish to heaven you had been my father!"

He got up and went quickly to the window. Presently I went to him and taking his arm led him back into the room.

"Tell me what it is, Preston," I said. "If I can help you I shall be very glad. You know that." Still he was silent. Presently I said, "Preston, let me tell you one thing. It is only fair that I should. When I came home from abroad, I made up my mind that I had been mistaken in you when you were a boy. The day I met you in front of the Fifth Avenue Hotel, I decided that you were a bad lot, as you say, and that your case was simply hopeless."

He laughed a little bitterly at the memory, and then broke in: —

"Of course you did; you're not an idiot."

Then he turned to me with his face flushed: "Do you remember what I asked you that day? I have hoped since that you had forgotten it or, better still, that you had not heard what I said. I might have known better. You always notice, and — Hell! what a brute I was! Why didn't you knock

me down?" I made no reply. Presently he went on. "I wonder you didn't kick me. I deserved it richly; but the fact is, doctor, I had made up my mind then, that there were only two kinds of men. I knew you weren't a fool and — and — I had often wondered — to tell the truth, I'm glad you came back, or — . . . I'm glad I know you, doctor. It gives me — it makes me doubt — oh, hang it, I can't talk!" and, struggling with his emotions, he began pacing up and down the room.

"Don't try to express it, Pres.," said I. "I think I understand about what you mean; but don't set me up on a pedestal. I suppose I've done a good many things in my life that your sensitive conscience would revolt at, and —"

He stopped short in his walk, and laughed uproariously.

"My 'sensitive conscience' is good! O Lord, doctor, but you are a droll bird when you make up your mind to it," and he went off into a fit of laughter again. Suddenly he stopped and came close up to me. He put his hand out and I took it. I was surprised at the revelation. It was as cold as the hand of a corpse. His voice trembled when he tried to speak. "Doctor," he said, closing his fingers firmly over mine; "for God's sake don't tell me if you are like the rest of us. I watched you, at first, hoping, and confidently expecting, to find you out. After a while I began to fear that I

might, and now —” he paused¹ to steady his voice; — “and now I believe that it would half kill me if I did. Let me believe in one man. Let me believe wholly, absolutely, fervently, in you. I must, or I shall go mad. Lie out of it, go away, or send me away; do anything! but for God’s sake don’t ever let me find out that you are just a great, big male brute like the rest of us!”

He was so much moved and excited that I said: “Sit down, Preston; do you know that you are on the verge of hysterics? No, hysterics are not confined to women, by any means; and, my boy,” said I, laying my hand on his shoulder, “they are not always a sign of weakness, either. In your case they are the accompaniment of a mental exaltation that has made me your friend again, and convinced me that my early estimate of you as a boy was quite right. You were made for a splendid fellow, Preston. You were caught in the awful meshes of fate; you were not strong enough to stem the tide. First, your own ignorance was against you, and later on, the training by —” I paused to think of a mild word to apply to his father; but before I had found it, he had flung himself, full length, on my lounge, and looking up at me like a caged creature, said through his set teeth: —

“Don’t mention him to me, doctor. I’ve tried not to curse him, openly, since that day at his

grave. I know how that shocked you; but—but—now, when my little sister is in danger, it all comes back to me with renewed force. I have never told you what he did. I want to tell you now. May I? I want you to know it. No one else does, and—and I want you to understand what makes me almost a madman at times. I did not sleep last night; I could not. I had been posing all day to myself as little Dell's guardian and protector, and was planning to send her away until she should forget the handsome face and attractive voice of my friend, Fred Harmon."

He laid satirical emphasis on the word friend, and I looked up startled, for I had seen the child,—she was no more than this, with her fourteen years of utter inexperience,—walking with their city guest only yesterday. He noticed my changed expression.

"No," he said, "no great harm is done yet, only the poor child is in love with him and just in a frame of mind to believe anything he says or do anything he asks. He knows it. Well,"—he broke off suddenly, and then began again in a bitter tone. "Well, I know Fred Harmon. You don't. If he thinks he can have a pleasant time, increase his comfort or happiness, or serve any purpose whatsoever, by tearing out the heart of a rabbit or a girl, from time to time, he would give it no more serious thought than just enough to make sure that he

wouldn't be found out—or if he was found out, to be moderately certain he was in a position to make it look as if he were on the right side, at least on the popular side. It wouldn't give him a pang, so long as he had the best of it, so long as society smiled upon him. Well, you know what society is. A good surface appearance is all it wants of a man, so far as character goes. But just let a breath of pollution touch a girl's cheek and she is hunted down and howled at, until she commits suicide—or worse."

He covered his eyes with his hands for a moment, and then went on.

"I have driven at least one girl to that;—fa—the man in the grave out there,—and I. I can't marry her. There is no way that I can repair the crime—none whatever—and yet she is an outcast, to-day, and I am welcomed by those who pass her by. It was not her fault—at any time!" This was a new phase of it. He noticed my changed expression.

"Wait," he said, "till I tell you. I had a letter from her yesterday, just when I was posing as Dell's defender and was beginning to feel quite virtuous." He ground his teeth. "Nellie was with me when I got it. I think you know, doctor, that I love Nellie and wish that I could marry her; but—"

"Does Nellie care for you, Preston?" I asked, struck with an idea of helping him out, if I found

that his cousin loved him. But he took the question as a sort of accusation.

"I'm afraid she does," he groaned, and yet with a warmth of happy emotion in his voice. "I'm afraid she does, doctor, and that she thinks strangely of me that I do not say something. Yesterday she looked at the letter I so hastily put in my pocket, very curiously indeed, and I—I lied to her." He put his hand up to his eyes again as if shading them from a memory.

"Oh, I hate to lie! Most of all to her!" he exclaimed vehemently.

"Why don't you tell her the whole truth, Pres.?" I asked. He shrank back as if I had struck him.

"The whole bare ugly truth. Give her your side. Tell her the extenuating circumstances—"

"Humph!" he said with a curled lip.

"Tell her that an older man—perhaps you need not say who he was—" He sprang to his feet and took two or three hasty steps. Then he faced me like a chained tiger.

"Don't! Leave Nellie out, just now. Let me tell you the whole damnable story first. Then you may tell me if you think it one calculated to win the confidence and love of a girl, or to keep it after it is won," he added tremblingly.

I saw that he dared not marry her with his secret untold, and that he dreaded lest he should lose her love if he told her.

"Well, tell me, Preston, if you think it will help you; and if I can do anything for you afterward, you know I shall be glad to. I believe in you, Pres., old fellow," I added, putting my hand on his arm "I believe that you have never had half a chance. Perhaps it isn't too late yet to make a fresh start. Your inclinations and conscience have never fallen in with your training. That is a good beginning."

"No, I haven't had a fair show," he said, despairingly; "but it is too late now. Read that." He handed me the letter he had received the day before.

"I was beginning almost to forget and be happy. I was driving with Nellie, and was going to ask her what to do about Dell — I was a great fool ever to have asked Harmon here, — when this was handed out at the post-office. I had to hold the horse, and so Nellie got out and went in. She got it and handed it to me;" and he breathed hard at the recollection. I read the letter in silence.

"Mr. Mansfield, I have learned your right address at last," it said; "and unless you send me a thousand dollars at once I shall come there to see you. The children are both well, God help me! I asked at the school yesterday. I saw them for a moment. They did not know me, and I only said that I had been sent to ask if they were well, and if they needed anything. I am glad, at least, that you do not forget them so far as money goes."

I handed the letter back to him, and tried to think of something to say that would not seem cruel ; but he spoke first.

“Do you think that is a promising letter to give Nellie to read ? Well, I will not marry any girl, and lie to her either about my past, or my present, or my future. I’ve had enough of the humiliation of deception, and I will not disgrace myself, or the girl I love, by compelling her to live with a man she would not live with if she knew the truth about him, even if that man does happen to be myself. We’d say any man was a brute, we’d say the law was cruelly unjust, to force a woman to marry a man whose character she loathed ; who required of her honor, and gave her dishonor ; who demanded all of her life, but gave only a scrap of his — thrown to her as a bone is thrown to a dog — after he is done with it ; who demanded of her that she be good, and pure, and noble, and honorable toward him, while he made no pretence to offer her more than the mere shell of these. I’m pretty low, doctor, but, by gad, I’m not quite down to *that* yet. I won’t do it. I won’t deliberately cheat a woman I love. Look here,” he demanded, “I’m not a very good talker, but I know I’m right in the idea. Don’t you think a good woman is as good as a good man, — is worth as much ? Suppose we put it as a matter of merchandise. The value is equal, isn’t it ? Well, now, suppose a fellow makes the

trade. He pretends to give value for value, doesn't he? Well, the fact is, he simply deliberately cheats. He stacks the cards. He uses a marked deck. We say he isn't fit for decent society, if he does that at poker, or misrepresents in a horse trade, or a land sale, where there are other men, capable and experienced enough to take care of themselves; but when it is a young girl, and her whole life is at stake, it is all right to deceive her into making the bargain." He got up and stood by the grate, with his elbow resting on the mantel.

"I am Nellie's guardian and trustee since — *he* died. What would people think of me if I lied to her about her money, and kept back and pocketed and turned to my own advantage her property, simply because I have the power to do it, and she trusts me? The more she relies on my honor, the meaner it would be, wouldn't it? Well, a woman has to trust wholly to a man's honor in marriage, and men think it is smart to deceive them. They have no sense of shame about it. Look at my mother! Father would have murdered her if she had done half what he did. He demanded all of her life to be true to him, and he gave her, in exchange, a miserable, beggarly, warped corner of a deceitful, underhanded, unclean nature in exchange for it. And he thought it was good enough for her. He had no sense of shame about it.

“What did he give her in exchange for her honor and loyalty? Dishonor. What did he give her for her truth? Lies. What did he take home to her every day of his life? A mere shred of his nature, patched up and stuffed out and dressed to look real, and he depended entirely on her not finding it out — on her strong faith in him to carry him through. He traded on her tenderest emotions and then pretended to love and respect her! Bah! That kind of love and respect wouldn’t go down with him. Why should it with her? I tell you, doctor, I don’t believe the man lives who loves his wife enough to be absolutely true to her; to let her see every corner of his heart and life, both before and after marriage.” Then suddenly facing me, “Do you?”

I opened my lips to reply; but he checked me.

“No, don’t tell me yet what you think, for it will — it might — put yourself in with the rest. Wait till I tell you the story of the girl who wrote that letter.”

“She seems to be one who threatens; who is willing to — ”

“Stop!” he said. “She *ought* to threaten. She ought to force me to tell it all. She ought to demand that I take her up to the plane I live on. What right have I to let her be an outcast, socially, and I stay where I am? — Where I was? Where *she* was before I — before he — ”

He stopped, with his voice shaking. After he regained control of it, he went on.

"When you left us in New York that time, he tried all sorts of schemes with me. He took me to two or three gilded houses. Well, you know I was pretty shy of women and — well, he didn't feel sure that I was properly started on the road to hell, so he took me to board in a house where there was a widow with a pretty little girl two years younger than I. You know I was seventeen." He began pacing the room again.

"The widow was of good family, but poor, and she had gone to New York with the confidence of ignorance, to make a living for herself. The girl was large, well formed, and very pretty. I liked her; but I was shy and she did most of the talking. My father was kind to the girl's mother,—told her he would get her a better position — she was writing in a law office. He won her confidence, and after a while he asked her to let her little girl go to the matinee with us. Once or twice we took the mother, too; but she could not go often. She was pleased that her child had met with so safe and good a chance to have a little pleasure and catch a glimpse of the brighter side of life.

"One day we took her to drive in Central Park. She had never driven there before and was enchanted. She looked very pretty. I remember having an impulse to kiss her and the mere thought

made me blush. After we left the Park — it was along in the afternoon — we drove into a side street that I knew nothing about. It was not very closely built up, and there was a large circular building of some kind. I remember that, because of something I will tell you of later on. We stopped opposite that, and *fa* — *he* told me to hold the horses until he came back. He said he had an errand near by. He laughingly told the girl — her name was Minnie Kent — to get out and go with him. ‘I can’t trust you two youngsters here alone,’ he said. ‘Pres. might get to making love to you and let the horses run away.’ This so disconcerted me that I got the color of a beet, and she jumped out as if she had been pushed. She turned her ankle a little, and went away limping, but laughing to hide her embarrassment. She was a nice little girl, though she was n’t so very bright and she — but no matter, I must stick to my story, now that I am wound up to the point of telling it.” The veins stood out on his forehead; but he steadied his voice and went on.

“They went around the circular building and disappeared. It seemed to me that they would never come back. I drove up and down and around and across; but as I did not know just where they had gone, I went back and sat holding the horses where *fa* — where *he* had left me. At last he came back alone and said that the girl had

hurt her ankle so badly when she got out of the carriage that he had taken her to a doctor, near by, and that I was to drive the horses back to the stable, and then go to our boarding house. He would bring Minnie home very soon. He told me not to tell any one of her mishap, because the doctor said that it would amount to very little, and there was no need to have it talked over by the people in the boarding house. I did exactly as he told me, and was at the window, two hours later, when he returned. Minnie was with him, and I saw that she had been crying. I thought the doctor had hurt or frightened her. He unlocked the door and let her in, and came directly up to our rooms.

“That night at the dinner table Minnie fainted. It was my father who carried her upstairs and quieted her mother’s fears. He sat by the girl until she fell asleep, after they had worked over her and given her some powders and a little champagne. Then he came to our rooms again. He was a little uneasy, but I did not notice it much. I was uneasy myself. I was afraid she had hurt herself seriously, and I thought her mother ought to know about it. But my fa—he told me to mind my own business; that the girl was a little frightened and a good deal hysterical (I have never heard the word since without feeling actually sick), and that she would be all right in the morning. He twitted me a little, and said he guessed I was in love with her,

or I wouldn't be so anxious. That silenced me effectually, as he knew it would. She had promised to go with me alone to the matinee next day; but when the time came she said she was not well enough to go. She seemed to avoid me, and treated my fa— him very strangely, I thought; but I fancied it was all because he had teased her about me. I suppose boys are never too young to be egotistical. Her mother was very busy in those days and was at home but little. Then she was tired—being unused to such steady work—and kept her room to herself most of the time. By and by I noticed that my fa—that *he* had gained complete control over Minnie. He asked her mother if the girl might again go with us to drive. Minnie began to protest almost tearfully; but her mother said: 'Nonsense, child, you are not afraid of horses at all. It will do you good. I want you to go; you are looking pale.' Then she thanked us for all our kind attentions, and closing the door behind her went off smiling to her task, which was to take her to Philadelphia for two days to copy some legal papers. She called back to Minnie to be sure to do as my fa—as *he* told her, while she was away. Well, of course he found some way to make her go. When we were near the circular building he again told me to wait while he took Minnie with him. She had worn a thick veil, this time (she said it was to keep the wind from her face), and I thought I

saw a tear behind it as she got out ; but, little fool that I was, I never dreamed what it all meant, and I was glad enough that he did not poke any more fun at me about love making, but just took her with him as a matter of course. After a while he came back saying that he would be delayed a good deal longer than he had expected, and for me to tie the horses and come with him. I went. I shall never forget the shock of what I saw, and the girl's wild despair when she saw me."

Preston clinched his fists and walked several times across the room before he could control himself sufficiently to go on. "My f— *he* unlocked the street door as if he were used to the place, and went straight upstairs. The room he stopped at was in the back of the house, two flights up. He unlocked that door, too, pushed me in, and hastily closed and locked it behind me. The room was so dimly lighted that at first I could see nothing, and I was so surprised by my f—, by his actions, that I stood perfectly still. Presently I saw some one move, and said, 'Minnie?' At the sound of my voice there was a wild cry, and she flew to the far end of the room. I went hastily toward her, and saw that she was only partially dressed. I was so shocked and frightened that I did not know what to do. I realized then, for the first time, *something* of what it all meant, and that he had locked us in and gone away! I learned the

rest from her, by degrees, after I made her understand that I had not been, at any time, a party to the plot." He ground his teeth. "She sobbed, and sobbed. I tried to comfort her. I blamed my f— *him*, and I cursed him, for the first time in my life. I have repeated that curse a thousand times since, but, my God, doctor, it was terrible then!"

"Sit down, Preston. You are —"

"Wait! Let me finish! Here is where my own devilment comes in. While I sat there with that girl in my arms, trying to comfort her, calling down the wrath of heaven on his head, the devil got the best of me. We were locked up there for hours together, and in promising to avenge her, in swearing to take her part against him, in the helplessness of our youth and ignorance, clinging to each other for mutual comfort, I added my infamy to his, and the girl was doubly damned, before we realized that sympathy could lead to crime!"

He sat down and wiped the beads of perspiration from his forehead. There was a long silence.

"She told me that the first day he took her there he locked the door, and after trying to coax her to yield to him, had taken a revolver from his pocket and threatened her. She was too inexperienced and young to doubt for a moment that he meant to shoot her. Then he told her that no one would ever know it if she kept quiet. If she

made a fuss about it she was lost anyway, for everyone knew the kind of house it was, and they had seen her go in willingly. Nobody would believe her if she said she did not know. Oh, he used all the damnable arguments and threats and devices familiar to civilized savages, and afterward kept her quiet by promises and threats, and now I had added my crime to his, and the girl threatened to kill herself. She tried to jump out of the window. I caught her and — well, I promised to marry her and — I — I meant it *then*.

“There is no need to tell the rest — not to you. You will know how it went on after that with such a teacher as my f —, as that devil, to manage us. He did not let me marry her, of course. The girl was sacrificed, utterly, and I — well, here I am!”

He dropped both arms by his sides as he stood before me like a criminal waiting for his sentence. I was too much surprised and shocked to trust myself to speak. I had known his father as a thoroughly selfish man, with an undeveloped ethical nature; as one of that great class of successful business men who think, in all sincerity, that all is grist that comes to their mill; who are thorough believers in religion, and who do not know the meaning of morality; who are honestly shocked by a declaration of disbelief in a vicarious atonement which shall purge themselves of any lapse from rectitude, which lapse they believe, with the

faith of childhood, is a necessary part and parcel of depraved human nature. I was sure that Mr. Mansfield had died as confident of salvation for himself as he was that he had sinned. Had not the blessed Christ atoned for all the sins of frail humanity? He believed this to be the truth, the fairest, most fortunate truth in all the world, for tempted, depraved humanity; and he thanked God not as a hypocrite, but as a devout believer whose faith was too real and too complete ever to admit of a single doubt.

He knew, did he not, that all men were tempted to do wrong? He knew, did he not, that most of them yielded? He believed that this was the result of original sin in Adam. He believed implicitly that Eve was the active agent in that sin. Therefore it was only just that Eve's sinful daughters should suffer most and be the victims of men, since all men were first her victims. If men could do right, if they could redeem themselves from their own debased tendencies, then why had Christ died? If man is his own redeemer, what need of the plan of salvation? The vicarious atonement became a hollow mockery if man could do right of his own motion — if he could be taught that he *must* be his own redeemer. If he cannot, if he must yield to his passions, if he is totally depraved, — and, as I say, Mr. Mansfield did not doubt it, — then there was but the one way. Let Christ bear

the burden as he had volunteered to do. Accept the redemption thankfully, humbly, without question and without reservation. Mr. Mansfield had always done this in perfect sincerity, and he daily prayed to be forgiven for any wrong he believed himself to have done. He believed that his prayers for pardon should be addressed to God, and that the plea upon which he should base the claim for forgiveness, was the love and death for his sins of the only begotten Son. He believed that a God could, and would have the *right* to, relieve him of all consequence of any crime or wrong he might commit (even though that wrong was toward other human beings), and that He would do it. Had He not promised? Would not the Almighty redeem His pledge? Had Christ died in vain? Mr. Mansfield had settled all these points finally, in his own mind, and to his own satisfaction very early in life, and he was wont to say to his class in Sunday-school that he thanked God that he had never wavered in his absolute belief and consoling faith from that time on. *And he spoke the simple truth.* This faith had ever been a solace and support to him. He often confessed that he was the chief of sinners — that his feet had slipped, again, — and he felt better after the confession. “But though my sins are as scarlet they shall be whiter than snow. It is for such as I that Christ died, — for poor weak humanity, unable to save itself, incapable of resisting temptation, whose

feet slip by the way, whose sinful passions overcome them. ‘Believe on me and ye shall have everlasting life.’ Cast your burdens on the sinless One who gave Himself a willing sacrifice that whosoever believeth on him shall have everlasting life.”

Mr. Mansfield had no doubt that everlasting life would be a blessing and a joy to him. If he ever thought of Minnie Kent exactly in this connection, he knew that she could gain the same priceless boon by a simple act of faith, and he thought that God would undoubtedly soften her heart before she died, so that she might accept salvation. If she did not,—and he was deprived of the pleasure of seeing her in the next world,—it would be her own deliberate refusal, and she must choose her way for eternity. No one could do that for her. I knew so well how he had argued to himself, when he had thought about it at all. I knew so well that his faith had comforted and upheld him all his life long. *He had not used his religion as a cloak.* His religion *was* his cloak. I looked at his son, standing before me now with both arms by his sides and with hands clinched, waiting for me to speak, and I found myself dumb.

“Did your father ever realize and try to atone for his crime?” arose to my lips; but a flood of memories of the man checked me before I gave utterance to the words. “I did not think he was capable of that,” shaped itself in my mind, and

then I remembered that it was very nearly this that he had asked me to do, or help him to accomplish, years ago. The minutes stretched out, and still I had not spoken. Nothing that I could think of seemed suitable to say. At last the young fellow shook himself as if trying to be freed from bonds, and raised his eyes to mine.

"I don't wonder that you are silent, doctor," he said slowly, "but — oh, *say* something! Say anything! I have borne it alone as long as I can, and you are my only hope. Say something, say *something*, doctor, or I shall go mad!"

"Have you ever thought that it may not be too late to marry her yet, Preston? — to sacrifice yourself, and your love for another, in an effort to do all you can to undo this terrible double wrong? Has it occurred to you that you have no right to think of your own happiness, and that you should make her your honored wife?" I asked.

He burst into a laugh as mirthless as it was discordant. "And so even you think that by marrying her I could give her respectability, if I cannot give her love, and that by giving her a loveless husband I can make reparation to her! Let me tell you something, doctor. I spent about two years making up my mind to do that. I felt perfectly heroic and virtuous when the time came. I pitied myself. I went to her, one day, and presented the case from that outlook." He paused and I

said: "I am glad you did that, Preston. She was grateful and pleased, no doubt, even if some cause prevented you, later on, from doing it."

"O Lord, yes, she was pleased and grateful!" he said with a dry sarcasm that was steeped in gall. "Her gratitude and pleasure were beautiful to behold. She waited until I had finished my generous offer and was expecting the fruits of my heroism to envelope us both in a perfect sea of tender self abnegation, when she inquired calmly, but with scorn unspeakable, —

"How could *you* make me respectable? How can *you* give me that which you do not possess yourself? How could a permanent connection with you confer upon me anything admirable? Make an honest woman of me, indeed! You have more than you can do, Preston, to make an honest man of yourself. I am, and always have been, far more than your equal. You and your fiend of a father once had the power to commit a crime against me and against those two helpless children who will always bear the curse of your blood; but you have never — since I was old enough to understand — had the power to make *me* commit the worst of all crimes against myself. No, I will not marry you. *I am low enough already.* For the sake of the children? How can it benefit them to know that they have two such parents? One is quite enough; but they are to have neither. Thank God! illegitimate chil-

dren belong to the mother who suffered for them. It is only the married mother who suffers the degradation of not owning her own child.' All this was when she had made up her mind to place the children at school and have them educated as orphans. She watches them from afar, and if my cheques do not reach them in time—if she fears I may neglect their support—I get a letter like that." He still held the crumpled paper in his hand. He wiped the beads of dampness from his brow, and I offered him a glass of wine. He swallowed it at a gulp. Presently he faced me again with the same calm desperation with which he had just spoken.

"No, doctor, there doesn't seem to be any way out of it at all. Consequences are unrelenting. This is the very reason I so hate my father. He has placed me where I can neither repair the past for others nor for myself. And I cannot begin anew with that burden on my soul—that stain on my life. I want Nellie to know that I love her too well to ask her to marry the moral leper who was scorned by a woman who spoke only the truth when she said: 'You cannot give what you do not possess yourself. You cannot make me respectable.' All she said was perfectly true. Her position in the matter is beyond argument. It is the impudent arrogance of power that enables men who have injured women, to talk about making their victims 'respectable' afterward. It is not the beggar who

offers alms. It is not the thief's prerogative to sit on the bench. She was right. It was a greater insult for me to assume that I could lift her up, than if I had struck her. If I had asked her to marry me, to make *me* respectable, to make *me* reparation for all that was lost out of my life, there might have been some sense in it. It might be possible for a woman (if she loved a man well enough) to give *him* respectability by marrying him after he had seduced or injured her; but for him to pretend or assume that he can give it to her — that is impossible. Minnie Kent is not, and never has been, a bad woman. She makes her living now in the only way that Christian society leaves open to her; but she still has too much self-respect to marry a man she does not love and cannot respect — especially the one who injured her. If she had loved me, it would be different, perhaps. She is a brave woman. She might have forgiven me if her heart had been on my side, for she knows as well as I do that in the beginning I was but little more to blame than she. She always says that she does not blame me particularly. She looks upon me as *almost* as much of a victim at the start as she was. Oh, she is fair enough, doctor; but *that* doesn't help matters out much. She said —" His lips trembled and he waited to command himself. "She says that I — that she — never looked at me, or thought of me, as — as *I*. I only represent

him to her. I stand for — I am little or nothing to her, in my own person; but I am everything devilish to her as — as *his* representative. As her eternal curse from him — through him. . . . I do not tell it very well; but I thought I could quite understand her that day. I can't make *you* see how it looked to her — how she made it look to me."

"Yes, Preston," I said; "you do make me see. But don't try to. Don't —"

He lifted his hand to stop me and went on.

"Oh, heavens, doctor, why prolong the agony? Don't you see that it is all quite hopeless — *quite*? Do you wonder that I hate my father with a hatred that is woven into every fibre of my being? Do you wonder that I am glad he died before I awoke to the deeper meanings of life, for fear that my own hand would have been the one to take his life? Great God! do you wonder at *anything* in a world where fathers commit such crimes against their sons — where daughters are hunted of men who are taught to *believe* that they can bestow respectability upon their victims or withhold it from them at their pleasure? What an infamous training it all is that teaches that the injured is the disgraced, and that the villain who wrongs a girl stands on a pedestal to which he can *lift* her if he sees fit! And then they have the impudence to say that men do not look down upon women, that it is only women who scorn the degraded of their sex! Bah!

I haven't any patience with the kind of narcotics we men use to deaden the little sense of justice and honor we were born with."

He arose and stood in front of me again as he ceased speaking, and seemed to expect me to reply.

"Have you ever thought that you might tell Nellie the whole truth, just as you have told it to me, and that it might be a wise thing for you to do?" I asked, trying to speak quite naturally.

"Have I thought of it?" he exclaimed bitterly, and with a desperation that forced itself out on neck and forehead in great cords of tense muscles. "Have I thought of food when I am hungry? But I dare not! *I dare not!* And then, look; I would have to tell of—I would have to tell all of it from the first, and of your part—about sister Allie. Of that object lesson you tried to give him; of his infamous life, and she—he—he was always kind to her. He was like a father to her. She never knew any other. She would not be able to believe me, even if she wanted to, and she would not want to—not against him. Then if she did, just look at it, doctor, just look at the whole thing as I have, a thousand times. She believes in him, not only because she loved him, but he did all the things that women are taught to believe are necessary in the life of a good man—that is, he did outwardly, and as far as she ever knew. Now I don't. I refused to be made deacon in his place.

Nellie knows that I swear, and — don't you see, the weight of evidence is all on his side even his death?

“If he were alive I could do it better. I might risk it then, for I could force him to tell her that I was not lying, or I would tell — no, I couldn't tell mother. It would kill her, and I could not do that, even to gain my own life. My God, doctor, don't you see that it is quite hopeless?” He broke off suddenly and threw himself into a chair. In a moment he was up again and pacing the floor nervously.

“But suppose she did believe me? Suppose I were to tell that story to Nellie, and suppose she forgave me (and there is very little a woman will not forgive if she loves a fellow; I've learned that, and men trade on it — the cowards!). Suppose she held him responsible for all that part, even then what can I do? Who is to shoulder the rest of my devilment? And you, naturally, could not take much stock in my general morals, after I was once fairly launched, could you? Why, I outdid the old man in a couple of years. No,” he added hastily, as he saw my look of inquiry.

“Oh, no; I never got quite so low as to duplicate his particular piece of villany. I never deliberately laid a trap to catch a young girl, and I never took part in but one thing that struck me as being based on the same kind of cold-blooded,

cruel-hearted brutality. I assisted once at a rabbit coursing. It made me sick. A lot of well-dressed brutes on two legs cheered themselves hoarse at the sight of a few timid, panic-stricken, defenseless little rabbits running in the wildest, most hopeless flight from trained dogs that were urged on by the shouts of their high-bred owners. There was absolutely no chance for the defenseless little beast. All means of escape by flight were cut off; but it was a noble sight to see a rabbit dash wildly here and there with its eyes starting from its head, and its heart beating like a trip-hammer, until the dogs finally ran it down and crushed its spine between their cruel teeth, when it was already about to die of fright! Do you know I couldn't help thinking of those rabbits as girls—they are about as utterly defenseless—and of the trained dogs as men who hunt them down, with as little mercy and about as little danger to themselves?

“I believe I could stand it to see them course cats or rats, or any kind of animal that can fight, that has a chance, but the grade of brute enjoyment to be obtained in rabbit coursing strikes me as admirably adapted to the men who hunt down little girls, and use their money and their piety and position as a shield.

“The fellows all gayed me unmercifully because I said, after the first heat, that it made me sick.

Fred Harmon said it was noble sport, and if I'd only stay till I got used to it, I'd enjoy it hugely. I told him I might be able to stay at a bull fight until the arena looked like a Chicago slaughter house, but I didn't believe that I'd ever get old enough, or experienced enough, or cultured enough, in this world, not to retain a prejudice against seeing grown men beat the brains out of babies just for the fun of hearing the babies yell, and witnessing the anguish of the mothers. Now, Harmon looks on me as a cad, because I talk that way. He thinks it is a lack of culture—that it is crude. Well, maybe it is; but somehow I've got a prejudice against getting my manhood all cultured out of me. Whenever I get so refined and exquisite and polished that the terror and suffering of any living thing affords me amusement, I hope to God, doctor, that you, or some other good friend, will have me put in a madhouse, or give me a dose of cold lead. I'm pretty low, I know, and my tastes are not at all fashionable, but I'd rather be out of the swim than deliberately to cultivate the tiger within me, or rather the jackal, for it is that noble animal, I believe, that depends on the helplessness of its prey for success."

I was glad that he had taken this channel of conversation to relieve his pent-up feelings, and I had led him on and on, farther and farther from the subject of his recent confession, and had begun

to congratulate myself upon the success of my plan to divert him, and so gain time, when he suddenly turned to me :—

“ Well, doctor, haven’t you made up your mind what to say yet? I’m about talked out. I’ve been running emptyings, as they say in the maple sugar camps, for the last half hour, to give you a chance to grapple with my charming little story in all its bearings ; but I see you’re a trifle short yet in the matter of congratulations. Well, I’ll come again. This is your office hour. Good-bye.”

“ I *would* rather think it over, Preston, before I say much to you. Come in to-morrow at the same hour. I shall be alone.”

“ All right,” said he, and passed out. He had not reached the hall door before he turned and re-entered my office. He came straight up to me and took my hand.

“ Don’t worry over me, doctor,” he said. “ Hell is full of my kind, and I’ll only be one more.”

He dropped my hand as suddenly as he had taken it, and was gone before I could utter a word.

“ Poor Preston,” I said to myself, “ what can I say to you to-morrow ? ”

CHAPTER XIII.

"Knowing at last the unstudied gesture of esteem, the reverent eyes made rich with honest thought, and holding high above all other things—high as hope's great throbbing star above the darkness of the dead—the love of wife and child and friend." — *Robert G. Ingersoll.*

"Now what could artless Jeanie do?
She had nae will to say him na;
At length she blush'd a sweet consent,
And love was ay between them twa."

—*Robert Burns.*

When Maude Stone received no reply to her note of final dismissal, addressed to Mr. Fred Harmon in Chicago, she at first grieved a little, then feared that he might not have received it. At last when six months had passed, she confided this fear to her father. He assured her that her note had been received and receipted for by Mr. Fred Harmon himself; for Mr. Stone had taken the precaution to send it registered.

"How did you ever happen to think of that, papa?" asked Maude, in astonishment.

Her father drew her down upon his knee, and pushing the light curls back about her fine forehead in the ugly way that the best intentioned men usually manage to achieve when handling a woman's hair, said softly:—

"I thought I knew Fred Harmon, daughter. I did not believe that he would reply, and I meant

that you should have no doubts about his having received the note. Here is the post-office receipt." He took the worn paper out of his pocket and placed it in her hand; then he pushed the curls back from her face again. He noticed that a sudden dampness covered her brow, and he mistook its meaning. Her hand trembled a little, then she deliberately tore the paper into bits, laid her head on his shoulder, and put one soft little palm against his cheek, pushing his face down on her own. They were silent for a long time, when Maude said softly: —

"You blessed old papa, I wonder if any other girl ever had such a wise, loving friend."

Mr. Stone rubbed his smooth cheek gently up and down on the velvet one of his daughter, but said nothing. It was dark in the heavily curtained library, and Mr. Stone rocked back and forth with the girl as if she were still a child.

"If I could make my little girl happy," he said presently, "if I only could defend her against her own generous, loving heart, I would be content; but —" he sighed and pressed her closer to him.

She freed herself so that she could sit upright, and taking his face in her hands looked steadily, unflinchingly into his eyes. The light had faded so that only the outlines of their faces were clear to each other; but her great, fine eyes looked luminous and clear.

“Papa,” she said slowly, “you *have* defended me against my own heart. You have made me see clearly in Fred, what I had always blamed myself for catching glimpses of at times. I could not be happy with a man who was not true to himself as well as to me. I could not long love a man who had no basis of character that was his own — his very own. Fred was so different from any one I knew. He was so — nice — on the surface, and at first I did not dream that it was not real. I admired him, and thought I loved him; but I believe now that I never did. You are so real, so genuine; Uncle Ball is, and — and —” she was going to say Harvey, but she did not. “Perhaps I was old enough to have known that all men are not to be measured by you; but I think I have always done that, and — I — never knew how terribly short of good weight a man can come when brought to that test, until that awful night of the Military Ball, nearly a year ago now, popsie. Did you know that it was so long as that? Since then, papa, I think nothing on this earth could have made me want to marry Fred. I felt so ashamed *for* him that night as I measured him by you, and — and — saw that he was not even capable of recognizing the disparity. Such differences as he saw he very clearly thought were to his advantage.”

Mr. Stone's hands clasped themselves back of the girl's waist. She was stroking his cheeks now

as if he were the one to be shielded and dealt gently with. Presently she went on steadily but in a low tone:—

“I am not at all a broken-hearted girl, papa. Don’t worry about me. I am—I shall be—it was a great revelation to me. I feel years and years older; oh, ever so many years older, and as if I had come through a very great change; but I am not unhappy as you fear, and as I would have expected to be—as I would surely have been—if I had really loved him, papa. It just seems to me all the while now as if some one—a friend or neighbor—had died, and I have to keep quiet and step softly, and—and not laugh very much or very often.”

Her father groaned a little, and kissed her hand as it came near his lips. He liked her to laugh very often indeed.

“But truly, papa, I am not—it just seems as if—each morning now when I wake up I have to try to think what it is that presses upon my spirits, and just what it is that I have lost. And truly, papa, I do not believe that it is my happiness. I *know* that it is not that; but only my confidence in and ignorance of—of—other kinds of men. I was very young, you know, last year, very young indeed, for my age.”

Her father snatched her to his heart again and a half sob escaped him. She was quite still for a

time, and then said softly: "I am not so young a girl now, papa, but that it is time I should learn one of the hard lessons of life. All women must, I suppose, and as to men — how could you have read Fred as you did, if you had not learned long ago to measure, and sift, and distrust people? I wish we did not have to do it. I wish we could take what people seem to be for what they are and not be cheated; but if we cannot, papa mine, is it not time that your great, big girl should know it?"

She was trying to cheer him up now by her old ways and tones. "Why, you see, popsie, I am getting pretty old — not exactly gray and toothless," she said laughingly, and her fine teeth gleamed out for a moment; "but quite old enough, for all that, and I ought to be more experienced and wise. You have told me yourself that nothing teaches one like sorrow. I never understood it until now. It is true, and in spite of all, I guess it was a lesson I needed pretty badly. I was too childish and too happy. Even love did not mean what it ought to have meant. It did not go deep enough — and then I was very thoughtless of other people."

"You were never that, daughter," said her father; "you were always thinking of others."

"Oh yes," she broke in, "perhaps I was as to whether they had this or that to eat or to wear; but I never thought much about whether they themselves *were*, or only seemed to be. In spite of the

pain, I am glad I had that lesson, for your sake, papa, if for nothing else. I never half appreciated you before, — and some other men like — Uncle Ball.”

Her father had both her hands in one of his now, and he was holding them to his lips just where the inside of the round little wrists came close together. “All the knowledge I had was just pitched helter-skelter into my brain. I’ve been making out a sort of table of contents from time to time this past year. I’ve tried to stop long enough to let the sediment settle. I used to suppose most people had parents like mine. Poor Fred! What a training, what weak examples, what soulless friends he must have had! How much he has lost and — and how much I have to be glad about.” She sat up suddenly and laughed. “I am happy to have made your acquaintance,” she said mockingly. “That expression always amused me so when I have heard people use it; but, papa, I *am* glad to have made your acquaintance, and I never knew you before until this last year.”

“John!” called out Mrs. Stone, pushing aside the portière and stepping into the room. “John!”

Maude put her hand over her father’s lips, and they remained silent in the darkness.

“Maude, Maud-i-e! I don’t know where they are. They are sure to be together concocting some mystery. Maud-i-e!”

Mrs. Stone had dropped the portière, and was going down the hall again when Maude's clear laugh rang out.

"What-e-e?" She called after her mother. "The two old hardened conspirators are here in the dark, mama-chen. What is wanted of them? They are a bad lot. Come in gingerly — Wah! go slow there!" And the girl laughed again as the sound reached her of some one in the darkness walking against a chair.

"Stand still now and wait until I whistle, and then you follow the whis, mama-chen. Now — wh — e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e! We're both over here. Wh — e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e-e!" She whistled again. "Where the head conspirator is, there will the small fry be found also. Selah!"

"I am not mama-chen, but I have found you by your whis, as you call it,— and by her connivance," said Harvey Ball; "and now it is her turn, and mine, to laugh."

Mrs. Stone's merry voice called out from the drapery,—she was always very happy to hear Maude talk in her old, flippant, rollicking way, — "Ah, ha, Miss, you are not the only one to play tricks in the dark. But for goodness' sake, light the gas, John. Harvey's father is out here. No, he has gone in search of you. He is out in the dining room," and Mrs. Stone started to join their old friend, and to say that her husband would be out at once.

Maude sprang to her feet and was on the other side of her father in a flash, with a hand on each of his shoulders, when Harvey Ball's voice had made known his presence. He was so near now that he could see the outline of the two figures. He put one hand on John Stone's shoulder and under it he felt the warm soft hand of the girl. It sent a thrill of almost painful pleasure through his veins. It was a good omen he thought — and she did not take her hand away. He was not sure but she had a vague idea that if she let it lie perfectly still he would not know that it was there and would remove his own. He wondered if he dared close his fingers over it. Would she be angry? It seemed strange to think of it in that way. Maude's hand had lain in his a thousand times in the past; but — dared he to take it up now? He pressed a little more firmly so that it could not slip out, but he did not close his fingers.

“ Well, between you two youngsters I do not see how I am going to get up ;” said Mr. Stone, resignedly. “ Maude is holding me down on one side and you on the other. But such is life. The old folks have to take a seat and give the floor to the rising generation. When did you come home, Harvey?”

He made a pretence of sinking hopelessly into the chair. The movement lowered his shoulder so that Harvey's fingers slipped naturally under

Maude's hand, and still she made no effort to draw it away. Harvey forgot the object of his visit. He forgot the sore heart with which he had started from home to see his old friend John Stone, to tell him about the new fear that had come into his life — the fear to be open and frank, and truthful at home.

His heart beat wildly, for surely, surely, Maude's silent acquiescence meant something for him. Not long ago she would have slyly pinched his fingers or openly made comment on the situation, claiming to be a prisoner in common with her father; but now —

"What will you give us to let you up?" she asked her father.

"Us!" Harvey pressed her hand a little more firmly; but kept the weight of his own upon her father's shoulder. Maude bore down a trifle more heavily on the other side and made elaborate pretense to be so occupied there that she was wholly unaware of the location of the hand that Harvey held. The young fellow wondered if she could be unconscious of it, and his heart sank; but he could not believe it. It was not like Maude. She would have noticed. She was keeping a secret *with* him. Her heart was beating like his, too! It was almost too delicious to believe, but —

She had put the side of her face down by her father's and asked again: "What will you give if

we let you up?" She rubbed her soft cheek against his, but that other hand still lay in Harvey's and it was deliciously flexible and warm.

"Give?" blustered Mr. Stone; "give? why I won't give anything. I do not propose to buy or beg my liberty. I believe in a man taking what he wants in this world, especially if it belongs to him by rights," and he suddenly shook his great frame free and stood up; but in the general movement, Harvey had carried Maude's hand to his lips, and pressed it there one long, rapturous moment. Did she know? She did not say a word to indicate it, if she did. Was she so merrily occupied in this little contest with her father, that even that eager kiss had not made her sure of a hidden meaning in their clasped hands? Harvey did not believe it, and when he dropped her hand, his heart was singing a new song, and he could not struggle back to the unhappiness that had brought him there to-night. It had all taken such a little while, and yet how everything was changed! Why did any one want to go to a lighter room? This one was brilliant.

"Can't we stay here and not have a light?" Harvey asked, and his voice trembled with happiness. "I like to sit in the dark. The moonlight is enough. It is getting in here now, see?" And stepping to the window he held back the drapery.

"There is Lyra," Maud said, from the window. "Do you know, I like Lyra best of all the constella-

tions. Why? Oh, I do not know, only I do. I always look for her when I am at the window, or if I am outdoors at night. I always think of her as mine."

"I'll go and get a match to light this gas, and bring your father back with me, Harvey," said John Stone. "I must say it is a little dark for my eyes, but I suppose you children can read almost anything by the light of the moon, or Lyra, hey, Maude?" And her father slipped out from behind the curtain where she had dragged him to investigate her favorite constellation. Harvey's heart gave a wild leap. Could he, dared he, leave his window and go to where she stood? Would she care? Would he have time before her father came back? Was her heart as wildly, as madly ecstatic as his own? Had his any reason?

"Harvey?" said a soft voice beside him. He turned, and the moonlight fell full on the upturned face and shining eyes of Maude. She was holding the heavy curtains back with both upstretched arms, and the soft folds of her gown almost touched him.

"Maude, my darling!" and their lips met in a long, eager kiss.

"Oh, I love you, I love you, I love you!" burst from the girl's lips, and her arms clung about his neck. "I love you, Harvey, I love you!" There were happy tears in her eyes.

Harvey was beyond speech. He pressed her to his breast in a transport, and kissed her eyes, her hair, her lips, her throat. There was a long silence. Then a great sob broke from his lips and he unclasped her hands from his neck, and suddenly sank at her feet.

"Oh, my God, Maude, darling, do not touch me again — not just now — or I shall go mad with joy. Darling, darling, darling, you love me!"

She took his hands from his face and kissed them madly — their palms and wrists — and holding one against her neck, she drew him up to the window seat beside her, and taking his head against her bosom, murmured softly, "Dear boy, dear boy, dear boy, are you as happy as I?"

No words, no thoughts, would come to either of these young hearts, stirred for the first time to their depths, where the birth of love's rapture had crowded all else out. Endearing names, soft tones, cooing inflections, murmured inarticulate caresses made speech a useless thing. Their hearts understood, and sang with a joy that was pain and rapture, that deadened all capacity to think.

"Kiss my other eye; it feels so lonely," she said presently. "You have kissed that one three times, and the other one loves you too."

Harvey broke into a rapturous laugh, and with his lips against the neglected orb whispered:—

"It loves me too, the precious, beautiful darling. Did I neglect it?" and he made that inarticulate, consolatory sound in his throat that mothers and lovers use when words will not express the struggling emotions of the heart. Maude laughed a happy little peal.

"Oh, oh, oh, don't put it out! I shall need it to look at you. I could not see enough of you with only one. There — there — oh, don't put the other one out too! I never dreamed that one could be so happy and live. I, who have known so little except happiness, have never seen its face before!"

Then standing with his face between her palms she said softly, reverently: —

"My darling!" She closed her eyes as if to shut out all the world, but the one thought, and sight, and touch.

"My darling, oh, my darling!"

"Mau-die! Mau-die! Har-vie! Where are those children? Mau-die!" called Mrs. Stone, from the doorway. "They are not here, Mr. Ball. I guess they have gone out for a walk. I must say it is a splendid night. Almost too fine to be in doors. Don't go. They will be back soon I am sure, and Harvey won't know what to make of your leaving so early and without him."

But old Mr. Ball was restless and unhappy. He wanted to be with his son again and yet he dreaded

it. He wondered if he could take down the barriers between them. He had confided his trouble to John Stone, and John had taken Harvey's side of course. "But Harvey won't hold any ill-will about it, Edward," he had said. "He will understand."

"Understand, yes," said the old man forlornly, "but can he forget? It must look to him as if I had deliberately tried to bully him into saying one thing when he thought another. I'm afraid John, I have thrown away the best pearl on the string, to make room for a conch-shell—sound, not value. I've been a pitiful old fool. It is not a question as to whether Harvey would hold malice, or whether he will *want* to feel estranged, and as if there was a barrier between us—of course he won't want to—but can he help it, now? That is the question. And can I? What did I do it for? I can't see now myself. I did feel as if I must warn him and check him; but I cannot see for the life of me now what put it into my head. He is good. That is what I want. He is honest. That is what I want. Well, what in God's name was I after any way? What *did* I want him to do or say?"

"You wanted his honest opinion, Edward," said John Stone, with a twinkle in his eye, "but with the usual consistency of the theological devotee you wanted him to be just honest enough to hide his doubts, if he had any, and make his opinions fit the

prevailing fashion, or you would know the reason why."

"John!" said Mrs. Stone, reprovingly.

Her husband laughed. He took hold of his old friend's overcoat, and held it up for him to put on.

"Taken all in all, Edward, you are the least tyrannical of believers and the most reasonable of those who reject reason as their guide. If you had not been born with a certain belief in your veins, you would talk just as Harvey does to-day. But in the day when you were born, faith, belief, dogma was born in people. Their mothers had no doubts at all, and their fathers kept such as they may have had, to themselves. It was a good deal safer to do it, in those good old days," he added dryly. "Well, it is different now. In fact it is exactly turned round. The mothers doubt and keep quiet for the most part, and the fathers disbelieve and speak out. The birthmark is no longer faith; it is doubt, more or less open. It is agnosticism plain or on the half-shell—that is about the size of it these days. Well, Harvey takes his straight. So do I. The Broad-churchmen and Christian Evolutionists serve theirs with a dash of Judaism, a pinch of Paulinism, a hint of Buddhism, and now and then a thimbleful of good, old-fashioned orthodox Christianity; but the latter variety is served to country customers only, and the man who passes it sprays himself afterward with more

or less Ethical Culture and Nineteenth Century Platonism." He laughed and slapped Mr. Ball on the back with a sounding whack that raised a little dust.

"Why, Edward, you say yourself that you do not know anything about any other life than this; you say yourself, that you would not like to swear to there being another world; you admit that you are not at all sure that a prayer was ever answered, in any theological sense. You confess that the only kind of beings you personally know anything about are residents of this world; well, that is the whole field. You are an agnostic, but you do not know it. You have certain little frills and bows that you tack on in the shape of church attendance and forms of expression; but when it comes to real, solid facts, you do not pretend to go one step farther than I do. Well, Harvey stands right where you do,—in point of fact,—only he takes a calm outlook, plants his feet and takes the consequences of his premises. He does not try to eat his jam and keep it, too, and when it is all gone, does not put the cover on the dish and try to make other folks believe that it is full. Now the 'reconcilers' do just that. They give away their whole case, and then they vow they have got it, only it is covered up. Beecher did that. Heber Newton does it, and so does Phillips Brooks and Dr. Thomas and all those progressive fellows over at Andover.

“Why, great Scott, Edward, when they lay down their premises, argue their case and then begin to draw their conclusions, it is enough to make a dog laugh. Their premises and conclusions are not even blood relations;” and John Stone chuckled over his comparison. “If you believe without a doubt, the story of the creation, the Garden of Eden legend, the snake tale,—which is necessary to the fall of man,—and the ‘In Adam all men died’ theory; if you accept the possibility of vicarious atonement, and can think it not a vicious idea; if you believe Christ was a God and had no human father, and that his death could in any way relieve you of your own responsibility, or make an All-wise God change his mind about damning you; if you are sure of such a God, such a creation, such a temptation, such a fall, such a Christ, such an atonement, and that it could have the results claimed,—then you are able to argue with some show of consistency. But drop one single link, admit one single doubt or question, and you are gone. Your whole system is worthless. The Catholics are the only consistent Christians. They do not try to use both faith and reason. They scout reason altogether, and they are right, unless you let it have full sway. The old-time Protestants—and there are precious few of them left—tried to take three parts faith and one part reason, but it did not stop there. It could not.

The Catholic Church understood that perfectly. To-day, the Broad-churchman and 'reconciler' element—those who 'reconcile' science and religion, or evolution and creation—try to work it with one part faith and three parts reason; but it is fatal to both. The result is that it is boiled down to just this—Rome or Reason. Now, you would make a pretty Catholic, wouldn't you?" And he laughed jovially.

"John," again remonstrated his wife, "you are such a tease. Let Uncle Ball go in peace if he will not stay any longer. I wonder where those children are? Maudi-e-e!"

CHAPTER XIV.

"You never need think you can turn over any old falsehood, without a terrible squirming and scattering of the horrid little population that dwells under it.—Every real thought on every real subject knocks the wind out of somebody or other."—*Oliver Wendell Holmes.*

When Mr. Fred Harmon returned to Boston from his prolonged Western tour—an incident of which was his unfortunate "call" of a plethoric jackpot when his opponent happened to hold a straight flush, and his subsequent six weeks' "hibernation" at the home of Preston Mansfield—he was the lion of the season. It was pretty generally understood that this heroic young man had come through a number of hair-breadth escapes, matrimonially speaking, in which scheming Western mothers and Indian hunting, crack-shot frontier fathers had figured somewhat actively.

There was very little doubt in the minds of his admirers that nothing short of his phenomenal *finesse* and *aplomb* could ever have brought him safely back to them, unaccompanied by a following and a household, who would have spread dismay on Beacon street, and carried ruin to the very base of Bunker Hill. But an overruling Providence had saved the scion of culture, and confounded the Philistines. Fred Harmon was back again, was matrimonially free, and was seriously

considering once more whether he would bestow the favor of his society and the wealth of his accomplishments and abilities upon the Almighty, or whether he would endow some other profession than that of theology with his exceptional genius. It was argued that the great divine who cast a lustre over Boston could not live always. He was not so young as he once had been, and who was to fill his place? Who could? No living man, now known to fame, would be tolerated by those who had been blest for years by his ministrations. Who else could lull their restless thoughts and questioning minds by so deliciously musical a voice, such intrepidity of tongue and facility of utterance? Who else could command language so graceful and ornate, that no break need be felt between the intonations of the sermon, the service, and the song?

In Fred Harmon there was hope; but if he failed them, where was Boston to turn, when the awful day should come and the place that knew its idol should know him no more forever? Serious as the question was, fatal as would be the result if he failed them, it is nevertheless true, that Fred still felt that it was an open question whether he would better sacrifice himself on this altar of duty and worship, or whether he would not do well to continue to temper poker with the prayer book and revive the traditions of Daniel Webster while he

eclipsed that gentlemen's fame in oratory and law and statesmanship. But this latter involved a somewhat longer purse than was at the young man's command. He figured that it would take as much as two years, after he should be admitted to the bar, before he could hope to be in a commanding financial position. Five years might elapse before his fame would be world-wide; and five years is a long look ahead to a genius of twenty-four.

In the ministry it would be different. He would not have to compete directly. His jury would be all on his side beforehand. If his pleadings were badly drawn, or if his arguments were faulty, there would be no opposing counsel at his elbow to take advantage of his blunder. His finances would not depend on his winning the case; but only on pleasing the taste of those who were already of his way of thinking. And while Mr. Fred Harmon had a very elastic and expansive opinion of his own abilities, still he did not lose sight of the fact that nowhere else on earth was mediocrity so safe from criticism and comparison of a discomposing order — and proximity — as in a calling where the line of argument is all laid out beforehand, and all parties concerned have previously accepted the conclusions which are to be drawn. There were times, therefore, when Mr. Fred Harmon felt that the security and ease and certainty of such a position would compensate for

a good deal. So the scales balanced back and forth, and Beacon Street trembled.

Fred's mother was ecstasically terrified. She would have been extremely happy to see the young man burst upon a dazzled nation as a statesman, whose voice should drown the memory of a Washington, a Webster, and a Lincoln; but in these days, politics were somewhat vulgar, and he would be thrown with men of — well, — to put it mildly, — an inferior order. They would not be able to appreciate him, and, indeed, she doubted very much if anybody could, — outside of Boston.

But in the church! Ah, how delightful it would be to see him wield the power and receive the worship of all those cultured souls; and then the reflected glory that would fall upon her — that, too, was a delicious anticipation. What a vast deal of good he would do, this lovely son of hers, with his exquisitely fine nature. How he would exalt the people. How he would free them from all lingering traces of Philistinism. How he would spiritualize and decorate and beautify their religion. How the touch of his fancy, the sheen of his taste, would tone down and glorify orthodox creeds. How he would read new meanings into them and read the last remnants of the old meanings out. Mrs. Harmon had two friends who were Unitarians, and she felt sure when Fred should wear the surplice and stole, these dear ones would be

redeemed too. They had once told her that they could look upon the ceremony of communion with nothing short of horror.

“If you really believe that it is the body and blood of Christ, why do you eat and drink it, dear?” one of them had asked. “It seems to me horrible, beyond words to express. I can see how you might want to take it home and keep it as a sacred thing—but *eat* it;” and she held her hands up in token of abhorrence.

“How literal you are,” Fred’s mother had replied. “You take all the poetry, and spiritual meaning, and lofty ethical significance out of a beautiful and holy service, and then you hold it to account for your own lack of sympathy with its deeper meaning. Of course one would not want to eat the body, and drink the blood of a dead man, or a dead god, as you say. Even more truly would one shudder to do so, if one had loved or revered the lost; but —”

“Then why do you say that you do it? Why do you go through the form which you admit would be abhorrent, if it were not wholly form, if it were fact? Have words absolutely no par value in your creeds? Why do you not say what you mean? In other matters you are hypercritical as to mere shades of difference in your use of words. So is your clergyman; but he says, ‘This is the body and the blood of Christ.’ Now, if he

does not mean that, why does he say it? and what does he mean? What are words for in theology? If he means that it is a symbol of that, why does he not say so? And why *eat* it even then? Why eat a symbol of the flesh and blood of the dead? No, no, my dear, you cannot make it appear to me either honest to call a thing by one name, and mean that it is a totally different thing, nor can you convince me that it is elevating to teach people even to say, in a Pickwickian sense, that they eat dead gods or men. It is shocking, beyond words to express, and when explained away from its original literal meaning, which the Catholics still insist upon, it adds dishonesty as well. The Catholics, at least, are honest. They mean what they say. However I may object to the meaning, I respect their sincerity. When they say 'this is so and so,' they don't turn around and explain it away, and finally end up by declaring that it is something totally different. They have the courage and mental integrity of their convictions. When they tell their devotees to believe that a certain relic is a piece of the true cross, they don't add, 'that is to say, it is made of a tree that once stood in the same forest from which the wood for the true cross was obtained; or, if you prefer to look at it another way, we will allow you to believe it in this form: It was cut in another country altogether; but it happened to fall with

its top pointing eastward, which, taken in its true spiritual sense, amounts to exactly the same thing.' Oh, no, they don't trim their requirements to catch the ethical agnosticism of the day. They, at least, are honest, direct, and firm in their demands on absolute faith; and mental reservations that *reserve the whole fabric*, are not accepted by them. No, no, my dear, if I should ever accept any of it, I should have to accept it *all*, absolutely, without mental reservation, evasion, or lapse, and then I would not join a Protestant church. I should go to the cathedral at once and finally."

Mrs. Harmon had given her friend up for the time; but when Fred should present the case, when he should stand before them in all his vestments, and clothe in prismatic tints the bald facts and undraped creeds of Protestant orthodoxy, as elaborated and refined by the ethical leaders of the Broad Church; when her gifted son should once vitalize the exquisite statue of revealed religion, Beacon Street, as one man, would become Pygmalions and the divine Galatea would have, not only the old lovers at her feet, but even these devotees of the King's Chapel should be lured by her incomparable charms. Not a night, not a day passed that she did not pray, long and fervently, to a god (which in conversation she translated into a Great First Cause) to bring about this transcendent blessing through her wonderful boy, and for the sake

of Jesus Christ her Saviour — whom she sometimes admitted she believed to be the son of a carpenter in Nazareth.

“In which case, why do you ask for things in his name and for his sake?” a sceptical friend had asked. “Why do you call him your Saviour? Do you not think that any explanation on that basis makes your petition, in his name and for his sake, quite meaningless and absurd?” But Fred’s mother had laughed the question aside and insisted that no one could talk seriously with such an absurdly literal person.

“You have no spirituality, dear,” she had said. “Why, it is just as natural to me to go to Christ for help in the things of to-day, as if he were in the next room, and yet when you pin me down in that energetic fashion, of course I believe that he was the son of Joseph, and that he is dead in the same sense that all of us are, or will be dead; but really, dear, if you will excuse me for saying so, I fail to see what that has to do with it.” Indeed, Mrs. Harmon had no more doubt that when her gifted son should explain the plan of salvation to these sceptical friends they would thenceforth believe in its efficacy, than had that unfortunate young gentleman in the sufficiency of a “king full” when stakes were heavy and luck his way. “The Rector was explaining just that point to Fred the other day,” she had said; “I wish you could have

heard him. It was beautiful. He told Fred that a literal belief that Christ was a god and had no human father—or that he arose from the dead in any material sense—in any sense that all the dead are not arisen—is not at all vital. He does not accept that view, and he explained to Fred that it was quite unnecessary—and Fred saw it clearly. I did, too, but you know I am such a poor sieve of a creature. It all slipped through my mind. I cannot make it clear to you now; but it was like crystal as they talked it, and dear Fred”—and here Mrs Harmon’s eyes filled with tears as she took her friend’s hand. “You must not breathe it, dear,—not just yet—but my boy has promised to take holy orders! Oh, my heart is so full of joy and thankfulness to God that I cannot talk, and yet I could not keep it from you a moment longer. It is settled! I am to give my talented son to the service of the Church. There are far more brilliant and showy, and (from a personal and selfish outlook) advantageous positions open to such as he, I know; but think of the blessedness of devoting one’s whole life to others under the direct hand and will of Almighty God!” Her friend wondered vaguely how an impersonal Great First Cause was going to give special directions to Mr. Fred Harmon, of Boston, U. S. A.; but she said nothing and only smiled inwardly a little.

"I am so happy, so happy, so happy! I pray that I may keep my reason!" continued Fred's mother, covering her face with her dainty lace handkerchief. When her friend withdrew, she sank softly by her couch and prayed long and fervently. As she knelt she had noticed that the pillow sham on the opposite side of the bed had slipped a trifle from its place. When she arose she rang for her maid.

"Mary, you are getting more and more careless about your duties. I shall be compelled to dismiss you, if you are not able to do better. That sham disturbed me at my devotions. It is far from straight."

"Yis, mum," said Mary humbly, "they is thet slick, mum —"

"Never mind explaining, Mary. How often have I told you that a servant's place is to keep such perfect order that explanations are unnecessary? Whenever a servant has to tell why a thing is not right, that is proof enough that it is wrong, and the apology comes too late. The only apology I accept from my servants is such perfect attention to their duties, that apologies are rendered unnecessary. This is a warning, Mary. Do not let it occur again."

"Yis, mum," said Mary, somewhat irrelevantly, and forthwith departed to readjust the offending sham.

“Oupoligy,” said she, as soon as the door was closed, “Oupoligy, indade! an’ mesilf havin’ no toim to so much as listhen to me b’y, Tummus, ex-hplainin’ the purtictive turruff to thim shtupid ghrocery men! Uv curse, Oi’v got no *immegit* inthrust in pollythicks, mesilf bein’ a lady — but Oi’d loik to know if it ishent every mother’s juthy to incourahg her b’y to thake an inthrest in publick affairhs? An’ ish’ent Tummus good fer the School Boarhd if he wance gits elechted this toim anto the commithee av elechtion inspechtors?” And the proud mother of Thomas, the prospective election inspector, re-arranged the couch of the proud mother of Frederick, the prospective divine, each feeling that her duty lay in sinking her individuality, and scheming for sons who accepted it as the natural and merited homage paid to exceptional ability by those who should keenly feel the reflected honor of the close relationship.

When Mary returned to the dining-room, she found her son far along in his address. As she entered the door, however, she was privileged to hear his closing, eloquent remarks: —

“And thet is the raashon Oi so perthicularly want ye both t’ cahst yer *franchaises* fer Misther Blaine. Oi want the mon best calculathed to perfect the turruff agin thim low Oitalians a-comin’ ovher here an’ ruhinin’ the ontoir counthry at the behist av Aingland — bad ’cess t’ her!”

"What air they a-goin' t' do to the tur-ruff, Tummus?" inquired his admiring mother, from her place by the door.

"Chyart it all aff, av course," responded the ready politician, promptly scowling upon her feminine incapacity to grasp a question so comprehensive as that of the protective tariff.

"The murtherin scoundrels!" exclaimed she, and the three prospective voters scowled fiercely out of the window at an organ-grinder, and Thomas went on.

"You musthent interrhupt a politichal spaach," said he, addressing the disturbing element by the door. "You'll git me thet nervhous thet Oi sha'n't be able to egsplahin the pints; but what Oi *do* know ish this; thim thet knows do say thet af the tur-ruff ish nat purtheected they'll chayart the whole av it aff to build ap the tur-ruff av Aingland thet ish almost tothally disthroied already. Ahn Oi say, be jabbers, let them build ap their own tur-ruff with their own sod, and nat be afther a rhuinin the looks av Americka by a cayartin aff hern. Americky fer the Americans, sez Oi, und Oi'll foit to purtect her sod again a aignerent furren poperlation!"

Mary's enthusiasm became so great at this point, that she forgot her warning and applauded loudly. "Och, but you're the beautiful polithical spaakher, Tummus," said she. "An' so thet is what all this

thalk about the tur-ruff is ovher, is it? Well, if they're short av sod, sez Oi, let 'em thake some an welcum. It'll ghrow agin an' Oi'd jist loik t' show um thet Ameriky hev plenty an' to shpare."

"Dhry up!" said Thomas, who saw signs of defection in his two recent converts.

"Dhry up! phwat do a woman know abhout pollyticks? They air nat well enough inforhmed an the thopics av the toims, to undhersthand pwhat we leadhers air thalkin' about, much less the mainin' av it; and an intilligent vother, that's got any sinse at all, won't so much as listhen to wan av ye gabble. Here, help shpread this thable-cloth an' kape shtill!"

The butcher's boy and the grocer's clerk withdrew to ponder over the tariff, and to deliver their wares next door.

CHAPTER XV.

"But, Lady Clare Vere de Vere,
You make your wares by far too cheap;
Your net claims all as fish that comes
Within the limit of its sweep.
You sit beside me here to-day;
You try to make me love again;
But I am safe the while I think
You've sat thus with a score of men."—*Tennyson.*

"The moment you attempt to find a base for morals outside of human nature, you go wrong; no other is solid and sure. The aid of the so-called sanctions of theology is not only needless, but mischievous. The alliance of the realities of duty with theological phantoms, exposes duty to the same ruin which daylight brings to the superstition that has been associated with duty."—*John Morley.*

When Miss Pauline Tyler received a proposal of marriage from Mr. Fred Harmon, her emotions almost overcame her. She assured him that she had never dreamed of such a thing, and that she really must have time to think it all over. Meantime she wanted him to understand, fully, that she was absolutely not betrothed to either the Envoy from Russia or the Senator from Michigan. How such cruel and foundationless reports got started in the first place, and how any one could be found to credit them, was beyond her comprehension.

Fred agreed with her in regard at least to a part of this statement; but he hinted that it was no wonder such gossip found ready believers,

for slander, like death, loved a shining mark and who else shone as she? "I wonder who will be next," he thought, while he talked. "There are really comparatively few left, and she will surely not descend to captains in the regular army, or unofficial men of wealth. I never but once knew her to shoot below a colonel. Of course she looks upon me as a bishop in embryo. She would be a great help to a man in his career. Her money, her untamed ambition, and her extensive blood relationship with everybody who is anybody, in both Boston and New York, would all be incomparable advantages to a rising man. When she is married to me she will naturally drop the habit of denying her engagement to other men, and—well,—after all, only a very few people appear to see through it, and it is a slight foible, and not confined to her. I suppose it would be unreasonable for me to expect absolute perfection in taste and judgment."

Fred sighed as he thought that no one in this world was likely to secure these when they married, unless, forsooth, it might be the fortunate woman who should one day become his bride. There was one point of difference between them. Pauline preferred that he should be a High Churchman; and then it occurred to her that she might like it better if he did not go so far as to receive confessions from Henrietta Dangerfield and Lucy

Fairfax ; so, after all, it might be best for him not to go the length of having a confessional. To be just high enough to come below, that was her idea. But Fred demurred. He said that if he were not a Broad Churchman he should feel it his duty to take the vows of celibacy and poverty and join either an Episcopal or a Catholic Brotherhood. Indeed, he hinted gloomily, that his inner conscience told him that this was his highest ideal ; but that his heart pleaded for her. He was not at all sure that in the end he should not awake to realize that she was the beautiful temptress of old who should keep a struggling soul back from the loftiest attainment of which it was capable. The struggle had been a hard one but she—love of her—had won, and he had chosen the less holy way for her dear sake.

Miss Pauline Tyler would have thought all this the noblest of sentiment if she had heard it or read it as applied to any one else ; but she was not prepared to look upon herself as a wholly sinful indulgence, which should make a man think he was giving up an altogether higher mission in a descent to her. Somehow it did not impress her as so entirely complimentary as Fred appeared to think. Of course it was beyond dispute that a Brotherhood was far higher and holier than marriage ; but — Pauline, for the first time in her life, questioned the taste of saying so. She put it

on the ground of taste. So Mr. Fred Harmon was not the only party to the tacit engagement who pondered over certain little changes it would be desirable to make in the outward expression, if not in the inward thought, after they should be married.

Pauline told him that she wanted time to examine her heart. She appeared to look upon that important member as a detached article, which had to be taken from an orris perfumed drawer and spread out before her for inspection to discover if the moths had gotten into it since last summer. This looked perfectly reasonable to Fred and he consented. He expressed the hope, however, that she would be able to go all over it carefully in a week's time, as he did not think that he could endure the suspense for a longer period. She thought that a week would give her ample time for the minutest investigation—and then she hinted that she would like to lay the matter before her confessor. Fred saw no objection to this, and he did not at all comprehend why she seemed a little hurt over it. He supposed that it was not that in reality. He had doubtless mistaken her manner and tone. It was most likely due to her deep spiritual preoccupation.

But Pauline was thinking that she would not like to know that Lucy and Henrietta were confessing in private to him. Why was he so indifferent

about her confessions to another man? She was unable to solve the mystery, so she took another method.

"If I say yes, can we not have a public, solemn, sacred betrothal? I think I should be dressed in simple white, with a rosary about my waist, and we should kneel before Father High-church and have a betrothal service. We could invite a select few, and it could be very quiet indeed, and very effective."

It impressed Fred as a charming idea. He at once pictured such service as a part of his future work. He thought she was right in thinking it could be made very effective. He saw himself in full vestments blessing a young couple kneeling before him, and then and there plighting their troth in a solemn way and in set terms. The more he thought of it the more firmly was he convinced that a betrothal should be a sacrament, and under the control of the clergy. He wondered if it would be easy to have a law passed to that effect. A wide field opened before him, and he felt that the duties and responsibilities of a servant of the altar were vastly greater and more varied than he had ever before realized. He wondered vaguely if he would be equal to it; but he put such thoughts from him as unworthy. His vows would sustain him when once they were taken. Men failed or fell, he thought, because they did not openly

commit themselves to a given course. When once his vows were taken, it would be easy enough. His liberty to browse on other fields would be surrendered. He felt very serious indeed, and the burdens of the new life seemed already almost upon him. He sighed.

"I do not wonder you feel your position so keenly," Pauline said, sympathetically. "That is one reason I want time to think. As your wife, my life too would be necessarily devoted to the altar and the cross. It is almost like taking the veil to marry a man in holy orders, don't you think so? It is very solemn. That is what I was thinking of in the church betrothal. That could symbolize the white veil; then the marriage could represent the black veil. Of course I could not wear black, but we could translate it to mean that. Interpretation is everything, don't you think? It would mean only a marriage to other people, but to those who understood the true higher significance, I could be the bride of the church, and dead to the world henceforth."

Fred glanced at the handsome bronze clock, and said that he must leave her now. Both, he said, needed to be alone—to think. He would not attempt to see her again until that day week. He stood with his legs very wide apart and gazed at her a moment, and then wrung her hand and bowed himself out.

As he buttoned his great coat over his evening dress, he said to himself: "By Jove, I believe I am late, don't you know! What a cad to stay over time. The fellows won't wait, and I shall miss the game altogether." Then he consoled himself with the memory that in that case he could still drop in for the last act of the comic opera, and see one of the plump beauties, in tights, home. The Parker House or even the "Parsonage" would not be much out of her way — actresses were always hungry. He supposed this sort of thing would have to be stopped after he took his vows; but, meantime —

"Drive faster," he called out, "I am beastly late now!"

CHAPTER XVI.

"Strange is the heart of man, with its quick, mysterious instincts!
 Strange is the life of man, and fatal or fated are moments,
 Whereupon turn, as on hinges, the gates of the wall adamantine!"

— *Longfellow.*

"The conduct that issues from a moral conflict has often so close a resemblance to vice, that the distinction escapes all outward judgments, founded on a mere comparison of actions." — *George Eliot.*

"Oh, here will I set up my everlasting rest;
 And shake the yoke of inauspicious stars
 From this world-wearied flesh. — Eyes, look your last!
 Arms, take your last embrace! and lips, O you,
 The doors of breath, seal with a righteous kiss
 A dateless bargain to engrossing death!" — *Shakespeare.*

The next day I sat waiting for Preston Mansfield. I had made up my mind to advise him to tell Nellie the truth, at all hazards. I was surprised to find that he was late. I looked at my watch. It wanted a quarter to three, and my office hour began in thirty minutes. The door was flung open and Preston burst into the room like a madman.

"Doctor, for God's sake let me bring her in here!" he exclaimed, breathlessly. His face was set and wild, and his lips pressed each other, until the instant after he had spoken, they were thin and white. I had never seen such wild despair, fighting with hope, on any human face. "She is dying, I think! It was all my fault! I —"

He had rushed back to the carriage which stood at my door, and I had followed him.

"Here, let her alone, there! Don't you touch her. Nellie! Nellie!" he murmured, with his lips close to her ear; but she did not move, nor open her eyes, and he turned to me with a groan.

"It takes the strength all out of me to see her like that. I thought I could carry her alone; but — you help me, doctor. I don't want that fellow to touch her, and two of us can make it easier for her, can't we? There, now, so? No, under this way. Is that right, doctor? I'm so — Won't that hurt her? Is there any danger of holding her so as to miss a chance of getting her heart to beat again? On the floor? Oh, doctor, why not on your lounge? No pillow? Nellie, Nellie! Oh, *do* something, doctor, do something for God's sake, do *something* to save her!" He chafed her hands, and watched her lips with an eagerness born of despair.

"Do you think she will ever speak again, doctor? Is it — it is not — death? My God! she will speak again, once? Once?"

"Wait, Preston," I said, "I am trying to learn if it is — if she will breathe again. Sit there. Tell me how it happened, while I work. Here, hold this — now help. No, not that way — so. Yes, that is right. Let her lie so. Now hold this, and tell me how it happened."

He groaned aloud, "It was all my fault. I took her to drive. You know that colt of mine? Well, I took it — like a damned fool. I had no business

to risk her life. This way? Oh, did her eyelid move? Look! Oh, doctor, won't that hurt her? Nellie! Nellie! Great God! Is she dead? My darling, my darling, speak to me — just once! just once! Oh, God, have mercy! Just once!”

The tears were rolling down his cheeks and falling unheeded. He would not dry them lest a sign that she might move or speak would be lost by the movement. His eyes were strained and set upon her face which was but little whiter than his own. He had looked so long at her eyes that the wavering of his own deceived him.

“Oh, doctor, she is alive! Her eyelids moved. I am sure! Oh, I am *sure*! Nellie, Nellie, can you hear me? I love you, I love you, I love you, darling! Do you hear me, darling? Don't die and not know. Oh, my God, it is no use! There—did you see that? She *did* move that time.—Her lips,—listen!”

He put his ear to the voiceless lips and strained to hear the tones that were silent forever. Presently he looked up at me and then slowly gathered her in his arms and staggered to a chair.

“Lock the door, doctor,” he said hoarsely, “and go away. She is mine, now, and I want to be all alone with her just a little while. Nellie, Nellie, darling, I love you, oh, I loved you too truly to deceive you! I could not ask you to marry me as it was. Do you understand now? Do you? Do you? O God!”

He strained the lifeless form to his breast, and kissed the parted lips as one starving and now in reach of food.

"I shall be back, Preston," I said, "in just fifteen minutes. Try to be calmer, my boy," and I laid my hand on his head. He looked up, with the tears still streaming from his eyes, and slowly shook his head. Five minutes later I looked into the room through a glass partition. He had turned with his face to the clock, and was holding the dead girl in his arms, as when I left him. Presently I heard a movement within, and I stepped to the door again. He was laying her on the lounge. He placed her gently there, and kissed her lips and hands. Then he knelt beside her, and laid his head upon her feet, and as the hands of the clock pointed to the time I said I should return, a shot rang out through the silent house. I burst through the door, and knelt beside him.

"Forgive me, doctor," he whispered. "It was the only way. You—you—will understand. I—told—her—and—she turned—from me. She tried—to jump—from—the—buggy, and the—colt—saw her—and—ran. I—ought—to—have known—better. It—was—all—my fault."

Two hours later Preston Mansfield was dead. Dead by his own hand. Or stay,—was it by the hand of his father?

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