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The Lofty and the Lowly;

OR,

GOOD IN ALL AND NONE ALL-GOOD.

BY

M. J. McINTOSH,

AUTHOR OF "TWO LIVES; OR, TO SEEM AND TO BE," "CHARMS AND COUNTER-CHARMS," "DONALDSON MANOR," ETC., ETC., ETC.

"The North and the South, Thou hast created them."—*Ps.* 89, v. 12.
"Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart."—*Ps.* 97, v. 11.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

NEW-YORK:
D. APPLETON & COMPANY, 200 BROADWAY
M.DCCC.LIII.

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TO

CAPTAIN JAMES M. McINTOSH, U. S. N.,

THIS ATTEMPT TO DEPICT

WITH AN EQUAL LOVE THE HOME OF THEIR CHILDHOOD AND

THAT OF THEIR MATURER LIFE,

IS

AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED,

BY HIS SISTER,

M. J. McINTOSH.

New-York, Nov. 29th, 1852.

TO THE READER.

The following volumes were commenced two years ago, immediately after the publication of "Woman in America." Laid aside for a time from the pressure of other engagements, they were resumed during the past summer, and have been concluded with little, if any, modification of their original plan. They had their origin in the desire to remove some of the prejudices separating the Northern and Southern United States, by a true and loving portraiture of the social characteristics of each. To do this for the South, required, of course, the introduction of negro-slavery; and though with a painful consciousness that she was nearing the elements of strife, the author has endeavored to sketch it as it appeared to her during an acquaintance with it of more than twenty years.

If, in pursuing the course originally marked out for herself, the author has been led unwillingly within precincts which others have made an arena of controversy, she has not entered armed for combat, but, relying upon the privileges accorded to her sex by the chivalry of every age, she stands between the contending parties, bearing the olive-branch, and desiring only to pour balm into the wounds given by more powerful hands.

While endeavoring faithfully to represent classes, the author has as carefully endeavored to avoid every approach to personalities, except in one instance; "Daddy Cato" had a real existence in one who was both honored and loved in her own family. To draw his picture has been a labor of love.

It may be proper to add, that every instance of sacrifice to a sense of duty in the slave-holder, or of affection in the slave, here recorded, had its foundation in fact known to the author, not by report, but by actual observation.

As the work had its origin in love, so is it sent forth, with many a loving wish, mingled, alas! with many a regretful sigh that the fruit is so little worthy of the seed, the performance of the conception. May He who can give efficiency to the feeblest instrument, make it productive of "peace and good-will to man."

Dec. 1st, 1852.

The Lofty and the Lowly;

OR,

GOOD IN ALL AND NONE ALL-GOOD.

CHAPTER I.

> "——————If thou art rich, thou'rt poor;
> For, like an ass whose back with ingots bows,
> Thou bearest thy heavy riches but a journey,
> And Death unloads thee."

Boston, Jan. 23d, 1822.

To Col. Jno. Montrose:

Dear Sir:—My sister, Mrs. Chas. Montrose, being unable to write herself, has requested me to communicate to you the very afflicting intelligence of the death of your brother, which occurred suddenly yesterday, from an apoplectic seizure. This is a very sad occurrence, and the sorrow it occasions is increased by the fear that it may have been induced by the anxiety of Mr. Montrose respecting the present state of his business. I have not, of course, been able yet to make any examination of Mr. Montrose's books, but I have reason to apprehend that his property will do little more than satisfy the demands against his estate. As no will has been found, I propose, with the consent of those most interested, to administer on the estate. The settlement of the business must be very troublesome, I know, but I am willing to incur the trouble for the hope of saving something from the wreck for my sister and her little girl. Charles, I can place at once as a clerk in a mercantile house, where he will soon be able to earn his own support. His mother and sister will for the present find a home in my house, and though the claims of my own family will not permit me to pledge myself for their entire maintenance, I will assist them as far as I can, and will promise to give Alice such an education as will enable her in future to command independence, if not ease.

I have written thus fully, sir, because I felt you were entitled to know all the prospects of those so nearly connected with you. I hope to be favored with your advice and co-operation, and shall therefore await your answer before taking any decisive step.

I remain, sir, very respectfully,
Your obedient servant,
THOMAS BROWNE.

The writer of the foregoing letter might have been taken as the model of a successful merchant. Shrewd and cautious in business, he had never entered into any of those wild speculations, by which many of his acquaintances, making haste to be rich, became poor. Close in his calculations, and a rigid economist, his expenses had always been kept far within the limit of his income. He was now supposed to be worth about half a million, and had ostensibly withdrawn from business, but was believed to be a sleeping partner to a considerable amount in the house of which he had formerly been the head, and where still no important step was taken without his advice.

Within the last ten years, Mr. Browne had removed from his former residence in a retired street, to one of the handsomest houses in the neighborhood of the Mall, and had set up his carriage. The introduction of the eldest Miss Browne into society had presented the occasion for these changes. In his new abode, Mr. Browne had added to the general approbation of his character as a merchant, no small share of social distinction. His ménage is in every respect well appointed, his dinners excellent, his wines of the rarest. Let us see him as he sits now in the midst of his family.

The apartment in which they are assembled is called "The Study," though we doubt whether it is often appropriated to the purpose which such a name indicates. It is a cheerful room; a fire burns brightly in the grate, and the astral lamp—solars were not yet invented—burning on the rosewood éscritoire, throws its rays on cases filled with richly gilded volumes, and surmounted with busts of Homer, Shakspeare, Milton, and Dante. Mr. Browne has drawn near the fire, around which the family have collected, as, in consequence of the death of Mr. Montrose, their doors are closed on visitors, and the larger reception-rooms look gloomy when occupied by only their own little circle. Mr. Browne is a gentlemanly looking person of fifty, or thereabouts, smooth, sleek, and somewhat corpulent; his countenance expressing satisfaction with the world and with himself. Mrs. Browne, fat, fair, and forty, seems no less complacent. The Miss Browne, for whose advantage her parents had made such changes in their domestic arrangements, had been for two years the mistress of another home. A young man of eighteen, or thereabouts, somewhat foppishly dressed, sits twirling a watch chain around a finger on which sparkles a diamond ring. Two young ladies in dresses of fashionable make and rich material complete the party.

"Mamma," said the youngest of the ladies, "how long must we keep our house shut up and refuse to see any company?"

"Till after the funeral, of course, Eliza."

"Must we wear mourning?" asked the elder Miss Browne, a young lady who had probably seen some twenty summers.

"Certainly, my dear Anne," said the father.

"Slight mourning," said the mother.

"Not too slight, my dear," rejoined Mr. Browne. "I would have every thing done to mark our respect for my sister's husband. Poor Montrose! ah, had he but taken my advice!"

A shade of sadness passed over the faces of the little group, and the next question seemed to indicate that their thoughts had been for a time drawn from themselves.

"How did you leave Aunt Montrose, mamma?"

"She was asleep, my dear. Poor thing! she was quite wild till the opiates made her asleep, and these opiates she would take for nobody but Charles. I think in the confusion of her mind, she mistook him for his father, for when he would say, 'Dear mother, take it for your Charles,' she would answer, 'Any thing, any thing for you Charles,' and swallow it down directly."

"And little Alice?" said the young man who had not yet spoken.

"Alice slept, too, but she sobbed on even in her sleep, and when her nurse attempted to remove her from her mother's side to her own bed, she cried out, 'Let me alone. I won't leave papa.' "

"Poor Ally, she loved her father so much, and he made such a pet of her—how she will miss him!"

"She will miss many things, I fear, my son, to which she has been accustomed. The sins of the father are indeed visited upon the children."

"But surely, sir," exclaimed the young man, with an earnestness which gave expression and interest to a face wanting only these to make it handsome, "surely, Mr. Montrose has not left my aunt and cousins without support?"

"A bare support, George, and that probably to be obtained through the kindness of friends aiding their own efforts, is a very different thing from the fortune they have hitherto enjoyed, as you would have understood before this, if I had been carried away by any of those foolish speculations in which your uncle Montrose has sunk money so rapidly."

Having thus seen how Charles Montrose was regarded in the house of his adoption, and by those with whom his marriage had connected him, let us see with what feelings his memory was cherished in the home of his birth and by the companions of his childhood. To do this, we must transfer the reader to the country residence of Col. John Montrose, situated on one of the small bays that indent the eastern shore of Georgia, south of the Savannah river. It is about ten days after the death of Mr. Montrose, and though the last winter month has but commenced, there is so little of winter in the air of the clear soft evening, that we may linger for a moment without the house, to mark the features of the scene.

The house, a large square building of wood, two stories high, is surrounded by a wide piazza, and has a balcony running along the front of the second story. It stands on slightly rising ground, about two hundred and fifty yards from the shore of the bay. Part of this space is occupied by a shrubbery, in which white flowers are already gleaming amid the darker shadows of the evergreens. Beyond the shrubbery, the path to the shore crosses a grassy lawn dotted here and there with trees, among which, by the evening's dusky light, we can distinguish only two gigantic live-oaks stretching their arms over many a rood of ground, and waving their gray drapery in the breeze. On the southern side of the house is a small flower garden, whose neatly kept beds are gay even now with roses, jonquils and hyacinths. On the north are the vegetable garden and orchard, and in the rear cluster several low buildings, among which we can distinguish the stables and the kitchen, and wash-house as it is called. That the kitchen should be thus placed at a distance from the proprietor's mansion, seems to us at first a very inconvenient arrangement; but as we approach it, the loud jovial tones that issue from it force us to acknowledge the wisdom of placing it where the mirth of its dark inmates shall neither trespass on the proprieties of the parlor, nor be checked by their consciousness of the neighborhood of the higher powers. At the distance of from an eighth to a quarter of a mile, our view is closed by a dark line which, were it daylight, we should find to be a belt of forest trees. But it is time to look within; for the messenger of evil tidings is drawing near, and we would introduce the happy party assembled there, before sorrow casts its shadow across their threshold. We may enter without summons or announcement, for the door stands invitingly open. Up the steps, across the piazza, into the wide hall, and now, turning to the left, we are within the room from whose windows there falls such a cheerful light.

The room is large, with four windows opening on the east and south. Opposite the door by which you enter is a fireplace, whose dimensions would have appalled Count Rumford. Within this fireplace, on heavy and elaborately ornamented brass andirons, lie large logs of oak wood, crackling in the blaze of the pitch-pine torches beneath them. How brightly and merrily plays that red flame on the various objects in the room, on the gay carpet of not very fine ingrain on the handsome but old-fashioned sideboard with its mar ble slab covered with cut glass, and bearing at each end heavy silver pitchers, on the clumsy mahogany chairs, black with age, on the tea-table with its snowy damask covering, its hissing silver urn, its variety of waffles and wafers and biscuits, its steaming hominy, its substantial dish of broiled ham, its toasted cheese and saucers of orange sweetmeats. But a servant has lighted the candles in the tall silver candlesticks, and removed them from the high carved wooden mantel-piece to the table, and we will turn from the inanimate objects in the room to examine by their clearer light the persons assembled there. At the head of the table sits a lady whose age is not far from forty. Her dress is very plain, and so far removed from any affectation of youthfulness, that it might suit a lady much older than she appears to be, yet amid all this simplicity, there is a certain stateliness of manner, and, at times, a gleam of pride, we had almost said of haughtiness, in the eyes, which mark one who has been accustomed to regard herself as entitled to no secondary place in her world. At this moment, however, we can discover in her countenance no emotion so unamiable as pride, but a mother's love beams from every feature as she looks on the animated faces of a boy of ten, who, seated on the rug before the fire, is putting the finishing touch to an immense kite, and of a girl about three years younger who stands beside him. In the last we see a striking likeness to the lady herself. Especially is this seen in the erect form, the sparkle of the dark eye, and the proud carriage of the little head, whose glossy ringlets put entirely back from the face fall almost to the waist behind. The boy's broader forehead and less delicate features seem modelled more upon those of the gentleman reclining drowsily in an arm-chair near him. Col. Montrose, for this is he, looks what his name and title seem to claim for him, the gentleman and the soldier, but he looks yet more than these. Few can match that gigantic frame, tall, with broad chest and slightly stooping shoulders, and that head, its dark hair besprent with gray, its massive features cast in a Roman mould, and wearing, as he sits there looking on his children, something of the aspect of a sleeping lion.

But the lion is aroused, for a servant enters hastily with newspapers and letters, and with a kindling eye and eager hand he takes them and draws near the light. Mrs. Montrose too approaches, and glances over his shoulder with a look of interest at the address on the three or four letters he holds. One of these is in a strange hand, and he is about to lay it aside unread, when the post-mark BOSTON attracts his eye; he turns it over, the seal is black, and a shade of anxious thought may be seen to pass over his face, as he hurriedly breaks it and unfolds the letter. His eye runs rapidly over a few lines, and the letter falls from the trembling hands which he clasps over his bowed face. Not a sound escapes his lips—cries and tears are for women and children, but suffering deeper, bitterer, because it must be still, for men. Such is his thought, perchance, as he sits there as still and seemingly as insensible as marble, while his heart is wrung by the contrast of the present with the pictures which memory so vividly and so rapidly places before him. Now he sees the rosy boy whose cradled sleep he had watched with somewhat of a protecting feeling rising in his own almost baby breast—now, as he murmurs his evening prayer at his mother's knee, the same cherub form kneels at his side and lisps a simple petition. In the wild sports of boyhood, in the high aspirations and bold adventures of youth, still they go forward hand in hand and heart linked to heart, protector and protected. Manhood had separated them, but it was to be for a brief season only, and though year had followed year till age had stolen upon them, they still had hoped that they should stand together again in their father's halls, "shoulder to shoulder," ere they lay in their fathers' burial-place, "side by side," and now *he* has lain down to his last sleep in a strange land, and instead of the brother he had so longed to clasp to his heart once more, he has only these cold memories. His childhood's world is now desolate indeed, and though his wife is weeping in sympathy with his unspoken sorrow, and his children are turning a wondering gaze upon his grief-stricken form, he feels alone. Mrs. Montrose is one who feels too deeply and truly herself, to hope to soothe such grief by words, but she lays her hand softly, tenderly upon her husband's. He understands the mute appeal, and clasping that delicate hand for a moment, says, "I will go to my room, Bella. Give the children their tea and afterwards come to me."

As he rises and leaves the room, she looks after him sorrowingly, but she does not offer to accompany him, she knows that his thoughts are not now for her. She had never known Charles Montrose. She was the second wife of his brother, and it was soon after the first marriage of Col. Montrose, a marriage which was childless, that Charles was induced, partly by the persuasions of an old college companion, and yet more, perhaps, by the pretty face and pleasing manners of Alice Browne with whom he had met during a summer visit to Boston, to sell his property in Georgia to his brother and enter into mercantile life in that city. In taking this step, Charles Montrose had given a signal instance of his love for his gentle Alice, for it had been in direct opposition to all the habits of thought and feeling impressed on him in earlier years, and in opposition to the yet stronger prejudices of the brother whose opinions had thitherto guided every important action of his life. At the time of which we write the people of different parts of the United States were but little known to each other. To the inhabitant of the Southern States, not only the New Englander, but every one who dwelt north of the Potomac was a Yankee—a name which was with him a synonyme of meanness, avarice and low cunning—while the native of the Northern States regarded his southern fellow-citizens as an indolent and prodigal race, in comparison with himself but half civilized, and far better acquainted with the sword and the pistol than with any more useful implements. Too many of these prejudices still remain, but they are so far abated that we can now scarcely conceive the keen pang with which Col. Montrose learned that his brother had not only dishonored his family by a connection with that of a Yankee *shopkeeper*, —a term considered by him as applicable to every man who lived by traffic of any sort—but that he was about to enter into trade himself. The brothers parted with more coldness than they had ever done before; but when, two years after, Col. Montrose became a childless widower, his brother's heart yearned to bring cheering to his desolated home. Leaving his wife whose presence just then might, he feared, bring painful memories to his brother's mind, he returned to Georgia and passed most of the winter at Montrose Hall. Col. Montrose accompanied him on his return to Boston and passed several months in the Northern States, making that city his head-quarters. This visit disabused Col. Montrose of many false impressions.

The brothers did not meet again, for Col. Montrose, taking the land route home, had met his present wife in Virginia, had married her in the ensuing summer, and had found his home since too attractive to leave it willingly. They had therefore been twelve years separated, for the second marriage of Col. Montrose had taken place in 1810, and it was now 1822. These years, it may be thought, even if they had not worn out his brother's tenderness, were sufficient to make the name of Charles Montrose an almost forgotten sound with all others in his Southern home. The sad countenances of the attendants, however, as the explanations of Mrs. Montrose to her children revealed to them the nature of their master's affliction, and the tears and impassioned exclamations with which the intelligence of his death was received by the older servants who had tended him in his infancy, sported with him in his childhood or served him in his youth, contradicted such an imagination.

When Col. Montrose was able to read Mr. Browne's letter, he found much in it that offered bitter food for thought. It gave poignancy to his grief to know that the brother he mourned had been bowed to the grave by the pressure of care, of disappointment and apprehension, while Mr. Browne's offers of service to his widowed sister and her children, and his proposal to procure a clerkship for Charles Montrose, and to educate Alice in such a manner that she might support herself—well meant as they doubtless were—excited his contempt and indignation.

"The mean Yankee!" was his bitter exclamation; "he boasts of his generosity in being willing to receive his own sister under his roof, and before the grave has closed upon my poor brother, he is calmly arranging a life of toil for his children—but my brother's children shall have no need to labor while I have a home to offer them."

Before Col. Montrose slept that night, he had written two letters which a servant was ordered to be in readiness to take to the nearest post-town at an early hour on the following morning. The first of these was to Mrs. Charles Montrose, and we insert it here.

Dear Sister:—The event which has made us mourners has but drawn closer the tie that united us, and has given us claims on each other which nothing else could have done. You cannot, I feel assured, deny me the only consolation I can know under the pressure of this heavy sorrow—the consolation of seeing all that is left me of my brother, of having the objects of his tenderest love, his wife and children, with me in my own home, under my own care, and within reach of the daily and hourly expressions of that affection with which my heart overflows for them. Your children are henceforth mine, and you must relinquish to me all care for their future maintenance and settlement in life. I cannot speak of business now—we shall have time enough when we meet for that—come to me as soon as you can. I am an old man, in feeling, at least, and have more perhaps of an old man's aversion to leaving home than my fifty years may excuse, but if you have any timidity about making the voyage under the protection of Charles, I will come for you. It may be that you will need funds; do not hesitate to draw on me. I shall write to your brother, however, on that subject.

You will understand why I cannot say more to you, at present, except that my wife and children join earnestly in my entreaties that you will come. Farewell, my dear sister! Give our love to Charles and Alice. Teach them that, while I live, they are not fatherless, and, believe me with a regard which no natural tie could transcend,

Your brother,
JNO. MONTROSE.

MONTROSE HALL, Feb. 5th, 1822.

This letter was enclosed in one to Thos. Browne, Esq., the contents of which were as follows:

Dear Sir:—I herewith enclose to you a letter for Mrs. Chas. Montrose, in which I have urged her coming immediately to me. Supposing, from yours of the 23d ult., that there may be a want of funds to meet her present demands, I hereby authorize you, if needful, to draw at sight on my factors, Messrs. —— & ——, of Savannah, for five hundred dollars. I will take care that they are in funds to meet the draft when presented.

In urging Mrs. Montrose to come to us, I am influenced no less by a desire to advance her interests than by more selfish considerations. If she can be happy in our home, she will live there without expense either for herself or her children, and whatever you can save from my brother's estate may be left to accumulate till the children are of age or marry. As I have no acquaintance with mercantile affairs, I shall never be disposed to interfere with any arrangement of the business that you may make, not doubting that you will do all that it is possible to do with justice to others for your sister. I thank you for your offer to obtain a place for Charles, but I hope you will not object to his coming out with his mother, that I may see and converse with him, before any irrevocable step is taken respecting his future course. Alice shall have such advantages of education as are given to my own daughter, and, as my daughter, she shall be provided for.

If I can at any time aid you in the settlement of my brother's estate, do not hesitate to call on me.

Please present my respectful remembrances to Mrs. Browne and your daughters, and believe me, sir,

Your ob't servant,

JNO. MONTROSE.

MONTROSE HALL, Feb. 5th, 1822.

There was something of calm superiority in the smile with which Mr. Browne read this letter.

"You will go, of course," he said to his sister, "for the home which he here offers you is probably all that you or your children will ever get from Col. Montrose. These Southern gentlemen deal much more in promises than in ready money. I should advise you, notwithstanding Col. Montrose's objections, to place Charles in the situation I have been offered for him before you go. All boys love idleness, and if you take him South and give him his choice, he will probably remain there, to grow up with the indolence and extravagance of a Southerner. Leave him here, and I will train him into an active, intelligent, successful merchant."

Mrs. Chas. Montrose yielded easily on most occasions to the opinions of others, especially of her brother, whose success in life seemed to her incontestable proof of his wisdom, but now her maternal fondness was on the side of Col. Montrose, and she steadily insisted that her son should enter into no engagement till he had seen and conversed with him who now stood to him in the place of a father.

CHAPTER II.

———"We're not all here!
Some are away—the dead ones dear.—"

———"We *are* all here!"
"Even they—the dead—though dead so dear."
"They're round us as they were of old"—
"We *are* all here!"

A WINTER voyage in a sailing packet—sea-steamers were then scarcely a dream—for a timid woman and two children, the elder of whom was only twelve years old and the younger not yet six, may seem to have been no light undertaking, but Mrs. Charles Montrose had few thoughts to spare for fears connected with such an object. The sea, even when darkest and most stormy, seemed bright in comparison with the grave which lay behind her, or the unknown home to which she was approaching.

A March sun was shining warmly and brightly as they sailed up the Savannah river, and they looked forth from the deck of the ship upon a scene clothed with verdure and flowers, but Mrs. Montrose gazed on it with tear-dimmed eyes and a sinking heart, feeling only that all around her was strange in aspect, and as they approached the shore she drew her children to her bosom with deeper desolation of soul than she had yet experienced. Her arms were still around them and the tears falling from her bowed face upon the almost flaxen curls of her little Alice, when Charles whispered, "Who is that, mother?" and looking up, she met the eyes, and with a sudden impulse stretched out her arms to the advancing form of one who seemed an older and grander and perhaps somewhat sterner image of her husband. The heaving of his breast as he folded her and her children together in a warm embrace, and the abruptness with which he turned away and walked to the farther end of the deck, that he might dry the moisture in his eyes and still the quivering of his lip before he could speak to them, might have taught her that his heart, if stern, was not cold. With few words, but those coming so directly from his heart that they dispelled all apprehension and loneliness from hers, Col. Montrose soothed his sister's grief without adverting to it. Scarcely could she believe it a reality, when a few minutes after she found herself seated at his side in a roomy, heavy old-fashioned coach, the dreaded meeting over, and a feeling of security and rest, such as she had not known for long, stealing to her heart. Her children looked more as they had done in former days than she had seen them since her husband's death. The tears were scarcely dried upon their cheeks, yet Charles wore a less anxious brow, and Alice smiled one of her own merry smiles, as her uncle told her of the cousins who were expecting her, and who would have come to Savannah to meet her, if his carriage had been large enough to permit them all to travel back together.

"Bella thought I was inconsiderate in planning to take you directly home whenever you should arrive—she thought I should give you a day or two of rest in Savannah first—but I felt you would rest better at home than you could do any where else."

"Thank you! Thank you!—I shall indeed," ejaculated Mrs. Charles Montrose with a grateful smile.

Blest power of sympathy, granted only to finer spirits, how little is thy heavenly influence understood by common minds! Visits of condolence, words or letters of condolence are the usual modes of expression of what the world calls sympathy—but to the truly sympathizing soul these are impossible, for such a soul knows that these are engines of torture, tearing open the scarce closed wounds, plunging jagged darts into the yet bleeding heart. From such a soul, gentler tones and kindlier looks, and tenderer words, show that the sorrow never named is never forgotten, and that in *its* esteem this sorrow has been as the fire from Heaven, sanctifying what it burned. Col. Montrose evinced that he was the possessor of this heavenly gift of sympathy, when he showed to the poor mourner at his side, that he and his Bella had taken counsel together for her comfort, and when he spoke to her of a *home* which was to be her best resting-place. Home! there was balm in the very word. Nor was the promise given by that word and by his tender care unfulfilled. The proud head of Mrs. Montrose was bowed in meekest pity to the widow and the fatherless. The young Isabelle and Donald Montrose, awed by the shadow of the first grief that had fallen on their household, were unusually quiet and gentle, and thought the sacrifice of their most valued treasures well rewarded by an expression of pleasure from their "*poor cousins who had no father*," while every negro on the plantation was anxious to prove his affectionate regard for "poor Mass Charles!" by some gift from his little patch, or poultry yard to his widow and children, or by some service performed for them, in those hours which were his own by prescriptive right. The influence of all this kindness upon Mrs. Charles Montrose will be best revealed in a letter from her to her brother, written about one month after her arrival at Montrose Hall.

MONTROSE HALL, April 23d, 1822.

My dear Brother:—I promised in my last letter that you should hear from me again as soon as I had time to think of the future, and to make any decision on the very different plans proposed by my equally kind friends, Col. Montrose and yourself. I fear, my dear brother, that you will think the decision to which I have at length arrived, very weak and self-indulgent. I have no doubt that the course you presented to me would be the most successful, the wisest possible course, if fortune alone were to be considered, but indeed, dear brother, I am not equal to the exertion it would demand. You little know how weak your poor Alice—indulged and petted as she has been by the tenderest heart in the world—has become. You say there could be no doubt of my success as a teacher; but, I fear, in thinking thus, you greatly overrate my powers. My life, for many years, has been a life purely of the affections. I have read little, thought little, and felt—oh how much! Before I could teach, I should find it necessary to become a learner, and how could I hope to learn with a mind so darkened by sorrow. Oh, no! dear brother, you must pardon my weakness—the shadow of death has fallen upon me—I cannot go forth into the careless world and enter upon the business of life, unless, indeed, such an effort were necessary to procure my children bread. This, I bless my kind Heavenly Father, it is not. He has raised up for them and for me a friend—a brother for me—a father for my children in Col. Montrose. He knew the heart of my Charles;—he loved him, oh how dearly!—and he says that Charles would have chosen for me as I have chosen for myself. Our home will be here—it is a pleasant home—a joyous home to the children, and to me the happiest I can now have any where: for it was the earliest home of my husband, and here every one I see loved him and mourns for him. You must not think, however, that I intend to receive so much without any return. There is one thing which I do feel myself competent to teach—music. You know how great was my husband's passion for it; for his sake I had the best masters and did all in my power to profit by their instruction. Now this is precisely the instruction which Col. Montrose finds it most difficult to procure for his daughter, and both he and Mrs. Montrose were delighted when I offered to teach her with my own Alice. Many other lighter accomplishments, common at the North and little known here, they will also learn from me, while the more solid parts of education, they, as well as my Charles, will acquire from the tutor of Donald Montrose, Mr. Dunbar, an elderly clergyman. Mr. Dunbar resides in a cottage about half a mile from Montrose Hall, and, being a widower without children, lives very comfortably on a salary of four hundred dollars from Col. Montrose, and about the same amount from the congregation worshipping at the little country church, three miles distant, which we attend. Thus, my dear brother, neither I nor my children will be at any expense, except for clothing. Even for this, Col. Montrose would have persuaded me to trust to him, but it will be very painful and humiliating to me to do so, and I cannot help hoping that the wreck of our own fortunes is not so entire, but that I may hope to receive two hundred dollars a year—the smallest sum for which, with even the severest economy, I could hope to procure a decent wardrobe for three persons. May I hope, my dear brother, to hear from you in relation to this part of my letter, and if I cannot obtain your approbation, will you at least assure me that you forgive your weak, but ever affectionate sister,

ALICE MONTROSE.

In due course of mail Mrs. Charles Montrose received the following reply to this letter.

BOSTON, May 10th, 1823.

You have judged rightly, Alice, in supposing that I could not give my approbation to a scheme which condemns you and your children to beggary for the rest of your lives; for, say what you will—call it by any name, however fine, those who are receiving from another what they can never hope to repay, are beggars. I speak plain language, for I am a plain man, and know nothing of *Southern Chivalry*, though I think my word would pass for as much in the market as the note of the proudest nabob amongst them. You ask me to say that I forgive you. I can scarcely do this with truth, for I consider you as throwing away, from shameful indolence, the very best possible prospects of independence for yourself and your children. You do it with your eyes open, however, and while I have no right to force you even to your own good, it is a comfort to me to feel that I have at least done my part, and that neither you nor your children can ever blame me in the affair. I would have taken all the responsibilities and the trouble—no little I can assure you, whatever you may think of it—of the arrangements for your school until it had been fairly set a-going. To Alice, I would have secured such an education as would have enabled her ten years hence to take your place, and for Charles I had already, as I wrote you, a place in the counting-house of one of our best firms. And all this you have given up, that you might live the life of an idler and a humble dependent in the house of another, teaching two girls to strum on a piano, and patching old finery that you and your children may dress on two hundred dollars a year, without disgracing your rich relations by your shabbiness. Well—as I said before—I have nothing farther to do with it, and henceforth wash my hands of the whole affair, except so far as may be necessary to see that you have your stipulated two hundred dollars. This, for the present, must be sent you from my own purse—whether I shall ever be repaid from your husband's estate, I do not know. If the business were wound up at once, I certainly should not be. I shall therefore continue it at my own risk, and hope in time to make it worth something more than that income to you. Thus, you see, my way of showing kindness to my friends is not to support them in idleness, but to help them to make the most of their means of supporting themselves. It is all which can be expected from a *Yankee shopkeeper*, and

Your Brother,
THOS. BROWNE.

There was a tone of personal bitterness running through this letter, which would not have been entirely inexplicable to Mrs. Chas. Montrose, if she had heard a conversation between Mr. Browne and a Boston merchant who had spent several winters in Savannah, in the prosecution of his business, which occurred the very day before her letter was received.

"Did you ever meet with Col. Montrose at the South?" asked Mr. Browne.

"Oh, yes—often—though only in the way of business. He was quite too high to condescend to have any other association with a Yankee shopkeeper, as he calls all Northern merchants."

Mr. Browne had all the super-sensitiveness common to those who enter late in life a circle for which their birth and early training had not prepared them, *et hinc illæ lachrymæ.* His letter produced no change in his sister's plans, though it made her a little less happy in their adoption. We leave her at Montrose Hall to experience the gradual influence of the great healer, Time. When we bid them adieu, Charles and Donald Montrose are preparing for college or for their future professions, under the tuition of Mr. Dunbar, and Isabelle and Alice are sharing with their brothers in the benefit of his instruction, and receiving the lighter feminine accomplishments from Mrs. Chas. Montrose.

Between these young girls there was a strange contrast and no less strange resemblance. This might be asserted even of their personal appearance, but was yet more true of their mental traits. Isabelle's erect form—the haughty carriage of her little head, with its raven curls drooping around a face whose large black eyes, delicate yet well cut features and glowing coloring, would have enchanted a painter, seemed in every particular the perfect opposite of the gentle Alice, with her soft brown curls falling on either side of a face of lily-like fairness, only relieved from insipidity by the earnest expression of the dove-like eyes of dark gray, and by the intellect which sat throned on the broad though not high forehead. They were certainly most unlike in individual feature, and yet there was a certain something about them, none could define what, which marked them as of one family and caused them generally to be supposed sisters. So in mental features, Isabelle was usually more rapid in her perceptions, Alice more deeply reflective; Isabelle more quick in impulse and decided in action, Alice not colder, but more timid and hesitating, yet exhibiting, when once thoroughly aroused, a strength of emotion and a tireless perseverance in the pursuit of the object that interested her, which made her seem for a time the leader of her more energetic cousin.

In Charles and Donald Montrose the differences of character and person were less marked;—both were handsome boys, talented, daring, active, strongly attached to each other, and looking forward with all the buoyant hopes and high aspirations of youth to the future which lay in glorious promise before them.

CHAPTER III.

> "And this life that we receive
> Is a gloomy thing and brief,
> Which consummated in griefs,
> Leaving ashes for all gain,
> Is it not *all* in vain?"

"All ye are brethren,"—thus spake the Divine Teacher, and the teaching is corroborated by every day's events. Clothed in purple and fine linen, Dives sweeps by the Lazarus waiting at his gate to catch the crumbs that may fall from his table, but Death lays his hand alike on both, for he sees that they are both children of him to whom it was said, "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." "I am of the chivalrous South," says one, and "I am of the enterprising North," cries another. "Ye are both men—born to sorrow as the sparks fly upward," whispers a "still, small voice" to each as he stands beside some just closed grave, or returns with slow, sad steps to the house which "has been left unto him desolate!"

On another February evening, three years later than that on which we stood beneath a soft, star-lit sky, to await the approach of the messenger of evil tidings to Montrose Hall, the family of Edward Grahame, a broken manufacturer, were assembled to watch beside his bed of death in a room whose shutterless windows scarce kept at bay the cold, sleety storm of a New England winter, raging without.

"Is Robert come?" asked the feeble voice of the dying man.

"Not yet, father," answered a young girl at his side. "You know he cannot leave the factory till eight o'clock—it is just that now."

"Send him to me as soon as he comes," was again breathed in a hoarse whisper, and then, except a sigh of exhaustion or a low moan of pain from the dying man, nothing was heard but the monotonous ticking of the wooden clock upon the mantel-piece and the beating of the sleet and rain against the windows.

In the few minutes thus measured out before the appearance of Robert Grahame, let us examine the room and its inmates. The room was small, the ceiling low, the plastering rough, and the windows, as we have already said, without shutters—its whole appearance being such as would cause it to be readily recognized, at the present time, as belonging to the class of buildings most frequently appropriated to the laboring classes, and which, of necessity, grow up rapidly in the neighborhood of a factory. The windows were shaded by curtains of a coarse cotton, called Hummums, the floor was uncarpeted, except just at the bedside, where lay a faded rug. The whole furniture consisted of a few painted wooden chairs, a cherry wash-stand and bureau, a small looking-glass framed in coarse Honduras mahogany, hung above the bureau, and a pine bedstead, in whose ample supply of pillows and blankets all of comfort that the room contained seemed concentrated. There rested the stalwart frame of one who had battled stoutly with life, and who was now said to be dying of consumption; though he himself and his family thought that his disease had assumed this fatal aspect only because his strength had been wasted in gigantic but fruitless efforts to retrieve his failing fortunes, and that, in the crush of long-cherished hopes, the springs of life had given way.

Beside his bed watched a young girl of ten, and a boy about two years older. The girl, young as she was, seemed to be her father's nurse—occasionally handing him drink, or performing some of those little offices which suffering humanity claims and seldom fails to receive at the hand of love. All was done by her in silence and with the quiet air of one accustomed to the performance of such duties. The boy had rested his head upon the bed and slept. A light, elastic, yet vigorous step was heard below the windows—there was character even in that step, it expressed energy, decision and the hopefulness of youth. A low quick summons on the street door—"It is Robert," said the young nurse as she glided from the room to admit him; and in a very few minutes, having only waited to throw off his wet cloak, and warm his chilled hands, a youth whose lip was just shadowed by the down of opening manhood, though his brow was heavy with the cares of a maturer age, entered the chamber and stood beside the bed.

"How are you, father?" he asked in a voice full of tender and sad feeling, as he bent above the pillow of the invalid.

"Dying—my son," answered a deep, hollow voice.

"Oh father! I hope not—I have brought you some jelly—Mary is getting it ready for you—you are exhausted, and will feel better when you have eaten."

"Nothing will ever make me better, Robert. I may live some days or only some hours, but I know my death is not far distant, and I wish to speak to you while I can command my thoughts and give them expression in words."

Here the speaker was interrupted by a hollow cough, which for several minutes shook his feeble frame, and left him exhausted, almost breathless. The first sound of that cough brought his daughter again to his side; and as soon as he was quiet, she presented some of the jelly of which her brother had spoken. It was a delicacy for which the dying man had expressed a strong desire for some days past—a desire which his impoverished children had been unable to gratify. He now received it with avidity, and ate with seeming enjoyment the few spoonfuls brought to him. As he lay down again upon his pillow, he asked, "How did you get it, Robert?"

"It is Saturday night, you know; all who are employed at the factory, are paid off on Saturday, father."

"And you have spent your money on this luxury for me—"

"Only a very little, father—we have enough left to supply all our wants for a week to come."

"You must think nothing too little to be saved, Robert; it is of this I would speak to you, my son. My poor boy! you have given up the studies you so delighted in, you have bound yourself to distasteful labor—"

"Oh no, father! not distasteful—I love it."

The invalid seemed not to heed the interruption—"And now," he continued, "you must curb your generous spirit and teach it to hoard. It is of this I would speak to you, my dear Robert,—'The sins of the fathers shall be visited upon the children,'—aye; even though they be only sins of ignorance. I have not willingly defrauded any man—I have not kept back the hire of the laborer—yet there are men, this day, when I am dying in poverty, who curse me in their hearts"—His voice faltered, ceased—and tears rolled down his cheeks.

"Dear father!" exclaimed Robert softly, as with that reverence to which sorrow ever moves a fine spirit, he bowed his lips to the emaciated hand that lay upon the bed. He could say nothing to comfort that sorrow, for he had already learned enough of the hard measure dealt by the world to the unsuccessful, to know that his father's impressions of the feelings entertained to him by many, were scarcely exaggerated. His sister with happier ignorance was indignant with him, that he should not contradict these impressions—

"Father," she cried, "how can you speak so! you whom no one ever suspected of a thought that was not honorable."

There was comfort in her words—aye, though he knew them mistaken; for they told him that in one heart, at least, his image would be preserved bright and unclouded. A soft smile hovered on his lips, and he turned his eyes tenderly, almost thankfully, upon her, though the next moment he said, "Ah, Mary! you know little of mankind—but leave me now, my daughter, I must talk to Robert of business—while he is with me, you may sleep. Let Richard go too, if you can wake him," and he looked at the boy, who, through all the movements in the room had never stirred. The daughter hesitated, and glanced at her elder brother, with an expression which made him whisper, "Go, Mary, to-morrow will be Sunday, and I can sleep then."

Exhausted by many nights of watching, Mary at length consented to this arrangement. While Robert roused the sleeping Richard, and sent him stumbling from the room, declaring, as he went, most energetically, and no doubt with the firmest faith in his own assertion, that "he had not slept a wink," and that "he was not in the least sleepy," Mary prepared the medicines and nourishment, which her father might require during the night. Then with a lingering pressure of her lips upon his forehead, and an affectionate "good night" to Robert, she left the room. Mr. Grahame's eyes followed her retreating form, till the closing door had shut it from his sight, then, turning to Robert, he said, "You must be both father and brother to her, my son—you will never let her want, Robert?"

"Never, father, while I live and have the power to work for her."

"I am sure of it, Robert—but there is another object, one that will perhaps interest you less, for which you must promise me to live and to work; Robert, I cannot die without laying a charge upon you—it is a bitter pang to burden you thus—you will perhaps think me unkind—but how can I bear to think that other homes are desolated, other fathers struggling, sinking, because of my mistakes?"

The dying man's frame shook with agitation. Robert knelt beside the bed, awed by the agony he witnessed—"Father," he said, "tell me what you would have me do, and my life shall be devoted to its accomplishment."

"Pay my debts, Robert."

"How, father? how can I do this?"

"Not this year—nor the next—nor the next, Robert—but little by little—working, saving, hoarding—it will be done at last. Is it too much I ask, my son—too much—it is your life; but did I not tell you the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children?"

He spoke with a wild, half-delirious manner, and Robert hastened to soothe him. "Oh no! father—it is not too much to ask—you have not sinned, and this is no judgment. Nay," he added, with an enthusiasm which the circumstances were well calculated to excite in a generous heart, "is it not a blessing to have so noble an object for which to live? I will live for it, father—I will work—save—hoard for it, and I promise you, if God spare my life, it shall be done."

"God bless you!—He will bless you, my son!"

"He has blessed me, father—I feel happier than I have done since our sorrows came upon us."

"It is the reflection of the peace you have given me, my son—a mountain is lifted from my breast—I breathe freely—I shall sleep to-night."

He did sleep, and awoke refreshed—calmer—stronger. For days his children almost persuaded themselves that the nearly extinguished flame of life would be rekindled. It was a delusive hope. In little more than a week, Robert Grahame repeated his vow with his hand resting on that of the dead, and as he turned away from the humble and unmarked grave to which very few persons had followed the bankrupt manufacturer, he stilled the spasm that contracted his heart, with the thought, "He shall have a noble monument yet."

CHAPTER IV.

"Each footstep of your treading
Treads out some murmur which ye heard before;
Farewell! the trees of Eden
Ye shall hear never more."

MILTON feared that he had been born an age too late; Edward Grahame might with more propriety have mourned the destiny which had sent him into the world so early. At a period when American manufactures were little more than a dream, he entertained the faith that only in the conjunction of manufactures and agriculture, could the financial independence of his country be attained. He proved his faith, by risking his all upon its realization. The factory for cotton and woollen cloths which he established upon the banks of the Connecticut would be thought but a rude affair at the present day, but in 1813, when steam engines and spinning jennies were still novelties on this side the Atlantic, it was the admiration and wonder of all who saw it. Admiration of the work, however, does not always imply respect for him to whom it owes its existence; and most of those who saw Edward Grahame's cotton and woollen mills, qualified their praise of the beauty of the machinery and the skill of the workmen, by a covert sneer or a friendly regret at the risk of so much capital on a yet untried adventure. For a time, however, every thing promised prosperity to the mill and its owner. The war with England and the interruption of our commerce which had preceded it, had greatly elevated the price of European fabrics, and depressed that raw material which we had been accustomed to exchange for them. No period could have been more favorable for domestic manufactures, and accordingly, for a year or two, Edward Grahame bought his cotton at a low price and sold his cloths readily at a fair valuation. The most sturdy opponents of his theories began to acknowledge their wisdom, at least, in this individual instance, as, day by day, they saw wagon loads of cloths sent off to be shipped for New-York and Boston, for Charleston and Savannah. Even his timid wife ceased to look frightened, as he talked of adding new looms and spindles to his factory. But peace was declared—the ports of England were thrown open to us—the cotton which had lain so long useless in the store-houses of the planter rose suddenly to an unprecedented price. That for which twenty-five or thirty cents had been thought a liberal offer was sold at fifty, seventy-five cents, or even at one dollar per pound. Nor was this the only trial to the home manufacturer. The overstocked warehouses of England emptied themselves upon our shores, and the strong prejudices in favor of foreign fabrics left the home manufacturer to a hopeless competition. Edward Grahame's was a sanguine temperament, and when he first felt the influence of this combination of opposing circumstances, he said, "This is a temporary derangement of the natural course of events, produced by unusual causes. The stream will soon return to its former channel. I will bide my time." Accordingly, in expectation of that better time, he stored the cloths, which he would not sell at reduced prices. But the time did not come, or at least it came too late for him. The greatest minds are frequently mistaken—not in the principles they espouse—not in their anticipation of the ultimate triumph of those principles—but in the time at which their hopes shall be fulfilled. "Of the times and the seasons knoweth no man." The laws of the human mind—the principles to which it must ultimately yield its assent—these are within our ken—but the events by which those principles shall be pressed upon its notice, and offered as it were to its decision, these belong to the secret things of God. Edward Grahame said to his patient, trusting wife, when the cloud upon his fortunes first threw its shadow on his home, "It is but for a little while—a few months and all will be bright again"—but months stretched into years till ten years had passed, and ever more the cloud grew heavier, the shadow deeper. Ere it had darkened into night she was taken away from the evil to come.

Three months before the death of his mother, Robert Grahame had been recalled from the college, at which his fine talents and noble nature had already won "golden opinions" from his teachers and associates, to aid in propping the falling fortunes of his house. He came reluctantly, and only the gentle soothings of his mother could soften the bitterness with which he found himself compelled, at his father's command, to relinquish the elegant pursuits of the scholar for the din and dust of the factory.

"If my father designed me for a manufacturer, it is a pity he should ever have awakened in me the refined tastes which belong to a different sphere," he said sullenly one day to his mother, when he had been reproached for want of attention to that part of the business lately assigned to him. No answer was made to his taunt, but his heart smote him as he glanced at his mother and saw a tear steal unheeded down her pale cheek. With one of those sudden impulses to which youth is prone, he threw himself on his knees beside her, and dropping his head upon her bosom, sobbed out all the sorrow which he had thought it unmanly to express, but which he could no longer restrain.

"Dear mother! must I give up all noble thoughts and hopes, to become a spinner and weaver, or a smith with sooty face and hands hammering on iron all my life?—I—who thought—no! no! let my father leave his wealth to Richard and Mary, I only asked an education from him, and even that I am willing to pay for by my own labor, but I cannot consent to lead a life in which all intellect and refinement must be lost."

Mrs. Grahame was a tender mother, and as she felt her son's tears wet her bosom and his heart throb against her own in all the abandonment of a first passionate sorrow, she could only drop her head upon his and weep with him; but at length, subduing her own emotion that she might soothe his, she said, "Listen to me, dear Robert, and I will tell you what you should have known before. I am convinced, my dear boy, that you have a nature capable of making great sacrifices cheerfully, when you feel them to be necessary to the happiness or the well-being of those you love. Knowing this I would have told you sooner what you are about to hear, but your father so shrank from giving you pain."

"Shrank from giving me pain!" exclaimed Robert, "and yet he—"

"Hush! Robert, listen to me before you speak of him again. He has been ever an indulgent father to you, proud of your talents and sympathizing in your hope of a high career, but Robert, you spoke just now of his wealth—what if I tell you that he has none, that our very home is ours no longer, and shelters us but by the sufferance of his creditors—that he did not withdraw you from college till he was no longer able to pay your bills there, and that he would now interest you in manufactures as the only career in which he can aid you."

Robert raised his head and gazed silently in his mother's face, surprised, bewildered by what he heard. For an instant

Mrs. Grahame met that gaze, then, as tears rushed to her eyes, she strove to hide them by pressing her quivering lips to his forehead. Her emotion dissipated every doubt—it was no dream, no fancy, this sudden change in the aspect of his life. With conviction of its reality, came thoughts, not of himself, but of her.

"Darling mother!" he exclaimed, no longer resting his head upon her bosom, but supporting her by the arm which he had thrown around her, "be comforted. We will all work for you—you shall never know want."

"I do not fear it, Robert," she replied. "It is for you—for my children only I have grieved."

She did not add what yet was in her mind, that she should soon be taken to her eternal home—a home to which neither want nor care has entrance. She would not chill his heart or enfeeble his energies by sad forebodings. Her object had been to arouse and to direct those energies. They were aroused and now she added, "Sit by me, Robert, and let us talk more quietly of the future. You spoke a few minutes since of relinquishing all noble thoughts and aspirations—"

"That was said in ignorance, mother, when I supposed the desire of wealth was the only object proposed by my father for my future life—now that I have you to work for—" he paused and met his mother's earnest gaze with a bright, happy smile.

"You feel that with a generous object in view—an object to be attained only by utter self-sacrifice, you have that from which the noblest thoughts, the highest aspirations spring. Is it not so, Robert?"

"Not quite, dear mother, for there is no self-sacrifice in laboring for you; that one thought will make all labor pleasant."

Again the mother's eyes filled with tears, and she pressed her lips to that bright, open brow, and murmured, "That must not be your only motive, my son, or what will you do when our Father in Heaven takes me where there is neither want nor labor?"

The bright face was saddened in an instant. Robert's lips quivered, and his bosom heaved with a sob which only the fear, that it was unmanly, gave him power to suppress.

"You will never want a motive for cheerful exertion while your father lives. You will not add to the bitterness of his disappointment in the plans and calculations of a life, by showing him that his mistake has inflicted misery on his children."

"My poor father! No, dear mother, he shall never be made more unhappy by me."

"Bless you, my son, for that assurance. You will be true to your pledge, I know; nor will it be so difficult a task as you now imagine—you already see that noble thoughts, generous purposes, and the highest of all aspirations, that of living for the happiness of others, are not incompatible with the life of a manufacturer; you will find in time that, though you may not make as great scholastic attainments in your present career as in a profession which demands these attainments as a preparatory course, you may acquire as valuable a mental culture and as true refinement. I see you are incredulous of this, but trust me it is so—you need not even entirely relinquish your classical studies."

"Why should I continue them?"

"Because of the pleasure they have always afforded you, and because of their influence in forming your mind and elevating your taste."

But we need not dwell farther on this conversation. Suffice it to say, that before Mrs. Grahame's anticipations of her own early removal were fulfilled, she had seen her son performing his duties without apparent reluctance, and arranging for himself a plan of study in his few hours of leisure, which, if systematically pursued, would at least prevent his losing the advantage of his past devotion to study.

Never did Robert Grahame waver in the purpose thus pledged to his mother—a purpose on which her death, quickly following, seemed to him to set a solemn seal. If he did not actually work at the forge, and we are not sure that he did not, he acquainted himself with all that was necessary to the fitting for their office those nice machines which have wrought such wonderful changes in our social life, and when the English machinist to whom his father was already largely in arrears, refused to remain with him longer, Robert took his place, supplying whatever was wanting to him of manual dexterity with the resources of a more intelligent mind, and a more thorough knowledge of the principles of mechanics.

The death of Mrs. Grahame precipitated the falling fortunes of her husband, by at once diminishing the energy with which he had hitherto breasted the tide of disaster, and the patience with which his creditors had watched his efforts and awaited their result. As their tone of demand, no longer chastened by pity for the sufferings of a delicate woman, became more uncompromising, his confidence in himself and his resources became less, and weary of struggle, he would, but for the thought of his children, have gladly relinquished all, and "rested from his labors," even though he had found that rest in the grave. We said, but for the thought of his children, but there was one other thought which united with this to nerve him to fitful and desperate effort—it was that which lay heavy on him in his death-hour—the thought that in his fall other homes would be desolate—other hearts crushed. The feverish excitement engendered by such impulses soon sapped the life they seemed to feed. As he felt his strength departing, he called his principal creditors together, explained to them his designs, and placed before them the books, which told a fearful tale of impending bankruptcy, while he endeavored to inspire them with somewhat of his own confidence in the ultimate success of his hitherto disastrous experiment. "I am passing away," he said in conclusion, "other hands must reap what I have sown—but the harvest will be abundant to him who has faith and patience. I stand not here to ask your forbearance for myself, or even for my helpless and most innocent children, but for yourselves. All I have—my house and its furniture—my mills and machinery are yours—take possession of them—I ask not the delay of an hour—but let the mills still do their work. They will repay you, even though you should be compelled to make further advances on them, while, if sold now, your loss must be reckoned in thousands."

"But we know nothing of manufactures—nor is it easy to find one who does—even were we willing to risk more capital, to whom could we confide our interest, since you declare yourself no longer equal to the demands made by the business on your strength?" was asked.

"My son has been engaged with me for more than a year—he understands my plans—he has acquainted himself with mechanics practically as well as theoretically—make him your agent."

Some of the men to whom he spoke knew Robert Grahame well, they had seen his untiring diligence for the last year, and only that morning had marked the perfect order reigning in the factory under his management. They felt that Mr. Grahame's proposition was decidedly the best that could be suggested.

CHAPTER V.

"Condemned to stem the world's rude tide,
You may not linger by the side;
For Fate shall thrust you from the shore,
And passion ply the sail and oar."

That golden age which seems to our faithless hearts a poet's dream, has it not once been a reality to each of us? Our life may be now a grim battle piece, but somewhere in Memory's tablets there is pictured a scene like some joyous idyl, —a scene in which beneath soft summer skies we danced with nymphs and fawns in greenwood shades, or reposed on flowery banks dreaming glorious dreams of the fair world that lay beyond us. And that moment—that long expected moment when the curtain which shut out that world was to be uplifted—when the fruit of the tree of knowledge was plucked but still untasted—when a voice within us said, "Eat and ye shall be as gods,"—what a moment of triumph was that! Those who have lived beyond it know the fallacy of its bright hopes—know that the whisper is from the arch-tempter,—that when, ceasing to make obedience the principle of our lives, we rise up in our pride to assert that we too are made in the image of God, with reason to perceive and will to decide,—ah! we know that the next act of the drama will close upon us the gates of our flowery Eden, and send us forth to win our bread by the sweat of our brows from a world which shall bring forth spontaneously only thorns and briers. Yet, with this knowledge burned as it were into our hearts by the sharp fires of our own experience, the old dream comes back, and our pulses bound with exulting sympathy as we see another of our race stand on that pinnacle of hope. Dark and rough may be the descent into the valley beyond, but there all is bright.

By some this point is reached earlier, by others later in life. Few have arrived at it so early as Charles Montrose.

For five years Charles and Alice had lived at Montrose Hall, apparently as free to all its comforts, pleasures, and advantages as were Isabelle and Donald. Together in the early morning they were accustomed to walk through the woodland path that led to the cottage of the good Mr. Dunbar; whom they alike loved and revered. The boys had read together the odes of Horace and the orations of Cicero, had puzzled side by side over the diagrams of Euclid, and were now beginning to feel the beauty of that language in which Homer sung and Plato reasoned. Recognizing no sex in mind, the good clergyman was leading Isabelle and Alice along the same road, except that for Horace he had substituted Tacitus, whose terse, elliptical sentences often drove them to seek for aid from their brothers. It was thus that Alice had applied one day to Charles, and after good-naturedly helping her through the difficulty, he exclaimed, " Ally, what on earth do you expect to do with all the Latin that Mr. Dunbar is crowding into this little head?"

Ally shook back the curls which in grasping her head to prove how small it was, he had drawn over her face, and with a gay laugh replied, " Do with it! Why what do you expect to do with your Latin and Greek?"

" That is a question, Ally, I should find it somewhat difficult to answer," said Charles, as with sudden gravity he turned away and sauntered from the room.

"Many a shaft at random sent,
Finds mark the archer little meant."

And the question Alice so carelessly asked had awakened a train of thought which Charles could not lull to sleep. After many vain efforts to answer this question himself, he sought assistance from those whose experience of life fitted them to be his guides. And first, he applied to his mother, but she could only look distressed and refer him to his uncle. The question came to her as a sphinx riddle which she had long and vainly sought to solve. To his uncle Charles went, and he proposed the question exactly as Alice had proposed it to him. "Uncle, what am I to do with all the Greek and Latin I am learning?"

"Do with it!" repeated Col. Montrose, "I do not understand you, Charles."

"I mean, what use am I to make of it, uncle?"

"I am sure I cannot tell, Charles,—it never seemed to me of the least use,—but it is generally considered now-a-days as essential to a gentlemanly education, and therefore I wished that you and Donald should study it. Besides, I thought that you liked your Greek and Latin. Have you grown weary of it?"

"Oh no, sir! I like it very much, but I am now nearly seventeen, and I think it is time I should be doing something, or at least preparing to do something not only for myself, but for my mother and sister."

"My dear boy," said Col. Montrose, as he looked with a pleased smile into the blushing face of the handsome boy, "do you think I shall ever permit you, or my pretty Alice, or your mother to want any thing—that I shall not provide for you?"

"But uncle—"

"But nephew, wait till you are of age and then talk to me again on this subject, and I will satisfy you that I did not mean only an empty name when I called myself your father."

Charles was silenced, but not satisfied. This life of dependence on his uncle's bounty was not the life he had proposed for himself. He had been old enough at the death of his father to know something of the widely differing opinions of his two uncles in respect to his career, and it was the dream of his boyhood to give a practical refutation of what, in the fervor of his spirit, he characterized as the sordid views of his uncle Browne, by attaining a situation of profit and honor under the guidance of his uncle Montrose. It was not only wealth and social position which he desired. He would feel that these had been won by the exercise of his own powers, on the honorable arena to which the generous patronage of his uncle Montrose had secured him an entrance. The prospect which this conversation with Col. Montrose presented to him of a life of uneventful repose and indolent dependence was therefore far from pleasing to him. He knew not how to state his objections; but they were not the less deeply felt, because they were felt in silence. His studies lost somewhat of their charm. They were less pleasantly, and therefore, less successfully pursued. Mr. Dunbar's observation was thus excited, and in him Charles found a sympathizing and judicious friend. The life of Mr. Dunbar had been one of struggle, and he had not outlived the memory of those visions whose impulse had launched him on his career and had long propelled him in it. Those visions had proved but "baseless fabrics," yet he acknowledged even now that they had not been valueless, since they had supplied stimulus to his energies which he should else have lacked. He believed that Charles Montrose would find a like stimulus in the desire to do honor to the judgment of the uncle who had sheltered his childhood, and to achieve an independence, however humble, for his mother and sister as well as for himself, and that thus straining every nerve, he would become a far nobler being, and would accomplish far more for the world and for himself, than if he should spend a life even of moderate activity in a sphere to which his uncle's wealth had won him an easy entrance, and where that wealth should continue to supply whatever accustomed indulgences he should fail to earn for himself or those dear to him. All this Mr. Dunbar presented to Col. Montrose with a force of reasoning to which Charles would have been himself unequal.

"Do you mean to counsel me," asked Col. Montrose, with some impatience in his tone, "to leave my brother's son to work his way unaided through a world, which you and I know to be far different from that which his inexperienced imagination paints?"

"By no means," answered the good clergyman warmly. "I am not the man to give such counsel, and if I were, you are the last of all the earth to whom I should offer it."

"May I inquire then what you do mean, for I acknowledge I do not understand you."

"I mean that, instead of removing all responsibilites from Charles, and training him up to a life of luxurious indolence ——"

"I have no such intention," interrupted Col. Montrose. "I mean year by year, as I grow older, to indulge myself more, and leave the business more entirely in his and Donald's hands."

"And if you left it all in his hands, my dear sir, what employment would it give to the energies of youth?"

"Let me tell you, sir, the proper management of a planting interest, such as mine, may employ the energies of any man."

"Not while it is the custom to manage it by proxy. To receive the reports of an overseer and direct his movements, you will confess is no great labor."

"Well—he may be my overseer himself, if he is so anxious to work."

"And so he might, were he twenty years older, and would you give him full power to manage in all things as he should think fit. He might then work out the most difficult problem, not absolutely incapable of solution, which has yet been submitted to the human intellect—how the slave may be elevated to the condition of an intelligent, accountable being, without detriment to the master's interest; but a youth of seventeen could not fight against the whole force of the social current surrounding him, and Charles would sink, in spite of your efforts to prevent it, to the level of an overseer,—and what is worse, he would sink to the character of one."

"And if he were as good a man as Mr. Ferguson ——"

"But he would not be as good a man. His spirit would be broken and his temper soured by supposed degradation."

"Well—well—we need argue that question no farther, as I should be as unwilling as any one to see him an overseer. I only named it as something that he might employ his superabundant activity upon, until he should grow tired of it—no very long time, I suspect. But as this will not do, what do you propose for him?"

"I propose nothing—he has himself suggested the navy."

"True to the family instincts for a military life—and he really expects to support himself, his mother and sister on a midshipman's pay?"

"Not quite, but he hopes to make this the first step to a position in which he may support them."

"A very forlorn hope, for the fulfilment of which, he must at the best wait some dozen years."

"Do you think so? Our navy has been much increased since the war."

"It has reached the greatest increase it will attain for many years, or I am much mistaken. Notwithstanding the popularity obtained by its successes in the war of eighteen hundred and twelve, the stern discipline necessary to render it effective, will prevent any enduring partiality for it in a people so impatient of control as ours. However, be this as it may, if Charles wishes to enter the navy, he shall have my hearty consent to do so, and my aid too—I feared he was thinking of selling tapes and ribbons, like that Yankee uncle of his. A true, manly, spirit, will find the naval service no sinecure—as my friend Capt. ——— says, it is a dog's life, but it is after all the best life with us for a poor *gentleman!*"

"I may tell him, then, that you accede to his wishes."

"I will tell him so myself."

And thus this affair, so important to the future life of Charles Montrose, was completed; for an application from Col. Montrese to a friend in Congress was quickly answered by the warrant for his nephew, which he desired.

The mother of Charles wept his approaching departure, but submitted to it with the resignation which an experience of deeper sorrows had wrought into her nature. Alice sympathized with all his bright hopes, rejoiced with him at the arrival of his warrant, felt her heart swell with heroic pride when he first assumed his uniform, meditated on Roman daughters and Spartan mothers as proper models for herself, and when the moment of parting came, threw herself with a wild burst of sorrow into his arms, and was inconsolable for days after his departure. In all her sorrow Isabelle sympathized while Donald almost envied Charles his independence, and determined to give his father no rest, till he should procure a warrant for him too. This was a resolution, however, built on too feeble a basis, to withstand the opposition of his parents, the sorrowful entreaties of Isabelle and Alice, and the indolence of his own nature.

This indolence was a marked feature in Donald's character. Overpowered at moments by the impetuosity of his passions, it resumed its empire as the storm subsided. Under its influence, he had resisted the efforts made by his mother and Mr. Dunbar, to induce him to enter college, and fit himself for some professional pursuit. In his opposition to their expostulations, he had been strengthened, it is true, by his father's passive influence.

"What did Donald want with a profession? There was the home and the fortune which had been sufficient for him—were they not sufficient for Donald and Isabelle? As to occupation, if Donald would give some attention to the plantation, he could easily fill up the remaining hours with hunting, fishing, and, if he chose, with reading. The world was overstocked already with doctors and lawyers, and he must confess he had no desire to see his son add to the number."

So reasoned Col. Montrose, if reasoning it may be called.

It was at last the impulse of a moment, which in this, as in other things, decided Donald's career. A young Virginian, a connection of Mrs. John Montrose, had been ordered to Savannah with a corps of dragoons, to which he was attached. At twenty-three, Lieut. Wharton, with the ardent impulses of youth, had the fixed opinions and resolute purpose of manhood. His enthusiasm in his profession was such, as might have become the most valiant knights of heroic time. The true soldier was, in his opinion, the successor to the valorous knight, and, like him, he was bound to be "*sans peur et sans réproche*," the vowed defender of the right, the chivalrous protector of the weak, and the enemy of the oppressor. A countenance of noble expression, a fine military bearing, and his skill in manly exercises, recommended him to all—at Montrose Hall, he soon became a general favorite. He talked with Mrs. John Montrose of her early home, with Col. Montrose of military affairs, and of modern improvements in the science of engineering with Mr. Dunbar. He rode, and sketched, with Isabelle and Alice. He hunted with Donald, and completely won his heart by teaching him to fence; and when, at the conclusion of his last lesson, he said, "you should be a soldier, Donald; a good soldier is the world's true ruler, and you look born for a ruler," Donald vowed, that come what would, a soldier he would be.

A purpose so earnest, rarely fails of accomplishment; and about two years after the departure of Charles, Donald too passed from the golden into the silver age—quickly—too quickly—to be succeeded by one of iron.

CHAPTER VI.

"This life, sae far's I understand,
Is a' enchanted, fairy land,
Where pleasure is the magic wand,
That wielded right,
Maks hours, like minutes, hand in hand,
Dance by fu' light."

We cannot pause on the details of the few following years of the life of Charles Montrose. The habits of careless expenditure contracted in his southern home had made it difficult indeed for him to live within the pay of a midshipman, then only eighteen dollars monthly. But debt incurred once, and once only, had brought with it such bitter suffering, he had borne so much of conflict with himself, before he could make the application to his uncle which justice to others at last compelled—an application involving the humiliating confession that he had failed in his purpose, and overestimated his strength—that the vow then made was never forgotten. He knew that many a thoughtless messmate looked disdainfully upon him for a rigid economy, which was attributed by many amongst them to his Yankee blood, yet he never faltered in his determination. While gaining strength by this discipline, he was losing softness. The bright, joyous face of the boy was becoming stern and hard, —the frank, confiding manner, reserved and cold. Had he felt less, he would have expressed more.

Less change had been wrought by the same time on Donald Montrose; for the sea of life had borne for him an almost unruffled surface. An only child, heir to large estates, surrounded by dependents eager to propitiate the future master, he could scarcely fail to become indolent, self-indulgent and exacting. Yet, that with a sufficient motive he could exercise no small degree of self-control, had been proved by his endurance of the discipline of West Point, opposed as it was to all his habits of feeling and action. This endurance had surprised his most partial friends, and perhaps, his perseverance in it was, in some degree, the result of their confident prophecies of his failure. His fine natural powers had been developed extensively though irregularly. Classical tastes had been early instilled into his mind by Mr. Dunbar, and the thorough mathematical training of West Point now did all which mental culture could do, to give him power for the guidance of his erratic impulses. His ambition had supplied the spur to his faculties which indolence made needful, and when the day arrived on which the examiners appointed by the country to whose fostering care this military academy owes its existence, were to sit as judges on his class, none doubted Donald's success, but himself. From him, the proud, buoyant confidence of months died away, as he met the calm, searching eyes which seemed to read his mind and take the gauge of its dimensions. There were Gen. S——tt; known by his towering height and fine martial head, before his name was announced,—Col. C——h, whose clear, truthful eye and honest face would have won trust from an enemy, and Col. B——d, whose looks were sterner than his heart. All the rough experiences of Donalds's after life never obliterated from his memory the hour in which he stood before these men.

He passed—passed triumphantly. His name stood foremost on the list of his class, and true to the affections of his home, his first thought was "my father—my mother—Isabelle—Alice,"—his first act to dispatch a letter, which, as furnishing a fair picture of his mind, we give below.

West Point, June 10th, 18—.

The long agony is over, and I am number one—so please to write me down a Lieutenant of Dragoons. I might enter the corps of Topographical Engineers, but I prefer a thousand times the life of a "bold dragoon." Wharton is here, and I am off *instanter* with him for the Springs—Saratoga, I mean, of course—to rub off the rust I have contracted here, and fit myself for an escort to Alice and Isabelle on their introduction to the gay world here this summer, which I consider as their "coming out." Tell them to look their loveliest for the honor of the South. They must wait till they come to New-York for the purchase of fineries, for whatever they bring from Georgia will be *passá* here.

I shall be in New-York on the 28th, which, as you sail on the 25th, will be probably some days before your arrival. I shall secure rooms for you at the City Hotel, and be on the look-out for the good ship Statira. Until you have been like me two years without seeing a home face or hearing a home voice, you cannot imagine how I long to see you. I wish Mr. Dunbar could come with you. I know he will be delighted with my success, which, I am sure, I owe in no small degree to him.

Have you heard from Charles lately?—

I hear voices and steps on the stairs—some good fellows coming to congratulate me, and I shall have no more time to write. Pray give a holiday and a dinner to the whole plantation, to celebrate my success. I am so happy myself, I would make every body else happy—good bye,

Your affectionate son,
Donald Montrose.

Montrose Hall, which we once saw shrouded with gloom, we might now present to the reader, sparkling with present pleasure, and gay with glad anticipation. Except the society of their own hospitable home, and that in which they mingled during a winter residence of six weeks in Savannah, Isabelle and Alice had seen nothing of the world, and now they were about to launch at once into its splendors. The North, unpopular as it has ever been in the eyes of the Southern statesman—though, even now, it appears to a thorough-bred Southerner a great collection—I will not say of *sharpers*—but of very shrewd men of business, ready to take advantage at every turn of their easy good-nature and thoughtless generosity—has always been to Southern youth of both sexes a name embodying months of more varied enjoyment than any other five letters in our language represents. With these, the North means Saratoga, Niagara, and a few other places whither the wealthy, the idle and the gay, who have been driven from the South by fear of *the* fever, resort; and whence Fashion, a ruler scarce less despotic than Fear, congregates her votaries, from cities infested by no disease.

We can no longer talk as poets were wont to do of the "languid heats" of summer, of the longing desire for the dash of waters, for the refreshing shades and freedom of the country, where we may indulge the delights of that "*dolce far niente*" which those heats induce. Far different are the pleasures now associated with summer in the minds of the world's leaders. You may spend your winter in seclusion without hazard to your reputation, but, on pain of eternal banishment from *the world*, beware of passing a summer at home. or resting from "laborious delights" during the months of July and August.

But fashion had little to do with the pleasure of Isabelle and Alice in the prospect of their northern tour. That tour was to introduce them to new persons and places, and thus to enlarge indefinitely the materials out of which their hearts were busily weaving the romance of life—life to them so beautiful.

On the last evening they expected to spend at home they mounted their horses, and attended by "Daddy Cato," who had grown gray in faithful service, and to whose care Col. Montrose was never afraid to trust them, they rode off to the plantation to say farewell to some of the negroes too old and too feeble to visit them, and to take that last look, so dear and yet so sad, of the places they best loved.

"Ah!" said Mrs. Charles Montrose, as she watched their receding forms from a window that overlooked the road they were pursuing, "will they come home in the fall with such light hearts?"

"Why should they not?" asked her less thoughtful brother-in-law, who stood beside her.

CHAPTER VII.

"——————Why rejoices
Thy heart with hollow joy for hollow good?
Why cowl thy face beneath the mourner's hood?"

Among the disappointments of earth, there are few so complete as the disappointment of our first voyage. "The sea—the sea—I love the sea"—we have heard said or sing from our childhood—the all encircling sea, image of the Infinite—grand in repose—terrible in wrath! From childhood had Isabelle and Alice been familiar with its aspect and its voice, yet not the less did they long to find themselves cradled on its bosom, and lulled to rest by its melodies. But ere they had lost sight of land, and could feel themselves fairly within the realm of Neptune, the *mal de mer*, that foe to sentiment, seized on them and kept them close prisoners in their state-room, careless alike of the sublime and the beautiful, till a blue line in the west marked the position of the hills of Neversink and they caught the faint ray of the light-house—not yet lost in the coming dawn. From this moment, all was enjoyment—enjoyment more vivid for the days of illness which had preceded it. Accustomed to the unvaried level of our southern sea-coast, the hills on the New Jersey shore, and even the green heights of Staten Island had for them somewhat of grandeur. Isabelle and Alice had each an open eye for beauty, and an open heart for its impressions. Isabelle was a painter, and looked on nature with an artist's eye. Not a shadow on the hills, not a variaton in the tint of the foliage escaped her. She saw not only the beautiful whole, but each part which had contributed to produce it. Alice saw only the beautiful whole—she could not analyze it, she could not depict it, but she steeped her soul in its influences, and felt them thrilling through every nerve of her frame.

The long arms of the telegraph at Staten Island bore to the city the information of their arrival, and they were still some miles distant when they were hailed by one of the many sail-boats with which the harbor was dotted. The boat drew near, a rope was flung from the ship, and the next moment Donald stood beside them on the deck; not the boy from whom they had parted three years ago, but a man, with a man's beard upon his chin, and a man's soul of fire flashing from his eyes. For a while nothing else was seen or remembered, but, when the first excitement passed, they found Capt. Wharton had accompanied him, and now stood beside them, smiling in sympathy with their joy.

We will not linger on their arrival, but suppose them emancipated from the confinement of the ship, escaped from the confusion of hackney-coaches and the crowd of bawling porters, and introduced to a pleasant suite of rooms at the City Hotel, which formerly stood in Broadway, just above Trinity Church. Their rooms included a private parlor, looking upon Broadway, to which Capt. Wharton, also a boarder at this Hotel, accompanied them, but, as it was near the dinner hour, he soon left the ladies to their preparation for that important occasion. Donald lingered a few minutes longer, that he might hold Isabelle and Alice again to his heart, might feel his father's hand laid again in blessing on his head, and his mother's lips upon his brow, and then turned from them all to kiss his aunt's cheek, as she sat quietly smiling upon them, and to tell her he was sure that Charles would soon be at home. His heart is still true to its early affections. Are his principles sufficiently firm to resist the temptations by which the world would draw him from them? If not, how many hearts shall suffer in his fall!

"Can we have a private table?" asked Col. Montrose.

"You can, but pray let us go to the *table d'hote*—I want Isabelle and Alice to see—and be seen," he added, with a laugh, after a moment's pause. "So look your loveliest for the honor of the South!" were his parting words to his sister and cousin.

Useless exhortation! What young and lovely woman ever failed to do justice to her charms? All desire that beauty which was doubtless designed as the type of an inner and lovelier life. It is a legitimate desire. The mistake is to suppose that this beauty is a thing of form and coloring merely. These are but the vase, exquisitely painted, it may be, but if the light of the soul beam not through, it will win but a momentary admiration. Even Venus was not irresistible without her cestus.

Donald must have been quite satisfied, we think, with the appearance of his sister and cousin when he called again, accompanied by his friend Wharton, to conduct them to dinner, or, if he thought the bows of Isabelle's raven hair too small for fashion, and the style in which Alice had arranged her glossy brown locks, which she assured him curled too much to be bowed at all, quite too simple, he was reassured by the admiring glances their appearance excited, and before he left the table he became invulnerable even to the eye-glasses occasionally levelled at the heads he had criticised, by some lady in the height of the mode.

In the evening Mrs. Wharton called with her nephew, and not only proffered her services, but with an easy nonchalance quite astonishing to our Southern travellers, inquired their plans, and learning that their immediate destination was Saratoga, informed them that they would need a complete outfit, as nothing made in Savannah could by any possibility be presentable there. The color rose for a moment to the brow of Mrs. John Montrose, but Mrs. Wharton quietly continued, "Were I a Northern woman, I would not dare to say such things to you, but I am a Virginian; yet, I assure you, I would not think of wearing in Broadway, and still less, of course, at the Springs, any thing made in the Old Dominion—for, if we ever had any dominion over fashion, we have certainly lost it."

Mrs. Wharton herself looked like one of the latest prints of Paris fashions, endowed with life and set in motion. Her really handsome face looked out from a bonnet with a crown of most extraordinary altitude, and a huge poke, decorated with immense bows of very broad ribbon; while her dress, with a waist immoderately long, and a skirt as immoderately short, showed to advantage a fine form, and to disadvantage a not very delicately moulded foot and ankle.

To Mrs. Charles Montrose, this lady had little to say. The widow's cap and deep mourning, which she had never laid aside, seemed to render her case hopeless in Mrs. Wharton's eyes, but she was eloquent on the *sin* of covering up such beautiful hair as that of Mrs. John Montrose, and disguising such a form.

"Why, my dear madam," she exclaimed, "excuse me for saying so—but it makes you look at least forty."

"I am forty-five," said Mrs. John Montrose, drawing up her fine figure with a somewhat haughty expression.

Mrs. Wharton was two years older, it seemed to her approaching too near a dangerous point to name forty-five, and she answered quickly and nervously, "Don't speak of it, my dear madam, don't speak of it, and nobody will suspect it—that is, if you will dress as you should do."

The next day and the next were spent chiefly in following this autocrat of fashion from Stuart's and Fountain's—then the great rival merchants of Broadway—to various mantuamakers, milliners and jewellers. Col. Montrose had given carte blanche to his children, and shopping with such resources was an employment too congenial to Mrs. Wharton's spirit not to be diligently pursued. It was to Isabelle that she at first exclusively devoted her cares.

"Show me your bright-colored silks and gauzes," she said to the shopmen. "Bright colors always for brunettes, my dear," she added in an aside to Isabelle.

"There, that lemon gauze is beautiful,—fifteen yards of it, sir."

"Will that be enough for both of us?" asked Isabelle, glancing at Alice.

"Both! Oh, no! I did not think of your cousin; does she want a gauze dress?"

"We always dress alike," said Isabelle, then appealing to Alice, "Do you like this?"

"Oh! that will never do for your cousin," interrupted Mrs. Wharton, "the most delicate rose or cerulean gauze, and pearl-colored silks—these are her colors."

Col. Montrose had accompanied the ladies to Stuart's, and was just taking his leave, when this little dialogue arrested him.

"I wish my children to dress alike," he said, with more determination of manner, than the subject seemed to demand.

"But, my dear sir, consider—their complexions and styles are wholly different, and what would become Miss

Montrose with her brilliant brunette complexion, raven hair, and queenly form, would make a perfect fright—"

Col. Montrose grew red.

"Nothing could make a fright of my pretty Alice," he said, as, drawing his niece to his side, he looked down on her with a proud and admiring glance.

Alice smiled up in those fond eyes and would have spoken, but Mrs. Wharton had perceived her error and hastened to correct it.

"I quite agree with you," she exclaimed, quickly, "she is the prettiest little fairy in existence, and might have disputed Oberon's heart with Titania; but not if you had insisted on her wearing the dress of Hypolita, Queen of the Amazons."

A little more well-timed raillery and a few adroit compliments, and Mrs. Wharton gained her point—the more readily that Alice advocated her taste in selecting different colors for Isabelle and herself. Col. Montrose saw some dresses purchased for Alice of the same quality with those already chosen for Isabelle, and then took his leave, only whispering to his daughter, as he went, "See that Alice has every thing as handsome as yourself, Bella."

Notwithstanding these little mistakes, Mrs. Wharton was invaluable. She was their good genius, from whom they hoped to receive the clew which would conduct them through all the windings of the labyrinth of fashionable society. Neither name, nor wealth, nor personal qualities would, without her aid, have gained them admittance to its inner recesses. They must have paused in its outer courts. Better so, than to become the prey of the Centaur dwelling in its midst.

Mrs. Wharton offered to accompany her new friends to Saratoga. Never had she seemed so amiable in the eyes of her nephew, who had been just regretting that his promise to travel with her would prevent his attending them.

They arrived at Saratoga in the afternoon. The United States Hotel was crowded, but their rooms had been engaged for a fortnight. Mrs. Wharton was a habitué of the Springs, and was immediately accosted by several of the most distinguished-looking of those gentlemen who sat in the piazza or lounged about the grounds.

"Who are your friends?" asked Mr. Bidwell, a young exquisite, who had driven the handsomest carriage and horses seen in Broadway the last winter, and who was consequently an especial favorite of Mrs. Wharton—that lady keeping no carriage herself.

"A southern family—Montrose—good old name, and wealthy too; there is a beautiful niece—a handsome daughter too;—but do not lose your heart with her—or it will be lost indeed."

"A dangerous competitor to Edward," thought Mrs. Wharton, and like a good aunt, she strove to give his attentions another direction.

"Shall you be at the ball this evening?" asked Mr. Bidwell.

"Certainly,—and I will introduce you, then, to my friends."

That evening Isabelle and Alice tasted first of Pleasure's Circean draught. There was no bitter in that first sip. Adulation from strangers, affectionate smiles from the dear home friends, met them at every turn. Mr. Bidwell was introduced, and to Donald's great annoyance danced twice with Alice. He pronounced him a blockhead and an impertinent dandy before the evening was over.

Edward Wharton could not solace himself in the same way, when he found the gallant and every way distinguished Maj. McPherson devoting himself to Isabelle. True, he thought the disparity between thirty-five and eighteen quite too great; but he knew that many would not agree with him in opinion, and Major McPherson was a man of acknowledged talent and courage,—handsome, graceful in manner, and above all, of higher rank and larger fortune than his own. What had he to oppose to these claims? He glanced for a moment at the miror in his room. It reflected gray eyes and a face of sallow hue, which presented little that was attractive, except to one who could read and value the intellect, feeling and resolution, throned upon the ample brow, and giving character to the earnest eyes and the firmly closed lips. From his unusually prolonged contemplation of himself, Edward Wharton turned away with a sigh, murmuring. "I have nothing to offer her—nothing but a heart which has loved her from the first hour I saw her, child as she then was."

This discouraging soliloquy was interrupted by Donald, who entered to invite his friend to join a party consisting of his own family and Mrs. Wharton, in a drive to the lake.

"We shall dine there—take a sail on the lake, and return here in the evening. It will be a great relief to get away from the Springs, even for a few hours," added Donald.

Capt. Wharton, though the most punctilious of men, was, for once, guilty of an impoliteness,—he repeated his friend's words, "Get away from the Springs! Excuse me, Donald, but I thought Saratoga was your Elysium."

"Saratoga is well enough for a man who is alone, and has nothing to do; but it is quite a different affair when he has ladies with him. If I had any reason that could be given to the world, I would persuade my father to be off to-day. I cannot bear to see Isabelle and Alice annoyed by the impertinent puppies here, who already seem disposed to 'bestow their tediousness' upon them."

"Are you sure that they are annoyed?" asked Capt. Wharton, hesitatingly, averting his face as he spoke. "They may not feel these attentions tedious,—McPherson, at least, is no puppy."

"No—McPherson, I confess, is an exception—though even he vexes me a little by his confident approach to Isabelle. But what do you think of that fop who danced twice with Alice yesterday evening? I was provoked with her for permitting it."

While conversing thus, the young men had been advancing to the parlor occupied by Col. Montrose and his family, and had paused at the door as Donald completed his last sentence. Before Wharton could reply, if he intended to do so, the murmur of manly voices within the room reached their ears, and, with an impatient manner, Donald flung open the door, and discovered the very gentlemen whose merits he had been discussing, established there, not the least, apparently, to the dissatisfaction of many of its previous inmates. As soon as Capt. Wharton had been welcomed and was seated in the circle, Col. Montrose said to him, "You will join us, I hope, in this day at the Lake, for which Donald is so eager."

Capt. Wharton bowed, but, before he could answer in words, his attention was distracted by hearing Maj. McPherson, in eager tones, urging upon Isabelle one of his horses, which he declared to be the most beautiful and gentle of creatures—"exactly suited for a lady's riding."

Isabelle glanced doubtfully at her father, who met the glance with a smile, as he answered for her, "My daughter is much obliged to you, Major, and would, I dare say, accept your offer with pleasure, as she has no fears in the saddle, but she knows I am loth to trust her on a horse with which I am unacquainted."

"But this horse is so perfectly gentle. Permit me to order him here at once and to attend you in a ride this morning, Miss Montrose."

Mrs. Wharton thought she read acceptance in Isabelle's eyes, and hastened to remind her of their excursion to the Lake. Major McPherson rose immediately, saying that he would not now detain them, but hoped that Miss Montrose would grant his request at some future time. Mr. Bidwell, who had been devoting himself to Alice, rose also, but paused a moment to ask if she would allow him to drive her to the Lake in his buggy. Before she could answer, Donald had declined for her. "My cousin Alice is engaged to ride with me," he said.

"Am I, Donald? I really did not know it," said Alice, laughing.

"Perhaps you would prefer to forget it;" muttered Donald, scarcely in an aside.

"How can you fancy such a thing, Donald? You know I would rather ride with you than with any one in the world."—Perhaps there was something of triumph in the rapid glance which Donald gave to Mr. Bidwell, whom he saw to be still lingering near them; but, if so, it was a triumph soon shadowed as the truthful Alice added—"at least any one except Charles."

Donald scarcely knew whether he were more angry with Alice, or with Mr. Bidwell, as he marked the smile lurking at the corners of that gentleman's mouth, when he made his bow and turned away. Donald hurried after him to procure horses, having just sufficient self-command to get out of the hearing of Alice before he vented his displeasure in words. Having the entire arrangement of the party committed to him, he placed his father, with his mother, and aunt and Mrs. Wharton in an open carriage, and had saddle horses for Isabelle, Alice, Capt. Wharton, and himself. They set out, and falling in the rear with Alice, Donald soon left Isabelle to his friend's guidance. For the first mile or two, Alice found him a silent and somewhat sullen companion, but displeasure deeper than his must have given way before her joyous mood, assisted by a bright sun and a capital horse.

Between Isabelle and Capt. Wharton there was little conversation during their ride to the Lake, and that little on the most indifferent topics—the weather, the scenery, the society of Saratoga, &c. There was not even an opportunity for the proffer of that protecting care from him which sometimes gives to such a ride a romantic interest; for the road was good, the horse gentle, and Isabelle an admirable and fearless rider. Arrived at the Lake, they visited the scene of the battle between Gates and Burgoyne, and on this ground Capt. Wharton became himself. There, every spot was pregnant with interest for a soldier, and the earnest and pleased attention of those who listened to him, prevented his perceiving that he was long the only speaker, as he pointed out the position of the hostile forces, and sketched with a glowing imagination, that could not fail to kindle theirs, the most interesting events of the day.

"This is one of Wharton's inspirations," whispered Donald to Alice. "They say, at West Point, he gets such fits now and then, and declaims, rather than converses, so eloquently that his listeners never grow weary, and then for days afterwards, will be as silent as if he had made a vow never to speak again."

But such silence did not now succeed to his temporary exhilaration. He had seen the cheek of Isabelle glow, and her eye kindle at some of the acts of heroism he narrated—he felt there was a sympathy between them, and dismissing Major McPherson from his thoughts, his spirit shook off its burden and rose the higher for its late depression.

"We are very much obliged to you, Captain Wharton, for the interest you have given to our day here," said Col. Montrose, as they were leaving the lake to return to Saratoga; "I hope to visit that battle-field with you again."

"I shall not come with you," said Alice, as Donald was leading her to her horse. "I hate all battles and battle-fields, and hope sincerely there never will be another in our land."

Capt. Wharton looked up at Isabelle, whom he had just placed in her saddle; a bright glow rose to her cheek, her brow, as she exclaimed, "I hope there are spirits in our land that would make a thousand such fields in defence of such principles as triumphed here."

As she concluded, her eyes fell, and she caught the upturned gaze of Capt. Wharton. His heart was in that gaze. Did Isabelle read it, and was it in rejection of its homage, that touching her horse with her light riding whip she cantered so rapidly away? If this was her meaning he did not understand it, for unwonted light beamed in his face, as leaping to his saddle, he urged his horse to a pace which brought him almost instantly to her side.

"You do not shrink from the battle-field and its associations as your cousin does?" he said after they had ridden for some minutes in silence, "you have more courage than she."

"I am not sure of that. If we were actors in the scene, Alice would probably bear her part as well, or better than I, though she might be less ready to enter on the strife."

Capt. Wharton asked with a smile, "Do you mean to represent yourself as very much given to do battle?"

"No—not quite that; but I sympathize more than Alice does—at least I think I do—with that spirit which will not yield an inch to a foe."

"An inch,—no—not a point where honor or principle is concerned, that is the spirit which ever animates the truly noble."

He spoke warmly, and his looks were ardent as his speech. Again Isabelle increased her horse's speed, and again he regained her side, and resumed the conversation.

"To a young and lovely woman like your cousin, we forgive every thing, and therefore I may not quarrel with her readiness to sacrifice principle to peace, but——"

"Alice sacrifice principle!" exclaimed Isabelle quickly, "I did not mean to intimate that—I am not sure that she would not—nay, I am sure that she would be more steadfast in the assertion of her principles than I."

"I do not see how that can consist with a determination to preserve peace at all hazards."

"The inconsistency is, doubtless in my mode of expressing myself. I do not know how it is, but while I cannot think of Alice as doing battle for any thing, I can still less fancy her as yielding a principle. Is there not such a thing as passive resistance?"

"Yes—it is that which makes Quakers and martyrs."

"Ah! that is it—I have always thought Alice would make a good martyr."

"The martyr may make his faith venerated, but it is the hero who bears it on to triumph."

"And is not the martyr a hero too?"

"He is—the noblest of heroes. But the world needs heroism of another sort—heroism which will strike boldly, as well as stand firmly for the right."

"That is the heroism which seems to me most attractive. It has at least the hope of success, and the glow and impetus of action to support it. But to stand still against opposing crowds—to be borne down, crushed—ah!—the divine must support the human, before we can choose such a fate." She paused a moment reverently, and then added, "I shudder, I grow pale at legends of the dungeon and the rack, but those of the battle-field kindle my spirit to a glow."

Isabelle spoke with unusual excitement—her face was flushed—her eyes sparkled—she sat more erect in her saddle, as if nerving herself for some deed of daring. Never had Wharton admired her so much. "Such," he said to himself, "should be the spirit of a soldier's wife—she looks as if she could do battle by his side."

Ah, Capt. Wharton! Is that all? Does she look as if she could wait and watch patiently for his return—as if she could fear for his life, yet the fear be unspoken, lest it should be as a chain on his spirit, holding him back from the path of honor—as if she could see woe worse to her than the dungeon or the stake, approaching, and BE STILL? Such is the heroism often demanded of woman—the heroism of the martyr not the soldier.

"See Wharton," shouted Donald; "you and Isabelle have passed the road."

They looked back—the carriage had already proceeded some fifty yards down a road to the left, and Alice was waiting at the turn, while Donald followed to recall them, and they were riding—whither?—

To whatever bourne it might have been, it is one they will not soon reach, for, obeying the call, they turn back, and ere they have finished their confused excuses for the blunder, the unwonted light has faded from the countenance of Wharton, and he has begun again to ask himself whether it would be honorable for a soldier who had no fortune but his sword, to marry, and above all, to marry an heiress. It was a question which he had asked himself every day since he had left New-York, and to which he had yet obtained no satisfactory answer. That evening, as he found his place at Isabelle's side usurped by Major McPherson, as he strove in vain to catch, even for an instant, the glance of the eyes smiling so brightly on his superior, he thought it was answered for him.

CHAPTER VIII.

"It were all one,
That I should love a bright, particular star,
And think to wed it; she's so much above me.
In her bright radiance and collateral heat
Must I be comforted, not in her sphere."

"EDWARD, what are your intentions in relation to Miss Montrose?" was the startling question of Mrs. Wharton to her nephew, as they took their seats in a retired part of the grounds to which he had accompanied her at her request.

"My intentions in relation to Miss Montrose!" exclaimed Capt. Wharton, surprised out of all conventional proprieties.

"Yes—pray don't repeat my words, as if you did not understand me."

"I really do not, my dear aunt."

"In plain language then,—do you mean to marry Isabelle Montrose?"

Capt. Wharton was in an agony. Fastidious to a fault in his notions of the delicacy of woman, and the care with which a man of honor was bound to guard that delicacy, he trembled at the carelessness with which his aunt spoke the name he would scarce have dared to breathe—spoke it too in connection with so strange a question.

Marry Isabelle Montrose! He who might hope to be so blest, should find his heart too full for speech, or if speak it he did, it should be in the hushed tones in which men speak their hopes of heaven.

"Pray aunt, be careful," he ejaculated.

"There is no one within hearing," she replied—"still, it may be as well not to call names—I will be as careful as you please, if you will only be plain."

"It is a subject on which I would rather not be questioned."

"And why not?"

Edward Wharton was always polite, generally affectionate to his aunt, who, though usually regarded as a heartless, as well as worldly woman, had been kind to him in his orphan boyhood, but he was now provoked beyond affection, almost beyond politeness. "Because," he replied, "it is a subject on which none living have a right to question me—it is one" he added in a softer tone, "which I have not yet dared to answer to my own heart."

"Well—I can only say it is high time you did answer it, or another will answer it for you."

Capt. Wharton grew more attentive to his aunt's words —"he did not understand her—would she please to explain herself?" But Mrs. Wharton was a woman—she loved power, and she saw that she could now exercise it and punish her nephew, moreover, for his resistance to her attempted inquisition. Instead of answering him, therefore, she apologized for having spoken at all of an affair which, as he had just informed her, did not concern her. "It was very foolish, she acknowledged, in her to feel any interest in it, but she had felt an interest, so great an interest, that she had relinquished her journey to Virginia—a journey on which she had set her heart, and had come to Saratoga, of which she was heartily weary, only to aid him in what she supposed to be his serious designs, but, if she had mistaken him, as it now seemed to her she must have done, there need nothing more be said,—she would find some excuse for leaving their present party and resuming their original intentions. If they set out to-morrow—and to-day would be enough to pack their trunks—they would still be in time to meet the Laights and the Vaughans in New-York."

Capt. Wharton had at first made some effort to stop this flow of eloquence, but he apologized and protested in vain, and taught by past experience, he at length became silent and allowed the stream to exhaust itself. When at last his aunt paused, he soothed her wounded self-love by a few well-timed assurances of his gratitude for her affection, and his confidence in her generous regard for his interests—he assured her that he had yet made no decision on the very delicate subject to which she had referred, but he would be glad to hear any thing that could be said by so true a friend as his aunt Wharton.

Her pride thus pacified, and her sense of power satisfied, Mrs. Wharton, laying her hand on her nephew's arm, said earnestly, "You know, my dear Edward, that, having no children of my own, I have always regarded you as my son, and there is nothing I can have more at heart than your success in life. You have no fortune of your own, and your commission, though it may give you the means of living very handsomely as a single man, is nothing to marry upon,—you must therefore look out for fortune in a wife.—But what's the matter, Edward?" she exclaimed in surprise, as Capt. Wharton sprang from his seat.

"Nothing, aunt—pray go on," he replied, reseating himself with a resolute air.

"Well—as I was saying—fortune cannot be dispensed with by you in a matrimonial arrangement, and it seems to me that, in the young lady of whom we were speaking,"—Capt. Wharton set his teeth firmly together, and wrapped his arms closely around him,—"this absolute essential of fortune is united with more of attraction than is ordinarily to be found. Her beauty—"

"Pray do not speak of it," muttered Capt. Wharton, between his teeth.

"Why—how needlessly cautious you are—there is no one near us. But, to say all in a word—I fancied in New-York that you were as fully aware as I of the advantages of the connection, and yet, yesterday evening and the evening before, you suffered another to take your place at her side, and that other one who is evidently in love with her, and who, if he be older than yourself, has both higher rank and larger fortune to recommend him."

"And may therefore be supposed to be disinterested in his affection—may he not?"

"Why—yes—I suppose he may—he can afford it."

"Then his offering is worthier than mine—let it be accepted. I have loved her—I love her—how dearly, let the future show. I knew not till she taught me, how much purity might be mingled with passion in man's heart—yet the passion was so strong that it might have overborne honor. To win the priceless treasures of her love I might have consented to be suspected of interested motives—might have consented to receive all where it would have been my delight to bestow all; but I thank you for having shown me that the shadow of my dishonor would have fallen on her—that the world might have dared to believe that I, to whom the lightest touch of her hand, the faintest breath of her lip, were of more value than all the treasures of earth's mines—that I had seen in her—in her, the bright, the beautiful, to whom my soul has looked as to its star of hope,—only a not altogether unworthy appendage to the gold I sought. Never—never—shall so degrading an imagination be associated with her through fault of mine—no, if assured that

I could make her mine to-morrow, I would not do it at such expense to her. Your question is answered, madam; no one but you would have dared to utter to me such doubts of my truth and honor: I may live to thank you for it—but now—oh, aunt!—aunt!—I will try to forgive you, but had your words been blows struck on my bared and quivering heart, the agony you have inflicted, had been less. Now, farewell—we must not meet again—do not attempt to follow or to speak to me—I have no friend! My life is desolate!"

Capt. Wharton had risen and stood before his aunt as he spoke—his figure drawn to its full height, his face pale with passion. The superficial woman of the world was awed by his eye into silence, but, as he turned away, she recovered her voice and called after him—"Edward—my dear Edward—pray come back and let us talk this over—I do not understand you at all—you must have mistaken me altogether."

He held on his way to the house, never once looking back.

"I do believe he has gone mad. I have a great mind to ask young Montrose to go after him—he may shoot or drown himself, or something,—and that would make such a noise here—it really would be dreadful."

Mrs. Wharton could not remain quiet. She rose and followed Capt. Wharton to the house. She went to his room—the door was locked—she knocked—she entreated to be admitted, but, during the time her fear of observation suffered her to stand there, not a sound gave token that her words fell on other than dead walls.

Within those walls sat Capt. Wharton, as still and apparently as insensible as they. "How, without attracting observation, should he leave Saratoga? How remove from her whom he had been suspected of dishonoring by making her the object of low, sordid speculation? Had she suspected him of such motives? No"—was the indignant response of his agitated soul; "she better knows her worth—nor would Donald so dishonor me—but her father—her mother—the world!" and again the head which had drooped at thought of her, was raised as if to defy that world.

Such were the subjects which, in every varying shape and shade of thought, rushed through his mind, interrupted by no sound, not even by the calls of his aunt. At length, however, he starts forward; he hears a firm, elastic tread—the tread of youth in its unbroken vigor and unclouded hope—but it was not this that dispelled his dreams. Lighter steps were there and voices gentle, yet gay, and once a low sweet laugh fell on his ear. The manly tread was Donald's, and Isabelle and Alice were his companions.

"Go on," he heard Donald say, "I will be with you in a moment—but I must first see Wharton, and bring him along."

"Shall I see him?" he asked himself. The question was not answered, when there was a knock at his door, and acting, as we generally do in matters so deeply affecting the heart, on impulse, he rose and opened it.

"Come, Wharton—why, my dear fellow, what is the matter? are you ill?"

"No"—

"Are you sure? I never saw you look so pale—but that is only another reason why you should come with me; we are going to ride—only Alice, Isabelle, and I—and I want you to take one of my plagues off my hands; Alice is as much as I can manage—I will leave Belle to you."

How strangely are the emotions of a human spirit concealed from its fellow spirits! Is it in mercy, lest, with such power to torture, man should become a fiend, and earth a hell?

For a moment, Capt. Wharton thought of accepting the invitation given by his friend. It would be one day—one blissful day, wrung from the closing hand of the destiny which was stamping "Ichabod" on his life. But no—he could not trust himself; and his friend scarce perceived that there had been hesitation, when he answered, "Donald, I cannot go, I must write letters; I have received intelligence this morning which will make it necessary for me to go to Washington. Excuse me to your sister and cousin."

"Oh certainly!" replied Donald, a little piqued, that an invitation of whose joyful acceptance he had felt confident, should be declined. "I will apply to Major McPherson to relieve me; he will, I have no doubt, take the place which you decline."

A dark flush rose to the face of Capt. Wharton, he raised his hand to his head, and reeled back against the wall near which he stood. Donald's pique was gone in a moment.

"Wharton!" he cried, "you are ill, what is the matter?"

"Only a little dizziness—I will lie down, and you will excuse me."

"Oh yes! though I must have both Belle and Ally on my hands—for to tell you the truth, Isabelle told me she would not ride with McPherson."

"Poor fellow!" soliloquized Donald, as he turned away, after seeing his friend on his bed, "I hope he is not really ill—it was a shame in me to tease him about McPherson. I begin to think Alice is right, and that he is in love with Belle—I wonder if she cares for him. She might make a more brilliant match, perhaps; but I do not know a person in the world, I should so like to call brother as Wharton—except it might be Charles, and that,"—and a smile broke over his face at the thought—"may be accomplished in another way."

No sooner had Donald's steps died on the ear of Capt.

Wharton, than, starting from his recumbent posture, he locked his door, and began to gather together the articles of clothing or conveniences of the toilette, which lay scattered about his room, and packing them, or rather throwing them in his trunks. The late interview had decided his course. One such day—one such hour, as Donald had proposed to him, and every thing would be forgotten but the passionate longings of his own heart. He must put distance, unconquerable distance between him and temptation. The decision once made, he lost no time in its execution. It was now ten; in one hour a stage would leave Saratoga for Albany, and he would be ready for it. His trunks packed, his next task was to write a note to Donald and his aunt. He promised the former that he should hear from him from Washington, whither he was going immediately on business. To the latter he wrote: "I cannot see you at present; our recent interview was too painful—I will endeavor to forget it before we meet again. Now I go to Washington and hope to obtain orders to some distant frontier station. I can say no more."

These notes having been prepared, Capt. Wharton rang for a servant, and, having given his directions respecting his baggage, he ascertained from him, that Donald had set out on his ride with Isabelle and Alice, and that he might therefore make those adieus, which his respect for Col. and Mrs. Montrose prompted him to make in person, without danger of encountering her whom he dared not meet. To their parlor he accordingly proceeded, where he was received kindly, though with evident surprise; Donald having reported him too ill to ride. Their regrets at the necessity which compelled his sudden departure, gratified him by proving that the presumption of which he was ready to accuse himself, or the base selfishness of which his aunt had suspected him, had not been seen by them. He left respectful messages for his daughter and niece with Col. Montrose, replied with expressions of gratitude which promised nothing to the invitations to Montrose Hall, and departed.

Travelling was not then so rapid as at present, but Capt. Wharton went post; and in six days from that on which he left Saratoga, he was in Washington, and had obtained from the War Department, orders to Tampa Bay on the Gulf of Mexico, then our most distant southern station.

CHAPTER IX.

> "You cram those words into mine ears against
> The stomach of my sense."
>
> "Not that the blush to wooers dear,
> Nor paleness that of maiden fear."

If the departure of Capt. Wharton left a cloud upon any spirit at Saratoga, it was not visible to the general eye. Perhaps, Major McPherson may have thought that "the beautiful brunette," as Isabelle was called, did not receive his homage quite so flatteringly as at first, but the difference, if difference there were, was too slight to discourage him, and he was still, whenever she would permit it, her partner in the evening quadrille and the morning ride. Alice was so assiduously attended by Donald, that though many admired her, not even Mr. Bidwell could mark his admiration by any very particular attentions. The latter gentleman had lost his most efficient coadjutor in Mrs. Wharton, who had left Saratoga soon after her nephew, accompanying a party to Niagara and Canada.

At the time of which we speak, the arrival of the mail was not a matter of hourly or even of daily occurrence. Twice a week, on Wednesday and Saturday mornings, the saloons of the United States and Congress Hall were filled with anxious expectants; then rides and drives, and all the usual sources of amusement were relinquished, to watch for the arrival of the mail-coach, and to wait in all the varied states of feeling, induced by varied circumstances and temperaments, for the opening of the bag and the distribution of its load of joy and sorrow. Among these expectants, Alice was at this time one of the most animated and eager, for each mail, she hoped would bring the welcome tidings of the arrival of the Frigate Constitution, and consequently of Charles in the United States, from a cruise of three years in the Mediterranean. Like all sensitive persons, Alice was reserved in the expression of her feelings, but this glad expectation of her brother seemed to her so natural, almost so necessary, that she thought herself secure of universal sympathy, and never dreamed of disguising her joyful hope or her bitter disappointment. Little did she understand the remarks of some ladies, on her "*amiable enthusiasm*," or the covert malice with which others complimented her, on her "*naïveté and grace*," as she sprang forward to receive the packet held up to her view by her uncle or Donald, long before they reached her.

Isabelle had scarce more knowledge of the world than Alice; yet she either understood its tone more readily, or felt it more keenly. None could see any manifestation of interest in her manner during these hours of expectation. Indeed she either was, or seemed from contrast with her cousin, more cold and listless than at other times. Yet a close observer might have marked that, though she never asked the question "Any letters for me?" even with her eyes,—her cheek became somewhat paler when "No letters for you, my daughter," fell on her ear—or if a letter were handed her, a flush rose quickly to her brow, to fade as quickly when the superscription in the hand of some old home-friend met her view. Could she have hoped that the looks, whose tale of passionate admiration, the lips had failed to utter, might seek an interpreter in written words?

Time, moving on with noiseless course, accelerated or retarded by no hopes or fears, brought at length the day and the hour. The Constitution had arrived, her arrival was announced at Saratoga, and the Montroses hastened to Boston, the port at which she had entered, to meet Charles. On that meeting we will not linger. Words can do little to convey an image of the mother's mingled pride and tenderness, as she leaned, faint with agitation, on the manly breast of him whom she had once borne in her arms and pillowed on her bosom; or the emotion of the sister—an emotion too glad for words, too deep for smiles—to which only tears, the ever-ready language of humanity, could give fit expression. The welcome of Donald and Isabelle was scarce less joyful than that of Alice—while Col. Montrose looked almost as proudly happy as his sister-in-law.

But this was not the only meeting of the day. Mr. Browne, scrupulous in the performance of his duty as a relative, called in the afternoon on his sister and niece, accompanied by Mrs. Browne and Miss Browne—their youngest and now only unmarried daughter. These ladies were dressed very gayly and in all the extravagances of the fashion of that day. They met Mrs. Charles Montrose and Alice with much cordiality, and extended their call to the other members of the party.

Charles, who had been compelled to leave his friends for some hours, for duty on board the frigate, returned in the evening in company with a gentleman, seemingly, somewhere between thirty and forty years of age, whom he presented as his cousin, George Browne. The impression made on his new acquaintances by the younger Browne will be best shown by the conversation which succeeded his departure.

"Mamma," said Alice, "my cousin George looks older than I thought him. He seems forty at least."

"He is not so old, my dear, by more than ten years. He looks thin and pale. Perhaps he confines himself too closely to business, though my brother, I think, used to fear that he would be a little wild."

"A fear," said Col. Montrose, "which I should imagine, from appearances, had not been without foundation."

"Do you think so, sir? I should be verry sorry," exclaimed Mrs. Charles Montrose.

"Of course I can know nothing, my dear madam; I can only suspect. He is very gentlemanly in appearance, and would be handsome if he looked in good health."

"And splendidly dressed," said Isabelle, a gleam of humor lighting up eyes that had of late been somewhat too grave in their expression.

"And splendidly dressed,"—repeated Col. Montrose, "yet, I acknowledge, I should be grieved to see Donald look like him."

"Little danger of that, sir, I hope," said Donald, pressing the hand his father held out to him in speaking.

Did Col. Montrose apprehend danger for his son, and thus delicately remind him that the happiness of others was bound up in his well-being. We know not, but if it were so, he did well to seek to place no bond on him stronger than that of grieving the hearts that loved him. It was too late to curb one who had thitherto known no ruler but his own will.

To be quite impartial we should, perhaps, permit the reader to hear a conversation, occurring about the same time with that we have just reported, at Mr. Browne's.

Mrs. and Miss Browne, dressed for display, sat in their drawing-room, impatiently expecting the arrival of the son and brother who had promised to accompany them to a concert. He was late, and was accosted somewhat fretfully on his entrance.

"Why, George, where have you been so late?"

"To see *la petite et la jolie* Alice. Have you seen her? The prettiest fairy—"

"Alice!" exclaimed his sister, "why, she is not so small, she is as tall as I am."

"Is she?" returned the brother, with a supercilious stare at his sister's certainly not *fairy* form. "I did not measure her height, but I saw that she was slight, and delicate, and graceful as a flower that sways to every breeze."

"You are really quite poetical. You must have lost your heart," sneered the amiable sister.

"Heart!" was the contemptuous exclamation in reply—"I would lose a fortune in exchange for a toy so exquisite."

"For my part, I think, Miss Isabelle Montrose is a thousand times more beautiful and more *distingué* in appearance,"—Miss Browne liked a seasoning of French as well as her brother,—"and with her you might gain a fortune instead of losing one."

"Thank you for the suggestion, my considerate sister,—she is the most brilliant brunette I ever saw, and has a splendid figure certainly—somewhat too Juno-like for my taste; but, if you will ascertain the number of thousands she will bring with her, I may be induced to overlook that."

"Here comes mamma, and I hope you will be induced to go with us at once,—we shall lose all the best music as it is."

Several weeks passed after the arrival of the Constitution, before Charles was freed from duty on board of her, and during these weeks Col. Montrose remained in Boston, that his nephew might be as much as possible with his mother and sister. The family of Mr. Browne made frequent visits to the Tremont and gave one laborious dinner to the Montrose party; yet their intercourse could scarcely be considered intimate, except on the part of George Browne. He was quite an example of an attentive nephew and cousin. Yet he did not like the recognition in speech of the very relationship which exercised so great an influence on his actions.

"Good morning, cousin George," said Alice, extending her hand to him in welcome. She had met him at the door of the parlor, as she was going to her room to dress for morning visits. He led her back to the sofa, and seating himself at her side, said, "Alice, what a perfect Southerner you have become with your *cousin* George."

"Excuse me," said Alice, coloring and withdrawing her hand, "I will not offend again in the same way, Mr. Browne."

"Worse and worse," he exclaimed, endeavoring to repossess himself of her hand.

"What shall I say then?"

"George—to be sure."

"George!" exclaimed Alice, her eyes opening wide with astonishment; "impossible!"

"And why impossible? You say Donald to Lieutenant Montrose."

"Oh! that is quite different—Donald is like my brother—I have grown up with him and scarcely know any difference between him and Charles."

"I have no ambition to be like your brother, dear Alice, but—" a movement in the room arrested his attention, and, on looking around, Donald stood before them. When he had entered or how much of the conversation he had overheard, they knew not, but Alice, before the day was over, had reason to believe that he had at least heard her avowal of sisterly feeling to him.

A ball was to be given on board the Constitution, and a few hours after the conversation with George Browne, Alice sat with her brother and Donald, talking over the coming fête. After a while Charles left the room to seek for Isabelle, whose hand he wished to secure for the first dance. Alice seemed to have fallen into a reverie after his departure, and Donald sat for some time gazing silently upon her downcast face. Suddenly looking up, and meeting his eyes with an open smile, she said, "Donald, I want you to engage yourself to me for that first dance."

It was just what Donald desired, yet he was vexed that Alice should have asked it—it was too *sisterly* a freedom.

"That will never do," he replied in a tone of pique—"you cannot dance with your brother, you know."

"Oh! but you are not my brother—though—"

"No, nor ever can be, Alice," interrupted the impetuous Donald—"and I wish you would cease that ridiculous habit of speaking of me as your brother."

Her pride and tenderness both wounded to the quick, the blood rushed to the very temples of Alice, and rising to leave the room, she strove to say, "I beg your pardon," but her voice was choked by an irrepressible sob, and though she turned her head quickly away, Donald saw the tears that hung upon her lashes. In an instant, he was at her side, his arm was around her vainly struggling form and he was exclaiming, "Alice—dear Alice—you cannot misunderstand me. If I would not be your brother, it is only because I would be something dearer—your lover, Alice, —your husband."

These last words were whispered in her ear, as she rested her head against his shoulder, endeavoring to hide there the tears which his first address had caused. Quickly raising it she now looked with a frightened expression in his face, exclaiming as she did so, "Oh Donald! Donald! do not say such terrible words."

"And why terrible, Alice? Are not lovers—"

"Oh! do not repeat them, Donald—do not repeat them —you frighten me."

"But why, Alice? Cousins marry every day."

"But not brothers and sisters, Donald—my brother Donald—my darling brother,"—and while bestowing on him these endearing epithets, the innocent girl passed her arm around his neck, and suffered her cheek to rest against his as he bent over her, seeming to wish by the tenderness of the tie she admitted, to win him from all desire for any other. But this freedom, far from charming Donald, maddened him, by showing the entirely different character of the affection of Alice for him, and of that with which he regarded her.

"Oh Alice!" he exclaimed, "would that we had never met till now!"

"Do not say so, Donald, I love you so dearly; I could never love a stranger as I love my brothers—you and Charles."

"Never love a stranger *as* you love us—but you will love one better one day, you will marry—"

"Never, Donald—never. I will never marry, but will live at dear Montrose Hall as I always have done, and we shall grow old together, always loving each other as we have done from our childhood."

"And you will never marry another? Do you promise this?"

"Oh yes! I promise, and you, Donald, you will love me just as you always have done—as your sister Alice?"

"I will love you ever and only, Alice."

"Sister, Donald—say your sister Alice."

"I cannot, Alice—I will not repeat what you dread to hear, but do not ask me to call you by a name my heart disowns."

"Oh Donald! how unkind—you have made me so miserable, and you will not say this little word to comfort me."

Tears were again glistening in the eyes of Alice, as she fixed them on her cousin; and Donald, though he had resisted her words, was overpowered by their mute appeal. "My sister Alice," he said, with a sad, faint smile, while the arm which had been folded around her, fell heavily to his side. She seized his hand and clasped it in hers, as she cried, "Thank you—thank you—my brother Donald. Now we will forget all this folly, and remember only that we are true brother and true sister."

"And that you are not to marry?"

"No—but to live on at Montrose Hall and be your housekeeper, perhaps, one of these days; but I must leave you now to dress"— and dropping the hand which no longer sought to detain her, Alice hastened to her room, not to dress, but to throw herself upon her bed, and weep bitterly over this first cloud in her hitherto serene sky. Smile not at her grief, sage reader, till you have felt what it was to have some quiet home affection on which your heart had rested without an apprehension or a doubt, suddenly transformed into a selfish, exacting passion, from which you shrank, yet which you could not crush without remorse, because it wore the face, and spoke in the tones of the old love.

CHAPTER X.

"Intelligence and courtesy not always are combined,
Often in a wooden house, a golden room we find."

"PERFECT love casteth out fear," saith the Book of Wisdom. We think the converse of this proposition is also true, and that in just so far as we fear, we cease to love. Think of this, ye who, loving fondly and truly, would yet constrain those you love by fear of the clouded brow, the sharp rebuke, the coldly sullen manner, or, worst of all fears to a generous spirit, the fear of inflicting pain on super-sensitive feelings. Would you know the signs of the decay of affections produced by such means, recognize them in the anxious eye of your friend, no longer confident of kind interpretation,—in the solicitous manner, studious to avoid all that could displease, and to surround you, at whatever expense to himself or others, with gratifications,—in the resolution which endures all in silence, rather than cast the lightest shadow on your sky. It is true that in all this fear mimics love, but like most mimics, it caricatures its original. It is true too, that only those whom we love, have the power to inspire such fear; but it is no less true, that they must choose between the two modes of influence, for where the spirit of love is, there must be liberty.

Donald Montrose, without reasoning on this subject, felt that the smiles with which Alice now ever received him, her more than usually affectionate manner, and her evident solicitude, on all occasions, to mark that he occupied no less of her attention than her brother Charles, were not proofs of increased affection. Angry with her, yet without ostensible cause of anger, or of reasonable complaint, he grew coldly sullen, and bitterly sarcastic. Ever at her side during the day, watchful of her every look and movement, the night usually found him dissatisfied with her, and scarcely less dissatisfied with himself. He who had never been denied a gratification, had not the majesty of soul which commands the tempestuous sea of passion—this is a power born only amidst conflict. Yet neither was Donald altogether destitute of generous impulses; he saw and loathed the selfishness of which he was guilty. Something of remorse seized on his spirit—a feeling with all the bitterness of penitence, but none of its salutary power to win the sinner from the evil for which he suffers. To escape its sting, he fled at night from loneliness and quiet, to scenes of reckless dissipation. In these scenes George Browne was his leader, "only," as he said, "to give him a glance behind the scenes of that stage on which the decorous drama of Boston life was enacted." Donald long continued a spectator, rather than an actor in bacchanalian revels, and the mad excitements of the gaming-table. Not at once can youth hush the voices which are borne to it on the wings of memory, voices so tender and so sad, seeking to lure it from the companionship of vice to purer pleasures and holier associations. But he who seeks amusement in the wild extravagancies or reckless follies of others, is inhaling an impure atmosphere, under whose exhausting influence the vigor of his soul will fade, and his power to resist temptation fail.

Though the freedom of a hotel life had screened Donald from the observation of those who would have been wounded by his frequent visits to the scenes we have indicated rather than described, yet the vigilance of affection could not be entirely blind to the change passing over him, and this change seemed to Col. and Mrs. Montrose in some way the result of his association with George Browne. It was therefore with little pleasure that, when after some weeks of travel, during which they had heard the roar of Niagara, and floated over the crystal waters of Lake George, they came to Newport even then a place of great resort to visitors from the South, they found Geo. Browne awaiting them. evidently by appointment with Donald.

"I am sure I do not see what pleasure you can take in that Browne's society," said Col. Montrose to Donald the first time he found himself alone with him after this unwelcome meeting. "He seems to me as thorough and as shallow-pated a coxcomb as I ever met, and besides I have no doubt he is Yankee enough to cheat you out of your very eyes, if you do not keep a sharp look-out."

"Do not fear, sir; as I shall neither sell to him, nor buy from him, he can make nothing out of me," was Donald's thoughtless reply.

At Newport, our party established themselves very agreeably in the house of a widow lady who eked out a small income by the profits she obtained from filling her large and pleasantly situated house with boarders. No Ocean House, or Atlantic, or Bellevue then offered its accommodation to the visitors at this spot of romantic beauty; and the only place of public entertainment was too little inviting to tempt even the gentlemen to leave for it the clean, comfortable and well ordered mansion of their hostess. The absence of great hotels will show at once that Newport was not then as now the resort of crowds of fashionable idlers; yet among the comparatively few congregated there might be found varied elements of character, capable of an infinitude of combinations, presenting a not altogether uninteresting study to the philosophical observer. There was the Southern planter, courteous and somewhat formal in manner, with a generous disdain of every thing mean and petty, which vindicated his claim to the epithet chivalrous, yet stung by false accusation and bitter taunt into an irrascibility and haughty arrogance foreign to his nature; and beside him the New England trader, designated by him with almost fierce emphasis, the Yankee, who, having acquired wealth by his own skill or industry, was proud of it as a warrior of his trophies, and displayed it with a bustling ostentation too little softened by the refinements which he had not had time to study. There were the children of both these classes, lavishing the money which the first could ill spare, and the last had hardly earned, in efforts to outdo each other in extravagance; and there were sharpers ready either in the bargain or at the gaming-table, to avail themselves of the folly of both. As few of the old gentry of New England visited Newport at this time, these were the grand shades distinguishing the classes most frequently to be found there; but there were besides a thousand nicer touches discriminating individual character. Perhaps these were more decidedly marked in those who by the successful industry of their parents had attained wealth and social position beyond their early expectations, than in any other class.

"My dear cousin, what a delightful rest it is to be near you," said George Browne one day, as he threw himself with a thoroughly exhausted air into a chair beside Alice.

"What great exertion has so fatigued you?" asked Alice.

"No positive exertion; my exhaustion is the effect of that sympathy from which every delicate organization suffers when observing the labors of others."

"And may I ask whose Herculean labors have so affected your delicate organization this morning?" asked Mrs. John Montrose, who, having entered unseen by him, had overheard his last remark, which he certainly had not intended for her ear. There was in truth a certain stateliness about this lady, which inspired even those she liked with some degree of awe, and which was so marked to Mr. Browne that even his self-esteem did not wholly preserve him from its subduing influence. Fairly caught however, as he now was, he had sufficient audacity to conceal his annoyance, and answered, "I believe, Mrs. Montrose, that I must exercise the privilege of a Yankee, and answer that question by another. Have you noticed since you have been among us, the contrast between the repose of manner prevalent in southern society—at least among southern ladies," bowing to the ladies before him—"and the fussy, fidgetty, laborious—what shall I say—I hate the word, and yet I believe I must use it—*gentility* of many here?"

"Like you, I dislike that phrase gentility, and besides, I am not sure I understand it. May I ask a definition?" asked Mrs. Montrose, with quiet gravity, unappeased by his adroit compliment to her countrywomen, or herself.

"My dear madam, you have given me a most difficult task; I would as soon undertake to paint the hues of a dying dolphin as to define it; it varies with varying place and circumstance. With you it wears the quiet aspect of one who, assured of her place and satisfied with it, does that which seems proper and graceful in her own eyes, without asking—what will others say? But with many here, and especially with those whom I have been visiting this morning, it consists in acting always and in all things as if *en pleine cour*—in jostling your way into a prominent position, and assuming when there a sort of *chevaux de frise*—a something which speaks as plainly as words—'Come not near, for I am greater than thou.' The first is a garment—it may be of rich—it may be of simple material, fitting gracefully and easily; the second one which, always glittering and showy, hangs awkwardly on the wearer and constrains every movement by its tightness."

This speech was artfully adapted to propitiate Mrs. Montrose, and, doubtless, was not far from expressing her own conviction; but she was too acute not to see its object, and too proud not to resent the effort to play upon her self-love, and, without the least softening of manner, she replied, "Without being a very keen observer, I may confess that I have seen the differences you describe, but they seemed to me indicative rather of classes than countries. If there is generally a greater love of display in the Northern than in the Southern States, we must in candor confess that there is more of splendor to excite such a feeling. As to the want of ease of which you complain, is it not the necessary result of that enterprise and industry which changes only, by elevating? And is not this a sign of a healthier and happier system than that in which all is stagnant? The perfect repose sometimes seen in a landscape of a summer noon is beautiful in painting or poetry, yet some of us have felt that the beauty may be too dearly bought."

At that moment a voice was heard in tones more decided than pleasant, exclaiming, "It is an assumption to which I will not submit, as I shall plainly show the next time we meet."

The speaker was tall, finely formed, and rather handsome in face, yet there was observable in her a want of refinement in looks and of good taste in dress, which, combined with her masculine voice and too energetic manner, rendered her by no means a pleasing object to any of our party Catching the eye of Mrs. Montrose, as she turned away after a momentary glance at this young woman, George Browne smiled and said, "And must I indeed prefer such activity to repose, Mrs. Montrose?"

"Of *such* activity I said nothing. Shall we remain motionless, because some action is ungraceful?"

"By no means, but I contend that it is precisely such ungraceful action which is most frequently met in our busy, bustling life; it is and must be the result of the change which you eulogize. This young *lady*—I would not dare, while the same walls enclose us, to name her *woman*—spent the first nine years of her life in a small parlor behind a retail grocery, and her whole subsequent existence has been an energetic protest against such an undeserved indignity, and a throwing down of the gauntlet to every man, woman or child who dares to look as if he remembered it."

"Surely, dear aunt, you would not have such jostling and browbeating as this lady's introduced into our dear, quiet Southern life."

Mrs. Montrose smiled as she looked at the flushed cheek and heard the quick, ardent accents of Alice.

"My dear little Southerner," she replied, "I am as little a friend to jostling and browbeating as yourself, and, perhaps, spite of my seeming magnanimity, as very a bigot to my own land; but I will speak reasonably, if I cannot always feel so, and my reason tells me that the roughnesses and awkwardnesses which are the result of recent change will be worn away by Time, while the natural tendency of the quietude you admire, is to gravitate downward to inertness."

"But I am sure, aunt, there is no want of action about you or my uncle, or Isabelle, or a hundred others I could name,—as you would feel," she said, turning to George Browne, "if you could see my uncle turning out before daylight to join a hunting party which will scour the woods for ten miles around—just for the pleasure of the ride, I suppose," she added, with a laugh, as she saw her uncle was listening to her, "for such parties rarely bring back any venison; or if you could peep at my aunt at sunrise in the dairy, or see her among her own people, nursing the sick, supplying the wants of the destitute, and comforting the sorrowing."

"Alice—Alice!" cried Mrs. John Montrose, coloring and striving to check the eagerly impulsive girl. "All this, my child, has nothing to do with our subject; you are talking of individual action—we of social progress and the general aspect impressed by it on life. You have given individual instances of activity, common enough, indeed, at the South; and Mr. Browne could, doubtless, if he would, set against these a thousand individual instances of quiet, idle, fine lady and gentleman life at the North; but where can we show an instance of one like this young lady, born in one sphere and introduced by the successful industry of her parents into another, while yet young?"

"Is it an advantage to her?" asked George Browne, resolutely determined, as it appeared, to please his cousin Alice, by his defence of her beloved South, right or wrong. "Would she not have been happier in her original position than she is in that which she now occupies, and where she retains her footing seemingly only by the most agonizing efforts?"

"My life having given me experience of neither," said Mrs. John Montrose, somewhat proudly, "I cannot answer your question, but admit that she would have been happier, and I do not see how that can influence our argument. Such an instance proves too much, if it proves any thing; it might with equal propriety be urged against any progress—against any social change."

"And I am not sure that it should be rejected for that reason; I doubt whether in any of these changes '*le jeu vant la chandelle.*' There is enjoyment in every class so long as the mind is not disturbed by ambitious hopes. The very lazzaroni of Naples——" he paused, arrested by the eye of Mrs. Montrose.

She replied only by a smile, but Charles, who had drawn near and heard the last part of this long conversation, said, with a laugh, "You have thrown the game into my aunt's hands, George; you have urged your own argument *ad absurdum.*"

"And here comes, just in time, an illustration of the advantages of the social progress for which Mrs. Montrose so ably contends."

George Browne turned to the window as he spoke, and, following his glance, the party perceived, approaching their house from the opposite side of the street, an old gentleman, pursy in figure and rubicund in face, leaning on the arm of a female of slender form and graceful movements, whose bowed head and large cottage bonnet did not for some time permit her face to be seen. While they were still too distant to permit words to be distinguished, the querulous tones of the old gentleman gave no pleasing impression of the subject of their conversation. Alice was still observing them when the lady raised her head, and she met the glance of a pair of dark gray eyes, earnest and intelligent, and gave her quick sympathy to the gentle dejection expressed in a fair and very youthful face. They were already on the steps, and the next moment the door-bell rang, and the gentleman's voice was heard inquiring for Mr. and Mrs. Larkins. They were ushered into the parlor, the gentleman reiterating to the waiter as he was leaving them—"Mr. and Mrs. Larkins; tell them it is Mr. Driscoll and his niece."

"Mr. Driscoll only, if you please," faltered a timid voice.

The red face of her companion grew redder, and, darting an angry glance at her, he repeated, "Mr. Driscoll and his niece, sir—remember his niece."

"She is not his daughter, then," said Alice, in a low tone, to George Browne, who had bowed slightly to the new comers.

"No, he is a bachelor, who, having made a fortune in India, came home to enjoy it. He has taken that young girl, Emily Willson, the child of a widowed sister, to live with him. He cannot be said to have adopted her, for he tells her every day and conscientiously repeats in the ears of every new acquaintance she forms, that she has no claim on him, and it depends on his pleasure whether she ever inherits a shilling of his immense fortune."

"Poor girl!" sighed Alice.

"Why does she remain with him?" asked Charles, eyeing indignantly the unconscious nabob.

"You had better ask her," said George Browne, with a careless laugh at his earnestness. "She has, at least, five hundred thousand good reasons influencing her, I doubt not —though romantic people pretend to say she is making a martyr of herself for the sake of a weak-minded mother, who is permitted, while she pleases her uncle, to live in his house, head his table and enjoy the luxuries which his ostentation accumulates."

"I have no doubt that is her motive," exclaimed Alice, warmly.

Charles looked admiringly at his sister's glowing face, and George Browne answered, "It may be; your sex are wonderfully given, I know, to make martyrs of themselves, —or of others," he added, after a moment's pause.

Just then the waiter returned to report that "Mr. and Mrs. Larkins were out."

"Give me your card, Emily," said the uncle, as he drew one from his own pocket.

"I have no card, uncle," said Emily, evidently with some apprehension of the consequences of such a confession.

"No card!" was the angry reply, "and pray what do you mean by visiting with me without cards? What do you suppose I gave you a silver card-case for, and a pack of the best enamelled cards, with your name engraved on them, if it wasn't that you should have 'em when you went visiting with me?"

The flush of shame rose to the fair cheek of Emily, as she strove to excuse herself, though in a tone too low to be heard by any other than him to whom she addressed herself. He answered with no such precaution, "I choose you shall call on her," and, writing the name of his niece on his own card with the very largest of gold pencils, Mr. Driscoll handed it to the waiter and hurried away. Emily followed him, but, embarrassed by consciousness of the observation this little scene had excited, she moved hastily, and stumbling against a footstool, she would have fallen, had not Charles sprung forward and caught her. The noise had attracted Mr. Driscoll's attention, and, before Charles could withdraw his supporting arm, he had turned quickly around and exclaimed, looking redder than ever, "What are you doing, Emily? Who are you, sir?"

"I stumbled, uncle, and am indebted to the gentleman for not falling," said Emily, eagerly, as if anxious to prevent some unpleasant observation.

George Browne, to whom Charles cast an imploring glance, stepped forward and introduced him as "my cousin—Lieut. Montrose of the Navy."

The introduction seemed to make no favorable impression, for Mr. Driscoll bowed stiffly, and drawing Emily's arm through his, led her immediately out, muttering as he went, fortunately for the equanimity of Charles, too low for him to hear—"Poor and proud—poor and proud—them officers in the navy always poor and proud—I knowed 'em in China."

Scarcely had the door closed on the uncle and niece, when throwing himself into a chair George Browne laughed long and loud.

"What is the matter?" asked Charles, coloring as if he feared that he was himself the object of his cousin's mirth.

"Oh! it is too good."

"What is too good?"

"Why, that old Driscoll should turn matchmaker, and manœuvre, like any fashionable mamma, for a good *parti* for his niece."

"I do not understand you,"—it was still Charles who spoke, and though he must now have been convinced that he had no personal interest in the affair, it was still in a tone of annoyance.

"Is it possible you do not see that he is making that pretty little Emily court Mr. and Mrs. Larkins for their son?—the most stupid booby, but son to the wealthiest father, I know."

"Poor thing! I pity her sincerely," sighed the gentle Alice. "Do you visit them?" she inquired of George Browne.

"Not very frequently, for I am no favorite with the uncle; and the pretty Emily's favor without his—I mean—pretty as she is, she is not to my taste."

"She is greatly to mine," said Alice, while Charles looked perfect agreement with her.

They not unfrequently afterwards met Emily Willson, and though no words passed between them, a respectful bow from Charles, and a look of interest from Alice, never failed to call a smile and a blush of pleasure to her cheek. This was slight intercourse indeed; yet pity for the trials of her life, so accidentally disclosed to him, combined with his admiration of her beauty to produce in the mind of Charles, in connection with her, a sentiment more nearly allied to tenderness than he had yet felt for any beyond the circle of his home; while the gentle respect of his manner often rose to Emily's memory in contrast with the harshness and coarseness of her uncle.

However enduring may have been the impressions produced by this scene, the scene itself occupied but a few minutes—so few, that the argument it had interrupted had not been forgotten, and George Browne would have resumed it, but Mrs. Montrose, as he turned towards her with this intention, anticipated him, saying with a smile, "Mr. Browne can scarcely, I think, be so little acquainted with the general aspects of human nature, as to believe that vulgarity and tyranny, such as Mr. Driscoll's, are monopolized by any one society. I assure him it is not quite impossible to find them even in my own beloved South."

"But aunt, surely they are not so obtrusively demonstrated there," cried Alice warmly. "I never saw a gentleman at the South exhibit any want of courtesy to a woman, however she might have been related to him."

"And yet there are unhappy households at the South, Alice, and tyrannical husbands and fathers."

"But at least, public sentiment compels them to keep such demonstrations of character for their homes. Such a man as Mr. Driscoll would not be accounted a gentleman with us."

"Nor is he here, nor could he be any where. A gentleman is not made by gold—not even by the education, the habitudes and associations which gold may purchase. Like a poet, he is born, not made; and such a birth is the result of the culture not of one, nor often of two generations; but where there is a rapid increase of wealth, as here, the culture will go on and the stock increase. Even the inheritors of Mr. Driscoll's wealth in the third or fourth remove will, I doubt not, be refined into that subtle essence which Mr. Browne found it so difficult to analyze."

"And you really then would prefer the North to the South?" asked George Browne.

"For myself?" exclaimed Mrs. Montrose with animation, "no—a thousand times no! For those who are contented with their own position, there can be no more delightful home than our own beautiful South ; but I would not quarrel, as you are disposed to do, with a state of society in which that position might be attained by those not born to it, even though in climbing there, they must bring some things I do not like 'between the wind of Heaven and my *gentility*.'"

CHAPTER XI.

> "His addiction was to courses vain,
> His companies unlettered, rude, and shallow,
> His hours filled up with riots, banquets, sports."
>
> "Consideration like an angel came,
> And whipped the offending Adam out of him."

HAD Donald made but half the effort to rule his own spirit which he did to mould to his wish the will of another, the result must have been to make him a better and a happier man. The bee sucks pure honey from many a bitter herb. But to Donald the very desire for self-control, the very perception of its possibility must be taught by sterner experiences than any which his life had yet presented. As his desires were selfish, there was nothing medicinal in his disappointment, while his expression of it exhibited more of boyish petulance than of manly regret. The natural reluctance of Alice to grant interviews, affording him only opportunities to urge requests to which she could not yield, or to lavish reproaches from whose sting she was not altogether shielded by a sense of their injustice, was resented as an indignity, and was met at last by passionate menaces, and mysterious hints of the reckless self-abandonment to which her cruelty was consigning him, and the misery thus to be brought by her agency on all who were dear to her.

"You have heard my entreaties for the last time," he had said to her on such an occasion, "I will offend you by them no more; but when I have abandoned myself to pursuits from which I may hope to win the only good life now holds for me—forgetfulness—should the home which has sheltered your childhood be dishonored, and the gray hairs of the father, who has cherished you as his own child, be brought in sorrow to the grave, remember that you—"

Pale with horror, Alice stretched her hands towards him with the imploring cry, "Oh, Donald, spare me!"

Seized with sudden remorse at that cry of anguish, he clasped her hands in his, exclaiming, "Alice, I am a demon to grieve you thus."

"And you will be good, Donald; you will not do any thing to distress my uncle—to break all our hearts?" she urged.

"I can make no promises, Alice; I will do my best; but I must have excitement—I must have forgetfulness. Ah, Alice!"—then as he heard the weary sigh with which she received the anticipated remonstrance, he dropped the hands she had not withdrawn, and exclaiming, "but I have promised no longer to torment you with bootless entreaties," hurried from the room.

Inexperienced as Alice was, it may be that she would have recognized in these menaces only the exaggerations of passion, had not some things in Donald already awakened the anxiety of his friends. These were but shadows, it is true, vague and uncertain, but they darkened their path, prophetic of coming ill. Ah! who can describe that sinking of the heart with which we mark the first plague-spot on the spirit of one we love; how hope and fear prevail by turns as the leprosy spreads, agitating us as no mere earthly ill can do. All this no words can paint. Each must feel or fancy it for himself. Man gives little of his sympathy to it; that is reserved for loss of fortune, or reputation, or for the wounds which death inflicts. But He who knows the heart knows that these last are but as the lading of the ship, which we throw overboard with scarce a pang, when storms threaten; but that the first—the inexpressible—is as the settling down of the ship itself, in which, if it sink, we must be ingulfed.

Though, as we have already intimated, Col. Montrose had felt some annoyance at seeing George Browne at Newport, he would far rather have endured his presence than to find, as he soon did, that he had the power of drawing Donald from his home circle to his own resorts. Browne had taken up his residence at a farm-house, remote from the society of Newport, but commanding one of the finest sea-views on the island, and giving easy access to the best fishing and bathing grounds. These advantages were the ostensible reasons of George Browne for his selection of it for his residence on the island, and of Donald for the visits extending sometimes to several days which he made there. But, however in accordance with these reasons might have been the pursuits of the day, the good farmer and his family could have told tales of the night which would have revealed attractions less innocent and more in unison with the haggard looks worn by Donald after these visits, and which, together with a certain moodiness of temper, had excited the anxiety of his friends. That anxiety would have been deep indeed, could they have seen some of the men who were his companions, in these nightly orgies—men on whose faces vice had set her brand, and whom he would himself have shrunk from acknowledging as acquaintances in the broad light of day. These, as evening approached, might be seen, like birds of prey, called out by the shades of night, wending their way toward the solitary farm-house, or, as passing time brought to their unconscious victim the craving for fiercer excitement, watching for his and Browne's arrival at the only public house at Newport—a house, as we have already said, offering little to attract the reputable visitor, but whose chief gains were derived from ministering to the evil passions of the gamester. Here, two rooms in the rear of the house, remote from the public eye, and carefully guarded from the entrance of the uninitiated, were furnished with tables for billiards, cards, and rouge et noir. In these rooms the display of lights, rich wines, and heaps of glittering coin, formed a strange contrast to the poverty exhibited in the rest of the house. Here, however, Donald did not find entrance till George Browne considered him too deeply entangled to escape his toils.

Great as had been the freedom from restraint of Donald's earlier life, it was a liberty which had in it nothing of licentiousness, for he had been preserved by the pure influences of his home, and the lofty character of his father from even the knowledge of vice. At West Point, the impulse which had sustained him in his studies had also preserved him from evil companionship, and on his first entrance into the world he had been shielded from it by the friendship of Capt. Wharton. Now, he had no engrossing pursuit, as at West Point. Capt. Wharton was gone, and from Charles, who might have supplied his place, as from the rest of his home-circle, he was driven by the irritation which Alice had excited. How his wild, untamed spirit chafed against the obstacle she opposed to his thitherto uncontrolled will! That will had till now swept from his path every thing that stood between him and his desires; must it be stayed in its most determined purpose by a feeble girl? He was yet to learn that the gentlest things in nature are the most powerful. The electric flash may startle us for a moment, but how much greater is the influence of the sunbeams that fall so silently around us! Passion had driven him from the sanctuary of home; yet more reprehensible passion had made him the associate of the depraved. He still held himself loftily apart from many of the associates of the profligate

Browne, but he would scarcely have received such deep and lasting injury from their coarse vulgarities as from the cold *persiflage* of Browne, and the plausible sophistries of one to whom Browne had introduced him.

It may be remembered that when Edward Grahame, the enterprising, but unsuccessful manufacturer, lay on his death-bed, two sons and a daughter were beside him. The younger of these sons, Richard Grahame, too young at his father's death to feel the pressure of those responsibilities which might have roused his indolent nature to voluntary action, and too old to bear the curb of a brother's authority, had grown up imperfectly educated, with a mind sufficiently ingenious in furnishing excuses for the gratification of his thoroughly undisciplined desires, with a heart not wholly destitute of kindly affections, but without the guidance of one abiding principle, or the energy necessary to resist one strong impulse, whether that impulse came from within or from without. What had been accomplished in Donald by the strength of passion, bursting asunder in its fury the bonds of early convictions, and right affections and noble aspirations, had been yielded by Richard Grahame to the first temptation skilfully applied. In both cases the tempter had been Browne, who had met Richard Grahame at his father's house in Boston, whither Richard had been sent as his brother's agent.

Mr. Thos. Browne had been one of Edward Grahame's largest creditors, and as he was also one of those most urgent for payment, Robert Grahame had very soon after his father's death begun to pay him certain yearly instalments from the salary he received as superintendent of the Grahame Cotton Mills. One of these instalments had passed into the pockets not of Mr. Thos. Browne, in the counting-room, but of Mr. George Browne, at the gaming-table. Other trans actions of a later date, and, if possible, still more disgraceful character, had cemented this union between villany and weakness. It was a union in which each gave what was needed by the other. It had been George Browne's misfortune to attain to manhood while his family were still maintaining a dubious strife for their position in the ranks of fashion. He quickly saw the advantage which his intimacy with the sons of certain families gave him with his father; for strange as it may seem, this shrewd man of business had no loftier ambition, no more darling object in the acquisition of gain, than to give his children the privilege of spending the wealth for which he had toiled, in the society of persons of fashion. That his son might do honor to his family in the eyes of his distinguished acquaintances, money must be at his command, and it was never withheld. The results might have been foreseen. In vain did the mistaken father, when they became apparent to him, seek to counteract them by withdrawing his lavish supplies and by an attempt to resume the authority he had long since relinquished. It was too late. The tree had already stiffened in the inclination given to the twig. The name of George Browne had been placed on that firm with which his father had never entirely dissolved his connections, but he was seldom known to enter the house in which their business was transacted, and the want of credit with his father drove him not to business, but to more disgraceful modes of filling his purse. The tricks of the practised gamester became familiar to him, and he had sometimes purchased immunity for failure to meet his own obligations by introducing to his brother sharpers some wealthier dupe. In this honorable task, he had not unfrequently found a useful coadjutor in his more decorous and plausible companion, Richard Grahame, especially when the intended victim was one who, like Donald Montrose, had seen too much of the loveliness of virtue, and was too little accustomed to the contemplation of vice, not to shrink from the cold, mocking tone, with which George Browne met every betrayal of finer affections than he could himself entertain, every hesitating step on the road which had become familiar to him.

Let us look at these worthies as together they await the appearance of Donald, who having an engagement to ride on the beaches with his sister had promised to leave her to return with Charles and Alice, while he rode over to the farm and proceeded to town with them by a road passing through the centre of the island. From the open windows of the room in which the confederates sit, the ocean is seen spreading in almost glassy smoothness to the southern and western horizon. The purple clouds of sunset are mirrored there, above which the new moon just shows its slender golden crescent. But this lovely scene wakes no glowing, grateful emotion in the dull, besotted minds of those who now gaze upon it.

"Do you see any thing of Montrose?" asks George Browne of his companion, who is looking steadily out over the marshes which lie between him and what is called the second beach.

"No," he answers languidly, and then, after a moment's silence, turning towards Browne, he says with more earnestness, "I wish you would let me off from this business, Browne."

Instead of answering him directly, Browne fastens his eyes upon the speaker for a moment, and then says, "You have been to Springfield, I perceive."

"I have, and I have seen my sister, whom I never see without hating myself and longing—"

"Pray, Mr. Grahame, spare me!" interrupted Browne, with a scornful curl of the lip. "I have heard all that before—besides, it is quite irrelevant to our present business, which is expressed in a very few words. I hold your check—I beg your pardon, your brother's check"—a sudden spasm as of pain, contracted the brow of Richard Grahame, not unperceived by his companion; "*your brother's check*," he repeated, "for five thousand dollars. I am willing to accept certain services from you in lieu of its payment; if those services seem to you too onerous, you have only to say so. Your brother is even now on the island, I believe; and at any rate, he has acquired such credit, that I have heard my father say, his check would be good in the market for double the amount I have stated."

Richard Grahame answered only by a look, as he strode rapidly through the room, to and fro; but in that look how much was concentrated—the helpless rage, the hopeless despair of the victim, who feels the toils tightening around him, and knows that his struggles are in vain. Rising also, George Browne approached his companion and said,—"I cannot conceive at what you hesitate in this affair."

"Can you not? do you not know that this man has a mother and sister whose hearts must be wrung by his folly?"

"Yes—a mother and sister who would think themselves less degraded by his vices, than by his communication with Yankee tradesmen and mechanics; who would sweep by your own lovely and graceful sister with contempt. Let them suffer, let them learn that they have no privileged exemption from human vicissitudes. I declare to you, Grahame, that my pursuit of this mad boy has been stimulated into almost a passionate excitement, by the pride of his family. Their immense wealth, too, frees one from any scruples of conscience in drawing something from their pockets."

He paused, but as his companion made no comment, he soon resumed: "You may be of great service to me in this affair. There is a certain decorous mode of playing the devil, unattained by me, but possessed by you in perfection, which is invaluable in silencing the foolish scruples of a neophyte. This young Southron is peculiarly alive to appearances. I have been obliged to order Matsell and Blixby to keep out of his way for the present, as the last time he found them here, he mounted his horse immediately and rode back to Newport in a rage. But for you he has asked frequently since you left us. Here he comes!" he added quickly, as glancing from the window he saw a horseman crossing the marshes at a rapid gallop; "you must decide quickly, therefore, whether I shall hand this slip of paper to your brother, or whether you will redeem it."

"Shall I redeem it?"

"Yes—I give you my word of honor that should you bring this prize within my grasp, I will surrender this paperto you."

"Be it so; I shall then be working for Robert while I am accomplishing your purposes, and, harshly as he judges me, I would walk barefoot over burning coals to aid him in his efforts,—at least," he added in a more subdued manner, as he read the sneer on his companion's face, "to feel that I had not interposed obstacles to his success. But will you give me in writing the promise you have just made?"

"No—you are not over careful, and such a paper would go far to establish a conspiracy case. You must play with Montrose yourself. You cannot doubt that I will accept his note to you in exchange for this check; nor can you, I think, doubt your success with such an unpractised player."

While Browne was speaking Donald galloped to the door, flung himself from his horse, and throwing the reins on his neck, suffered him to crop the grass that grew in luxuriance at the very door-step, while he entered the house. Saluting Grahame with evident pleasure, he said to Browne, "I believe you must excuse me from accompanying you this evening to the Maison du Mer."

"What! does *Madame votre mère* command your presence in other scenes?"

"My mother never commands me," was the boyish retort hastily uttered.

"Then may I venture to ask, what has occasioned your change in relation to an engagement which has kept Mr. Grahame and myself at home all the afternoon?"

"I regret to have restrained the movements of Mr. Grahame or—"

"Pray do not say a word of it so far as I am concerned," interrupted Richard Grahame eagerly, "I shall have the pleasure of your company in our ride to town, and that will reward me sufficiently for any restraint I have suffered."

"First let us have some tea," said Browne, adopting immediately the courteous manner of his companion.

He rang and gave his orders, and they were soon summoned to the bountifully spread table of their farmer host, where excellent bread and butter, fresh raspberries, and abundance of sweet cream, atoned for poor tea and coffee.

"What was the result of the argument you were repeating to me when Montrose came in, Grahame?" asked Browne as he filled his saucer a third time with raspberries and cream, while his companions pushed their chairs from the table, to indicate that the meal was concluded. "I mean," he added, as he saw the puzzled expression of Grahame's face, "your argument with your very straight-laced friend on the character of our intended amusement this evening."

"Oh!—excuse me—I had forgotten. Well, to my friend's first objection, that it involved the waste of time and money, the answer was obvious, that this was quite as true of many things in which the 'unco guid' themselves indulged without scruple, as, for instance, of expensive entertainments given only for amusement, of fishing and hunting, when these were pursued only for sport, and of more things than I had time to name. My friend now shifted his ground, and objected, that to an honorable man, it must be painful to take money won at a gaming-table; since he must feel that he had rendered for it no adequate compensation in labor or otherwise."

"And what could you say to this?" asked Donald, with an eagerness that showed his interest in the subject.

"That success in play, if the play were fair—and this was always supposed among gentlemen—could not be obtained without labor. That it was obtained, like all other success, by abilities sharpened by exercise, and that as regarded the having rendered an adequate compensation, none but the loser could decide on this; and for my part, I thought every man a fool, who would risk more on a game than he thought the amusement worth to him."

Donald remained silent, and it was Browne's turn to ask, "What was your friend's reply to this?"

"He had not a word to say; but lest he should be only silenced, not convinced, I carried the war into the enemy's country, and begged leave to inquire what adequate compensation in labor or otherwise, he had rendered for the ten thousand dollars gained that day on the stock exchange."

"Ha! ha! you had him there, I think."

"Yes—I have heard nothing of his objections since, and I doubt not I should have had the pleasure of introducing him to a more gentlemanly amusement than stock brokerage, had he not been completely under petticoat government."

"Will you ride with us, Montrose?" asked Browne, as he rose from the table.

Donald assented, and they were soon mounted and on the road. They were unusually silent, for two of them were considering how they might influence the third, and this third was revolving the arguments—he called them such—he had just heard in favor of a practice which he had hitherto been accustomed to consider by no means respectable. The town was still a half mile distant, when Browne drew up his horse, and pointing to a road at his left said, "Montrose, if you are afraid of being seen in the company of such naughty boys as Grahame and I, we had better part here;

this is our way to the Maison du Mer—you will reach your lodgings quite as directly by that road."

"I do not understand you, sir," said Donald, coloring high with anger.

"Afraid of being seen with us! Do you know your friend so little, Browne?" exclaimed Grahame; "I required scarce a day's acquaintance with Lieutenant Montrose to satisfy me that *fear* was a word whose meaning he had yet to learn. If indeed you cannot go with us this evening," he added to Donald, "can you not appoint some time when it will be more convenient for you? Browne tells me you play billiards, and I want to have a game with you, for I particularly value myself on my skill in billiards."

"Can you not spare an hour from your evening's engagement to see us play out one game to which I am pledged with him?" asked Browne. "He is so intolerably vain of the way in which he handles the balls, that I should like to have you see me beat him; will you come? It will not detain you long."

Donald could not run the risk of being thought *afraid* to do what he liked, or "*under petticoat government*," and like many a youth before him, he sacrificed his own self-respect, and obtained only the contempt of companions who saw clearly enough the motives by which he was actuated.

"After all, it is only a game of billiards, and I have played them many a time with my father," he repeated to himself, as he proceeded at a brisk trot with his companions to the Maison du Mer.

The road they were pursuing wound its way over a succession of hills. They were approaching the last of these that lay between them and the town, when Donald perceived a horseman just rising from the opposite side, to its summit. As he reached it, he drew up his horse and stood still, apparently gazing from that commanding position on the landscape around him. The forms of both horse and rider were clearly revealed against the glowing western sky, and rarely have there been seen forms more symmetrical. The horse was jet black, and as he stood, his neck arched till his small head almost touched his broad chest, his ears quivering with impatience, and one fore-foot slightly pawing the ground, he was worthy an artist's study. But Donald's gaze was riveted not on him but on his rider, whose figure, though not above the middle height, exhibited in its proportions more of easy dignity, and even of command, than any on which he had ever looked. The object of his observation remained perfectly still for more than a minute, when suddenly dropping his reins he stretched out his arms towards the sea, with a gesture graceful, yet energetic. The spirited horse, finding himself released from control, began rapidly to descend the hill, wheeling so suddenly that he must have thrown a less practised rider.

"See! see! he will be down," Donald involuntarily exclaimed; but, ere the words had left his lips, his apprehensions were relieved. Even before he had caught the reins again, the horseman had resumed the mastery over the impatient animal, which now came gently though fleetly forward.

Donald's attention had been too much absorbed in his admiring observation of the new comer to permit him to remark the effect produced by his appearance on his companions. A low, deep "Damnation!" uttered between his clenched teeth, was George Browne's salute to him as he lifted his eyes at Donald's exclamation, while Richard Grahame, suddenly checking his horse and casting a hurried glance around him, seemed to be seeking some mode of avoiding the meeting, which he soon found to be inevitable. As this conclusion forced itself upon him, he put spurs to his horse, and crying "*Sauve qui peut!*" urged him to a rapid gallop up the hill. Donald, supposing this only a playful challenge, would have followed him, but Browne, laying his hand on his rein, said, "Stay Montrose—this is a family affair, and we had better have nothing to do with it. The gentleman riding this way is a brother of our friend Grahame, and they have had lately some serious differences. I believe Grahame means to cut—By Jove! the fellow is determined not to be cut. See, he draws up his horse to wait for Grahame."

"What a splendid rider he is!" cried Donald, ever attracted by excellence in all manly accomplishments; "his horse obeys his mere volition, as if he were a part of himself. Grahame will pass him; but no!—he wheels his horse across the road—Grahame must stop."

"Or ride him down, which is what he should do," said Browne, bitterly.

Irresistibly attracted by what he had seen and heard, Donald's gaze was riveted on the stranger as he drew near him, and seldom had he beheld a countenance which awakened his interest so powerfully.

On the broad brow which the riding cap left wholly uncovered, there sat a kingly majesty, while the determination of the firmly closed lips was softened by the milder expression of the earnest dark gray eyes. There was power—wonderful power in that face, but to a close observer it would have seemed the power rather of endurance than of action. With a certain family resemblance between them, never did two men exhibit in countenance characteristics more opposite than did those two brothers as they stood there, facing each other. Richard Grahame was flushed, angry, glancing restlessly from side to side, as if seeking some means of escape; his brother pale, calm, resolute, his eyes fixed on the face before him, not actively interfering with Richard's movements, yet, by keeping his horse across the road and directly before his brother, effectually checking his advance.

As Browne and Donald approached, Robert Grahame—for he it was—glanced for a moment at them. Somewhat to Donald's surprise, George Browne met that glance with a bow more respectful than he was accustomed to give, to which the stranger, while a slight flush rose to his pale face, replied by a bend so stately and so frigid that Donald thought, in Browne's place, he would have been better pleased with no acknowledgment at all. Occupied by his observation of others, he had not seen the look of almost sad interest with which he was himself regarded. If he had, he might have anticipated the words uttered as soon as he was out of hearing, "And so, this is your intended victim, Richard?"

"Robert, this is unbearable. I am no longer a boy, to be stopped by force and lectured at your pleasure. Let me pass!"

"I will, when you have heard that which I stopped you to say."

"Say it quickly, then."

"I will. Having occasion to call at the Maison du Mer this afternoon, by a fortunate accident, or rather by a good Providence, I overheard a conversation from which I learned something of your and Browne's designs, and I was even now riding out to see you, and to tell you that I will thwart them if there be power in man to do so."

"And I tell you that you had better not interfere with us for your own sake. I know not what ridiculous folly you may have heard and been sufficiently credulous to believe,—you are always ready enough to impute evil to me; but, whatever our designs may be, what business, I pray, have you with them?"

"It is the business of every honest man to prevent so flagrant a violation of the laws of God and man, even when the violator is one in whose actions he has no special concern."

"And you have no special concern in ours."

"In Browne's I thankfully admit I have not."

"Nor in mine."

"That is a question of which I am the only judge; but I am not here to argue with you, but only to warn you that I am watching you, and that no consideration—mark me! no consideration—shall prevent my doing what I feel to be my duty in this matter. I have said it. Good evening."

"Your duty!" began Richard Grahame, with contemptuous emphasis. Before he could say more, his brother was out of hearing, having urged his horse into a gallop the moment he himself ceased speaking. Richard looked after him for an instant, but if he had any thought of following him, it was quickly relinquished, and he rode rapidly off in an opposite direction, hoping still to overtake Browne and Montrose in time for the fulfilment of an engagement which had become more than ever important, since, should his brother keep his word—and, from his knowledge of him, he had little doubt that he would keep it—they would probably have few such opportunities of accomplishing their object. His last word had reached his brother's ear, and found a quick echo in his mind.

"Duty!" he said to himself; "for what else have I lived? Fame? Power? These were dreams of my boyhood—dreams indeed! Pleasure? Of that, as an object of life, I think, I never dreamed. There was nothing in it to touch my soul. One other youthful dream there is; but it is one in which I never dared indulge, lest it should make my life seem harsh in contrast—love. Would it not have softened the spirit and unbent the energies which, on my father's grave, as on a holy altar, I had consecrated to duty—a homely duty—but it may be that such a consecration is not the less ennobling, not the less approved by Heaven, because it can hope for no earthly appreciation—no earthly reward. DUTY! THE RIGHT! THE TRUE! Is not this the only substantial good in the whole creation? Is not the pursuit of any other object but chasing a shadow? The wealth which Richard—ha! Richard—where am I?"

Bound in the spell woven by such thoughts, he had left, more than a mile behind him, the road by which, doubling on his track, he had intended to return to the city in time to interrupt the confederates in the execution of their design, and, as he hoped, oblige them to relinquish it, or, if this might not be, to expose their plans to their intended dupe, and thus induce him to break from their toils. Awakened from his reverie, he returned rapidly to Newport by the shortest route, but, though he went to the Maison du Mer and to every place of public resort, he could neither see any traces, nor hear any tidings of those he sought.

CHAPTER XII.

"Though the mills of God grind slowly,
Yet they grind exceeding small;
Though with patience stands he waiting,
With exactness grinds he all."

NAMES exercise over us a power which few of us would be disposed to admit. It is a power, however, capable of demonstration. Controversies which have kept the world agitated for years, or even for centuries, are they not often to be traced to names? How many in our own times have been the mocking words, even the bitter, angry feelings excited by the name animal magnetism, yet who doubts the thing itself? Who doubts that there resides in some a wonderful power of attraction, by which they win to themselves the sympathies of all hearts, and move the minds of men hither and thither at their will? Others may overpower opposition by strength of reason, but these move us by an attractive force as sweet as it is irresistible. Is it not thus with that wonderful Hungarian, who, exiled, proscribed, reviled, speaking to strange nations in strange tongues, sways not the rude masses merely, but the grave judge, the stern legislator, and the solemn divine? And what is there more wonderful in any physical influence, than in this power over minds, by which we are induced to yield to one, what a greater array of argument and stronger personal motives could not have won from us for another? Somewhat of this power was possessed by Robert Grahame. It was the power of a nature simple and earnest, which dared always to seem what it really was. Little instructed in worldly forms, he might, and, doubtless, often did, sin against conventional rules, but never against the "higher law" of Christian courtesy—courtesy the dictate of a kind heart and a fearless nature. His attractive power had been exercised on Donald even in their momentary meeting, and its result was to defeat his own projects, for, through it, his brother became more interesting, and thus the influence was increased which he had designed to destroy.

There had been little conversation between George Browne and Donald during the few minutes that Richard Grahame was detained by his brother. They rode slowly, and were soon overtaken by one who came with the rapid pace of excitement.

"He is alone," said Donald to Browne, as he saw him approaching, "I hoped he would have accommodated matters with his brother and brought him along. I should like to see more of him."

"Ah, Grahame!" cried Browne, as he came within reach of his voice, "where have you left Signor Grandissimo? Our friend Montrose is quite desirous to make his acquaintance."

"If you mean my brother, he intends to try to be with us in the course of the evening, and I may have the pleasure of introducing him to Lieut. Montrose, if he is not compelled to leave us too early."

Browne gave a quick glance to his friend, who met it with quiet assurance, adding, carelessly, "Ride up, and before going to the hotel we will leave our horses at Camp's, where I got mine. I think I shall stay in town to-night, at my old lodgings, with Mrs. Marmont; I can give you a bed, if you will accept it."

"Thank you; perhaps I may. At least, I will leave my horse at Camp's; he will be better cared for there than at the Maison du Mer, and my host at the farm is somewhat particular about the care taken of his horse. That is a fine bay you ride, Montrose. Did you get him at Camp's?"

"Yes, and I liked him so well that I engaged him during my stay in Newport, but I wish I had not been so hasty; he is not to be compared to the horse your brother rode."

"Ah! there are few horses that can rival Ebony; but then you could not get him, he belongs to Robert, who would not part with him for any consideration."

"By the by, Grahame," said George Browne, "is not that an indiscretion in your prudent brother? Such a horse must have cost no small sum at first, and then the expense of keeping him on these journeys must be considerable. It would be nothing for you, or me; but your brother, you know—"

"Is wiser than both of us put together," said Richard Grahame; who, however he might quarrel with his brother himself, seemed to be little pleased with censures on him from another, "and in this instance has not departed from his usual wisdom. He bought Ebony quite a colt from a gentleman who was removing from Springfield, and as his journeys are always connected with business requiring dispatch, he finds that the time gained over our slow stage-coaches, added to the sum he must have paid for the use of a public conveyance, abundantly repays the expense of this, I verily believe, the *only* indulgence which Robert allows himself."

Donald impatiently spurred his horse. These prudential arrangements savored too much of Yankeeism in his estimation. He could not make them accord with the impression of the noble bearing that had won his admiration so lately. That a gentleman might not be able to afford a fine horse, he could understand; but that he could calculate so closely the expense of keeping one, was, in his opinion, a littleness characteristic of a Yankee only.

Donald rode to Camp's stables, and having consigned his horse to the care of a groom, prepared to attend his companions. Little did he suppose that this arrangement had been made solely to give them an excuse for entering the Maison du Mer in the rear from a narrow, unfrequented street, leading in that direction from the stables, and that this circuitous route was recommended chiefly because it would enable them to elude him whose promised visit was now his chief attraction to the party. The plan was completely successful. Reaching the rear entrance unseen, he and his conductors were immediately admitted on knocking, and passing up a private staircase, they found themselves at once at the rooms we have described as appropriated to play. Richard Grahame paused at the door to say a few words in an inaudible voice aside to the landlord, and then led the way within. It was two o'clock in the morning when, flushed with wine, and with a brain sadly confused in the vain effort to compute a sum in loss and gain, Donald Montrose issued from that room. The Rubicon was passed. He was on that declivity whose downward tendency it becomes ever more difficult to resist.

With an aching head, and a manner in which sudden flashes of reckless gayety contended vainly with unusual gloom, he presented himself on the afternoon succeeding at the lodgings of Richard Grahame. He was expected, and found Browne and Grahame together. After some embarrassed attempts at conversation, Donald suddenly interrupting Grahame in a very animated account of a race he had witnessed that morning between two rival yachts, suddenly exclaimed, "By the by, I am indebted to you both, I believe; but how much, I am ashamed to acknowledge I do not know."

"Oh! a mere bagatelle," cried Browne, "which it would scarcely be worth your while to talk of settling, as the next shuffle of the cards, or roll of the balls, may reverse the tables, and make us your debtors."

"In which case, we poor devils should not find it as easy perhaps to settle as a Southerner, with a hundred darkies working for him; so, you see, it would be bad policy for us to permit you to establish any such precedent," said Grahame.

"There is little probability of our changing places," replied Donald; "but should we do so, I promise you I shall not be a hard creditor. In the mean time, if I do not pay you, shall I give you my note for the amount of my debt?"

"I see you are quite a novice, Montrose," said Browne, "I must initiate you into our customs. Between strangers immediate payment would be necessary, but between friends, as we are," Donald winced a little, "each party keeps a memorandum of losses and gains which, when we are parting, may be balanced in hard money, or if this be not convenient, in a note payable at any time that suits the convenience of the giver."

"Suppose that should be never?" suggested Donald.

"That is somewhat longer credit than we have been accustomed to give or ask, though mine may prove to be little less, should *mon bon papa* live as long as his looks when I saw him last seemed to promise. You look puzzled, Montrose; did you never hear of *post obits?* I find their moral effect admirable, I assure you. They are great strengtheners of the filial sentiment."

"I should think post obits among us, where property is never entailed, were not very safe investments."

"Unless the debtor be, like you or myself, an only son. I should think it in your case a capital investment, as you know they always bear high interest; so remember, should you desire to do me a favor, you have only to give me notes at parting for some ten or fifteen thousand dollars, payable when you are master of Montrose Hall."

Donald laughed, yet with no hearty mirth, for he could not hear without a pang, these light allusions to the death of his generous, noble father. Nevertheless this conversation was not without its influence on his future actions. His self-indulgent nature was ever ready to sacrifice the future to the present, and the debt which might have seemed formidable enough to frighten him from his unsafe pursuits faded into nothing when viewed in the distant future. He delivered himself up, therefore, without reserve or hesitation to the guidance of Browne and Grahame. His life was now one of intense and dangerous excitement. There were moments, indeed, in which reason awoke; but her reproaches were so bitter, that he hastened to drown them again in the intoxication of pleasure. No friendly hand was outstretched to lead him from his wanderings back to the better path. Alice, indeed, reproaching herself as the cause of the evil whose extent she little suspected, would gladly, by almost any sacrifice, have won back the confidence and the influence of former days; but the lowering brow, and cold, curt sentences of Donald, took from her all the courage necessary for such a task. His mother and sister, on the other hand, made the fatal mistake into which noble, but proud spirits so often fall; they showed rather their scorn of his vices than their tenderness to himself, and thus repelled instead of attracting him. So far from confiding in them, from seeking their aid, when some flashing gleam of light showed him his true position; he fled from their presence as from his bitterest punishment, and would rather have led a forlorn hope to battle, than have remained five minutes alone with his mother. His father was unfortunately absent, having gone with Charles to Washington, hoping by his presence there, and his influence with an old friend, now Secretary of the Navy, to promote his nephew's professional interests.

Every thing seemed to conspire for Donald's ruin, and to favor the plan of his tempters. Even Robert Grahame, whose threatened interference they might have found it impossible long to elude, had disappeared from Newport on the third day after his introduction to the reader. He had been absent a month, when Richard Grahame received a letter addressed in his brother's handwriting.

"From Robert," he exclaimed with some surprise; and opening it hastily, perceived that another letter was enclosed in an envelope, containing the following lines:

"The enclosed was forwarded to me by mistake, from the Newport post-office; having been addressed, as you will see, only to R. Grahame. It was not till I had mastered its infamous contents, through the disguise of miserable penmanship, and worse spelling, that I ascertained the mistake. In returning it to you, I have only to say, that I hold to the determination expressed when last we met; and that I shall be with you when you least expect me.

"ROBERT GRAHAME."

With a failing heart, Richard Grahame opened the letter enclosed, and the color flushed to his brow, as he read the coarse terms in which the writer—one of those with whom his evil habits had brought him into association—questioned him concerning the success of his present "*chase*," which he supposed must be promising, as he had heard that "*the game had been seen flying through the back-door of the Maison du Mer*." Scarcely glancing at the remaining lines, which contained only a hope that this anticipated success would enable him to pay a debt long due to the writer, Richard Grahame cast the letter impatiently from his hand, and was striding to and fro with rapid steps, when Browne entered without the ceremony of a knock.

"Read that!" cried Grahame, as he threw rather than handed him the letter which had agitated him thus: and stood observing him with no pleasant expression, while he ran his eyes rapidly over its contents.

"The devil fly away with that brother of yours for a meddlesome fool!" exclaimed Browne as he concluded. "How soon do you suppose we may expect him?"

"I do not know; he moves so quickly when he has a design to execute, that I should not wonder to see him at any moment."

"Then I have no time to lose in seeing Montrose and bringing him to a settlement; he has proposed it several times, and I have put him off, that he might not be frightened away at the sight of the sum total, of which I verily believe he has not the slightest suspicion, as I know he keeps no account of his losses or gains."

"And you care little that he should be frightened away, now that your own objects are accomplished; though I, who came here on your account, and have done all in my power to promote your ends, am not one dollar the better for it all. I am certainly entitled to claim at least the return of my note to you. You promised that if I aided you—"

"I promised to exchange your note to me for that of Lieut. Montrose to you, and I am ready to do so."

"You have never given me an opportunity to play with him, and now you are about to do what you say yourself will frighten him from the gaming-table."

"I said no such thing: it will frighten him from me, no doubt, but with a little management, will only throw him the more certainly into your hands."

"I do not see how."

"By encouraging him to believe that his success with you may counterbalance his ill-luck with me."

"Encouraging him to believe!—a very pretty phrase, and easily spoken; but he must be a greater fool than I take him for, if any suggestion of the kind you propose from me, would be received as *encouraging*."

"Perhaps if you keep your temper till you understand my plan, you may not find it so fit a subject for irony as you seem now to think it. Suppose I make the suggestion, and invite him to witness a game between us; do you not think if you can put such constraint upon yourself as to refrain from winning *my* money, that you may have an opportunity given you to win some of *his*?"

"I see your plan—it looks well; whether it succeeds or not, I certainly think I deserve some consideration from you, for having given up my time and engaged in what was so distasteful to me, only to promote your advantage."

"Most disinterested, I acknowledge," sneered Browne, but instantly added, "but we will not quarrel, for Satan must not be divided against himself. I will do what I can for you, but have no time to talk more now—I must find Montrose."

It was but half an hour after, that having met Donald, Browne accompanied him to his own room, that they might talk over, without danger of interruption, the state of the account current between them. Regretting that the necessity for his leaving Newport the next day—a necessity the consequence, as he said, of letters just received—should oblige him to terminate, for the present, an intercourse most agreeable to him; he added, that perhaps they had better compare their memoranda, and ascertain the present state of the account between them. Donald had no memoranda. The suggestion so early and artfully made by Browne, that his note made payable after an event, which his affectionate reverence for his father disposed him to consider only at a remote distance, would be received as present satisfaction for his debt, had made him, as Browne well knew it would, less careful of the amount of that debt. To a prudent mind, it may seem strange that the mention of large interest did not serve as a counterpoise to this postponement.

But Donald was not prudent; like all the self-indulgent, he was ever prone to sacrifice the future to the present. Besides, with that common error which regards the reverse of wrong as right, he had been taught in his Southern home, that the first characteristic of a gentleman was, to prove himself untainted with a narrow, money-loving, or as they termed it, *Yankee* spirit; and that this was to be done, not by a wise and systematic benevolence, but by thoughtless profusion and disregard of money. To have kept a regular account of his losses and gains, would have savored of the petty shopkeeper in his opinion.

"Browne will take care that I do not cheat him; I warrant he is Yankee enough for that!"

Yet Donald was not wholly blind to the fact, that he was losing a great deal of money; but with the philosophy which sustained Jacob Faithful in a better cause, he said to himself, "better luck next time," or took refuge in the thought that the evil day was far distant. He was indeed somewhat unpleasantly surprised when the sum total of his loss stood before him, and he found that it must be computed by thousands; and that these thousands, with the interest embodied in the note to avoid the charge of usury, amounted to five. He might even have betrayed some annoyance, had not Browne prefaced the exposé by some complimentary expressions on the freedom with which a Southern gentleman always parted with his money. As it was, he controlled all expression of feeling, and with easy gayety commented on his own ill-luck, while he signed, without reading, the note prepared by Browne.

"This has been a most wonderful run of luck for me," said Browne, as he folded the note and put it in his pocket-book; "I dare say when next we meet, you will win it all back."

"I think it will be wiser in me not to try. I have sufficiently proved my want of skill at cards."

"So any one might have thought of Richard Grahame, when we met here last summer. I beat him at whist, at rouge-et-noir, at every thing we tried, till he had lost more as I well knew than he could afford to pay, and I was fool enough to try him at billiards, the only game he can play and I cannot."

"Do you think he plays billiards well? I have beaten him whenever we have played together."

"Have you?—well, he beat me confoundedly. I wish Montrose, in charity, you would win from him some of the thousands I owe him, and let me pay you with your own note. Post obits will not do for him, he wants ready money, and it is an article I do not find it easy to get."

"I should like to oblige you in this way very much," said Donald laughingly, "if I were sure of the result."

"There can be little doubt of that, if you have beaten him at billiards, for it is the only game he has any pretension to play well."

"Does he go with you?"

"No; and if he did, I would delay a day or two, for the pleasure of seeing you try your fortune with him. Suppose I propose it to him, and you meet us at the Maison du Mer this evening?"

"I have no objection."

"These were indifferent words, and spoken in an indifferent tone, yet beneath this coldness lay a burning desire and an exulting hope. Inconsistent as it may seem, that which the pleasure-loving Donald could dismiss from his mind as a trifle wholly unworthy of thought, while thought could bring only pain and self-reproach, in the dim twilight of the hope now opening before him, assumed a fearful magnitude, and presented its threatening aspect wherever he turned. He knew that with large estates, his father had seldom ready money at command. To meet a claim even of five thousand dollars, would at any time, if immediate payment were demanded, compel him to sell property; and property thus sold must, he was aware, be sacrificed. To acknowledge this debt to him then would be painful, indulgent as he was; but should he avail himself of the arrangement made this morning with Browne, should this debt remain as a claim against him to be met—he would not even to himself say when his father was in his grave, but when he was sole master of Montrose Hall—how should he bear his mother's sorrowful, yet haughty rebuke? how could he meet her indignant glance when she should learn that he had suffered himself to anticipate his father's death, she would perhaps believe with a certain satisfaction, as releasing him from the bondage of debt? Then his father himself, how could he receive his accustomed indulgent love and generous kindness for years to come, and keep this dark and painful secret from him? Such were the thoughts which, once having gained admittance to his mind, he could not dismiss or silence. They would have goaded him to madness had he not found refuge in the hope which Browne had inspired. The more he dwelt upon this hope, the more sanguine was he of its fulfilment. Billiards, Browne had told him, was that in which Grahame was most successful, and at billiards he had proved he was his superior. He examined his watch, he counted the hours to evening, and ten o'clock found him at his old place, and with his old companions at the Maison du Mer.

And where now was the lofty spirit which considered the desire of gain degrading to a gentlemanly nature? His heart is on fire with the passions of the gamester, and they are casting their lurid light upon his face. How painfully would the good Mr. Dunbar have marked the change in his pupil, could he have seen the sullen brow, the eager eye, the closely-compressed lips, the flush or pallor betokening the alternations of hope and fear, which had replaced the frank, joyous expression of former days. Ah! how true it is that sorrow never leaves us as it found us. If we receive it submissively, as the cup which a Father's love hath mingled, it purifies, exalts, and strengthens; but if we rebelliously dash it from our lips, and strive to wash away its bitterness by the intoxicating wine of pride, or the honeyed draught of Circean pleasure, the hardening or the debasement of our nature is the inevitable consequence.

For once Donald left the scene of his midnight pleasures with an elastic step and a heart full of hope. The succeeding evening found him at the same place, with the same companions, and the same objects, but not the same success. Whether the fortune of the preceding night had made him less, or his opponent more cautious, or whether fickle Fortune had already wearied of her favor to him, we know not, but he lost, and with every game became more agitated, less able to cope with his cool, unruffled antagonists—antagonists we say, for though Richard Grahame played the game, Browne was present, and manifested an interest which at once surprised and irritated Donald. As again and again he found himself foiled in his effort to retrieve losses which he almost feared to compute, he resorted to wine to sustain his failing spirits, wine which excited without intoxicating him. It was late in the night, when, turning from rouge-et-noir, he exclaimed, "Fortune is against me here; let us try billiards."

"Billiards!" ejaculated Grahame, with a yawn, "I fear I shall go to sleep over them; however, I must not refuse your challenge."

They turned towards the billiard table, and both, at the same instant, became aware that among the few remaining to watch their now exciting contest, was one of whose presence they had not before been conscious. When or how he had come, they knew not, but Donald met again those calm, earnest eyes, and, even while the flush of shame rose to his brow for his present engagement, felt there was a friendly interest in their gaze which strengthened him.

Far different was its effect on his antagonist. Richard Grahame flushed, grew pale, hesitated, and at last, stopping short in his advance to the table, "It is too late to play billiards to-night, Montrose; I will have a game with you to-morrow, if you like."

"No! it must be to night," said Donald doggedly, his determination only rendered firmer by the vacillation of Grahame. "You cannot," he added, "refuse to give me an opportunity to redeem some of my losses."

Richard Grahame raised his eyes slowly, and as if by an involuntary impulse, to his brother's face, and answered, "Be it as you will."

"The same stakes?" said Donald inquiringly.

"I am not accustomed to play so high at billiards."

"Well, half—five hundred shall it be?"

Again looking towards that silent, and, as it seemed to him, stern face, Richard Grahame answered, "As you will."

They played—Richard Grahame in a quick, nervous way, Donald better, more quietly, feeling, he knew not why, that a friend was near him, and turning again and again to those kindly eyes, which were evidently marking every turn of the game. He won.

"Ah, Grahame!" he cried, "the fickle goddess is deserting you. Well, you must not grudge me some of her favors. After your success this evening, you will not be such a niggard surely, as to refuse to double the stakes?"

Again Richard Grahame consented, and again Donald was successful.

"And now, Montrose, I must stop; see there, it is morning," pointing to a clock whose hour-hand was moving fast to four.

"One more game, it shall be our last; you will not surely refuse, and I will double all—my whole debt, or clear all."

"Double all?"

"Yes, or cancel all. Come, you see you risk nothing, I every thing—shall it be?"

"I—I—" stammered the unwilling gamester; but a spell was on him, and again he faltered, "if you will have it so," in spite of a warning "ahem!" from Browne, who with a darkened brow immediately left the room, and remained absent for some minutes. When he returned, he saw quickly, that though Grahame was playing with greater caution, Donald, who was in truth the best player in a fair game, had the advantage. Then came a crisis in his game,—a position of the balls in which, with a single stroke, by hazarding much he might win all. Carefully he bent himself to his task, he took his aim,—at that moment a voice was heard, not loud, for that would not have been permitted, but suddenly, and therefore startlingly, breaking the deathlike stillness with the name of Mr. Robert Grahame. Was it this, or was it that the guardian eyes were for a moment withdrawn?—we know not—we only know that Donald's stroke failed, that he became nervous, that the game was lost. At the last there was a chance for him, he might have recovered himself—he failed—and turning upon Browne, he exclaimed with uncontrollable anger, "That was your fault, sir! and by my soul, I believe you did it purposely."

"You are mad, Montrose! Did what? what could I do at such a distance to affect your play?"

"What you did, I cannot say; but something I am sure—the waving of a handkerchief or a hand, enough at least, to dazzle my eyes, strained as they already were."

"Strained! that will explain the whole, and exonerate me to every one in his senses. You would not have played for such a stake, at such an hour, if you had taken my advice."

"Your advice!"

Donald's tone and look were contemptuous, and Browne was stung into saying, "Pray be calm—gentlemen"—with a peculiar emphasis on the word—"here do not lose their temper, because they have lost their money."

Donald turned towards him a face pale with passion, and lifting the cue he held, exclaimed, "Be silent, sir, or I will treat you as the base hound deserves, that turns upon the master on whom he fawned but yesterday."

"If you were not a madman—"

Before Browne could utter another word, the uplifted cue descended, and the next moment Donald seized him by the collar, and swinging him around, hurled him across the room with such force, that his head, striking against the carved and projecting foot of a sofa, he lay stunned and seemingly lifeless, with a few drops of blood oozing slowly from the temple. The whole scene had passed too rapidly for interference, but now there were confused cries in many voices, and the landlord of the Maison du Mer, having dispatched a servant for a surgeon, turned to Donald, exclaiming, "I believe you have killed the man, sir, and I must detain you at least till I hear what the surgeon will say."

He spoke to one who did not heed—who seemed not to hear him. The paleness of Donald's face had been succeeded by a purple flush, and he stood in the attitude in which he had hurled Browne from him; so motionless, that but for the darkened face and heaving bosom, he would have resembled more a sculptured athlete than a living man.

"Stand aside, gentlemen, and give the man air," said a voice not loud, but clear and commanding by its resolute composure, where all else seemed confused and agitated. The crowd gave way, and Robert Grahame stood beside the prostrate Browne. Loosing his cravat, he bathed his brows, and soon saw the color return to his lips, and his eyelids quiver with reawakening life. He felt his pulse—its throb was feeble but regular, and having no farther apprehension of danger for him, he consigned him to the care of his brother, and turned his attention to Donald. Approaching him as he stood in the attitude we have described, he said, "Do not be alarmed, sir; Mr. Browne is in no danger."

Donald did not stir, nor did any change of countenance show that he had heard what was said. Laying his hand on his shoulder to rouse him, Robert Grahame repeated this observation. The touch sent a shiver through Donald's frame, but this was his only movement. Grahame was alarmed, and a physician with whom he was acquainted entering at this moment, accompanied by the servant, who had been dispatched for him, he exclaimed, "This way, doctor; the man to whom you were called is but little hurt, I think, but this poor fellow, who did the injury, seems alarmingly ill."

"Bad affair, sir, bad affair," said the worthy doctor, as, having given one glance to the still prostrate Browne, he put on his spectacles, and peered into Donald's face with more deliberate and careful examination.

"Too much blood about the head—too much blood about the head;" then pressing his finger on the pulse, he added, "Full—hard—slow—just as I thought; he must be bled, sir—no time to lose;" and suiting the action to the word, the good doctor drew out his case of lancets, and, asking for a knife, began to rip up the sleeve of Donald's coat.

"Had he not better be removed before he is bled, doctor?" asked Robert Grahame; "the appearance of this room would probably renew his agitation, if his consciousness were restored here."

"Right, sir, but we must not attempt to remove him far. Dougherty, have you a room on this floor unoccupied?"

"Yes, sir,"—and the landlord, to whom the question was addressed, led the way to another room, Dr. Darley and Robert Grahame following, with the unconscious Donald between them. A vein was quickly opened in his arm, and as the blood flowed, the rigor of his limbs relaxed, and his pulse became less tense.

"That has saved him from apoplexy," said the doctor, "and now I will go look after the other man. Don't be afraid," he continued, in answer to the looks rather than the words of Robert Grahame; "let him bleed—take some of that bad blood out of him; good thing for all these young chaps to bleed them occasionally—less blood, more brains."

Dr. Darley muttered the last observation to himself, as he was proceeding to the room in which he had left Browne. He was gone but a few minutes, and returned with the pleasant announcement, "He will do well enough; wanted nothing but some sticking plaster."

As he spoke, Donald opened his eyes, but quickly closed them again, with a languid expression.

"Ah, that's right! that's about right!" repeated the doctor, as, after touching the pulse, he proceeded to stop the bleeding, and arrange the compress and bandages which he had procured during his absence.

"He is fainting, doctor," cried Robert Grahame.

"Yes, sir, but we will lay him on the bed, and that will soon pass away."

It did pass away, but this was only manifest in a slight change of color and variation of pulse. Donald continued motionless, with closed eyes. In vain the doctor spoke again of Browne, with the hope of rousing him; not even a look evinced interest in the subject.

"There is something wrong here," said the physician, drawing Robert Grahame aside. "Do you know this young man's friends?"

"I have no personal acquaintance with them, but I know who they are and where they are to be found."

"Then go to them at once. I will not leave him till he is in their hands. But who is he?"

"Lieut. Montrose, of the army His family, I have understood, are from the South."

"I'll warrant—that accounts for it all. Idle, and so, dissipated—that's the history of these Southern chaps."

"Ah, doctor! not of them only. This young man is, I fear, more sinned against than sinning."

"Nonsense! Excuse me, Mr. Grahame, but I am ashamed to hear you talk such nonsense; it's the sinning, not the being sinned against, that put him there, sir."

Robert Grahame did not contest the point with the plain-spoken doctor, but with a sad smile turned from him to perform his painful duty. Before leaving the house, he sought his brother, whom he found pacing the parlor of the inn alone, George Browne having retired to a room to sleep off the effects of fatigue and excitement.

"How is he, Robert?" asked Richard Grahame anxiously, as his brother entered.

"I scarcely know—the worst danger seems to have passed away—yet he does not speak, and exhibits such symptoms that by the doctor's desire I am going to his friends."

Richard Grahame resumed his walk with quicker steps, and a deeper shadow on his brow. His brother stood beside the mantel-piece, on which he leaned, observing him for some minutes in silence, which he broke at length only to say in a low yet impressive tone, "Richard, this is a sad business."

"Sad indeed," was the response, but Richard Grahame, even while speaking, carefully avoided his brother's eyes.

"You will, of course, be anxious to clear yourself of any participation in what I firmly believe Lieut. Montrose was right in considering the fraudulent dealings of Browne—

There is but one way, I think, in which you can do this, and that is, by relinquishing all claim on this young man or his friends for any money lost by him at play. I hope you will do this, Richard, for your own sake—may I say for my sake—for the sake of the name we bear,"—there was in the voice of the speaker no vehemence, but a deep earnestness which Richard Grahame seemed to find it difficult to resist.

"Robert," he said, "I wish I could do as you desire, but indeed I cannot—it is impossible."

"What impossibility can there be in it? You know it would be right, that you ought to do it, and what we ought to do we can do. Come, Richard," he added, as he thought he saw some yielding in his face, "do this and I will help you as far as I can out of any present difficulties."

"Indeed, Robert, I cannot; Browne holds my note for—for a sum quite as large as I have won from Montrose; these winnings are in truth his, not mine."

"It is indeed then a hopeless case," said Robert Gra- [illegible] and proceeded on his melancholy

CHAPTER XIII.

"I, as a child, will go by thy direction."
RICHARD III.

"And thus the whirligig of Time brings in his revenges."
TWELFTH NIGHT.

It is a trite remark that there is something peculiarly beautiful in the tie that unites a father and daughter. The reverence and obedience which a son rarely renders without some effort, is the spontaneous tribute of a daughter's heart, and the authority which has in it ordinarily somewhat of sternness to a son, is tempered to a daughter by a chivalrous gentleness. Of this character was the tie between Alice and her uncle; yet it may be that her reverence was more profound, her obedience more cheerful and exact, and that his gentleness wore a shade of deeper tenderness because of the consciousness that the tie was not altogether one of nature's weaving. Free-will offerings are ever the most abundant. Thus Alice more frequently than Isabelle shared the early walks and rides of Col. Montrose, copied his letters, read his newspapers, and performed for him all those little kindly offices which elderly gentlemen are accustomed to claim from their young friends, and which affection delights to render.

And now, while Donald was terminating a night of restless and guilty excitement by an act of murderous passion, Alice having risen from the refreshing sleep of health and innocence, having made her careful yet simple toilet, and prepared herself for the duties of the day by reading a portion of God's holy word, and bowing her knees in reverent acknowledgment of His goodness, and earnest supplication of His grace, had descended to the parlor, where her uncle already awaited her promised coming, to copy some letters which must be sent by this day's post. They were answers, for the most part, to those which had accumulated during his late visit to Washington, from which he had returned only the preceding day. He was writing when Alice entered, and so absorbed that he did not perceive her till, stealing gently to his side, she laid her hand on his, and accosted him with, "Are you punishing me for being late, uncle, by doing your writing yourself?"

"No, darling," he said as he gave her his good morning kiss, "you are not late. This is a letter I must write myself, but there are the rough draughts of two which you can copy for me."

For some minutes they wrote in silence. Col. Montrose finished his letter, and having sealed and addressed it—it was to the Secretary at War—he sat for some time buried in thought. A deep sigh from him caused Alice to look up. His eyes were fixed upon her, and as he met her anxious glance, he smiled, but Alice thought the smile was sad. Though she could not venture to ask him what was the matter, she looked concerned and he saw it, and answered it by saying, "I feel anxious about Donald, Alice; I find he has not been at home since yesterday morning, and before I went away I thought he was looking gloomy and unhappy. Do you know what is the matter with him?"

Alice was very truthful, and had no aptitude at evasion. As she could not say "no," she said nothing, but hung her head and played with her pen, while the color flushed to her brow.

Having observed her silently for a moment, Col. Montrose took her hand, and drawing her to his knee, folded his arm around her and bent his head so as to look in her downcast face as he asked softly, "Alice, does Donald love you with more than a brother's love?" Alice hid her face on his shoulder as he continued, "Tell me, my darling, is it so? Does he seek my Alice for his wife?"

Her lips moved, and bending his ear to them, he heard the murmured assent which scarce shaped itself into words.

"And have you refused my poor boy, Alice? Will you not marry him?"

His tone was sad; Alice thought it was reproachful. It was the first reproach she had ever heard from him, and she could not bear it; tears rushed to her eyes, her bosom heaved, and, passing her arm around his neck, and creeping closer to his bosom, she whispered, "I will do as you wish, uncle."

"My darling!" he exclaimed, as he kissed her forehead and put back the curls which fell as a veil over her face; "and did you doubt that I would wish it? Was this the cause of your refusal?"

Alice hesitated, and before she could decide on her answer, there was a rap at the door, and, putting her off his knee, her uncle rose and opened it.

What character there is in a voice! Alice had expected to hear her uncle addressed by a servant, and the words "Do I speak to Col. Montrose?" had nothing in them which would determine the character of the speaker, yet, before she raised her eyes, Alice felt that he was a gentleman, and a gentleman of refinement and of earnest feeling. Entering the room at the invitation of Col. Montrose, Robert Grahame gently and cautiously communicated to the anxious father the illness of his son. Doubtful how far the habits of the son were known to the father, divided between his desire to leave nothing untold, which should be known to Col. Montrose, and his indisposition to act the part of a spy and an informer, there was in the manner of Robert Grahame a degree of embarrassment and restraint very unusual to him, and which, conveying to the quick eye of affection the idea of something that he was anxious to conceal, excited more alarm perhaps than the truth would have done. The first apprehension was evidently of a duel, and the blood, whose equable flow no fear for himself had ever disturbed, retreated to the heart of the old soldier, and his stalwart frame quivered like a reed, as, leaning for support on the chair by which he stood, he questioned the stranger in a voice that vainly strove to seem firm. Alice had hitherto remained unobserved in a distant part of the room, but in her uncle's agitation and her own alarm for Donald, her usual reserve was forgotten, and gliding to his side, she, too, fixed on the stranger earnestly inquiring eyes. Even in that moment of confusion, Robert Grahame felt an emotion which mere beauty had never before awakened in him, as that face of childlike innocence was turned to him, and he met the gaze of eyes,

——— so pure, that, from their ray,
Dark vice would turn abashed away,
Blinded like serpents when they gaze
Upon the emerald's virgin blaze.

As the best means of allaying the fears thus excited, Robert Grahame, without referring to the cause of the dispute, narrated, simply and truthfully, the attack made by Donald on Browne, and described the alarming condition induced by his excitement.

"But what occasioned this attack, or what was Donald doing at that house—a house which has never appeared to me very reputable?"

"Would it not be better, sir, to reserve these questions till your son, who must have the fullest knowledge of the facts, may answer them for himself? His health seems to me, at present, the first consideration, and that, I think, requires that he should as soon as possible be attended by those with whose faces and voices he is most familiar."

"You are right, sir; I will only communicate these sad tidings to my boy's mother, and accompany you to him, if, indeed," he added, "I may so far trespass on your time."

"I am here for that purpose."

"You are very kind. May I ask the name of one to whose friendly interest we are so much indebted?"

"My name is Grahame—Robert Grahame," he added, with some emphasis on the Christian name.

Alice raised her eyes and turned them on him with an expression of surprise, as she said, hesitatingly, "A friend of Mr. Browne, I believe?"

There was a slight erection of the head, a slight degree of hauteur in the tone with which he replied, "I am not so fortunate, madam"—after a moment's pause, he continued, with a subdued tone and manner, "The gentleman to whom you allude is Mr. Richard Grahame;" he did not say, my brother.

Mrs. Montrose would not delay her husband, but she soon followed him to the bedside of her son, whom she found in the delirium of fever.

"Inflammation of the brain, I fear," said the physician; "produced, as I believe, by great and long-continued excitement."

As she entered, Robert Grahame moved from the bed, where he had stood, pressing his hand upon the fevered brow of the patient. As he withdrew, the low mutterings of Donald became a loud, impatient call, while he tossed restlessly from side to side.

"You must come back, Mr. Grahame," said the physician, "no one else seems to have the same control over these paroxysms that you have; you must calm them for us till medicine has time to act."

Robert Grahame checked his advance to the door, and stood looking hesitatingly to the parents, who had turned towards him at the address of the physician.

"We have no right to trespass on your time," said Col. Montrose, "but if you could—"

"I can—I will, most cheerfully—gladly."

He made a step back, but paused again, as he caught the steadfast gaze of Mrs. Montrose, who, in her sadness, had lost nothing of her dignified self-possession. In her eyes he read doubt, investigation; and he met them with a quiet gravity, which seemed neither to defy nor dread inquiry. Her doubts, if doubts she had, were quickly satisfied. Perhaps only he had observed her hesitation, when, holding out her hand, she said in cordial accents, "How shall we thank you for such kindness, such interest in strangers?"

Pressing with respectful sympathy the hand presented to him, Robert Grahame, without other answer, resumed his place beside Donald, whose tossings ceased in a few minutes, while his loud tones sank into gentle murmurings.

"That is what I call animal magnetism," said the doctor, with a grim smile, "and now, madam, I will leave my patient for awhile to you and Mr. Grahame. May I say a few words to you, sir?" he added to Col. Montrose—then, as he saw the anxious looks of the parents, he continued, "I have no special communication to make of your son's illness, you see as much of it as I do, at present; but some knowledge of its causes may help me in its treatment; and these you may aid me in discovering."

"Could not Mr. Grahame give us the information we want?" suggested Col. Montrose.

"I don't choose to ask him," said the physician bluntly; "at least not if I can learn what I want to know from any other source."

Robert Grahame thanked him by a smile, and Col. Montrose withdrew with him from the room.

"You seem to know this Mr. Grahâme, doctor," said he, as they sat together awaiting the landlord for whom they had sent.

"I do sir,—I know him for as honest and honorable a man as lives. I know too that he has a brother who is a cross betwixt knave and fool; and whom I suspect of having had a hand in this business—though how Robert Grahame got himself mixed up with it, I cannot understand."

The landlord came, but no promises of impunity, or even of reward, could induce him to make any farther revelations, than circumstances had already made to the doctor. It may have been, as he said, that he only knew that the sick gentleman "had played cards or billiards frequently with Mr. Browne, or Mr. Grahame, and that he had lost some money; he could not tell how much, last night."

"Had Mr. Robert Grahame ever been in the room in which I found him, before last night?" asked Dr. Darley.

"No, sir; and I was puzzled to know how he found his way there, till Mr. Browne told me he had received a letter that was meant for his brother."

"Aha!—I understand—directed to Mr. R. Grahame; well, it is not the first time that initial letter has done mischief,"—and the doctor laughed a dry, short laugh. "Well, sir," he continued to the landlord, "you are more cautious than communicative, I see; but you may at least tell Mr. Browne, that he has lost his labor in this business, for that he cannot recover one red cent of any money he has won."

"Excuse me, doctor, but he must tell him no such thing; as soon as I can ascertain from my son what his debts really are, they shall be paid to the last penny, if it be within my power."

"A pretty encouragement for gambling!" muttered the doctor—then, in a louder tone, as he led the way back to Donald's room, "I think I will try your son at billiards myself when he gets well; it will be an easier way of making a few thousands than setting broken limbs, or patching up worn out constitutions."

Mrs. Montrose sustained her husband in the determination thus expressed. "Better poverty," she said, "than the shadow of obligation to bad men."

It was many days before Donald could suffer anxiety or experience relief from these resolves. The disappointments, the bitter repinings, the reckless self-abandonment of the last few weeks of his life, were all forgotten; and his spirit, escaping from the restlessness and weariness of his sick room, was wandering far away by the dashing waves, or leafy savannahs, of the home of his childhood. As the scenes so vividly pictured by his fevered imagination arose before his mother's eye, they awoke in her soul a painful feeling of self-condemnation. With wonderful distinctness, in the silent watches of those long anxious nights, she saw the influence which she had exerted in moulding the character of her son. And now, when he seemed to be rapidly passing to another world, she remembered with bitter remorse, that the impulses she had given, bore reference only to this. Her son had been her idol—she had been proud of his beauty—proud of his talents—but no prayer had consecrated his childhood, or sought for him amid the perils of youth, the protection of the Omnipotent and Ever-present Spirit. The self-reliance of her own proud nature had never before been shaken. Well did she remember the pitying smile with which she had turned away one evening, from the room of her sister-in-law, where, having entered unexpectedly, she had found her on her knees, with her children at her side, commending them to the protection of Heaven ere they slept. And now she sought to pray, but it was a cry of terror, not the pleading voice of a loving and trusting child, that arose from her heart. As a mother, she had been tried in the balance and found wanting; and the hand of God seemed to be writing her doom in the sufferings of her son.

The haughty spirit was bent; but lower, lower, must it bow, ere it can find peace at the feet of the Crucified One.

CHAPTER XIV.

> "Let us do our work *all* well,
> Both the unseen and the seen,
> Make the house where gods may dwell
> Beautiful, entire, and clean."

WEEKS have passed away, and Donald, still pale and weak from recent illness, though daily convalescing, is resting on a couch covered with a pretty chintz, and drawn up to a window, from which he may gaze, with all that keen enjoyment, awakened by long enforced abstinence, upon the face of nature in one of her loveliest aspects. Around the window from which he looks, are clustering honeysuckles and creeping roses. Farther on, the drooping branches of that most graceful of trees, the elm, are swept by the morning breeze across his line of vision; and beyond them, veiled, not concealed by their leafy screen, sparkle the waters of the Connecticut: not flowing on with the quiet majesty which it assumes as it approaches the termination of its course; but foaming and brawling amid the rocks that would obstruct its passage. Far in the east, blue hills close the view.

The room in which Donald lies, is small and very simply furnished; but there is an indescribable air of refinement amid its simplicity, making you feel, that a woman of gentle culture has presided over its arrangements. Two engravings, one of the Madonna del Sisto, the other of the last supper, framed in plain wood, blackened and polished to imitate ebony, hang upon its walls. Except these, the only ornaments visible are flowers, disposed in baskets woven of green rushes or grass, in graceful forms, by the fair hands which had arranged the flowers they bore. Fitting into one corner of the room is an étagère, formed of a highly polished wood, whose fine grain and light color give it the appearance of satin-wood. But Donald has learned that, like the pretty work-table and desk on the other side of the room, it is of domestic manufacture, and made of the common pine highly varnished. The shelves of the étagère bear not the fashionable bijouterie commonly found on such articles, but books. Let us examine them, and we shall thus gain some acquaintance with the mind that has fed on them. On the highest shelf are arranged some volumes of history. Froissart's Chronicles is placed beside Hallam's Middle Ages, and these volumes are followed by Hume's England and Botta's America. On the next shelf the epigrammatic Macaulay, the polished Alison, the philosophic McIntosh, and the caustic Jeffreys, stand side by side, flanked by Evelyn's Diary and Boswell's Johnson. Miss Edgeworth and Sir Walter Scott, have filled two shelves, and the remaining one is devoted to poetry. There are Shakspeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and the Childe Harold of Byron.

But Donald is disturbed from his reverie, and we from our examination, by the entrance of a girl, who, though she has seen but twenty summers, has already exchanged the gayety of very early youth, for the graver expression and more staid manner which usually accompany matronly cares.

Donald's eyes, still languid from recent illness, brighten into a smile, as he says, "Your hour has seemed to me a very long one. I have been so spoiled since my illness, that I grow weary even of this beautiful view, without some one beside me to whom I may say how beautiful it is."

"I am sorry Robert could not have remained longer with you to-day, but I will do my best to supply his place. Shall I read to you?"

Donald playfully held back the book she would have taken from him as he said, "I would rather you should talk with me, if you please."

"My pleasure will depend somewhat on the subject you choose," answered the lady, readily adopting his easy, playful tone.

"What if I should make a recantation to you, of some opinions hitherto held as a part of my creed."

"If the opinions were false, I will receive the recantation with pleasure."

"False they certainly were, for I believed that most of those who lived north of the Potomac, and all the inhabitants of the New England states, were Yankees."

"Well, we are Yankees—or descendants, at least, of those to whom the Indians gave the name Yenghese," said the lady.

"Ah!" exclaimed Donald, "but with us of the South, the name has a very different meaning; it marks not a geographical, or national, but a moral distinction. By Yankee we mean—I am ashamed to tell you what we mean, now that I have ascertained how far it is from the truth."

"Pray let me hear; how else can I have your recantation. The greater were your prejudices, the higher glory will it be for us to have overcome them."

"Overcome them! How could I maintain them, having once known your brother."

"Ah! but you must beware of falling into an opposite error, as you assuredly will, should you take Robert as a type of the Yankee race."

"He is, at least, the possibility of a Yankee."

"And is he not also the possibility of a Southerner?"

"I think not. I almost fear to tell you why, lest you should suspect me of impertinence, where I feel most admiringly."

"Do not be apprehensive. I should not easily suspect impertinence when Robert was the subject." She spoke with a proud significance.

"You are right; the firmness of your brother's adherence to principle may awaken dislike, but there is nothing about him on which contempt could feed."

"Thank you," she replied, while her cheeks flushed and her eyes grew moist with pleasure. "But why do you think such qualities as his impossible to a Southerner? Surely you are not such a renegade as to think any thing noble beyond their attainment."

She spoke jestingly, and he began to answer in the same tone, but grew more serious as he proceeded.

"Certainly not! They are all Chevalier Bayards, incog., but they could not, I fear, exhibit the dignity and courtesy, and, as I have good reason to know, the heroism of a Chevalier Bayard, in the person of—may I say it?—a manufacturer and mechanic."

"Why should you hesitate to say it? The dignity, the courtesy and heroism are inherent in my brother's nature; the manufacturing and mechanics are adventitious circumstances, which neither make nor mar that nature."

"True; yet he must have had some affinity with these to have chosen them. It was a choice no Southerner would have made."

"And are you Southerners always able to choose your own line of life? Is it never forced on you by circumstances?"

"A life of ignoble labor on a gentleman of education and refinement? Never!"

"Ignoble labor? and what makes labor ignoble? Has it never been companioned by high and pure thoughts? Or is it this particular form of labor to which you object—mechanics and manufacturing?—the first the power by which we subdue nature to our will, the last the application of that power to procure comfort and wealth for thousands. Are these ignoble?"

Indignant emphasis was in her tones; and her features, usually cold in their expression, quivered with excitement. For the first time, Donald thought her beautiful, and in admiration of the enthusiasm thus unveiled, forgot the painful character of the emotion he was exciting, and, without an apology, pursued the subject.

"Not ignoble in their principles certainly."

"And in their practice?"

"Must they not, in our present social arrangements, force us into degrading associations?"

"No; if we are brought into such associations it must be by our own will, though we strive to lay our sin on that great modern scape-goat—society. But one example is better than twenty arguments; you must see Robert in his work—amidst these *degrading associations.* You will find him occupying a position of influence, a ruler and guide to many, and availing himself of this position only for good. Around him are some who came to him untutored clods, fitted at best for expert machines, into whom he has infused intelligent souls, and whose aspirations he has directed heavenward. These are his degrading associations; this his ignoble life."

"I have displeased you, and ought to apologize; yet I can scarcely say, with truth, I am sorry for that which has made you so eloquent."

"Pardon me, I have been too warm," she said, recalled to herself by his observation; then, after a moment's pause, she added, "I should have remembered that Robert himself once felt as you do. The greatest sacrifice of his life was made when he entered on his present career, but that was in his boyhood; he has learned since then, and will yet teach the world, that a noble spirit can find its appropriate aliment and exercise in a life of labor, if the labor be undertaken for noble ends."

Donald was silent. He did not quite understand the earnest, enthusiastic girl. She had risen above his range of thought. All life was with him the result of impulse, or necessity. Labor—mechanical labor—he had supposed always the result of the last, and now he heard of its being "undertaken for noble ends." What ends?

"I fear you will think me unpardonably inquisitive, but my interest in your brother tempts me to ask, what objects could have prompted a sacrifice which—but pardon me—I have given you pain; your goodness had made me too bold. Do not answer what I should not have asked."

"You blame yourself without reason. I should not have referred to these objects had I been unwilling to explain my reference. Besides, a knowledge of them is necessary to your thorough appreciation of Robert, and though there may be some pain in recalling them, they are so linked with my most endearing memories—"

She ceased abruptly, and gazed earnestly forward, as if fancy was picturing on the air those treasured memories. A movement of Donald recalled her to the present, and, turning her eyes upon him, she asked, "Did you notice as you came here, about a mile from Springfield, a large house of gray stone, standing on an elevation, and surrounded by fine old trees? There was Robert's boyhood passed, and there our mother—"

Her voice faltered—her lip quivered. "Do not indulge me at such expense to yourself, my dear Miss Grahame," cried Donald, "it was worse than thoughtless in me to ask it."

"I cannot speak of her, but my father—he had been reared in idleness and luxury in England; his father died, and he found himself without the fortune required to support the position he held, yet with what he was told would be accounted wealth in America, and to America he came. He was then young, and the remainder of his life was spent here, yet he never became thoroughly American in feeling. His most dearly cherished hope was to win back wealth, and return to end his life where it began. Fortunes had been rapidly made in England by manufactures, and why should they not be here, he asked. He was in earnest; earnestness made him eloquent: he induced larger capitalists to join him, imported from England skilful workmen and an experienced agent, and became the owner of the mills you have seen. For a time all went well, but then came disaster—failure. He struggled courageously—desperately, at last, for, with my mother, his hope and courage died, and there was left only despair and a blind contest with the destiny which he knew to be alike unavoidable and inexorable. Better for all had he despaired earlier. His sanguine nature had led him to involve others deeply in his failure, and he who was the very soul of honor, found that he had not even the heritage of an unsullied name to leave his children. Robert's talents had gratified my father's pride, and well do I remember the exultation with which, at every new academic or collegiate triumph gained by him, my father would predict that he would yet win a noble name in *his own* land, as he always called England. I think his hardest trial was the being compelled to withdraw Robert from college, and to devote him to the pursuits which had wrecked his own fortune, peace and life. But what could he do? It was only by continuing the mills in operation that his obligations could be met, the stigma wiped from his name, and his children preserved from utter pauperism. And who should continue them? His own life was failing, and even should it continue, he had neither the vigor of mind nor strength of body, requisite to acquire the thorough knowledge of mechanics and the practical skill necessary to one who would take the place of those expensive agents whom he could no longer remunerate." Miss Grahame paused a moment, then added, "Poor Robert! It was indeed a costly sacrifice when he laid his talents, his hopes and purposes of life upon the altar of filial duty. He struggled at first, but my mother was living then, and her gentle voice could always subdue his most wilful mood. At eighteen he stood alone, the guide and protector of others, and even on our father's grave he vowed that he would give himself no rest till none were left who had a right to revile the name he bore. He has been true to his vow. Has his fidelity dishonored him?"

"Certainly not; it has ennobled him!"

Donald spoke earnestly, and felt as he spoke; yet this was a nobility which he was contented to admire, without a dream of attaining. He fell into a reverie, asking himself what he would have done under like circumstances. The answer was hardly satisfactory. The only careers open to a gentleman who had never studied a profession were, in his opinion, those offered by the army or navy, and these paid but poorly. He could, to be sure, relinquish all superfluities—wine, segars, horses—yes, he would give them all up, and the readiness with which he made the resolve increased his self-esteem. These things cost an immensity of money, and, though time might be necessary before the sum saved by their sacrifice would clear a heavily encumbered estate, some friend would be found, doubtless, who would advance the money, and accept payment by yearly instalments. This was a thing done every day by men under temporary embarrassment. And this thought brought him to the remembrance of his own embarrassments, a subject which he had hitherto dismissed from his mind whenever it presented itself, under the plea of being too ill too think; but this would hardly serve as an excuse even to himself now, since he was only waiting for his father to join him and approve his project before he should write to the department, asking orders for Tampa Bay, where his friend, Capt. Wharton, was stationed. Besides, he must make some arrangement about these debts before he should see his father again. He had easily checked all disagreeable questions since his illness, but now they could no longer be evaded, and he must either devise some mode of settlement before his family rejoined him, as they would probably do some time in the next ten days, or he must reveal the whole to them, post-obits and all, and see them stripped and burdened for his debt. No! this he vowed he would never do. The very thought made him desperate, and, springing from his couch with an activity which frightened Miss Grahame, who had supposed him too feeble for such a demonstration of feeling, he rushed to his room, that he might pace the floor with hurried steps and think with more freedom. The result of his thoughts was the following letter to Charles Montrose, who was in Boston, preparing for a voyage to the Pacific in a frigate to sail from that port.

SPRINGFIELD, Aug. — 18—.

I was truly glad, dear Charles, to hear that you were in Boston, as I want to employ you in a little business with your cousin, Mr. G. Browne, who, if he cannot be seen, may doubtless be heard of in that city. I fear my mode of saying good-bye was not altogether agreeable to Mr. Browne, and I am forced to confess, that neither my own memory, nor the relations obtained from others who were present, give me any assurance that it was not as unjust as disagreeable. I am, of course, ready to give Mr. Browne any kind of satisfaction he may be disposed to claim; though, if it were only for the sake of his connection with you, I would prefer that the satisfaction should be the peaceable one of such an apology as is readily suggested by my illness immediately following it. This last admission is, of course, made to you alone. I leave the affair in your hands. Act for me as you would desire another to act for you under the like circumstances, and I shall be satisfied. But what you do, do quickly, as my relations with Mr. Browne are somewhat complicated; and besides this affair, I have a little matter of money to arrange with himself and his friend, Mr. Richard Grahame, which I would gladly complete before my father has time to involve himself in it. This pecuniary obligation annoys me, and should have been cancelled immediately at any sacrifice, were it not that I am really, strange as it may seem, ignorant of its amount, and of the whereabouts of one of my creditors, Mr. Grahame. To tell you how I incurred this obligation would require a volume, which I am not yet strong enough to write. Doubtless the birds of the air, which you and I used in our boyhood to think so uncharitably busy in carrying evil reports, have prepared you to learn that it was incurred at a gaming-table. It was my first, and will be my last loss there—I speak confidently, because, as I sought the gaming-table only as a relief to sad thoughts, now, that hopes of which I dare not speak even to you till they are more assured, are dawning on me, its associations are remembered with any thing but pleasure. I would gladly indeed forget them altogether, but this cannot be till my debt to Mr. Browne and Mr. Grahame be discharged. Will you help me in arriving at this "consummation most devoutly to be wished," remembering that all you may learn on the subject is strictly confidential?

"You may wonder that, writing as I do, from his brother's house, I need to inquire where Mr. Richard Grahame is to be found; but in truth, Charles, I cannot speak of him to his brother or sister. I have an idea, how obtained I know not, that he is regarded by them as the one great blot on their escutcheon; and yet he did not seem to me a bad fellow. But I am weary, and must close with the assurance that in good or ill, I am still with the old affection,

Yours,
DONALD MONTROSE.

To this letter Donald received, with the delay of only one mail, the following reply:

BOSTON, Aug. — 18—.

You are right, dear Don., in supposing that I had heard something of your misadventures in Newport; enough to make me very anxious about you, till a letter from Alice, dated a fortnight ago, relieved me from present apprehension at least. Had it been in my power to obtain leave, I should have come up to see you during your illness, but alas, Uncle Sam's Nigs (U. S. N.) are the most despotically ruled in the country; and the bustle of fitting out for our Pacific cruise, left me no moment in which I could have any hope of success in such an application. But now to reply to the business part of your letter.

My impressions of Browne's conduct, received principally from Alice, were such as to make me very unwilling to see him, and I accordingly wrote to him, on the reception of yours, a mere business letter, requesting to know the amount of your debt. The reply I received I now inclose to you. You will perceive from it that Browne is not quite so graceless as we supposed. But what must be said of Richard Grahame? No wonder that his brother and sister regard him as a blot on their escutcheon. Forgery under any circumstances is vile enough, but forgery on a brother, and a brother who is straining every nerve to save his name from the lighter taint of a father's bankruptcy,

——— "St. Jude to speed!
Did ever knight so foul a deed?"

For the sake of his unfortunate brother and sister, we must keep silence respecting this scoundrel's crime; but as it would be impossible now for you to meet him as a friend, I think you had better accept Browne's offer, to be your medium of communication with him.

You will see by Browne's note, that he disclaims all enmity to you for your "Southern impetuosity." Though lightened a shade or two in my estimation by this letter, I have no doubt that he is in truth quite conscious of having deserved what you gave him; and that this is the cause of his lack of resentment.

The only question awaiting your decision in this business, is whether you will give your note to this Grahame for the sum due to him, as Browne proposes, or whether you shall obtain the cash from my uncle for its payment. As my good uncle has probably been at great expense this summer, the first arrangement may be the most convenient; and yet I am not sure that it will be wise in you to continue any association with Browne, his influence having already proved so injurious to you. Confidently as you assert your freedom from all penchant for gaming, I think your safest course would be, to break every link that is even remotely connected with it. Touch not, handle not, has been my motto in regard to this habit.

I write in great haste, dear Don., on the eve of sailing. I am sorry I cannot complete this business for you, but the way is now open for you to write to Browne yourself.

One parting word on another and more pleasing subject. My mother has told me of your love for Alice; we have been so much as brothers and sisters together, that I never suspected this, and even plead guilty to a somewhat old-fashioned prejudice against cousinly marriages; but so dearly do I regard you, and so entirely do I trust my uncle's judgment, that if he sanction your wish, and my mother assures me that he does, I shall rejoice to have a right to subscribe myself what I have ever been in heart,

Your Brother,

CHARLES MONTROSE.

Enclosed in the foregoing letter, was the following from Browne to Charles Montrose.

I have just received your very dignified communication, and perhaps should I act *selon les regles*, I should mount stilts as high as your own; and as neither of us would find it agreeable to be the first to descend, our hitherto easy and friendly intercourse would be at an end for ever. But as this course would probably cost me more than yourself—I being by nature peculiarly ill adapted for stilts—I shall not adopt it; but shall rather invite you to descend and hear—my defence?—no! my complaint. And devilish good reason I have for complaint, let me tell you. Here have I, from pure good nature and cousinly affection—not for you, Mr. Charles—devoted myself during the greater part of a summer to your Southern friends, without reward or hope of reward, beyond your and their acknowledgment of my good intentions; and behold! I receive for my pains from the one party, a broken head: and from the other a letter, which, if I had not more warm blood about me than most people have, would have frozen me into an icicle. And what have I gained as an offset? but little amusement and less profit. You will probably stare at this, prepared as you evidently are, to believe that I enticed your cousin to the gaming-table, and fleeced him when there. Stare you may, but you must believe me when I assure you that I can prove by every witness present, that it was with

Mr. Richard Grahame, and not with me, that Lieut. Montrose played those last desperate games, which left him a loser of several thousands. And now I come to the real pith of our correspondence. You wish to know the amount lost by Lieut. Montrose, and to make arrangements for its payment. This is not unexpected by me, for however I may have suffered by your cousin's Southern impetuosity, I have never doubted his honor, or supposed that a debt would be less binding on him because the law did not enforce its payment. The poor devil to whom he is indebted is less confident, perhaps because he has more at stake. He is trembling not merely for his dollars, but for what the most covetous man values yet more, his character and freedom. I may be wrong in revealing to you all the cause he has for apprehension, but I have such implicit confidence in your honor, and that of Lieut. D. Montrose, that I am assured what I say will never be used to the injury of Mr. R. Grahame; and I know not how I can so well serve him, as by showing you the motives which impelled him to avail himself of your cousin's most opportune fancy for play, and which now make immediate payment of the money so won, of the utmost importance to him.

You are perhaps aware—Lieut. Montrose is, I know—that the father of Richard Grahame died a ruined man, and that Robert against all advice, assumed his debts, stipulating only for time in which to pay them, and for the liberty of selecting those whose claims should first be satisfied. My father was a creditor to a large amount, and those more needy having been paid, Mr. Robert Grahame intrusted to Richard a considerable sum to be conveyed to us. He arrived in Boston too late to make the payment on the same day—the night brought temptation—the morning vain though bitter repentance. He was nearly frantic, and pitying, yet unable to help him, I made a suggestion, prompted I verily believe by Satan, that he should raise the money by getting a note discounted. He seized on the idea. He hoped thus to obtain some months time; in the interval fortune might favor him, and he could then redeem the note, and all would be well. But one difficulty presented itself—his name was worth nothing in the market; his brother's, however, was of more value. I cannot speak more plainly for fear of consequences. He obtained the money—his debt was paid—but a burden was laid upon his soul heavier than that of an uncancelled debt. I am sure I need say no more. You will understand his thirst for money—his determination to obtain it at all hazards. Every day that this note remains in the hands of a broker, he is in danger of exposure which will bring shame on his family as well as ruin on him. The least variation in the money-market may cause some transfer leading to detection. He may deserve to suffer, but I am not immaculate, and cannot refuse him my pity. Still more do I pity—nay, I tremble for his brother and sister, who are high-souled and delicately susceptible to the least shadow of dishonor.

I have dwelt on this subject, that you, and through you your cousin, may know how important a consideration time is to Mr. Richard Grahame. As Lieut. Montrose is not known in the money-market here, he may not find it easy to command at once so large a sum as the amount of his debt, and the fifteen or twenty days necessary to draw from his factor in Savannah might be ruinous to poor Grahame. But I have an arrangement to propose, which will I hope suit all parties. I am a poor devil myself, but through my father my name has some market value, and my note will be readily taken in exchange even for Robert Grahame's. My endorsement will of course be equally valuable, and if Lieut. Montrose will give Richard Grahame his note for the sum due, I will endorse it, and will promise to stave off all calls upon him for six or even for twelve months, if he desires it.

Will you explain this affair to your cousin, and present my proposition to him. If he thinks a broken head a sufficient recompense for a foolish jest, which, I believe, was the sum of my offence against him, and will write me frankly on this subject, he will find me ready to meet his views. Whatever he does however, if intended kindly, must be done quickly—I am interrupted, and conclude by signing myself in spite of your repelling dignity,

Yours as ever,
Geo. Browne.

P. S.—My interruption was from poor Dick Grahame. He was in unspeakable agitation, having just seen the holder of his note, and fancied from some observation made by him that he began to "smell a rat." Pray lose not a moment's time in giving Lieut. D. Montrose the information I have given you. His generous Southern nature will, I am sure, prompt him to make some effort to save from disgrace the family of this man, who have, I believe, shown kindness to him.

This letter, with that in which it was enclosed, reached Donald while he was enjoying the kindness and hospitality of those whose interests were most deeply involved in its communications. He had been listening to the brother's praises from the sister's lips. He remembered how her cheek had flushed as she spoke of her father's bankruptcy, how proudly she had dwelt on her brother's sacrifice of all to honor. He knew that this sacrifice had left them nothing but an honest name. His heart beat fast, his breath came quick, his hand trembled as he thought that, even while he read, this might be lost; and Richard Grahame himself could scarcely have felt more anxiety to secure them from such a result. To wait the slow forms of business for this, would be treason. Were his father here, he would for such an object find courage to tell him all; but he could not wait his coming, and since the proposal of a gradual liquidation of his debt, which he had designed at the commencement of this correspondence to make to Richard Grahame, was now out of the question, nothing seemed to remain for him but to accept the proposal of Browne. Whether he should communicate the whole affair to his father, immediately on his arrival, or reserve the disclosure for a more convenient season, would be a subject for after thought. Having arrived at this decision in a shorter time than it has taken us to record his thoughts, he drew his desk to him and wrote as follows:

SPRINGFIELD, Aug. 18th.

SIR:—Your letter of the 12th inst. to Lieut. C. Montrose, U. S. N., lies before me. Its contents are of very deep and painful interest to me, for the sake of the kind friends whom they so nearly concern, and I therefore make not a moment's delay in writing you in relation to them. Before entering on this subject, however, I feel that an apology is due to you for an act which I deeply regret, and which I am persuaded only the delirium of fever could have prompted. It is an act which I hope you will forget, as I heartily wish I could.

I thank you for having given me the opportunity, by the letter before me, to make some return to my friends here for obligations I can never wholly cancel. I am impatient to place in your hands the means of preventing an exposure, which would be to them so great an evil, yet the absence of my father would have made it impossible for me to act with the necessary promptitude, but for your kind offer to arrange the business for me. I accordingly enclose you my note for ———. I was about to state the sum, but find, on reference to your letter, that you have not mentioned it. I find it impossible, from my own confused memories, to fix the exact amount, and, as the two-days necessary to obtain farther information from you might prove destruction to our design, I enclose my note, leaving a blank space, which you will oblige me by filling up with a sum sufficient to cancel Mr. Richard Grahame's debt, and thus to ward off the threatened evil here, even though it should somewhat exceed my losses.

Time is too precious to permit me to add more than that I shall ever hold myself your debtor for what I may truly call your magnanimity in this affair. I hope to see you in Boston before I return South, and will then arrange with you the modes and times of the payments to be made to you. Till then, accept assurances of the highest respect from,

Yours, very truly,
DONALD MONTROSE.

The next morning George Browne might have been seen hurrying through the streets of Boston, from the post-office to his own lodgings. Having arrived at his room, he locked the door, and then, withdrawing a letter from his pocket, he broke the seal and glanced rapidly over its contents.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed, "this is better than I hoped," while his eyes kindled with a fire that was not all pleasure.

He was engaged in a second and slower perusal of the letter, when there was a rap at the door, and, opening it, he admitted Richard Grahame, who, in a voice and with a manner betraying some agitation, asked, "Have you heard from him?"

"Yes, his father is absent, and he cannot therefore pay the money at once, he says; but he sends me his note, on which I may perhaps raise the money."

"For what amount has he given his note? It is made payable to me, I suppose?"

"It is, and if you can pay this other," opening his pocket-book and touching a paper in it, "I will give it to you; if not, I will keep it as security, and when it is paid, if that be ever done, will give you the surplus hundreds."

"Then give me my own note, the existence of which it maddens me to remember."

"Excuse me—not till I receive in exchange something more valid than the I. O. U. of this sprig of Southern chivalry and aristocracy."

"This is too much, sir," cried the excited Grahame, rising as he spoke. "You have no claim on that note of Lieut. Montrose, except in payment of the debt for which the other was given, and to keep both is a fraud which I will not bear. I will take legal measures."

"Do so, and the good people of Boston will be entertained with a criminal case, the termination of which may be to find you a residence at the expense of the government."

The blood purpled the forehead of Richard Grahame. He could scarcely refrain from rushing upon the tormentor, who sat calmly observing the rage he had excited.

"This quarrel between us is very foolish, Grahame," said Browne, at length; "I have no unfriendly meaning to you, but you really cannot wonder that I have some hesitation in parting with a paper which is worth five thousand dollars to me—"

Grahame interrupted him in a voice whose deep, unearthly tone proceeded from lips of ghastly whiteness: "I swear by all I value on earth and all I fear beyond it, that you shall never gain one dollar by that paper—sooner will I confess my crime and bear its consequences."

"A thing easily said," sneered Browne; "but I will tell you what is more easily done. Endorse this note, making it payable to me, and enclose it in such a note as I shall dictate, and I will give you the other."

"Give me pen, ink and paper, and dictate your note," said Grahame.

Browne placed these articles on the table, and, drawing a chair opposite to Grahame, he commenced his dictation.

"It is necessary to be civil on such occasions, so begin, 'Dear Browne.'"

Without a change of countenance, his victim wrote.

Browne continued, "'I have just received a note for twenty thousand dollars'"—"twenty thousand!" exclaimed Grahame, looking up in surprise, "it is scarcely one-fourth of that sum."

"Well! suppose I choose to call it one hundred; will that make it so? I can only recover at last the amount of the note, which your letter can neither increase nor decrease."

"I will not write a lie," said Richard Grahame, laying down his pen.

A sneer was on Browne's lip, but, as he looked in the colorless face opposite to him, he saw that a strange fixedness, the resolution of despair, had taken the place of its usual mobility of feature and expression, and he changed his tone to one of confiding friendliness.

"To be frank with you, Grahame," he said, "I am engaged at present in an affair which makes it very desirable to me to be able to exhibit some proof that I shall one day be master of such a sum; that is all I want your letter for, and, as I do not believe in the old proverb, 'a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush,' I am willing, for the possible advantage I may derive from this, to exchange a note which is as good as if issued by a bank, for one of doubtful value."

"But suppose I should be examined on this claim one of these days?"

"Have I not already told you that I can have no claim except for the amount of the note? a fact which, I should think, would be sufficiently plain without any showing of mine: however, do as you please. This paper is perhaps better for me."

"I will write," and, bending himself to his task, Richard Grahame did not again look up till he had written the following lines, at the dictation of Browne.

"I have just received a note for twenty thousand dollars from Lieut. Donald Montrose, U. S. A., if you will accept it in payment of my debt to you, I will endorse it to you. Let me hear from you immediately.

Yours, &c.,
RICHARD GRAHAME."

"Here are envelopes, wax and taper," said Browne, putting them on the table as he spoke. "But stay; your signet, if you please, on the seal; and now your endorsement on this slip of paper," putting the note on its face before him.

Richard Grahame wrote his name; then, still keeping his hand on the note, said, "I have fulfilled your conditions; now give me the other."

"Certainly; here it is."

The notes were exchanged, and, tearing the name from that which he received, and severing it letter from letter, Grahame walked to a window and threw out the minute pieces, to be wafted hither and thither on a gentle summer breeze; then, turning with flashing eyes to Browne, he exclaimed, "Thank heaven! I am free once more, and may tell you, as I have often longed to do, that I despise and detest you as the basest of scoundrels."

"A very unwise confession," said Browne, coolly; "let me advise you, if you would circumvent a scoundrel, never betray your suspicions of him."

With an impatient gesture, Richard Grahame flung open the door, and commenced a rapid descent of the stairs, but had not proceeded far when Browne called after him to know if he had not left his cane. This coolness redoubled his ire, and, snatching the cane politely extended to him, he rushed from the house, feeling that an instant's delay would render the temptation irresistible to use it on the person of his quondam friend.

CHAPTER XV.

"Let us lift the curtain, and observe
What passes in that chamber."

In the same city, and within a few doors of the very house in which Browne was maturing projects whereby he hoped to gratify at once his avarice and his revenge, Mrs. Charles Montrose and our gentle Alice were awaiting the arrival of Col. and Mrs. Montrose and Isabelle, with whom they were to pass a few days at Springfield, that they might become acquainted with Donald's kind friends in that neighborhood, after which they were to proceed southward. It was the intention of Col. Montrose to return home by land; stopping for a few days at Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington, and Richmond, and, as this was before the era of railways, such a journey would occupy several weeks. As it was now late in September, and the Colonel was desirous to be at home early in November, they could not long delay their departure.

Mrs. Charles Montrose and Alice had passed a fortnight in Boston, the last fortnight before the sailing of Charles on a long and distant cruise. Alice had seemed to suffer more now than at her first parting with her brother, and yet no stormy burst of weeping marked now as then her last adieu, but, for many days before, her face wore a saddened expression, her movements were languid, and her mother or brother, entering her room unexpectedly, had more than once surprised her, with her books or work resting on her lap, and tears stealing slowly down her cheeks. On one of these occasions, Charles, fearing that these tears were indications of some secret cause of sorrow, had sought to win her confidence by the tenderest assurances of sympathy and affection.

"My darling Ally," he said, as seating himself beside her he pillowed her head upon his shoulder, and kissed her cheek—"tell me what is the matter with you."

"Nothing—I was only thinking how lonely Mamma and I would be when you were gone," she murmured.

"Is that really all, Ally? Do not turn your eyes away—look at me, and answer me truly, as you would answer our father if he were living. I cannot leave you with a doubt of your happiness upon my mind: I always loved my little Ally dearly, and always will; and now tell me, darling, have you promised, as my mother tells me, to marry Donald after this year of probation which my uncle has imposed on him?"

The only answer of Alice was to hide her face on the shoulder against which she leaned.

"You do not answer me, Alice; must I go away, feeling that I have lost my sister's confidence?"

Alice could not resist the grieved tone in which this was said, and putting her little hand in his, she whispered, "I promised my uncle to do as he wished."

"But it is your wish, not my uncle's, that should determine this, Alice. Tell me, my sister, do you wish to marry Donald?—do you love him? Answer me, Alice: remember we are soon to be parted, and Heaven only knows how and when we shall meet again."

"I would tell you if I could, Charles, but I don't know." The low voice ceased.

"Only tell me if you love him, dear Alice."

"I always loved Donald, almost as well as I loved you, Charles."

"But do you love him better?—do you wish to marry him, Alice?"

"I would rather not marry any one; but if I do, I suppose—I think—I mean—if Donald wishes it——" again she left her sentence unfinished.

"You would say that you would prefer Donald to any other?"

"I suppose so."

"I am glad to hear it, my darling," said Charles, kissing her, and smiling to think by what circumlocutions and tortuosities one must arrive at any knowledge of a woman's heart. "Donald is a noble fellow in spite of his peccadillos this summer; and though I do not in general approve of cousinly marriages, if you really love him, I have no doubt yours will be very happy."

These were pleasant words, and yet, strange to say, Alice felt more saddened than soothed by them.

The house in which Charles had obtained rooms for his mother, his sister, and himself, was very pleasantly situated, looking on one side upon the Mall, and on the other upon the long-disused cemetery of a neighboring church, in which no indication remained of its original use, except here and there a broken and moss-covered stone, above which trees planted by mourners, who had themselves long since gone down the grave, threw their widely sheltering arms. Upon this shady and secluded spot the windows of the room occupied by Alice looked, and one night—it was that which followed the departure of Charles—she lay long gazing upon the fantastic shadows thrown by those old trees, as their branches were slowly waved by a gentle breeze, beneath the light of a brilliant moon now at the full. Alice lay very still, lest she should arouse her mother, who occupied another bed in the same room, and whom she supposed to be sleeping. Thus she lay "chewing the cud of sweet and bitter fancies," till she had heard a distant clock toll forth the midnight hour,—then, sleep began to interweave its own wild visions with her waking thoughts. She dreamed, and still she saw the old church-yard and its waving trees lighted by the solemn moon. She was walking there with Donald, or some one whom she believed to be Donald, but he did not speak to her, and a cloud came over the moon so that she could not see him, and at length a doubt—a fear took possession of her; and she implored him to speak to her, by the memory of their childhood, by the love he had so lately vowed to her; she prayed for one word; and as his continued silence made the doubt conviction, and the fear an overpowering terror, she would have snatched her hand from him, but he grasped it more tightly than ever, and drew her along with frightful rapidity, though she was stumbling over graves at almost every step—she strove to cry out, and woke to feel her mother's soft hand on hers, and to see her in the moonlight bending over her.

"What is the matter, my child?" asked Mrs. Montrose; "you seemed very much distressed in your sleep."

"Oh mother! I am so glad that you woke me—I have had such a frightful dream about Donald."

"Ah!" thought the mother, "so it is with young hearts, the one thought ever present, waking and sleeping; Charles need not have feared that Alice did not love her cousin."

And having soothed Alice with gentle and endearing words, and re-arranged her pillows, and closed the window lest the night air should be too cool for her, Mrs. Montrose went back to her bed with pleasant anticipations of her daughter's future, and slept. And soon Alice too slept again, and with sleep the dream came back, but less vividly, shifting and changing, like those flickering lights and shadows which she had watched so long. She had slept as she afterwards found but two hours, when, dreaming still of Donald and the old grave-yard, she thought that she had fallen into an open grave, and that he was shovelling the earth upon her; it was on her chest, a mountain-weight, oppressive, stifling—she strove, as only those can strive who strive for life, to throw it off, and in vain; yet she was not hopeless, for a voice whose very tone awakened confidence, bade her "be of good courage;" and as she looked in the direction whence it came, she saw one in whose aspect strength and gentlness, pity and power seemed blended, as she fancied they must be in an angel; and saying to herself, "It is my guardian angel," she stretched out her arms to him, and awoke. But was she indeed awake, or was it but a change in her dream? She lay indeed upon her bed, she was in no grave, but the same stifling sensation was on her chest, and the moonbeams seemed to shine as through a vapory haze into the room. A cry met her ear, it seemed the echo of that which she had striven to make; and then the voice, the very words of which she had dreamed, "Courage, madam! only rouse yourself, be quick, and do not fear."

Alice raised herself on her arm, and in the dim light she saw her mother standing, but she scarcely looked at her, for nearer the window, with the moonbeams falling directly upon him, and making every feature visible, though seen as it were through a veil, was the very being whom she had greeted in her dream as her guardian angel. Before she could do more than *feel* the strangeness of such a visitant at such an hour, sounds forced themselves on her attention, which explained all—the crackling of flames, the hoarse shouts of the firemen as they arrived and took their stations in the street in front of the house, and the noise of the engine pumps which were already at work. All that we have described had passed so rapidly with Alice, that the words we have recorded as addressed to her mother were scarce concluded when with a cry of terror she sprang to her feet, and fully aware of her danger, and forgetful of all else, was in an instant standing beside her mother, and before the stranger. In her restlessness, her cap had fallen off, and her hair fell in disordered curls around her pallid face, and over the white wrapper in which she had slept. That moment of fear was not a time for speech.

"My mother!"—"My darling!"—and that clasp which said for each, "we live or die together"—that was all between the mother and child.

"Do not despair—there is good hope for us yet," said their companion; and Alice, under the vivid impression of her dream, felt that the very tones of his voice brought strength and courage. She watched his movements, and obeyed his slightest suggestion, with the ready and unquestioning confidence of a little child; while he, on his part, for the sake of these weak, trembling women, evinced a composure and hopefulness he was far from feeling. To Mrs. Montrose alone, there was neither hope nor courage. She stood with hands clasped, her pale lips moving as in prayer, insensible to all but her danger and her child's presence.

"Dearest mother, we shall be saved; this kind gentleman says so," urged Alice.

A look of agony—a quicker movement of the lips, was the only answer from her mother; for, alas! she had seen what had taken from her all hope, except that which lights the world beyond the grave. When roused, like Alice, though from sounder sleep, by the voice of a stranger in her room, in her confusion she had opened the door into the front room, hitherto used as a parlor by Alice and herself; and a scene had presented itself, at which the hearts of brave men have often quailed. For through thick smoke—smoke which was now filling their chamber—which even then made it impossible to breathe in the outer room, the red, fierce flames from the lower part of the house rose leaping, as if eager to devour their prey, to the very windows of the third story, where she and Alice were, as she supposed, the only sleepers, and where, as she quickly divined, they had been left without even a warning, by those who occupied the lower rooms, and to whom the imminence of the danger had made self-preservation the one thought. Mrs. Montrose found, however, when driven back into her chamber by the smoke, that they had an unexpected companion, in what she considered their certain destruction, A gentleman arriving late in the evening before, had been put into the room which Charles had occupied, and which opened by one door into hers, and by another upon the hall, just at the head of the stairs. The stranger had been aroused from sleep by the cry of fire, and even while throwing on his clothing, had endeavored to awake those who slept near him; but receiving no answer, he entered the room by the door which a careless attendant had left unlocked, in time to see the horrors exposed by the open doorway, in which Mrs. Montrose was standing. It was doubtless the stifling sensation produced by the smoke thus admitted which had caused the last dream of Alice; and the figure, and voice, and words, which had seemed a part of that dream, were a reality apprehended by senses but half aroused.

"I must leave you a moment to see what can be done," said the guardian angel, as he still seemed to the trusting Alice. "If I can get to the front of the house, all will yet be well; in the mean time, have you woollen clothing? it would be safer than these light dresses."

He went, and Alice, quick to understand and to obey, threw over the cambric gowns worn by her mother and herself, wrappers of some woollen fabric, which the cold air of Newport had compelled them to prepare even in the midst of summer; then she found their shoes and stockings, and placing her mother, who seemed to move with as little consciousness as an automaton, in a chair, she put on hers, and afterwards drew on her own. With her rapid though trembling movements, this had scarcely occupied three minutes; yet the time seemed long, and as the sounds grew louder of falling timbers and crackling flames, and their protector came not, her heart sank; and growing impatient, she opened the door into his room. At that moment he was entering it from the hall, and by the lurid light of the burning stairs, she saw the desolation, the horrors beyond; and as he came nearer, she saw that one sleeve of his coat was burned. Deeper suffering on his part she did not then perceive.

It was strange, but his presence brought more of quiet and assurance with it, than that terrible view had given her of fear.

"This way," he said, and hurrying her to the window in the rear of the small room in which they stood, he made her look out with him, and pointing far below to a flat roof rising to a level with the second story, which covered a piazza extending along a row of houses, of which theirs was one, he added; "there is our safety! Have you courage to let me lower you from this window to that place?"

Courage! Poor Alice! she was timid as a fawn, but she was also as confiding, and she answered, even while she closed her eyes, lest she should grow dizzy at the depth, "I will do whatever you wish, but you will save my mother!"

"Save my child," murmured a feeble voice beside them, "and I will pray God to bless you!"

"I will save you both, or die with you!" vowed the brave heart of their companion, but he paused not for speech. Rushing into their apartment, he drew the sheets and blankets from their beds, and knotted them firmly together, and bearing the feather-beds to the window of his own room, threw them to the roof below. The sheets and blankets which he had joined, he then tied to the broad and strong mahogany head-board of his bedstead, which he drew close to the window, and dropping them outside, found that they would reach within two feet of the roof below.

"Now," said he to Alice, "are you ready? you must go first. Can you trust yourself to hold on firmly, till you reach the place of safety?"

"I will do it, but my mother—"

"Trust her to me; be firm and quick, and all will be well."

"Can you not put her in safety first?"

"No; she is not sufficiently herself to be trusted alone; you must be there to receive and cheer her."

"I am ready—what must I do?"

"Only hold on tightly—remember your life depends on it. Stay," he added, as he felt how cold and tremulous were the soft white hands that grasped the sheet, "I had better secure it around your waist; then hold firmly here—that is right, now courage!"

Taking a strong hold himself of the sheet just above her head, that he might be able to prevent its running out too rapidly, he lifted her through the window in his powerful arms, as easily as she could have raised an infant. For an instant she clung to him, throwing her arm around his neck in the unconsciousness of terror; and touched by her trust, he involuntarily clasped her, as he might have done a timid child, closer to him, even while whispering, "For your mother's sake, courage!"

She released him instantly, and leaning far out that he might prevent her being endangered by striking against the house, he suffered the sheets and blankets to run slowly through his hands, till he saw her touch the roof. Quickly she unbound them from her waist, and he drew them back.

Mrs. Montrose had watched their proceedings without a word. Only as he was about to lift Alice in his arms she pressed forward and kissed her; but when now he said "your daughter is safe"—when he made her look out, and Alice herself in a cheering tone cried, "Come, dear mother! it is quite easy," she burst into tears; and catching the hand of her child's preserver, pressed it to her lips, and yielded herself as implicitly as Alice herself had done, to his directions. She too descended safely, and then they prayed their deliverer to come quickly, but though the air grew more hot and stifling every moment, he thought he would still be safe for a few minutes; and those minutes he employed in lowering their trunks and his own. His own descent was more perilous than theirs, both because of his greater weight, and because there was none to give him the guidance which he had given them. It was accomplished in safety, however; and beneath the stars that night, there went up no more earnest thanksgiving, than arose from the hearts of those three as they stood in the free air, delivered from that most appalling doom—a death by fire.

The burning cinders, which had hitherto been borne in the opposite direction, the current of air caused by the heat now began to bring towards them. They were hurried on therefore by their protector, who, laying the trunks upon a blanket, drew them along with him. They passed thus several houses, the sashes of which were securely fastened down; but at length, finding an open window, though the room into which it looked was quite deserted, they entered, and leaving their trunks there, descended the stairs, meeting no one on the way. In one of the parlors, to which a brilliant light attracted them, they found a man-servant asleep, who, when he had been aroused, and had recovered from the surprise and terror caused by their appearance, informed them that the family had all left the house, believing it must be burned; but that the people from the insurance office thought it quite safe; and had therefore forbidden any thing to be removed. While he was speaking, Alice was standing in such a position, that the light fell directly on her face, and even through the disguise of a costume more bizarre than becoming, Robert Grahame, for it was he who had been brought so providentially to their rescue, recognized her whose gentle beauty had so attracted him in his visit to Col. Montrose at Newport. Mutual explanations followed. A carriage being obtained by the aid of the servant, who also supplied the ladies with cloaks and shawls, they proceeded to a hotel together. It was already day, yet Mrs. Montrose and Alice retired to bed to repair their exhausted strength. To their protector no such indulgence was possible. The business which had brought him to the city could not be delayed, and by the time his burned arm—for it was badly burned, though his companions in danger did not know it—could be dressed, his burned coat replaced by another, and his toilet made, business hours would have begun. Therefore while Alice slept, and Mrs. Montrose, with nerves still too much disquieted for sleep, lay beside her, alternately gazing on her rescued treasure, and lifting her heart in grateful adoration to the Heaven from which she acknowledged every good to proceed, and in prayer for blessings on him who had been the instrument of Heaven's mercy, Robert Grahame was immersed in the cares and perplexities of the passing hour, though even into "this sea of troubles," he carried with him the memory of the Ever Present. A true, earnest soul can never stand face to face with death, without bringing away some token of his power; and wherever Robert Grahame was, or however engaged, this day, a perpetual hymn of thanksgiving seemed ascending from his heart, which, unconsciously to himself, like the key-note in a piece of music, was shaping all his life into harmony with it. His spirit had ever been "touched to fine issues." His past life had been no light barcarole or sentimental lay, but rather a grand battle-piece. This day, all earthly trials had shrunk into such insignificance, that it seemed as if the victory had already come, and there went up from his soul no exulting shout, but the solemn "TE DEUM" of a Christian conqueror.

Amid these high and sacred emotions, there came sometimes a thrill of more earthly feeling. This was associated with the occasional recurrence to his mind, of the moment in which Alice had clung to him, in her innocence and helplessness, as to her only earthly stay. It is so sweet to the brave and noble to protect the weak. He called on the ladies by appointment, in the evening. Alice placed in his, a hand tremulous with the emotion which was painted on her glowing cheek, and betrayed by the tears which her drooping lids vainly sought to conceal. Mrs. Montrose strove to speak of their obligations, but the events of the last night were too recent, the feelings they excited too deep for speech. He turned from them to talk of Donald, and of his improved health, and restored vivacity.

"Both my sister and I," he said, "were very sorry to part with him; his visit threw a pleasant sparkle over the quiet stream of our lives."

"He is now with his father in New-York, but you will probably see him again next week, as my brother, Col. Montrose, writes me that they shall all remain a few days in Springfield, for the pleasure of visiting Miss Grahame and yourself. He proposes that Alice and I shall join them there,—offering to come on here himself and escort us back."

"If I did not fear you would think me too bold, I would ask if your engagements here are such as to make it necessary for you to wait till Col. Montrose arrives at Springfield, before going there yourselves?"

"Certainly not; our engagements here were at an end when my son sailed; and as my brother, Mr. Browne, is absent with his family, we have no inducement to remain."

"Then may I not hope to persuade you to go to Springfield, and await the arrival of your friends there? It would give my sister so much pleasure to make your acquaintance, and, pardon a brother's partiality if I say, I hope the pleasure would be mutual."

"I am sure it would; and we should be delighted to go, but we are so little accustomed to travel alone."

"I should be but too much gratified, if you would permit me to attend you."

"That would be very pleasant—but, may I ask, when do you return? I could not consent to interfere with your business."

"Unfortunately for me, my business is so imperative an affair, that I cannot postpone its claims for any pleasure however tempting—it compels my return the day after tomorrow. May I hope that the time will suit you?"

"Can we be ready, Alice, do you think?"

"Oh yes, mamma!"

"I thank you for that ready acquiescence," said Mr. Grahame with a smile, to Alice; "I hardly hoped for it."

"And why not?" she asked.

"For a reason which I begin to think was very unreasonable."

"And that was—"

"Remember, if you please, I abjure even while I confess it; it was the belief that ladies in general, and Southern ladies in particular, were slow to decide, and slower to act on their decisions."

"I must leave the ladies *in general* to your sister, but for Southern ladies *in particular* why did you form such an opinion of them?" inquired Alice, adopting insensibly his own easy manner.

"I supposed that the climate and their peculiar modes of life would tend to create indolence."

"Mamma, you are a Northern woman, and have lived nearly eleven years at the South, you ought to be able to decide the question; are we very indolent there—more indolent than Northern women?"

"No, my love;" then addressing Mr. Grahame, Mrs. Montrose continued, "I was greatly surprised when I first went South, to find that women there, though their employments might require less physical activity, were by no means less constantly employed; I found that my sister-in-law, Mrs. Col. Montrose, was a very early riser; that she superintended the arrangements of her own dairy, was her own housekeeper, visited, and often prescribed for the sick on her plantation, and with the aid of seamstresses trained and directed by herself, did the needlework of her family."

"But this is a single instance."

"Yet characteristic of a class, not of course without exceptions. But these are not sufficiently numerous to justify the general belief at the North of Southern indolence."

"Then that belief will soon cease to be general; steamboats are bringing us into so much more frequent communication, that Maine and Georgia will soon be near neighbors, I am thinking; and better acquaintance will, I hope, obliterate many a long-cherished prejudice on either side."

The ladies were ready on the appointed day. A journey from Boston to Springfield, one hundred miles, was not then as now performed in a few hours, but as the road was excellent, the stage-coach comfortable, the scenery through which they passed varied and pleasing, and Mr. Grahame an excellent travelling companion, conversible without loquacity, attentive without being obtrusive, acquainted with every mile of the road, and with every legend or historical trait which could give interest to the places through which they passed, Alice, at least, would not have exchanged their easy journeying for railroad speed. They spent the first night in the pleasant town of Worcester, and arrived in Springfield the next day at noon. Having seen them comfortably accommodated at a hotel, Mr. Grahame left them; but only for an hour, when he returned with his sister, to urge their removing from the hotel to Flowerdale, as the cottage home of the Grahames was called. The invitation was so heartily given that it was impossible to decline it.

Between Alice Montrose and Mary Grahame there were great dissimilarities—dissimilarities visible to the most casual observer. Alice, sensitive and impressible, was timid in the expression of her feelings, and yet more of her opinions. Life had dealt so gently with her that she was still unconscious as a child of its evil, while the world of nature, and the men and women who inhabited it, were alike clothed with rainbow hues by her fervid imagination. Early forced into contact with painful realities, Mary Grahame had acquired decision, not only of mind, but of manner, and the human depravity which was to Alice an abstraction, accepted in her creed, but disbelieved every where else, was to her a living fact, saddening, though not hardening her heart. Mary Grahame was, in the fullest sense of the word, a Christian. If to recognize his obligations to Him who had bought him by the sacrifice of Himself, if, under the recognition of this bond, to make DUTY the law of his life was to be a Christian, then might Robert Grahame claim that name, but there was one thing lacking; he could labor for his fellow-men, but he could not love them. From his own loftier and purer sphere, he looked with contempt upon their weaknesses, and, except in some such case as that of Donald Montrose, where the duty he acknowledged as supreme over his actions demanded his interference, rarely interested himself in their affairs. Pride, the sin of the archangel fallen, was his, and reigned perhaps all the more despotically in his heart for having been so crushed in his outer life. But Mary Grahame had made that last attainment which he lacked. Of her, as of Abou Ben Adhem, the recording angel might write as of "one that loved her fellow-men." She knew them selfish and debased, but she knew, too, that she inherited the same nature, and that, through the same divine principle which had made her to differ, they might become pure and holy as the angels in heaven. And to aid in this great work of the world's purification, she considered as at once her highest duty and most blessed privilege. While Alice was still a child, yielding with scarce a thought to the sweet affections and generous impulses of her nature, reflecting on all around her the almost unclouded brightness of her own life, Mary Grahame, disciplined, by adversity had become

> "A perfect woman, nobly planned
> To warn, to comfort and command."

Yet between those two dissimilar beings there was enough of sympathy to form the basis of a true and lifelong friendship. And, during this visit, they felt of how much use they could be to each other—Alice felt so strong with Mary's judgment to rest upon, and Mary was so lifted out of the dull realities of life by the ardent and imaginative Alice. It was one of the chief pleasures of Alice to follow her friend from province to province of her simple ménage; to see how, by neatness, industry, and good taste, with the aid of only one servant, the young mistress of the mansion was able, without very severe labor, to make all her little household comfortable, and to mingle something of elegance with the simplicity of her arrangements. The chief merit in all this, that it was done with the smallest possible amount of means, Alice did not know. Mary had been a cheerful coworker with her brother in his life's labor. Five hundred dollars was the amount allowed by the brother and sister to their own wants, all the rest that Robert could make, going to his great object. By Mary's good management, from this sum of five hundred dollars there was sometimes a remainder at the year's end; it was never exceeded. Yet Alice never saw any thing wanting at Flowerdale. It is true, Mary's dresses were neither so varied nor of such fine material as Isabelle and she were accustomed to wear; but then they fitted so perfectly and seemed to suit Mary so well, with their grave, quaker colors, and their plain style, that no thought of poverty would ever have suggested itself in connection with them.

One thing both Mrs. Montrose and Alice regretted at Flowerdale; it was that they saw so little of its master. While they still slept, he breakfasted and left his home, to which he did not return often till a late hour of the evening. Yet, scarcely a day passed without some evidence that he had thought of them. Now, there was a book brought from Springfield which Mrs. Montrose had wished to read; now a rare flower, of which he had spoken to Alice, and now a pleasant walk or drive planned for them all.

"Are you not very lonely sometimes in this beautiful home?" asked Alice of Mary, one day.

"I am very much alone, but rarely lonely; that is a feeling for which I have not time. And then you must not suppose that Robert is always so much away; he is particularly engaged at present."

"And do you never go to see him at the factory?"

"Often; I always breakfast with him when we are alone, and in summer I frequently walk to the factory with him in the morning, or go in the evening and persuade him to come home with me."

"Does he object to having other visitors there?" asked

Alice, hesitating, as if she feared the very question were touching on forbidden ground.

"Not at all; would you like to go? I have several times thought of proposing it, but feared it might be tiresome to you."

"I should like it very much, if you are sure your brother will not be displeased."

"I am quite sure, so we will go this afternoon, and see if we cannot lure him away for a walk."

They went, Mrs. Montrose declining to accompany them. In spite of Mary's assurances, Alice still felt some apprehension that the visit would annoy Mr. Grahame, and, as they approached the room which Mary called his "den," she hung back with somewhat of the feeling of a timid child who would screen herself behind a bolder companion, when caught in an act of questionable propriety. Mr. Grahame was giving some directions to a workman at the moment they came in sight. He did not see them at first, and when he did, no change of countenance, or of manner, marked any of that embarrassment or discomposure which Alice had feared to produce. With a smiling bow to them, he continued, without the slightest interruption, his conversation with the workman, till, apparently satisfied, he turned away, then advancing to his sister and her friend, he said, "This is an unexpected honor; to which of you am I to make my acknowledgments for it?"

"Oh! to Alice. She had some curiosity about—which was it, Alice?—a factory or a manufacturer?"

"Both, I believe," said Alice, laughing.

"Do you really wish to go through the factory?" asked Grahame, with some surprise.

"Oh, no!" said Alice, "but, if you have no objection, I should like just to take a *coup d'œil* of the whole—that is, if you do not dislike."

"Dislike it! Why should I? I will attend you in a moment."

He stayed only to put some papers in a desk, lock it and take the key out, and then led the way up stairs and to the door of the long room in which the looms were busily at work, each performing the labor of many men. Between every two of these looms stood a young girl, some of them looking both pretty and intelligent; others, Alice thought almost as much machines as the looms they attended. Alice looked sadly on them.

"What is the matter? What offends or grieves you here?" asked Robert Grahame, who observed the change in her countenance.

"Those girls," she said; "a life of such labor in youth must be so hard."

"Do you think a life of idleness easy? Some of those girls have noble motives for their work; some are working that an old father, or feeble, helpless mother may die beneath the roof which they love, because it sheltered their happier life; some that a young brother may not want the culture which his mind craves."

The face of Alice had changed its expression when Mr. Grahame ceased speaking. It was still grave, but with its gravity was mingled admiration rather than pity. The gravity continued long after she had left the factory. It excited the observation of one of her companions; the other was as grave and as silent as herself.

"What is the matter, Alice?" asked Mary Grahame. These young girls had already exchanged the ceremonious address of strangers for the familiarity of friends.

"Matter! Oh, nothing!" replied Alice, with a smile, and a sudden clearing up of the cloud from her brow.

"And do you put on such an air of deep thought over nothing? or is that a civil rebuke to my Yankee curiosity?"

Robert Grahame raised his head and turned his eyes on Alice, seeming to expect her answer with some degree of interest.

Alice colored, and with a laugh which betrayed embarrassment rather than gayety, replied, "I believe I was fast arriving at a conclusion of which I am a little ashamed." She looked up and met the eyes of Robert Grahame. They questioned her as plainly as words could have done, and more forcibly, perhaps. Alice could not resist them, and, after a moment's hesitation, continued, "It was very ungrateful to my kind uncle, but—I was thinking, if he had not done so much for us, it might have been better in the end; I might have been able to do for mamma and Charles what Mr. Grahame said those girls were doing for their mothers and brothers."

Robert Grahame glanced quietly over the person of the delicate girl, from the pretty straw hat, beneath which he could just see the soft brown curls that shaded a brow of the purest white, to the tiny slipper, so tiny that it might have been worn by Cinderella herself, and there was the slightest tinge of mockery in the tone in which he asked, "And you would like to exchange places with those factory girls?"

"Not quite that," said Alice, "but I should like to feel that I was capable of doing as they do. I see *you* do not think I am."

"Excuse me, I have not said so."

"Not in words, but—well, may I ask, what do you think?"

"I think you should be grateful to Heaven and your uncle that the question is likely to remain unanswered. There is no romance, Miss Montrose, but a great deal of sad and of somewhat coarse reality in the lives of those girls."

Alice was silenced; she was even hurt, for there seemed to her something of severity in the tone of this reply. The reverie into which she fell was interrupted by Mary Grahame, who had turned aside to secure a spray of wild roses that grew temptingly near, and who, now returning, handed them to Alice as she asked, "Well—how is the question settled? Is Robert ready to engage you as a factory hand?"

"No, he considers me quite useless."

"Useless!—yes, as a factory hand," said Robert Grahame with a smile; "but—these flowers,"—touching the roses in her hand,—"they furnish us neither with food nor clothing; have they no uses?"

"I do not know, they are very beautiful," and Alice gazed on them with a loving smile.

"They are beautiful, and their beauty greets us from every wayside hedge, needing no elaborate search or costly expenditure. The simple country girl as she twines them in her hair, and the clown who gathers them for her, feel a new sense stirring within them; a consciousness of perceptions and wants not purely animal; yes, beauty has its uses."

The last words were spoken slowly, deliberately, and while the eyes of the speaker rested, perhaps unconsciously, not on the flowers, but on the face of Alice. The gaze was so prolonged, that her color deepened, and her eyes fell beneath it. When next she looked at him, he was walking a little apart, with folded arms, eyes bent upon the earth, and the usually serious expression of his countenance seemed to have deepened into sadness. During the few days after this that she remained at the cottage, he was so much engaged at the factory that she scarcely saw him. After the arrival of Col. Montrose at Springfield, they met more frequently, but as it was always in the presence of many others, they had little conversation.

From Springfield Donald made a visit to Boston, that he might see Browne, and ascertain the amount of his debt, which his father was anxious to pay. What passed between them we know not, but on his return, he told his father that if he could pay five thousand dollars for him, he would never again call upon him for a gambling debt. Col. Montrose paid it immediately, assuring Donald, as he did so, that he should never regret the loss, if it had indeed taught him the danger of such an amusement.

It was now the middle of October, and as the travellers intended to spend some time in Virginia, among the relations of Mrs. John Montrose, they thought they might commence their return to Georgia, without danger of arriving there too early for health. All turned homeward with joy. All felt, though some *could* not, and some *would* not have told wherefore, that their summer had brought less of pleasure, and more of trial than they had anticipated. Donald was to accompany his friends as far as New-York, where he would embark for Tampa Bay; Col. Montrose having obtained orders for him to join the regiment stationed at that post, to which Capt. Wharton was also attached. In vain did Donald entreat permission of his father, before they separated, to bind Alice to him by indissoluble ties.

"Only let me have her promise to be mine, and I shall leave her with a lighter heart," pleaded Donald.

But his father was inexorable. "Show yourself worthy of her, Donald," he said, "and you have my consent to woo, and to win Alice; but as I would not give my daughter to any man who had shown himself as unstable as you, till I had provd him, you cannot expect me to be less careful for Alice."

Donald might have taken the affair into his own hands, but his father said, "I exact no pledge from you on this subject, my son—I trust you entirely; if I could not do so, no persuasion, no circumstances could induce me to place the happiness of Alice in your keeping; but whatever else my son may want, he will never, I am sure, want honor. He may oppose, but he will never deceive me."

"In this, *at least*, I will be true," exclaimed Donald, wringing the hand his father extended to him, with a force of which he was himself unconscious, and with so much of bitter feeling depicted in his face, that the kind father could not see it without sympathy.

"Come, cheer up, my boy," he said, laying his hand gently on his shoulder, "a year will soon pass; and then you may claim the heart which, as I have told you, I believe to be already yours."

But Donald seemed little comforted, and hurried from the room as soon as he was released by his father, leaving him to moralize over the impetuosity of youth, and to glide on in thought to the time when he should see himself surrounded by his children, and his chidren's children in the home of his fathers, continuing there the name and race he valued.

"After all," he said, thinking aloud, "there is a great deal in race. I think Grahame, for instance, must have good blood in his veins, or he could not have preserved that air of nobility amidst such depressing circumstances."

"Oh yes!" replied Mrs. Charles Montrose, who had entered, unseen by him, just after Donald left the room, and who supposed he was addressing her, "I heard all about them from an old lady who called at the cottage one day when Miss Grahame and Alice were walking and I was the only person left to entertain her. She said she remembered when they first came to this country, or at least when their father and mother came, and that a servant who accompanied them, used to boast that his master was of a very high family abroad; and indeed she added, that the father was proud enough to be the King of England himself; and that his acquaintances were always, to use her expression, 'tip-top' people, until Mr. Robert Grahame was sixteen or seventeen years old, when he lost his fortune, and his acquaintances with it."

"Likely enough, when his acquaintances were Yankees. I wish I could get him South, for there, however poor a man may be, if he has good blood in his veins and an honest heart in his bosom, he is the equal of a prince."

"Did you invite him to come South?"

"Yes, but he declined on the score of business; then I ventured to propose to him, that he should quit his present business and study a profession. There is something about him which makes it difficult for even an old man like me to suggest to him, that there is any thing in his employment that might be supposed distasteful to a gentleman; but I am under great obligation to him, and it was worth some effort to acquire the power of serving him, so I proposed to him that as he had had a collegiate education, and was as I learned from Donald an excellent classical scholar, he should study a profession; three or four years would be enough for this, and for these years he might command my purse, and we would take his sister to our home."

"And what did he say?" asked Mrs. Montrose, as her brother paused.

"Thanked me warmly, but acknowledged that money was his first object, and said that his present employment was more lucrative than any profession could be. It is strange, but while I never knew another man who would not have seemed to me degraded by such an acknowledgment, he seemed while making it even more elevated than before above the common standard."

Perhaps one more accustomed to investigate causes than Col. Montsose was, would have accounted for what seemed so strange to him, by the fact, that where one has evidently an abundance of the pure gold, it is of little consequence to himself or others that it should not have the "GUINEA STAMP."

CHAPTER XVI.

"Oh! they wander wide who roam,
For the joys of life from home."

——————"There abides,
In his allotted home, a genuine priest,
The shepherd of his flock."

I HAVE seen nothing this summer, which I liked so well as this," exclaimed Col. Montrose, on the evening of his return to Montrose Hall, as he drew his chair once more to the hearth, beside which we first introduced him to the reader, and where now, as then, a bright fire was blazing. Alice sat opposite to him; between them were Mrs. John and Mrs. Chas. Montrose, while Isabelle had drawn her chair to table on which the supper was not yet laid, and was cutting the leaves of the last Edinburgh Review, which had just been brought in.

"I wish Donald and Charles were with us," said the Colonel, as he glanced around on all the accessories of this scene of quiet, domestic enjoyment. A sigh from the two mothers, and a smile from Alice, responded to the wish.

Steps were heard, and the next moment there appeared in the open door-way a negro about the middle height, and spare in form, whose gray head showed him to be no longer young, though his broad smile displayed teeth as white and sound as ever. His face was radiant with delight. "Cato," as he was called by Col. Montrose and the two elder ladies—"Daddy Cato," as he was hailed by Isabelle and Alice, hastened forward to seize the hands extended to him in welcome, addressing to each in turn some appropriate salutation.

"How d'ye do, Maussa, I sure I glad to see you look so well, sir, and Missis too and Miss Charles—and Miss Isabelle and Miss Alice, is grow purtier 'an ever. Well! I tank my Far'er in Heaben I see you all back again once more. I hope, sir, you is never goin so far agen."

"Not very soon, at least, Cato," said Col. Montrose with a good-humored smile.

"And how have you been, Cato?" asked Mrs. Montrose.

"I bin quite smart, ma'am, all summer. I ent had a day's sickness; but Aunt Charlotte and sister Auber is bin quite sick—dey's a settin up to day though, and dey would 'a tried to come here to-night, only I telled 'em you'd be vexed if dey come."

"That was right, Cato; tell them I will come to see them in the morning," said Mrs. John Montrose. "Are all the other people well?"

"Most on 'em is, ma'am, but sister Harriet's got a baby, and sister Judy—she lost a child, and aint been well enough to work since."

"Which of her children, Cato?"

"De boy, ma'am."

"What, that smart, bright little Ben?"

"Yes, ma'am."

After a little further conversation on the subject of health, and some messages of sympathy to poor Judy, Col. Montrose asked, "How much cotton have you got in, Cato?"

"I don't know 'xactly, sir, how much, but the cotton house full. I never see so much cotton in my life. We pick and pick, and pick, and when we done, the field look jis' as white as when we begin."

"And how is it with the rice?"

The smile vanished from Cato's face, and shaking his head sadly, he said, "Ah maussa! dat las' freshet play de mischief wid we up to Sedgefield; of it wa'n't for dat, sir, we'd a had a great crop. But you see, sir, dat 'are freshet ruin we I 'fraid, sir; 't'aint left more nor twenty bushel to de acre."

"Ah well! the cotton must make up for it, Cato," said his master consolingly.

The supper appeared, and Cato began to bow himself out, but Col. Montrose stopped him; and leaving the room for a moment, returned with a parcel, from which he displayed to the smiling eyes of Cato an overcoat, of cloth of a finer quality than that usually worn by the negroes, a muffler, and a fur cap.

"Tank you, maussa," said Cato; I 'fraid you make me proud, sir, when I get all dese on."

"Try it, Cato; let us see you put them on,"—and nothing loth, Cato attired himself in coat, hat, and muffler, and gazed with evident pleasure on the reflection of his own figure in the pier glass. At length Cato was suffered to depart, saying, however, as he went, "Some of de people is a waitin' to see you, sir, tell you done supper; sister Peggy wouldn't let 'em come before, 'cause she say your supper would be all cold 'fore dey was done talkin'."

The supper ended, all the family went out into the yard, where about fifty negroes were assembled around a fire of pitch-pine, whose intense blaze brought out into strong relief, their sable faces and rude forms, with the objects immediately surrounding them; leaving in deeper darkness all beyond the circle of its rays. The faces, the names of all were familiar. Each had a kind clasp of the hand, a word of pleasant greeting, and testimonial of remembrance—a bright bandana handkerchief, and calico dress to the women—a jacket and muffler to the men. Before these had all been distributed, Mr. Dunbar came up and was received with evident delight by both white and black. He looked on with benevolent sympathy while the gifts were allotted to each, when stopping them as they were about to disperse, after whispering a few words to Col. Montrose, he said: "We have a great deal to be thankful for to-night, my friends—have we not?"

"Oh yes, maussa! dat we has," was the response from every tongue.

"Then before we separate let us unite in grateful worship of our Heavenly Father. Let us sing the hymn beginning,

"Come Thou Fount of every blessing,
Tune my heart to sing thy praise,
Streams of mercy never ceasing,
Call for songs of endless praise."

The hymn was known to most even of the negroes, and their melodious, though untutored voices, in union with the silvery notes of Alice—Isabelle did not sing this evening—and the deeper and fuller tones of Mr. Dunbar, made not unpleasing music. When the hymn was finished, the good pastor repeated the 103d psalm, and then lifted up his voice in a prayer so simple, that it needed no interpreter even to the most ignorant; yet full of eloquence, the eloquence of feeling—and in its humility and love, its thanksgiving and praise, bearing witness that the spirit from which it proceeded was that of a true child of God.

The negroes dispersed without a word, but with kind and friendly glances; all hearts had been at once warmed and solemnized. As Mr. Dunbar was saying good-night, Alice whispered a request that she might see him in the morning.

"Can you not come to me?" he asked; "you have not forgotten the way to the parsonage."

"Oh no! I will be there directly after breakfast."

"After all, there is no place like home!" ejaculated Col. Montrose again, as he entered the house.

Isabelle's was the only face which the events of the evening had not brightened. It had been pale and sad for months, it was not less pale and sad to-night. She and Alice had their beds in the same room; ere she entered hers, Alice knelt beside it in silent prayer. Her face was hidden by her clasped hands, but below them fell a few quiet tears. Isabelle neither wept nor prayed.

The next day was one of those bright, soft November days, which make the glory of a Southern winter, with a light hoar frost upon the ground, and just enough of chill in the air to give a good excuse for kindling a cheerful fire. Alice was awakened early by the girl who came to kindle one for Isabelle and herself, and she instantly sprang up with the feeling that she had some important task to perform that day. Breakfast was always early at Montrose Hall, and immediately after it, Alice prepared for her walk to the Parsonage. As she was leaving the house, Mrs. John Montrose having inquired in what direction she intended to walk, offered to accompany her as far as the negro houses by which the path to the parsonage led. These houses were distant about a quarter of a mile from the Hall, from which they were screened by a belt of wood. They consisted of some fifty small houses, containing generally only two rooms, built on each side of a broad street or road. To most of them gardens were attached, in some of which a peach or nectarine tree was growing; and a few cabbages or turnips still remained, to furnish material for the favorite delicacy of their cultivators—pepper-pot. But nothing probably would so have attracted a stranger's eye as the poultry—fowls, ducks, and turkeys—which roamed about them, and the children of all ages, from the infant of a few weeks, to the boy or girl of twelve years old, who were at play in the road. These children were all dressed alike, the girls in a frock, the boys in a loose jacket and trousers, of gray cloth. Their feet and heads were bare, and there was an evident want of cleanliness perceptible in them at the first glance; but this did not interfere with their merriment, which was as hearty as that of young lords could have been. They evinced the same diversities of character usually found among children; some running away as Mrs. Montrose and Alice appeared in sight, others hanging back bashfully till called by them, and others coming boldly forward to speak to them.

Giving to her aunt, who was about to enter one of the houses, some parcels, containing little delicacies for the sick, which had been committed to her care, Alice proceeded on her way, crossing, a little farther on, a rustic bridge, thrown over a shallow but wide creek, and then winding on through a wood not very thickly set, where, in the undergrowth, a few fall flowers still showed themselves amid the wild myrtle, the bright-leaved holly, and the darker cassena, with their glistening red berries. Emerging from this wood, Alice found herself on a lawn, dotted here and there by a clump of oaks, at whose farther extremity appeared the Parsonage, a wooden building, a story and a half in height, with shelving roof and broad piazzas. It was approached through a court-yard, in which rose trees, six or eight feet high, which were covered with the beautiful but scentless daily rose, and the more delicate and fragrant noisette. As Alice entered this yard, a Newfoundland dog, that lay near the gate, arose, and, shaking his shaggy sides, advanced to meet her with an evident air of recognition. Her "How d'ye do, Triton," attracted the attention of a negress who was scrubbing the floor of the piazza with a piece of palmetto root, to which a long handle had been attached, keeping time by her movements to the wild music of a hymn of that peculiar style more frequently heard in Methodist congregations than elsewhere. Dropping her scrubbing brush, as she saw Alice, this woman came forward, extending the hand she had first carefully wiped upon her apron, with many a joyful exclamation of welcome.

"Well, Hagar, how do you do?" said Alice, giving her hand, as she spoke, to her old friend.

"Quite well, Miss Alice, and how you do and Miss Isabelle. I sho' I glad for see you come back; it bin so lonesome for maussa sence you bin gone."

"Is he now in the house, Hagar?"

"Yes, ma'am, you fin' 'em in de ole place—but how purty you do look, Miss Alice! Ah! I expec' some o' dem gentlemen from de Nort' will be 'long here soon, en't it, Miss Alice?"

"Why, you do not think I would have any thing to say to a Yankee—do you, Hagar?" asked Alice, with a laugh.

"Well, I don' know, Miss Alice; I don' like 'em much, dat's de trufe, but some o' dem purty smart for all."

With a smile at Hagar's commendation of those with whom she had no more acquaintance than she had obtained from an occasional visit of a pedler of clocks, or of an invalid traveller in search of a more genial clime, who had been attracted by Southern hospitality to this secluded spot, Alice left her, and, entering the house, proceeded to the room which Mr. Dunbar called his study. It was not large, and its bare floor, uncovered tables and uncushioned chairs, would have given it an air of poverty, perhaps, in the eyes of one accustomed to the luxurious arrangements by which such a room may be made attractive; but Hagar took care that the floor should be as white, and the tables as glossy "as hands could make them." Nor was cleanliness the only charm which the room presented. The old pastor was writing at a window, beside which grew an orange tree, whose yellow fruit he might have plucked without rising from his seat. The view from this window was one of that quiet beauty in which the neighborhood was rich. Seaward, the boundless expanse of ocean; landward, the green savannah, its surface sprinkled with the gay colors of autumnal flowers, and its level broken by an occasional clump of oaks. But, pleasant as this view was, it would have been surpassed in interest to a genuine lover of books by that within the room, whose walls were covered with shelves, filled with books, the selection of a scholar and the produce of a life's economy.

Mr. Dunbar sat at a table covered with books and writing materials. At the moment that Alice entered, he was deeply engaged in reading from a little book, with well-worn cover, which she recognized at once as his Greek Testament. She stood for a moment in the door-way, observing the kindly face and snow-white head bent so reverently above the holy volume, and then advanced into the room. Mr. Dunbar did not perceive her till she was close beside him, and then he did not rise to greet her, or lay aside his book, but, looking up with a pleasant smile, he said, "I wish you had studied Greek, Alice, and then you might feel the beauty of this passage, as you can never feel it from our translation, correct as it is. Listen,"—and he read a few verses in the original Greek. "Is not that beautiful?"

"It is very musical," said Alice, "but it is only to me as a pleasant song."

"I know it, my poor child; I am sorry it is so. I should have been so happy, too, to teach you Greek, and you chose instead to learn German and French. Well, there is no accounting for tastes, and I must not quarrel with a gay young girl for differing a little from a sober old man;" he held her hand as he spoke, and, drawing a chair to his side, seated her in it and asked, "Where is Isabelle? Why did you not bring her along?"

"Because I wanted you all to myself this morning."

Alice spoke playfully, and Mr. Dunbar answered in the same tone, "Does that portend a confession as it used to do in old times? You look very much as you did years ago, when you would steal in here to tell me of some task that pleasanter engagements had driven from your mind."

"But this is a task which I have got into my mind, and do not know how to accomplish without your help."

"Well, what is it? Let us hear."

Why is it that the young, ingenuous soul shrinks so from the disclosure of its first, earnest views of the relations in which it stands to God and man—to its Creator and its fellow-creatures? Is it that these views—these first, faint aspirations of the soul after a higher good, bring us into a region so remote from the common, or, at least, the apparent life of those around us, that we fear their expression may seem an assumption of an unusual sanctity, to which our conscious spirits forbid us to lay claim? or is it that this expression would seem to pledge us to a future of effort to which we fear our powers are unequal? Whatever be the cause, the effect is, we believe, universal. Alice presented no exception to the rule, and when she would now have spoken to her old friend of solemn thoughts which the remembrance of a great danger had awakened, and the new sense of responsibility which the example of Mary Grahame had impressed on her, words refused to come; she colored, and hesitated, and looked so embarrassed that Mr. Dunbar began to apprehend a more serious confidence than he had at first anticipated.

"Can the child have formed any foolish attachment?" he said to himself.

The question with which Alice at length commenced her communication did not tend to relieve his doubts.

"Did my uncle write you of our visit to Springfield, and of the Mr. and Miss Grahame whom we went there to see?"

"Yes, he wrote me of Mr. Grahame's kindness to Donald, and afterwards, of his self-possession in saving you and your mother from a burning house, and he said, I think, that he had a sister, and that you intended to visit them, but—Mr. Grahame is only a mechanic, I believe," said Mr. Dunbar, somewhat irrelevantly, as it seemed to Alice.

Her quick, earnest speech, and heightened color did not undeceive him, as she answered, "He may be a mechanic, but he is not *only* that, for he is a scholar, a gentleman, and a Christian."

"All that may be, and I dare say is, and yet your uncle—"

"My uncle admires him as much as I do."

"He may do so, and yet may be unwilling to see you connect yourself with one so far beneath you in the world's estimation."

"Connect myself! I do not understand you," cried Alice, while cheek, neck and brow grew crimson, and her heart beat with an emotion which she did not pause to analyze. Rapidly she hurried on, "I wanted to speak to you of Mr. and Miss Grahame's interest in their work-people—especially of Miss Grahame's; how she had taught many who came to her quite ignorant, to read and write, and of the Bible class with which she spent her afternoons on Sunday, and of a great many other things, which made me ashamed of my useless life. I tried at first to excuse myself, under the plea of different circumstances, and to persuade myself that I had none whom I could teach and influence as she did these people; but then I remembered the negroes, and how much I could teach them, and how ready they always were to do as I wished, and I thought if my uncle were willing—but I cannot speak to him about it."

"And you want me to speak for you," said Mr. Dunbar, with a smile, and a mind greatly relieved of anxiety.

"If you please; and I want you to tell me what to do, and how to do it. I am so ignorant, it seems so presumptuous that I should try to teach others—I mean about such things." The voice of Alice faltered, and tears rose to her eyes.

"Fear not, my dear child," said the Christian pastor, as he laid his hand affectionately on her head; "only let your own heart be right with God, and all will be right. Look away from yourself, Alice; from your own good and your own evil, your own weakness and your own strength, to Him in whom is all wisdom, and all strength, to the Blessed Saviour. Love much, Alice, and pray much; and be assured that He who has put into your heart the desire to serve him, will guide you to the fulfilment of that desire."

Alice wept, but they were happy tears, such tears as a penitent and pardoned child weeps on the breast of a loving parent; and she returned home so strengthened and elevated, that she found no difficulty in speaking to her mother of her designs.

Col. Montrose, though he thought it was a strange fancy in Alice, and one of which she would soon tire, and though he doubted very much whether the negroes would be either better or happier for being taught, readily consented to her trying the experiment. The "Prayers House," as a room was called which had been built for the devotional exercises of the negroes, and in which they were accustomed to meet for a few minutes every morning before going to work, and every evening about eight o'clock, was thoroughly cleansed, the floor sanded, benches prepared, and with a degree of nervousness which she found it impossible to subdue, she commenced her task. She had little at first to encourage her; her uncle feared she had undertaken what she could not long endure—Mrs. John Montrose talked with a smile of youthful enthusiasm—Isabelle, when she would have won her to a participation in her undertaking, begged to be excused, assuring her that she had not the slightest disposition to play the school-ma'am, and, worse than all, a visitor one day complimented her on her philanthropy. Poor Alice! many a time would she have fainted and grown weary, had her strength been in herself. From her mother and Mr. Dunbar alone, of all the world, did she find sympathy and help. Her very pupils for some time laughed at the idea that "Miss Alice wanted them to read books, like her and Miss Isabelle." To a sensitive and timid girl, all this was a species of martyrdom; and many a time did Alice retire to her room to weep in secret, and to ask herself if she must indeed continue what was so disagreeable to herself, and so unprofitable to others; but a few words from Mr. Dunbar, or, if he were not near, a single thought sent upward, never failed to bring back to her, peace, strength, and hope. And only a few weeks passed before her hope began to be fulfilled. Two or three of her brightest pupils could form letters into words; could read for themselves a text in the Bible, and the whole face of affairs was changed at once. They were pleased, and their parents delighted. One morning as she sat in the school-room listening to the "stammering tongues" which were uttering precious truths, Daddy Cato made his appearance. Alice did not see him at first, and he stood with his head uncovered and reverently bowed while the 13th verse of the 103d Psalm was read—"Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him;" then, as the voice of the reader ceased, he exclaimed, "Dat's good, Miss Alice, I lub to hear dat; lem me see how he look, Joe."

Alice held out to him the book from which the boy had been reading, containing texts of Scripture printed in very large type. Cato looked at it earnestly, then said, "Please show me, Miss Alice, which word da Far'er."

Alice pointed it out, and then said, "Why not learn to read yourself, Daddy Cato?"

"Me, Missis!" he cried, "a'nt me too old?"

"Not if you are willing to try."

"Willin'! Hi, missis! I too willin'. I willin' for try till I dead, if I only can read da' blessed book once for myself."

"Oh! you will soon learn, Daddy Cato; you see even Joe here is able to read a little. Suppose when you come from the field to your dinner every day at twelve o'clock, you call here; I will send the children away, and you and I will read together, while maum Auber is cooking your dinner."

"Far'er in Heaben bless you, missis, for say dat word! I glad tell I can't glad no more," and the tears which stood in the old man's eyes as he turned away, spoke his joy more emphatically than any words could do. And day after day might Cato have been seen entering the school-room at the appointed hour; and we think few painters could have desired a more pleasing or interesting subject for the pencil, than was given by that fair young girl, and the sable son of Africa, as they sat side by side; her face beaming with the tender pity of an angel—his, full of the simplicity, the earnestness, the docility of a little child. The same book was held on one side by a hand which nature had marked with the color of a curse, and which toil had rendered coarse and hard; and on the other, by one of lily-like fairness and delicacy. Cato did not learn easily, the old seldom do, but he was untiring in his perseverance; and when once the mystery of letters was conquered, when those strange marks acquired character in his eyes, and formed themselves into a word, the expression of a thought, the difficulty was over; and his improvement became rapid. It was perhaps two months after we first introduced him to the reader, that he sat beside Alice, and from the book we described above, read the verse already quoted. He had asked that she would not help him, but would permit him to read it for himself. He succeeded even better than Alice or he himself had hoped. As he finished it, tears rushed into his eyes, and clasping his hands together, he cried, "I read de blessed word myself, now I know he's dere. Oh Miss Alice! how I can tank my Far'er in Heaben, and how I can tank you!"

Alice was more than repaid for all her trials; aye, she would have been repaid for a hundred-fold more when she saw Cato, as often after this she saw him, bending over the Bible which Mr. Dunbar had given him, with the same expression of ecstatic joy in his face, as she now saw there. Nor was she the only one on whom this sight exercised a salutary influence. Col. Montrose became an earnest advocate for her views, when he saw the use which Cato made of her instruction. Mrs. Montrose still smiled, but the smile had changed its character,—it was approving, not deriding; and Isabelle, after a visit to the school-room, exclaimed, "I envy you, Alice."

"You need not do that, Belle, for you can join me and share my pleasure," said Alice.

"I should find no pleasure in it: there is the very thing I envy; a heart so free from all selfish interests that you can find enjoyment here."

But not only at home did Alice now find friends for her undertaking. Many who heard of it wondered that it had never occurred to them. Gentle and generous hearts which had ever felt deep interest in the well-being of the slave, hailed this dawn of intellectual advancement for him with delight; and the example of Alice was followed by the wives or daughters of most of the gentlemen planters residing within visiting distance; that is within twenty miles of Montrose Hall. From these the influence was communicated to others more distant, till it spread over several counties.

But when was a good work ever begun on our earth that the evil spirit did not find some mode of throwing obstructions in its way? Of these obstructions, the most effectual as well as the most frequent is, to send forth a spirit from the pit wearing the features of the Angel of light, under whose ministration the good work has been done, yet with those features so exaggerated and distorted, that they shall inspire dismay and aversion. Does Luther preach reform in the Christian church? Immediately fanatics in various parts of the world start up, calling for the destruction of all existing forms of thought and life. Does the mind of France at a later date strive to emancipate itself from the despotism of its Jesuitical rulers? Freedom becomes the watchword of infidelity, and under its sacred name horrors are perpetrated which shall sicken the hearts, not of living men only, but of all succeeding generations.

Thus now, when many of those in whose hands God in the movements of His providence had placed the destinies of the negro, were awakened to a deeper sense of their responsibilities to him, and were beginning to give him that access to the word of life, which would have richly repaid him for all earthly toil and privations, there arose a spirit calling itself by the name of love, but kindling by its breath hatred and revenge.

We are anticipating, however, for nearly a year passed away without interruption to the good work whose commencement we have sketched. During this time the life of our friends at Montrose Hall was varied by few external changes. Yet it stood not still. Each of them was moving with a progression—it may be perceptible only to that eye which sees in the present alike the past, of which it is the fruit, and the future of which it is the seed—towards their destined bourne. To Mr. Dunbar it seemed, that the habit of earnest thought for others, the daily submission of her own will to a principle of duty, was giving to the character of Alice a consistency and strength, which he had feared would ever be wanting, to one naturally so timid, and so sensitive. She was not self-relying, she never would be ; but she was learning to lean without fear, or doubt, upon an Almighty arm, and the repose which this gave to her heart was written in her life. Perhaps this was the more remarkable from its contrast with the fitful moods of Isabelle, who was now under the influence of depressing gloom, and now of reckless levity, though even in her gayest words there seemed a vein of bitterness.

"What is the matter, Isabelle ?" asked Mr. Dunbar one afternoon, as entering the parlor, he found her there alone, sitting near a window, her arms hanging listlessly down, and her eyes fixed like those of one in reverie.

Isabelle started with surprise at the sound of his voice, for she had not seen his approach, yet she answered quickly, and gayly, "Matter ! oh matter enough sir, for the speculation of twenty heads wiser than mine."

"And may I inquire what was the subject of speculation with you at present ?"

"Well ! I believe the last subject was the versatility of young ladies, and the fascinations not of young gentlemen, but of negro children. Here is Alice positively refusing to go with me to Savannah, and insisting upon it that she had rather stay in the country, and spend her mornings at that tiresome school."

"Perhaps Alice does not think it tiresome. She seems very happy in her present life."

"And that was just the enigma I was trying to solve."

"And to what conclusion did you come ?"

"To no positive conclusion, only to a vague suspicion that she had become a candidate for canonization."

Mr. Dunbar's countenance assumed a pitying expression as he said, "Are you happy, Isabelle ?"

For an instant her eye fell beneath the mild steadfastness of his, but only for an instant. Throwing back her head with a movement that had something of haughtiness in it, she exclaimed, "Happy! oh Mr. Dunbar! I would not be convicted of any thing so commonplace and unsentimental for the world."

Again his eye, gentle as it was, conquered hers, and as she looked down the color mounted to her cheek, with shame perhaps for her flippancy to one, who deserved her highest respect both from age, station, and character. She had not yet recovered her usually proud and free air, when a horse was heard rapidly approaching, and rising she apologized to Mr. Dunbar for leaving him, informing him at the same time, that he would find her father in the next room, and adding, as she took her hat and whip from the table beside her, "I promised to ride with Mr. Clarke, and here he is."

As Isabelle left the room Mr. Dunbar approached the window, and saw from it the young man whom she had named, standing beside a powerful bay horse from which he had just dismounted, while a groom was leading forward her own riding-horse, of a lighter and more symmetrical form, and unspotted whiteness. But Mr. Dunbar's eye rested not on the horses, but on the youth, whose tall, sinewy form showed the hardy vigor of a countryman, and whose movements had less of courtly polish than of the wild, free grace of one unaccustomed to restraint. His face, bronzed by exposure to sun and wind, and possessing no regularity of feature, was yet handsome from the bright joyous expression by which it was irradiated. He was just nineteen, being but a few months older than Isabelle herself. They had been playmates in childhood, and as their homes were within five miles of each other, and as William Clarke had been one of Mr. Dunbar's pupils, and had never left home to complete the education thus commenced, their intimacy had continued unbroken to the present time. Isabelle, though reserved almost to haughtiness in her intercourse with gentlemen in general, allowed William Clarke all the privileges of a brother, and would as soon have dreamed of his entertaining matrimonial designs in relation to his sister as to her.

Having examined the equipments of her horse, tried the girthing of the saddle, seen that the cloth lay smoothly, and that the stirrup was properly arranged, to all which he attended carefully himself, in spite of the somewhat provoking smile of the black groom who stood beside him, and his assurance, "All right, and no mistake, Mass William," Clarke turned to Isabelle, who stood on the piazza, awaiting his summons, and cried, with brotherly freedom, "Come, Bella,"—yet there was something more than brotherly admiration in his eyes, as he watched her approach. He held out a large, bony hand, but Isabelle hesitated to put her foot in it.

"Are you sure you are strong enough, Will?" she asked.

Agrippa, the groom, laughed maliciously.

"Nonsense, Bella! I could carry you for a day without wearying."

"I should not like to try it," she said.

"I should," replied Will, as he received the little foot, and, lifting her to the saddle, placed it in the stirrup. Making sure that Agrippa had moved away too far to hear him, as he put the reins in her hand, he said, "You are very beautiful in that hat, Bella."

With a gay, unembarrassed laugh, Isabelle exclaimed, "My hat is very much obliged to you, but cannot stay here any longer to receive your compliments, so give me my reins."

Receiving them, she touched her horse with her light riding-whip, and was off at a gallop, before he could mount. To rest his hand on his horse, spring into the saddle, and, by a slight touch of the spur, send him off at a rapid pace, was the work of a moment. He overtook and passed her in time to open for her the large gate in the fence that separated the grounds around Montrose Hall from the woods beyond.

"Now for a gallop!" cried Isabelle, as the gate closed behind them. And away they went. To the outward eye no happier pair could be found that day on the earth's surface than this; yet, with one, joyous as she seems, ride where she will, there rides "black care."

Mrs. John Montrose had seen her daughter mount and ride away, followed by young Clarke, and, throwing up the window at which she sat, she called to Agrippa, inquiring why he had not accompanied his young mistress.

"Miss Is'bel didn't tell me for go, ma'am, and Mass William say he no want me," was the answer.

"That is strange," said Mrs. John Montrose, drawing in her head and addressing her husband, who was within the room; "I never before knew Isabelle ride with any one but you or Donald without a groom."

"That is because you have never before known her ride with William. She cares no more for him than for Donald."

"But she ought to remember, William is no longer a boy."

"Well, what then? He is a very clever young man—a good-hearted, honest fellow, like his father before him. I should have no objection to see Isabelle settled at Fairhope as Mrs. Clarke."

"You forget that there is a younger brother and two sisters, to one of whom Fairhope may belong."

"Not if Isabelle should marry William; Clarke has told me as much."

"Well, you and Mr. Clarke are the last persons in the world I should have suspected of match-making," said Mrs. Montrose, with a smile.

It may interest the reader to take a momentary glance at the home to which Colonel Montrose evidently destined his daughter. For this purpose we will daguerreotype the picture it presented at the moment his observation was made. It was the latter part of February, and already the early spring had clothed the woods with beauty, and breathed its odors on the air. Fairhope had not the advantage possessed by Montrose Hall of a sea-view. The only water visible from it was a narrow stream, winding for miles a devious course through low, marshy ground. But, to compensate for this, the house and its immediate surroundings exhibited a scene of rural enjoyment and beauty rarely surpassed. At the moment we present it to the reader, Mrs. Clarke was sitting on the upper step of the stairs leading from the piazza in the rear of the house to the yard beneath. Fat and forty she was, but fair we can hardly call her. She was evidently one who had never denied herself the enjoyment of the bright sun, or the free air, from any care for her complexion, which, however, could never have been a blonde, as appeared from the soft, silky black hair, escaping in a careless ringlet here and there from an embroidered muslin cap, whose fashion was none of the latest, but which might have been redeemed from utter condemnation by the richness of its lace and the beauty of its lilac ribbons. But no outward adornment was necessary to recommend a face so full of kindness and unpretending goodness as that of Mrs. Clarke, as she sits there, her skilful fingers plying the needle,—not in some embroidery, or other graceful fancy work, by which fine ladies manage sometimes to persuade themselves that they are patterns of industry,—but in a shirt made all of the finest linen,—Mr. Clarke would wear nothing else—in which every stitch had its rule, and every seam its measure. A little girl, ten years old, perhaps, was seated at her side, with a lap full of the fragrant yellow jessamine, the flowers of which she was stringing on a thread. In the yard below was a promiscuous assemblage of turkeys, fowls, ducks and geese, whose voices, discordant as they were, made music not unacceptable to a good housewife, to whom they gave promise of future dinners. In the centre of this noisy crowd stood a slender, well-made black girl, who was throwing corn amongst them from a basket on her arm.

"Throw some this way, Myra, to these chickens," cried Mrs. Clarke, "that old gander takes all you throw there."

"Yes, ma'am," said Myra, with a merry laugh, as she threw a handful of the grain over toward the house, "he jis' like old Mr. Dibbin, he eat up every thing come in his way. Get away, old Dibbin!" and she pushed the gander aside.

"You saucy jade, do you mean to call Mr. Dibbin a goose?"

Myra looked to the piazza, and seeing a gentleman of fifty or thereabouts standing near Mrs. Clarke, from whom the question had proceeded, she dropped her head and slunk away, as if ashamed, though an arch smile still played about her lips. Mrs. Clarke laughed heartily as she watched her going, then looking up at her husband, she said, "Mr. Dibbin is no favorite with Myra. I suspect she thinks he was at the bottom of his Tom's giving her up last winter, when we all thought he was going to marry her, and marrying one of his own women instead."

"Well, if he was, it was a very wise thing in him, and a great deal better for Tom and for Myra, too. Tom will be on the same place with his wife now, and Myra will marry John, at Montrose Hall."

"Then she will not be with her husband, father, and I don't see how she will be any better off than with Tom," said the little girl, evidently inclining to the interests of the first love. Mr. Clarke did not answer her, but he looked at his wife, and they exchanged smiles which seemed to say that they had reasons, unknown to their daughter, for thinking Montrose Hall not very distant from Fairhope.

"Father, what are you doing with your gun?" questioned Jane Clarke, as she at this moment perceived that her father held a double-barrelled gun in his hand, and shrank away from the formidable weapon.

"Nothing, now," he said, as he smilingly removed it from her by taking it in his other hand; "but I have been cleaning it, and to-morrow I hope to kill, at least, one buck with it."

"Will the gentlemen who hunt with you come here to breakfast, father?"

"Yes, my daughter."

"Oh! I am so sorry; those howling dogs will wake us up before daylight."

"Those howling dogs! Wait till you find yourself in the woods of a spring morning, before the sun is up, following a pack of hounds in full cry, Miss Jane, before you say you have heard music."

"I had rather hear it in the woods than when I am in bed," said Jane, and most persons, we think, would have been of her opinion who should have been at Fairhope the next morning.

At early dawn, Mr. Clarke was in the piazza, loading the guns to be used by his son William and himself—great Nimrods both,—giving orders to their grooms respecting their horses, and occasionally speaking to a colored woman, whom he called Elsie, to hurry her with the arrangements she was making for breakfast. Four gentlemen, the companions of the day's intended hunt, soon arrived, all well mounted, and wearing a shot-pouch and powder-horn, slung over one shoulder, and a small blowing horn, highly polished, and tipped with silver, over the other. Breakfast was the first business, and this was given to the gentlemen by Elsie, no ladies making their appearance at the meal. The conversation was on the day's hunt.

"Did you send Tom to drive the deer?" asked Mr. Clarke of our friend William.

"No, father. Tom's child was so sick that he did not like to go so far away, and I sent Sam."

"Sent Sam? What does he know about driving deer? I am afraid our hunt will be spoiled. If you had told me about it last night, I would have sent over to Col. Montrose for his John."

"Why is not the Colonel with us?" asked a gentleman.

"Well, I don't know," answered Mr. Clarke; "but it seems to me he is not half the man he used to be before he went to the North last summer. I remember when there couldn't be a hunt any where without the Colonel; but when I talked to him about it yesterday, he said he didn't know about coming, it would depend on how he felt to-day."

"I have heard it said that Donald was a pretty wild boy. I *expect* he must have spent *a heap* of money at West Point," said another of the Colonel's acquaintances.

"Ah, well! boys will be boys, and Montrose can pay all his son spends easy enough, I *expect!*" said Mr. Clarke.

"Yes, I dare say," rejoined another guest; "is his daughter as handsome as ever?"

"William thinks so," answered Mr. Clarke, following, with a smiling eye, the retreating figure of his son, who had made a rapid exit at the introduction of Isabelle into the conversation.

"Ah! sits the wind in that quarter?" exclaimed the questioner, with a laugh; "I thought the pretty niece was William's attraction to Montrose Hall!"

"Alice? Oh! she is too grave for Will. If Donald has not secured her, she will suit my sober Allan better."

"Where is Allan? Does he not hunt with us to-day?"

"Allan hunt! If he does it won't be with me; I lost the finest buck of the season the last time he went with me, through his carelessness. I had given him the very best stand, about a quarter of a mile away from mine; well you see, Tom roused up a noble fellow over in the Mount Hope drive, and he come bounding out into the road, about fifty yards ahead of me; I could have knocked him over as easy as looked at him; I had my rifle up twice to shoot, but he was going right towards Allan, and I thought it would give the boy so much pleasure to bring down such a buck, that I lowered the gun, and mounting my horse, followed after him. Well, every moment I expected to hear the gun, and when I did not hear it, I began to think the deer must have taken to the woods again; but no—there was his track all the way along the road till I came upon Allan, and what do you think he was doing?"

Mr. Clarke paused, and his listener looked all curiosity.

"He was lying down under a tree, reading some nonsensical book—"

"No!" exclaimed the listener, with an emphasis expressive of the utmost incredulity.

"Indeed he was; and his gun leaning against another tree yards off. And when I asked him which way the deer had gone, if you'll believe me, he had never seen it; did not even know that such a thing had been there. I vowed then he should never hunt with me again—but there goes William."

The last observation was induced by hearing a few notes of a horn, which, however unintelligible their language might have been to human ears unskilled in the science of woodcraft, seemed to be perfectly understood by the hounds. These immediately sent forth a responsive howl, as their long, deep-toned bark might well be termed; and gathered around the young huntsman, as if impatient to begin the work of the day. The call brought forth Mr. Clarke and his companions. They were quickly mounted and set forth—six gallant-looking men, with forms developed into vigorous symmetry by country labors, and country sports, and faces whose frank and careless glee and *sans souciant* good nature we should vainly strive to match, amid the crowded thousands of a busy city. Their dogs followed, their long ears almost touching the ground to which they bent their heads in running; their deep prolonged bark hushed as soon as they were in motion, to be opened only when they should be put on the deer's track.

Pity it is, doubtless, that such tireless energy, spirit so adventurous, should have no nobler aim than victory over the life of a timid deer. There is something too in the manner in which the poor stag is chased from covert to covert, through seemingly impassable thickets, for a compass of twenty miles or more, and in the delight with which he is at last brought to bay, and shot down in his helpless terror, which savors too strongly of cruelty to please us in our moments of reflection. But this is a point from which no genuine sportsman could be brought to view a hunt. The exhilaration of pursuit, without regard to the object; the rapid, fearless ride "over brake and through brier;" the competition with others as ardent in the pursuit as they; the eager cry of their dogs, the inspiriting music of the horn—these make up the idea which the word "hunt" presents to sportsmen. All, we think, can see the attractiveness of such an idea; and few there are who will not consider it, with all its disadvantages, as far less injurious to the formation of a true, manly nature, than those excitements which the city presents to the youthful pleasure-seeker; or than those quieter and more recondite enjoyments through which the fashionable dandy lounges away his existence. Hunting fills a large part of the life of a Southern planter on the sea-coast, where the deer are still to be found in plenty. Along this sea-coast, there are a number of islands whose fertile soil has been but partially, if at all cultivated. Here over the green savannahs or amid the leafy thickets of live-oak, the deer roam as fearlessly as if they had never heard the sound of a rifle or the bark of a hound; yet several times in the course of a summer, these islands are visited by parties of sportsmen on hunting expeditions, called "maroons"—a name derived, we believe, from the buccaneers who formerly frequented these islands. Whatever was its original signification, this word is used now to denote a mode of living in which only absolute necessaries are provided; a tent for shelter, a mattress on the ground, cooking utensils, plates, dishes and drinking cups, their only furniture—venison and fish their principal food.

It is early in September; no autumnal coolness has yet begun to temper the heats of summer. For a week they have wanted at Montrose Hall the restorative of cooling sea-breezes. The wind from the land has blown hot and parching through the long brilliant day, and died away in the evening, to leave the night in its stillness and closeness more intolerable than the day. Donald is at home, and Capt. Wharton with him. It was an unexpected visit—Capt. Wharton had been ill. Reckless exposure to an unaccustomed climate, in his devotion to his duties, had brought on lingering and dangerous disease. Its worst aspect had been removed, but he remained debilitated and under the influence of a low nervous fever, which threatened to prostrate still lower both his mental and physical system. The army-surgeon who attended him, having exhausted all other prescriptions, ordered change of air. Capt. Wharton obeyed the order, and Donald, full of anxiety for his friend, obtained a short leave of absence, that he might accompany him. Donald had urged, and Wharton, too weak to resist himself or others, had consented to take a route to Virginia, which would bring them to Savannah on their way, and to stay for a few days at Montrose Hall. The voyage from Tampa Bay had been of service to the invalid, and already when he reached Savannah he was strong enough to make some effort to induce Donald to visit Montrose Hall without him, and afterwards to join him in Virginia, whither he would proceed by slow journeys. But Donald would not consent to leave him, and as he had informed his friends at home of their intended visit, Capt. Wharton was not willing to disappoint them. And thus, in the late evening of one of those warm September days we have endeavored to describe, they found themselves once more approaching the Hall. Donald bent forward in the open carriage, and drew in long draughts of the home air; while Wharton leaned back faint with an agitation, which, till sickness gave him a lesson in human weakness, he would have sternly rebuked as unmanly. Suddenly Donald too sank back exclaiming, "It would kill me to see Montrose Hall in the possession of another."

Capt. Wharton did not answer this ejaculation; indeed, he seemed at the time scarcely to hear it, though some months later it recurred to him painfully in connection with circumstances then first known.

The travellers were welcomed joyfully by Col. and Mrs. Montrose, and Mr. Dunbar, who had not seen Donald since he left home for West Point, and who retained a very pleasant recollection of Capt. Wharton's first visit to the Hall. Alice had also remained to welcome them, by her uncle's desire, but Isabelle with unusual obstinacy persisted in retiring very early to her room; declaring that it was quite too warm to submit to the constraint of sitting up for company.

"Do you call Donald company?" asked Mr. Dunbar.

"Oh, Donald can come up to my room and see me; he is a great admirer of a demi-toilette."

"And Capt. Wharton—" suggested her mother.

"Must excuse me for this evening; you can make any apology you please for me. I shall see him to-morrow though not very early; for I am going to ride very early with William Clarke, and I may breakfast at Fairhope."

"If you do you will greatly displease me," said Col. Montrose. "It is Donald's first visit for years, and it may be years before he comes again; pray let him not feel that he is received with coldness in his home. Take your ride in the morning if you will, but be here at breakfast; perhaps Clarke will come with you."

Isabelle had lit her candle, and was approaching her father to receive the good-night kiss, without which she had never slept from her babyhood, when he spoke thus. His first words had arrested her steps, and as he concluded, she turned away without speaking, and with an angry flush upon her cheek, proceeded very deliberately from the parlor, and up-stairs to her own room. There, extinguishing her candle, she threw open the shutter of a window, and seated herself where she could look out upon the quiet night scene. All without was repose, all within was agitation. How little we know of a human soul! Like some long quiet volcano, on whose sides flowering shrubs and tall trees have grown, and men have built their houses, and dream not of the fires smouldering beneath them, till some cause unseen, unguessed at by them, kindle those fires into flames, and the boiling lava bursts forth, carrying desolation in its track; so, be sure, beneath the smiling countenance and the gentle voice, and the hand whose soft pressure speaks such truth and tenderness, there lie hidden fires, which, should they be awakened, would leave but the ashes of those joys in which now thy spirit so securely dwells. Some there are, whom Divine Love hath so guarded with its heavenly might, that those fires have slept undisturbed, unknown, even to themselves. Let such be humble in their gratitude, remembering who maketh them to differ. Others, less blessed than these, have felt the kindling of the flame, the boiling of the lava within, but have had power given them to press it down, to give it no outlet, and to make it instead of a desolating current, a vivifying principle, a source of strength, giving new beauty and a loftier serenity to the life which it underlies. Let these not boast thereof; for "not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit," saith the Living God, hath the victory been attained. With others, the volcano fires never sleep. Scarce has a flower reared its head in the scorched and blackened soil of their lives, ere the fire bursts forth and it is consumed. Be pitiful to these, oh man!—Be merciful, oh God!

And now the lava current was boiling up in Isabelle's soul. Often has it been thus before, and ignorant where her strength lies, deaf to the voice which cries to her from her own inmost soul, as well as from the world around, "God is our helper," she has met it in her own strength, and combating fire with fire, has conquered; pride ruling over passion—How shall it be now?

Long she sat with eyes fixed on the river, whose current broken by an embankment of stones, originally intended as a landing-place, but long since separated by the advancing waves from the shore, sent its rippling sounds to her but half-conscious ears, while thoughts like these passed through her mind.

"Are my own family leagued with Captain Wharton to humiliate me, and embitter my existence, that I am not permitted even to avoid him? What have I done that my life should be thus poisoned at its very source? Fool! fool! you believed in man—you trusted to his honor—to his truth—you suffered him to see——Oh that my heart would break! that now, even now he might hear Isabelle is dead! What is it to him that my eyes are dimmed, and my cheek pale, and my heart bitter. These are but so many proofs of his power. He may triumph in them without fear of reproach, since my brother brings him here, and my father forces me to do him reverence as an honored guest. But was it not all my own folly? Was he to blame? After all he may have meant nothing, he may have suspected nothing; and if I can only preserve my self-possession for these few days—he will not stay long—I may retain his respect at least. William Clarke will be an invaluable auxiliary. Surely it is time they should be here."

As this last thought passed through her mind, she turned to look towards the long avenue leading from the road to the house. By some suddenly awakened association—awakened, she herself could not say how—her eyes rested a moment after on a clump of trees, at some distance from the avenue, and farther from the river, amid whose sombre darkness there was here and there a gleam of white to be discerned. This was the family burying-ground. She had often looked at it before, and as none she had known and loved were there, it had excited no strong emotion; nothing but that decent gravity with which we regard the last resting place of all who have worn the form of man. But now the thought that she must one day lie there, arose as she gazed, and though in her impatience at the first evil of her life, she had just wished for death, this thought chilled her, yet she could not banish it. Death and life—they had never seemed to her so mysteriously blended; the Hall here, the grave-yard there, each a dwelling for the same family; *there* were two generations of Montroses, to the next belonged her father; she remembered how years had changed him, how his hair had grown whiter, his temples more bare, his strong frame more bent than it was in her childhood. Were these steps toward that last home? Her heart felt a painful thrill at the question, all other griefs seemed unreal when brought into comparison with this; tears rushed to her eyes, and yielding to her impetuous nature she sprang from her seat, opened her door, and running down stairs, entered again the piazza where she had left her father, advanced to him, and passing her arm around his neck as he sat, said in a voice unusually low and gentle, "Father, I have come to say good-night."

"Good-night, my darling; I am glad you have come back, I missed my good night kiss," said the father, as, having kissed her, he laid his hand softly upon the shining tresses of her dark hair.

Isabelle's heart swelled within her, and there were *tears in her voice* as she said, "Father, would you rather I should stay here to see Donald to-night?"

"No, darling, you are flushed with this heat; I will send Donald to you as soon as we can spare him here, and I will apologize myself to Captain Wharton for you; there's another kiss for you; good-night."

And Isabelle went with a happier heart, and gentler thoughts, back to her room. That casual glance at the grave-yard, and its associated train of thought, had done its work well. What prompted it? This was a question Isabelle did not ask, or its answer might have caused her to bend her knees in humble gratitude to Him who is the source of all good. Isabelle had not yet learned to look above the earth for the spring of her actions.

The sun was just showing its red disk above the eastern horizon the next morning, when Isabelle set out for her ride with William Clarke. The air was already warm, but the dew with which every leaf and flower was gemmed, imparted to it a refreshing moisture, while the light breeze which fanned the cheeks of the riders bore on its wings the mingled odors of the woods. A ride seldom failed to exhilarate Isabelle, but this morning she continued languid and *distrait.* Her listlessness gradually sobered the high spirits of her companion, and they rode for many miles in almost unbroken silence. They were within a mile of Montrose Hall on their return, when Isabelle turning with a playful air to her companion exclaimed, "What has become of your spirits this morning?"

"Gone in chase of yours," he answered in the same tone.

"I fear they will not catch them; mine have evaporated in this heat, and want only a cool breeze to waft them back."

"I hoped they had returned in company with Donald. By the by, is his friend, the gallant Captain, as irresistible as ever?"

"Irresistible! to whom?" asked Isabelle, while her cheeks flushed, and her glance fell before the questioning eyes directed to her.

"To young ladies' hearts of course, that is the only object of attack to our military men now-a-days. Have you forgotten with what a *furore* of admiration he inspired Alice and yourself on his first visit?"

"No more than I have forgotten your devotion to mamma's cousin, Miss Granby, when she visited us a year or two before Captain Wharton's advent."

William Clarke's merry laugh rang through the woods as he answered, "Dear Miss Granby! what a fine specimen she was of a female grenadier, and how I did adore her."

"I will ask mamma to invite her again in the winter for your sake, for you know, '*on revient toujours à ses premiers amours.*'"

"That will be good news for Captain Wharton; for me, Miss Granby was not my *premier amour*."

"What a precocious young gentleman you must have been!"

"Rather say, Isabelle, what a constant one I am!"

The words were light, but there was a color on the cheek, a faltering in the tones, a light in the eye of the speaker which made Isabelle quicken her pace, exclaiming, "Now for a race; if you win you shall have the whitest curd, and the richest cream in maum Peggy's dairy."

"And if I lose?"

"If you lose, you shall acknowledge yourself my prisoner for to-day."

"Only for to-day?—What afterwards?"

"Oh, afterwards I will send you to Miss Granby."

The race was won by Isabelle of course, but before she could dismount, Clarke was by her side to lift her off. While Agrippa led their horses away, they entered the house together, and proceeded to the breakfast-room, from whose windows their arrival had already been seen. Her ride had called a bright color into Isabelle's cheeks, now too often pale, and with her becoming little riding cap, and closely fitting habit, she looked unusually well—so thought William Clarke, and so thought Capt. Wharton. The latter gentleman rose at her entrance, and advanced a step towards her, with a heightened color and somewhat less than his usual calm self-possession. Isabelle did not meet the advance, but, courtesying where she stood, she civilly expressed her pleasure in seeing him, and her regret for his illness, and turned to present her companion, who was still exchanging cordial greetings with Donald. As Isabelle was leaving the room, to exchange her habit for a cooler dress, she said to Col. Montrose, "Mr. Clarke is my prisoner for to-day, papa; I leave him in your custody."

"I will take good care of him," said Col. Montrose good-naturedly.

"I fancy he may be trusted to take care of himself, papa," Isabelle gayly rejoined, "only see that he does not escape."

There was something in the words, and more in the manner, which caused the hearts of two who heard them to throb with powerful emotion—the one of pleasure, the other of pain.

"Why, Alice! Where are you going, through this sun?" asked Donald Montrose, about an hour later, as he saw Alice —whose every movement he had watched since his arrival, with the hope of securing a private interview—stealing away through the back-door.

Coloring, as if detected in some guilty act, Alice answered, "Hush, Donald! Do not say any thing about it—I am only going to the negro houses."

"Indeed, I shall say a great deal about it, and the first thing I shall say is, that you must not go. If any one of the people is sick, can you not send a servant to see after them, instead of taking this hot walk yourself?"

"But no one is ill, and a servant cannot do what I am going for. I will be back in an hour."

"Well, according to the Scotch proverb, 'a wilful woman maun ha'e her way,' and I suppose you must have yours; but you will not refuse to let me accompany you."

Had Alice been a woman of the world, she would have foreseen this; but Alice was only a simple girl, who, so far from knowing any thing of the world, was ignorant of what lay much nearer to her, her own heart. The reader may remember that in a conversation with her brother in the previous summer, just before his sailing, she had spoken, or at least permitted him to speak, of her engagement with Donald as *un fait accompli.* She had never even in her own mind formally relinquished this view of it; she had only put away all thought of it as much as possible, as of a thing that was to be, but of which she need not think at present. Perhaps she was able to do this the more readily, by some scarce conscious conclusions on the uncertainty of all future events, especially when these depended on the constancy of young gentlemen exposed to all those fascinations which an epaulette rarely fails to develope. For the strength of the resistance which her heart now made to Donald's claim, for the pang with which she had heard of his expected arrival, for the faint sickness which overpowered her as the moment she had accustomed herself to regard as at an almost interminable distance seemed to have become THE PRESENT, for this she was wholly unprepared.

"Alice! you are ill now," cried Donald, as he saw her turn very pale; "lean on me, dear Alice." But she was already resting against one of the pillars of the piazza on which they stood; and she said gently, with the shadow of a smile on her pale lips, "It will pass soon; it must be the heat; and I suppose I had better take your advice, and give up my walk this morning."

"That is my good, gentle Alice, who cannot be a wilful woman, even though she should try for it. Now come into the study, we shall have that all to ourselves, and you shall rest on the sofa while I tell you a long story about myself. But you are faint again, Alice, are you really ill?"

"Oh no: this will soon pass over, but I believe you must let me go to my room for a while."

Gently as she spoke, Donald was irritated; a frown gathered on his brow as he exclaimed, "Are you determined not to hear me, Alice?"

"Do not be angry with me, Donald," she said, deprecatingly. "I will be better by-and-by, and then I will do—I mean I will try to do all you wish."

Guarded as was this promise, she almost repented the next moment having said so much, when she caught the expression of joyful triumph flashing from Donald's eyes, and heard the impassioned thanks he uttered, as he pressed her hands in his, and raised first one and then the other to his lips. At length her looks, rather than her words, prevailed on him to suffer her to leave him, and slowly ascending the stairs, she entered her room, and throwing herself upon the bed, hid her face in the pillows.

Poor Alice! She was as little formed to contend with the selfish passions of others as a reed to resist the storms that lay it prostrate. Strength she had, but it was the strength of a woman—strength to endure and to sacrifice—not to contend and conquer. Had the happiness of another been in her keeping, Alice would have had strength to resist all that could touch it, but to prefer her own happiness to that of Donald and her uncle—this she could not do. How often had she prayed for his life during his illness at Newport, with the firm resolve to do all that in her lay to make that life happy, should her prayer be granted! Had she not, indeed, in some manner, pledged herself to his father, and to her own mother and brother to do this? Nay, was there not a time when she believed herself becoming reconciled to this anticipation, when she could even regard it with a certain degree of satisfaction, as the source of happiness to many whom she loved? Why was it, then, that her whole soul now rose up in protest against it?

"Things look so differently, near, and at a distance," she murmured; yet, even as she did, she felt that this was not all the truth.

We will not strive, however, to look beneath the veil with which she has covered her heart, even from herself. We will endeavor to believe her as she whispers to herself, that her nature is too passionless to respond to an affection ardent as Donald's, and we are ready to acknowledge with her, that there is enough of sorrow to a generous heart, in finding itself thus compelled ever to receive what it can never hope to return. It is sufficient for our purpose that we give the result of her self-communings, which was the following note to Donald, written after many attempts to express herself in a manner which should appear at once kind to him and true to herself.

"I cannot rest, dear Donald, under the memory of your reproachful looks; and then, my uncle—can I bear to see regret in his eyes, and to think that I am the cause? What would I not do to make you both happy! But, Donald, you must have patience with me—you must remember it is not an easy thing to unlearn the lessons of many years, almost of my whole life, which had taught me to love you exactly as I loved Charles. Perhaps you may wish to remind me, that it is more than a year since I gave you some reason to believe that I would endeavor to regard you as you wished. This is true; but, as you did not speak on the subject when we next met, I hoped you had gone back to the good old brotherly affection, and forgotten all later wishes. Since this is not so, only give me time, and I will endeavor to become all you desire. We are very young, Donald; it seems but yesterday that we were children: in two years I shall be but nineteen, and you but twenty-four; we shall better understand ourselves then, and if you still preserve your present feelings, and speak to me of them then, I will endeavor to give you such an answer as your generous affection deserves.

"I shall show this note to my mother, who will hand it to you, if she approve of its contents. You can tell my uncle and aunt, and Isabelle, what I have proposed. Then, if you please, dear Donald, we will not speak on this subject till the two years are at an end. Till then, think of me kindly.
ALICE.

"P. S.—Should your own feelings change in these two years—should you see another whom you could love better than your cousin Alice, hesitate not, dear Donald, to tell me. As your happiness will be the chief object of my life, I should be miserable indeed to find myself a barrier to it."

This note was enclosed by Alice in one to her mother, requesting her to read it, and to hand it to Donald, if she did not think it wrong in her to send it. To Mrs. Charles Montrose it seemed a very discreet, sensible letter—far more discreet and sensible, she was ready to acknowledge, than she could have written to the father of Alice. Donald was less sensible of its merits. He said, and not unjustly, that it was cold as ice. It first excited his anger, and then his sorrow—sorrow deeper for the hopes which his father had kindled, and which Alice had herself fed in their first interviews after his illness—interviews occurring at Newport, while he was stiil too feeble to leave the house, and while the memory of his late danger and the impress he still bore of suffering, called forth all the tenderness of his friends, and especially of Alice, who, remembering his threats, had suffered from bitter, though most undeserved, self-reproach, during his illness. He would have sought an immediate interview with her, on reading her note, but, on applying to her mother for this purpose, he learned that she was still too much indisposed to rise. He must speak to some one, and, as his father had already been in his confidence on this subject, he sought him, and found him writing a letter in the room called the study.

"Read that, sir, and tell me what I shall do," Donald exclaimed, flinging down the letter of Alice on the table, with manifest discomposure.

"What you shall do?" said Col. Montrose, after reading it. "Why, do as Alice has told you, to be sure. I think her proposal the very wisest possible for both of you. I had no idea the child had so much prudence."

"I would be better pleased with less prudence and more heart," subjoined Donald, in a sulky tone.

"More heart!" and Col. Montrose colored with indignation. "Where will you find another with half so much?

From the time she laid her head against my bosom, sobbing at the memory of her father, to the present moment, in every action of her life, the heart has been her manifest dictator."

"Then it is very evident that her heart is not in my interest."

"What would you have given a year ago, Donald, to know that, in three years, Alice would assuredly be yours?"

"Every thing I possessed, or hoped to possess," he replied, with emphasis.

"And now you have that assurance; be satisfied."

"Even Alice, without a heart, cannot satisfy me. Only see in what a cold, business-like style that letter is written."

"Did you expect Alice, in opening a correspondence with you, to make love-speeches?"

"No; but I would rather have seen that there was sufficient love in her heart to make her afraid to open a correspondence with me. The consciousness of love makes a woman timid."

"And Alice is too bold—is she? I will advise her to be more reserved."

"Heaven knows you need not, when she positively forbids me to speak to her at all on the subject of my love."

"Donald, you are as unreasonable as—as a lover. I have no doubt you have frightened the child by your impetuosity, and, fearing that with her own heart on your side, she will never be able to withstand you, if she hears you plead, she writes to propose to you what the age of both makes a most wise arrangement. Could you expect that in such a letter she would be lavish of professions of attachment?"

"Certainly not, but she carefully avoids even her usual expressions of kindness."

"Would you rather continue her brother, Donald, to whom she might give pet names and even caresses without apprehension?"

"No—"

"Then be satisfied with your new character."

"But surely I may be permitted to speak to Alice—to thank her for her promise—to put our intercourse for these two years on a less icy basis than she has done here. Why, she does not even give me permission to answer her letter."

"Oh! that I think you may venture to do without formal permission. Only try to be a little reasonable in your demands on Alice, and calm your impetuosity sufficiently not to frighten her when you find an occasion to plead your cause, and the course of your true love is likely, I think, to run smooth enough, in spite of Shakspeare."

Alice did not appear at dinner. Her mother said she seemed to be asleep, and, as she had been suffering from headache, she would not disturb her. In the afternoon she received the following note from Donald.

"Let me see you, Alice—my Alice—if only for a few minutes, this evening, if it be possible without suffering to you. This letter is so cold—but I will not complain. Complain, did I say? I want all my words—all my life to thank—to bless you, Alice. In this one thing only must I disobey you; I must speak of my obligations to you—two years of silence would kill me. But do not fear me; I will curb my impetuous nature, I will be gentle as yourself, and I will ask nothing of you but to hear me, and sometimes to let me hear your promise from your own lips. For this evening, my Alice, I only ask to see you. You will not surely deny so small a favor to

Yours, with devoted affection,
DONALD MONTROSE."

Alice sat long with this note in her hand, gazing upon its lines through the mist of "unshed tears" Then she rose, laid it aside, and prepared to go down-stairs, dressing with even more than her usual simplicity. As she entered the piazza, on which all the family was collected, just before the tea-hour, her spotless muslin dress flowing in soft, graceful folds about her round, yet slender form; the loose sleeve edged with a narrow lace, falling not far below the elbow, showing the waxen fairness and smoothness of the arm just where it tapered to the small wrist and delicately-moulded hand; the white throat rising gracefully from the lace edging which finished her dress at the neck, the rich ringlets of her glossy brown hair drawn back from the beautifully-rounded cheek, and fastened in the comb which confined her hair at the back of her head, the pink of those cheeks a shade paler than usual, and the soft brown eyes just meeting for a moment the welcoming glances of her friends, and then veiling themselves behind the curtain of their long, dark lashes; an artist could have asked no fairer personification of his ideal of a youthful *réligieuse*, in all her vestal purity, unsullied by earthly passion, turning from "the pomps and vanities of this wicked world," and consecrating herself to the service of Heaven. Donald placed a chair for her next his own, and, far from avoiding him, as she had done hitherto since his arrival, she accepted it, and met every attention he proffered to her in a manner which more than fulfilled his hopes. It is true, she was very grave, but it was a gravity so gentle that he would scarcely have been willing to exchange it for a gayer mood. It is strange that, while not only Donald and his family, but even her own mother, saw in Alice nothing to regret—nothing that militated against their wishes, Mr. Dunbar—perhaps because he had no wish so strong as for her happiness—was painfully impressed by her appearance and manner this evening. He often referred to it in after years, saying that it seemed as if she had passed in a few hours from the impulsive life of the child into that of the thoughtful, earnest woman, prepared to bear with sweet submissiveness sorrows which she knew were unavoidable. Nor was this a passing mood with Alice; it continued unchanged during the remainder of Donald's visit, leaving him, at the moment of parting, nothing of which to complain, except that she would not shorten the interval of two years between the present time and that at which he would be privileged to claim the fulfilment of her promise. In the mean time, she readily consented to correspond with him.

Capt. Wharton made but slow advances towards health while at Montrose Hall. His nights were restless, and languor and feebleness confined him for most of the day to his own apartment. When he was able to appear among his friends, they all vied in efforts to amuse and interest him, except Isabelle; who always appeared at such times particularly absorbed with William Clarke if he was present, or, if he was absent, with her embroidery or a book.

Thus the week wore away, which had been allotted to the visit of the young officers; the morning of the last day had arrived, and they were at breakfast, when the boy who had been sent to the nearest post town for letters arrived. Every face except Capt. Wharton's and Isabelle's brightened with expectation. Some were doomed to disappointment. "No letter from Charles!" cried Mrs. Charles Montrose; and Alice, "He was never before away so long without our hearing from him."

Donald received a letter which had been forwarded from Tampa Bay, but it apparently brought him little pleasure. He glanced at the address with surprise, opened it hastily, read it with a frowning brow, and having refolded it and thrust it into his pocket, sat for some minutes in gloomy silence; and then pushing his chair from the table, was leaving his breakfast untasted; when his father laid his hand upon his shoulder and pressing him back into his seat, said in a low tone, "You have bad news—is it of Charles?"

"Of Charles!" repeated Donald with surprise. "No, sir, what would make you think so?"

"Hush! I will tell you after breakfast. Here, John, give Mr. Donald and me another cup of coffee; ours has grown cold while we have been talking politics. My dear sister, you must remember it is a long voyage to the Pacific, and there is no regular post on the high seas."

Mrs. Charles tried to smile, but tears came instead; and after a moment's struggle to repress them, she rose and left the room, followed by Alice, who paused for a moment at her uncle's side, to place her hand in his and say, "Uncle, you are not uneasy about Charles?"

"I am much more uneasy about you and your mother;" then as Alice turned away with a brightened face, waiting only for her to get beyond the reach of his voice, he added, "That is true, for if poor Charles is gone, it has been by one short sudden pang, and their hearts may be years in breaking."

"But what reason have you to fear for Charles?" asked Donald.

"Read this," said Col. Montrose, as he placed in his hand a newspaper, now three weeks old, and pointed to the following paragraph under the head of naval news.

"Serious fears are entertained for the safety af the brig Enterprise, which sailed from Boston about a year ago, bound for the Pacific. She was to have stopped at Rio on her outward passage, but she has not been heard of at that port, as we learn from vessels just arrived."

"How long have you had this?" asked Donald.

"More than a fortnight, and it has never left my pocket before. I wrote the very day I received it to Washington, inquiring if any more certain intelligence had been received at the Department, and there is my answer. You see they have heard nothing; but hush!—here comes Isabelle; she loved Charles too well to conceal her anxiety from her aunt and Alice, if she should hear any thing of our fears."

As Isabelle entered from her accustomed morning ride, each tried to greet her cheerfully, yet there was a shadow on their brows which her quick eye perceived. She would have questioned her father or brother, but they rose from table and left the room together; she glanced at Capt. Wharton, and met, for a single instant, a look so full of compassionate tenderness, that she turned away with a heightened color, and a mind forgetful of every other cause of discomposure.

"I want to speak to you, Donald," said Col. Montrose as he left the breakfasting-room, and proceeded to his study, followed by Donald.

The father and son entered, and seated themselves over against each other. Both were grave.

"Donald," said the Colonel—then paused a moment—then resumed—"My son!"

Donald looked up; his father's eyes were fixed upon an open window, Donald's followed the same direction, and rested upon the family burial-place. His heart swelled.

"What is it, father?" he asked.

"Donald, you are going away to-day, and there are some things which I ought to say to you before we part; some things connected with business."

"But, father, I shall see you again on my way back to Tampa Bay; will not that be time enough?"

"Perhaps not, Donald, at any rate it will do no harm to say it now; it may do much to leave it unsaid. Much of what I am going to say to you, will make part of the will which I shall make Symonds draw up for me, as soon as he returns from the up-country."

"Then why trouble yourself to speak of it to me, father?"

"Why, my dear boy," said Col. Montrose, resting his hand on Donald's shoulder, and smiling affectionately upon him, "you are not superstitious, are you? a little of it runs in our blood, I know; but not enough, I hope, to make you unwilling to listen to me. Soon after your uncle Charles's sudden death I made a will, which I destroyed only a few days ago, when Alice gave us reason to hope that she would one day be your wife. I shall make another, as I just now told you, when Symonds returns; but in the mean time, as we never know what may happen, I should like you to know what I wish done with what I leave behind."

"Well, father, your wishes shall be sacred, though I am sure I hope—" he stopped; his voice was choked.

"That I shall never die—hey, Donald?" and the old man laughed. "I dare say you do, my son; you have never thought of the value of a post-obit—"

Donald could scarcely keep his seat, but his father did not see his agitation; for he had risen to unlock a desk and take out a paper. Returning with it to his seat he resumed.

"You will find a little memorandum here of my property and of my debts. The largest of these was incurred by the purchase of the river lands I bought last. I bought at a bad time; cotton has fallen since. I could not sell them now for half I gave, but they are very good lands, and will soon pay for themselves when brought under thorough cultivation. Two or three good crops well sold will pay off all I owe. I hope to be able to leave my children free of all debt. This place I shall leave to you; if your mother should prefer to live here, you will of course give it up to her during her life; but it was my father's wish, and has always been mine, that none but a Montrose should ever call the old Hall his."

There was another twinge at Donald's heart, as he pressed his hand convulsively against the pocket containing the letter this morning received.

"Father," he said, "had you not better leave the Hall to my mother for her life, and to me afterwards, if I survive her?"

"No, no, your mother is not a Montrose; she understands me and thinks as I do. She will have the third part of all my property, and with the exception of the Hall, I wish her to select her portion both of lands and negroes. The remainder will be divided between Isabelle and yourself. But what I particularly wished to say to you is, that I shall burden my estate with a legacy of ten thousand dollars, to be divided between your aunt and Charles. In my former will, I left Alice ten thousand dollars, and Charles five, and your aunt only a thousand dollars, as a testimony of my regard; but now I consider Alice to be provided for in her marriage with you, and I think both you and she would prefer that her mother should not be quite dependent upon you. Would you not prefer this?"

"Certainly, father; but—" he hesitated.

"Speak freely, my son; it is because I want your opinion that I speak thus to you."

"I was going to say that I would rather Alice should not be left wholly dependent on me; if any thing should happen; if I—if she—"

"You are a generous fellow, Donald;" cried the pleased father, "and have the old blood warm at your heart. I see what you mean; you do not wish that Alice should have any bond upon her freedom of choice, but that of her own affection; you need not be afraid, she thinks as little I suspect of dollars and cents as you do. However, it shall be as you say, only instead of being taken as my other legacies will be, from my undivided estate, it must be paid by you from that portion which shall fall to your own share. Will this suit you?"

Donald, though hardly satisfied, knew not how to object.

"There is one other thing, Donald," commenced Col. Montrose after a moment's silence. "I want old Cato to have his freedom after my death; give him a piece of land, build him a small house, and let him live here where he can have his wife and children with him, and can be taken care of in illness and old age."

"Father, this at least you may put out of the power of chance; you can free Cato now, or at least, you can write at once and have properly attested, what will secure his freedom at your death."

"But what's the use; you know my wish on the subject, and so does your mother—"

"Something might happen to us: put it out of the power of chance or fate."

Donald was very earnest—his father smiled and promised.

"And now, Donald, one thing more, and I have done. Should you marry Alice, as I hope you will, remember that her whole happiness will be in your keeping. Be tender to her, my son, and always, always, Donald, prefer her happiness to your own—promise me this."

"I do, father; I do promise it," said Donald as he held his hand out to his father, who grasped it in his and continued to hold it, as he added, "and my Isabelle, Donald, you will be her protector when I am gone; but you must be gentle with her, you must not assume any authority over her, she will do any thing for love, nothing for command; for she has a proud spirit, and I am afraid is a little spoiled, as well as yourself. But, spoiled child as you may have been, my dear boy, I know I may trust you to do all I wish kindly and honorably."

"Oh, father! I cannot bear to hear you speak thus, I do not deserve your confidence."

"Well, well; under the influence of a dear, good wife, like Alice, you will grow better, I dare say. She has made me think more seriously of some things than I ever thought before; I only wish the thought had come earlier. But it is time to see where your friend is."

When the friends took their departure the sun was near its setting. By travelling for one or two hours after night, they would arrive in Savannah without encountering its excessive heat. From that port they were to sail the next day in a brig for Norfolk. The grave conversation of the morning, or perhaps somewhat of that superstitious feeling of which he had accused his son, cast a shadow at parting over the usually cheerful countenance of Col. Montrose. His "good-bye, Donald—God bless you, my son," were spoken with a fervor which sent a thrill to the heart of all who heard him; except perhaps of our friend Agrippa, who was absorbed in the pleased contemplation of two bright silver dollars just dropped into his hand by his young master, and of a bank-bill, whose value he did not so well understand, received from Capt. Wharton, to whom he had occasionally played the part of nurse.

CHAPTER XVII.

"The warld's wealth, when I think on
Its pride and a' the lave o't;
Fie, fie on silly, coward man,
That he should be the slave o't."

In the commencement of this history we introduced to the notice of the reader the family of an opulent merchant, of Boston, in the enjoyment of that wealth and social position which was the result of his well-directed labors. Slight as was the glance we gave of them, and seldom as we have recurred to them, we think it has been sufficiently evident that wealth, and the glittering appendages of wealth, were their chief objects of desire. Mr. Browne was a prominent man in the vestry of the church to which he belonged, his contributions to its support were always respectable,—more than respectable when that contribution was made in the form of a subscription, the name of the donor being given in full; but the half-starved beggar at his door, the man of business whose misfortune or whose want of judgment had reduced his family to want, found not one weak spot in his heart, by which he might be tempted to encourage mendicity, or to interfere between his brother man and the wise Providence, by which, as Mr. Browne was accustomed to say, the consequences of our acts were meted out to us with unerring faithfulness, even in this life—an opinion which is, we believe, generally prevalent with those who have had much success in life.

Did this man, it may be asked, never hear a still, small voice, asking, "He that loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen?" or did he never, in some hour "to sober contemplation given," see the look of sorrow once turned upon a young ruler, who, having much possessions and a fair reputation in the world, had been told, nevertheless, "Yet one thing thou lackest?" We know not, but if he had, the world had soon drowned the voice and veiled the look.

The master mind of his family, Mr. Browne had impressed his own views upon them all. These views, too, had had their legitimate effect on all, in indurating their hearts, degrading their aspirations, and presenting to them life in its most superficial aspects. As respects the female part of the family, thanks to those social laws which fence the daughter of wealth from all strong temptation to evil conduct, the mischief stopped here; but we have already seen that it was not so with the son. The steady, plodding, industrious habits which had been formed while toiling his way to wealth, had preserved Mr. Browne, even in the heyday of youth, from yielding to any of those impulses by which he might have been led beyond the bounds of strict propriety. Such habits had stood him in the stead of the nobler restraints of principle, and good reason had he—had he but known it—to be thankful for his early poverty. No such seemingly harsh and truly friendly restraints had been laid upon George Browne, and no nobler principle had held the rein over him. The immortal soul within us, whether we feed it with the husks of earth, or the ambrosia of the gods, craves ever more of that nourishment to which it becomes gradually assimilated. The wealth and the luxury, which was the terminus of the father's ambition, was but the starting point of the son's. That for which the father had toiled, the son expected to receive without labor, and when his father's purse was closed to him, he helped himself, without remorse, to the purses of others, not by putting his fingers in their pockets—that would have been dangerous—but by exacting tribute from their vices for the support of his own. Of the harvest thus to be obtained, the present summer had not been so productive as the past; it is not often that a dupe is found at once so wealthy and so credulous as Donald; and, as the autumn approached, George Browne found himself compelled to curtail his pleasures, or to draw for their support upon their last year's victim.

The reader has, doubtless, been as much surprised as Donald himself was, by the proposal that his debt to Browne should be liquidated by notes payable at the uncertain period of his father's death—a period which the giant frame and hitherto unbroken health of Col. Montrose seemed to place at a very distant date. But a moment's reflection will show good reason for an arrangement which Browne would not have thought of proposing to one in the least degree more worldly-wise than Donald. By such an arrangement, he broke down all those defences with which the apprehension of difficulty might have surrounded one who had been accustomed, he saw, to fulfil to the letter one scriptural injunction—that of letting "to-morrow provide for the things of itself." Another advantage gained was, that he avoided all examination of his accounts by shrewder heads than Donald's, while the circumstances on which his claims were based were so recent as to make it possible that *the errors* into which he had fallen might be corrected. Then, the character of the security given was made a reason for demanding a usurious profit, and, last of all, and most important in his esteem, was the conviction that, with Donald's love for his father, and with the dread of his haughty mother's contempt, which Browne had early divined, this obligation would become, in skilful hands, an instrument of torture, by which all he could command might be wrung from him, whenever it was applied. The summer's ill success, of which we have spoken, compelled Browne to make the application rather earlier than he at first intended. The letter received by Donald on the morning of his last day at home, was from Browne, and brought the pleasant information—conveyed in language peculiar, we believe, to gentlemen of his habits—that he was "hard up," and must be indebted to him for an advance of a thousand dollars on his notes. There was something in the tone of this communication which was as displeasing to Donald as its contents. The bland courtesies, the gentle flatteries, with which Browne had hitherto seasoned his addresses, were wanting; it was the free, bold and somewhat coarse demand of a creditor, who knew that his debtor could not evade him. And how was he to reply to this demand? He had promised his father that he should not again be called upon for a gaming debt. And for his pay—he could not spare a dollar of it. It is true, there were men in the same company with himself who were said to save money, but these were Yankees, and had been brought up to save; nobody expected them to do what a Southern gentleman did: to be sure, there was Wharton—

"By the by, Wharton," he continued, thinking aloud, "I heard you say the other day you were never in debt; may I ask if you lived on your pay when you entered the army as a lieutenant?"

"You may ask, and I will answer—I did."

"And did not run in debt? I cannot see how you managed it."

"I will tell you; I never bought any thing till I had the money in hand to pay for it; and I kept a regular account of my receipts and expenditures, that I might never be betrayed into expenses beyond my means."

"Kept an account! One might as well be a merchant at once."

"Better be a merchant than a slave."

"A slave! I do not understand you;" and yet the angry blood rose to Donald's brow, as if he suspected some personal application of the word.

"I mean that a debtor is the slave of his creditor; held in a bondage harder than that of our friend Agrippa. I hope you will never know this by experience, Donald; take my word for it, and keep out of debt."

"It is somewhat late for that advice to me now, and, to tell you the truth, Wharton, I suspect you are the only *gentleman* south of Mason and Dixon's line, who could, with any propriety, give it."

Wharton was silent for some minutes, and when he spoke again, it was in a more earnest tone than he had hitherto used in the conversation.

"Donald," he said, "if I take a little of the Mentor's tone to you, excuse it for the sake of my friendship for you, and my eight years' greater experience of life. I have often heard you speak of a *Southern* gentleman, as if men, like plants, changed their qualities with the climate. Now, it seems to me that the GENTLEMAN is the same every where, in fundamental qualities, though he may differ in the cut of his clothes, in the language he speaks, or in any of those things which are the result of social prescription, rather than the spontaneous expression of the man. North or South, in Europe or America, the gentleman is still unchanged."

"I should like to hear your definition of a gentleman."

"There was a definition given something more than eighteen hundred years ago, which I cannot hope to surpass."

"I do not know to what you allude."

"Do you remember such injunctions as to 'have no fear of man,' to 'fear God,' and to 'love our neighbor?' Now I think that he who should give to these injunctions their appropriate expression, in word and manner, would be a finished gentleman."

"Surely you do not mean, Wharton, that the best men are the most complete gentlemen."

"No;- because the best men are imperfect. A man may fear God and love his neighbor, and yet retain so much fear of man that he may give no true expression to his feelings, or may render himself ridiculous by attempting to conform to conventionalisms to which he has not been accustomed. What makes a man pass current in society as a gentleman? Is it not that he has been trained to show fearlessness to the strong, courtesy to the weak—courtesy which is the outward expression of kindliness, of love?"

"Well, you make out two of your principles as undeniably essential to a gentleman—'fear no man' and 'love your neighbor;' but I do not see the necessity for your third; how do you prove it?"

"It is necessary, because no spirit can be truly elevated above all fear of man, which has not strengthened itself by dependence upon the power of God, and none can contemplate that power without reverential awe."

Capt. Wharton spoke with solemnity, and, perhaps unconsciously to himself, raised his hat from his head as he concluded, as if he were under the influence of the sentiment he described. Perhaps Donald, too, felt something of this influence, for he was long silent; at length, he said, "This was a strange digression from the subject of debt."

"Not so strange or so distant a digression as it may seem to you. I hold that no debtor can truly fulfil the precept, 'Fear no man;' he must and will fear his creditor."

"Then, according to you, no debtor can be truly a genman?"

"That is pushing my text to an extreme inference; I would rather say, no true gentleman is willingly a debtor."

"I will readily agree with you there."

"Then, Donald, I may venture to urge you not to remain in debt; your father, I am sure, would rather—"

"I cannot speak to my father on this subject."

"Then, Donald, allow me to claim the privilege of a friend; I have not only lived on my pay, but have four or five hundred dollars put away, which I do not want—"

"Thank you, thank you, Wharton. If I need your help, I will come to you as I would to my brother."

Wharton answered only by clasping Donald's hand in his for a moment; there was something in that last word which checked his speech, and sent his thoughts in another direction.

Two days' easy travel from Norfolk brought the friends to the Virginia Springs, where some of Capt. Wharton's early friends had made an arrangement to meet him. In their care Donald left him, to proceed to Boston, promising to return, if the business which carried him North should leave sufficient time at his command, before the expiration of his furlough.

The summer heats, so oppressive in Donald's Southern home, had only served to bring out into fuller and fresher life the beauty of the Northern landscape; but it gave him little enjoyment. In wooded slope, and verdant meadow, and ripening field, he saw only his nearer approach to that interview, by which it was to be determined whether he should ever again stand within his home with the glad free spirit of his boyhood.

"I have been a fool to trust to a man with Yankee blood in his veins, as I have done to Browne. When I paid that thousand dollars I ought to have ascertained what was still due to him; but I was so pleased by the assurance that the rest could be managed without calling on my father, that I took every thing else I wished for granted. Managed without calling on my father! I should like to know how. I would relinquish every thing I ever hope to own, if, by doing so, I could keep this whole affair from my mother. The very thought of meeting her proud, cold eye, is madness. And Alice—but she will have little reason to complain, for I believe, on my soul, if she had only given me, a year ago, the hope she has done now, this would never have happened."

And Donald found some relief from the unaccustomed burden of self-condemnation, by throwing a part of the blame of his own ill doings on Alice; and this part increased as he dwelt on it, until he became in his own eyes "more sinned against than sinning;" an unfortunate, and very ill-used person.

But Donald did not linger on his way, and neither will we. He arrived in Boston late in the evening, too late to see Browne that night; but the following morning, breakfasting two hours earlier than was his custom, when not on duty, he sallied out in search of him. Inquiring at his father's house, he was directed to the hotel at which he resided; and going immediately thither, found him just as he was leaving the house. A nice observer might have detected something of triumph mingling with surprise, in Browne's reception of his unlooked-for guest.

"I thought you were at Tampa Bay," he said, "and sent a letter there to you two months ago."

"Which was forwarded, and received by me only a fortnight since. My absence will account for your not receiving a reply sooner."

"It was deuçedly unlucky that you should have been absent; I am really very sorry for it—very sorry indeed."

"For what?—for the delay in your reception of the money you demanded? I am not sure that I could have done any thing for you at present, if I had received your letter sooner."

"No, no; I did not mean that exactly; but the truth is, Montrose, I have been completely used up; or, what is worse, my purse has been. The old man's heart was as hard as a nether mill-stone. I must have left Boston more hastily than pleasantly, if I had not thought of asking him for a loan on good security and prime interest. The bait took and he has your notes."

"Do you mean to say," cried Donald, with a flushed brow and a voice in which rage was blended with dismay, "that all the papers which passed between us are in your father's hands?"

"Every one; post-obits and all."

"Then you are a blacker villain than even I thought you; but I might have known it when I trusted myself to one of your mean race."

"And I, Lieut. Montrose, knew too well what the prospect was of getting money from a *large-talking little-doing* Southerner, not to get rid of your notes as soon as I could, even at half their nominal value."

Donald stepped forward with his cane uplifted, but the next moment he drew back, saying, "Villain as you are, I will treat you as a gentleman for the sake of your relationship to Alice; you shall hear from me through a friend—"

"Another version of a new way to pay old debts, I presume; but if so, you had better send your challenge to my father; though I fear he will hardly accept payment in lead instead of gold. For myself, I am sorry I cannot gratify you, being on the eve of leaving Boston. I am at present particularly engaged, and must bid you a very good morning."

The last words were said with a profound bow, and an expression of gratified malice, which would probably have overcome Donald's generous intentions towards the relation of Alice, had he not been restrained by the presence of ladies, who had entered while Browne was speaking. As it was, he followed rapidly his retreating steps, but when he reached the hall, he was nowhere to be seen; and the servants to whom he applied, to know in what direction he had gone, declared that he had left the house, though for what place they knew not.

Exasperated beyond all sober thought, Donald followed, and walked with hasty steps up one street and down another, pursuing gentlemen, who, when they were overtaken, proved not to have the slightest resemblance to George Browne, till he was thoroughly heated in body and somewhat cooled in mind. Then came the reflection that his most important business was now with the father, to whom a duel with the son would be scarcely the best recommendation. Before this thought occurred to him, he was in a part of the city with which he was quite unacquainted, and when he would have retraced his steps, he found himself so embarrassed with many windings and turnings, that it was more than an hour, ere with the help of occasional direction from those he passed, he was able to make his way to the lordly mansion of the Brownes in Beacon Street.

"Is Mr. Browne at home?" asked Donald of the porter who had come evidently in haste, to answer his somewhat impetuous pull at the bell handle.

"Yes, sir."

"Where is he?"

"In the study: but, sir—if you please, sir, Mr. Browne is engaged: I will take your name in, sir."

And all this time the servant was retreating before the advancing strides of Donald, who, fancying that George Browne was in some way at the bottom of the evident reluctance to admit him, felt all his ire reviving. Putting the servant forcibly aside as he reached the door, he turned the latch and threw it open. Opposite to it Mr. Browne and another gentleman, whose back was towards the door, were seated at a table covered with account-books and papers. Mr. Browne, without noticing Donald, who stood directly between him and the servant, looked up with a stern expression at the latter, exclaiming, "What is the meaning of this, John? Did I not tell you I was particularly engaged this morning?"

"If I have intruded, Mr. Browne," said Donald, "your servant is not to blame; he endeavored to stop me, but I leave Boston to-morrow, and I must see you therefore to-day. Appoint any other hour and I will not intrude upon you now."

"I do not know that I shall have any hour disengaged to-day, Mr. Montrose," said Mr. Browne, coldly and without rising; but no sooner had he uttered the name—Montrose—than the other gentleman turned quickly, and Donald saw that it was Robert Grahame, who, springing from his seat, advanced to meet him with outstretched hand and the most friendly greeting.

"I thought I knew the voice" he said, "as soon as you spoke, and yet it seemed impossible; so I forced myself to be quiet, till Mr. Browne named you. When did you come, and where are you going, that you must leave Boston so soon?"

"I came last night," said Donald, already softened and cheered by the looks and tones of a friend, "and when I leave this place, it will be to return to the Virginia Springs, where I left my friend Capt. Wharton."

"But cannot you spare a few days to your friends here?" Donald shook his head, though his smile seemed to show him half-disposed to yield—"One week only; I am about to sail for Europe. Spend this week with me at Springfield. Still a shake of the head? Well, dine with me at the Tremont, at three o'clock, and we will talk further about it."

"I can make no engagements for to-day, till I have an answer from Mr. Browne:" then turning to that gentleman, Donald continued in a very different tone, "I desire to have no secrets in this business from my friend, Mr. Grahame; what I ask from you is only justice, and will, I think, occupy but a few minutes of your time."

"And I can wait," said Robert Grahame, "till you have attended to my friend, Lieutenant Montrose."

"Well, sir, since Mr. Grahame is so kind, will you please to say what the object of your visit is. Perhaps it may be to redeem your notes—is it so?"

"I wish to Heaven it were, if only that I might hope never again to degrade myself by association with one of your name."

"I assure you, Lieutenant Montrose, I join you earnestly in that wish. I am an imperfect man, conscious of many faults; but without any pharisaical spirit, I may well desire to hold myself aloof from a gambler and a duellist."

"So, your immaculate son has made his report; I thought so, but let it pass; it would be as manly to quarrel with a woman as with your gray hairs. My object is soon stated; I wish to see the notes which have so dishonorably passed into your hands."

"To see your notes! your own notes! a somewhat strange request, and one which I may well refuse to grant, as they are now my property, fairly purchased from my son. Did you ever hear, Mr. Grahame, of a gentleman requesting to see his own notes?"

"I have no doubt Lieutenant Montrose has a sufficient reason for his request," was the grave, and to Mr. Browne not very satisfactory answer, to this appeal. The look to Donald which accompanied it drew from him an explanation which he had not intended making. It was addressed to Robert Grahame.

"I am almost ashamed," he said, "to acknowledge even to you, that in my careless, and, as I am now satisfied, ill-placed confidence in him to whom the notes were given, I made no memorandum of them; and I have, I fear, a very imperfect remembrance of the terms of payment, and scarcely a very exact one even of the amount due. You can scarcely blame me, I think, sir," turning from Grahame to Mr. Browne, "for desiring to rectify this, and to acquaint myself with my liabilities. My only object, I assure you, is to make arrangements for their speediest possible payment."

"You cannot hesitate, I think, Mr. Browne," said Robert Grahame, "to comply with the request of Lieutenant Montrose; at least you will show me those notes," he concluded, as he saw the unbending sternness with which the old man regarded Donald, whose impetuosity and pride had evidently aroused the enmity of the father as well as of the son.

"Will you trust me in this matter?" asked Grahame of his friend, speaking in a low voice, while Mr. Browne had gone to a desk at some distance apparently to bring the notes.

"Trust you? Entirely."

"Then leave me with this man; I think I can make better terms with him than you can do. Be at the Tremont at three o'clock. If I am not there, wait for me; I will come as soon as I can."

With a warm pressure of the hand, and an earnest "Thank you," Donald turned from him to Mr. Browne, who was slowly approaching with some papers in his hand, which he was reading as he walked, and said, "I believe it will be pleasanter for us both that I should leave this business in the hands of Mr. Grahame. Whatever engagement he may make for me I will do my best to perform. I wish you good morning, sir."

A very slight inclination of the head from Mr. Browne, another hasty pressure of the hand from Grahame, and Donald was gone. He had gained no intelligence in the interview; Mr. Browne's manner was certainly not very cheering, yet the mere presence of Grahame, the mere fact that he had undertaken to obtain information for him, had given him new courage. Dismissing with his usual facility all unpleasing subjects of thought, he spent an hour after his return to his room in writing to Alice a letter full of playful and hopeful tenderness; then he spent half an hour over the morning paper, and at length dressed himself and proceeded slowly to the Tremont. Robert Grahame had not yet arrived. When he came, Donald was struck, even at a distance, by his air of painful abstraction. He approached, and with head bent and eyes fixed on the ground, passed him without notice, and began to ascend the stairs to his room. Donald called to him, and he turned and held out his hand in friendly welcome, but the animation, the eagerness of the morning were gone.

"Come to my room," he said, after a moment's apparent hesitation, "we can talk better there." Yet when they were in the room, he still delayed adverting to those circumstances which were the subject of thought doubtless to them both. Donald's spirits sank beneath a dread of some calamity, the more terrible because so vaguely apprehended. At length he could stand it no longer, this evidently forced avoidance of what he had come purposely to hear, irritated him.

"Grahame," he said, "you have something unpleasant to tell me. Pray let me hear it at once; I can bear any thing but suspense. After all," he continued, endeavoring to speak cheerfully, "a few thousands of debt is no such mighty matter; if I could only get time to pay them without calling on my father again after my promise, I should not care about them, and at any rate they are not worth the uneasiness you are evidently feeling for me; so let us hear the worst."

"You speak bravely, Montrose, but I fear you do not suspect the extent of the ill. It may be, however, that the circumstances of my own life have given debt an exaggerated horror in my eyes, yet what do you suppose to be the amount of your debt to Browne, and to—to his accomplice, to Richard Grahame."

As he said these last words, Grahame's voice assumed a sterner tone, and a darker shadow fell upon his face.

"My debt to Richard Grahame! Why I paid it every cent to Browne before I returned South last summer."

"You paid it to Browne! and why not have paid it to Richard?"

"Because he preferred not to see me, and I was quite satisfied, for reasons of my own, that it should be so."

"You saw your note destroyed, of course?"

"No; for I was obliged to leave Boston immediately, and Richard Grahame, who held my note, was not there; but I have what is as good, Browne's receipt for the money, as in payment of my note to Richard Grahame, of such a date."

"And what was the amount you paid?"

"Five thousand dollars."

"Which Browne has endorsed on a note of twenty thousand dollars, which note Richard Grahame has made payable to him."

"It is a damnable forgery!" exclaimed Donald, transported beyond all propriety.

"I truly believe it, Montrose, and I would gladly believe that Browne was the forger; but how came he to hold your note to Richard? and I am bound to conceal nothing from you, though it cover my own name with shame. Browne has placed in his father's hands a letter accompanying this note from Richard, in which he names the amount as twenty thousand dollars."

"But if one be a forgery, may not the other?"

Grahame hesitated a moment, then slowly shaking his head, said, "No. The letter, I fear, is genuine; Richard's is a hand not easily imitated."

"Where is your brother? If I could see him, I might get to understand this matter better."

"I cannot tell you. You look surprised—but there has not for years been any great cordiality between Richard and me, and since that affair at Newport, I refused to see him, or to hold any communication with him; I even forbade his name to be mentioned to me, though Mary continued to correspond with him. From several things I conjecture that he has gone to some distance; but come to Springfield with me, and she will tell you more than I can do."

There was a pause, during which Donald walked hastily to and fro, striving, as we often do, by physical exertion, to give vent to mental irritation. At length, he threw himself into a chair, exclaiming, "Fifteen thousand dollars! It will make some difference in Alice's and my housekeeping. Well I suppose I ought to be thankful that Mr. Browne did not make it a hundred thousand. He certainly has evinced some forbearance when he had to deal with such a blockhead as I have shown myself in this business."

"But this, you know, is not all your debt to him."

"No, but I hope his ingenuity has been less profitably exercised upon the other. It was of less consequence to display it there, as he may have to wait—I pray God!" he added, with earnestness, "he may have to wait many a long year for that."

"A man can afford to wait for fifty thousand dollars."

"For what?" cried Donald, with startling emphasis, while his face became positively pale with excitement.

"Your note to George Browne, bearing date Newport, August tenth, eighteen hundred ——, and made payable when you become master of Montrose Hall, is for fifty thousand dollars."

"Grahame, there is some mistake here," said Donald, "or you are jesting," and he tried to wreathe his pale lips into a smile, while he trembled with agitation.

Robert Grahame shook his head. "I wish," he said, "I could believe there was any mistake. I am not apt to jest, and I should hardly do it on a subject which so nearly concerns a friend. But what did you suppose your debt to be?"

"Not more than five thousand, I will be sworn; less, I think, but of that I am not quite so confident. I was but too careless of the amount when I signed the notes, satisfied that, by deferring the payment, I had prevented any annoyance to my father from it, and then my illness, following so closely on the transaction, made me yet more doubtful of my own impressions."

"A doubt which you expressed before Mr. Browne yesterday, with your usual frankness, and of which, be assured, he will avail himself, in any controversy on the subject."

"I see I have delivered myself up, bound hand and foot, into the hands of these scoundrels, and not myself only, but all—all! Fool!—fool that I have been!"

He was silent a moment, then burst forth again—"I was too generous—too noble, to condescend to examine into accounts—to think of dollars and cents—generous! noble!" and he laughed a laugh which made Robert Grahame tremble; "and now my poor Alice must work for her bread, and a stranger will call the very graves of my fathers his! But there is a God, Grahame—do you not think there is a God—just and holy?"

"Assuredly, my dear Montrose."

"Then this great wrong cannot be. I may suffer, for I have sinned, but my father and mother, and Isabelle and Alice—they have done nothing, you know; why should they suffer? My father, who trusted me so entirely"—his voice faltered, his manhood gave way, tears rushed to his eyes, and his chest heaved; had he been alone, he would have wept, but, as it was, he rose, walked to the window, stood there till he was comparatively calm, and then, taking his hat, held out his hand to Grahame, saying, "You will excuse my leaving you so abruptly; I am too much stunned by this intelligence for any company—even yours—I shall set out for home this afternoon."

"That you must not do. Do not despair, for, though you spoke wildly just now, you spoke truly; there is a just God above us, and such fraud as I am convinced has been practised toward you never prospers. Come home with me, consult Mary; a woman's intuitions are often worth more than a man's reasoning in such a case: then, three days hence, I may be able to introduce you to that *rara avis*, an honest lawyer, and we will get his opinion on the case. We might see him this afternoon," he continued, consulting his watch, "for he is a Boston man, but at Springfield we shall have him all to ourselves, and he has promised to be there to assist at the most joyful event of my life. I want your presence on the same occasion."

"Your marriage?" questioned Donald, with a smile that was almost cheerful, for already the buoyant spirit of youth had seized the hope which Grahame had thrown out, and was rising above the despair that had threatened to ingulf it.

"I will tell you what the event is as we ride along this afternoon, for I have finished my business, and, if you can be ready, I think we had better set out as soon as it gets a little cooler—say about five o'clock."

"Is there any coach leaving at that time?"

"No, but I have Ebony here, and you can hire a good hack for a week for what your coach-fare would cost you, and in this way we shall have a great deal more liberty, both of movement and speech; do you not think so?"

"Oh, yes! I shall like it a great deal better, and I should like to set out at once. I want to feel that I am doing something."

"Well, you shall be doing something. Send your trunks over here, that they may go with mine by the coach to-morrow; they will be at Springfield nearly as soon as we shall; then we will go to the Tremont stables and order our horses. That will leave us little time unoccupied before five o'clock."

"So much the better. It is hard to keep a still body, with the mind in a ferment; if I could only meet George Browne on the way, and make him acquainted with my cane—it would be the exercise I should like best."

"I should be glad to see you enjoy it, if it were not that it would be a somewhat expensive pleasure. We pay high for such things here."

"Even with my new notions of the value of money, I fear I should hardly be able to deny myself such a gratification, if the temptation were set before me, but I suspect he will take care to keep himself out of my way. Well, I will be with you again as soon as I have packed my trunk and ordered it here."

One thing more Donald did, however; he added a postscript to his letter to Alice, saying, "I am just setting out for Springfield with Robert Grahame, who, I think, from something he said to me, must be about to be married."

CHAPTER XVIII.

"No tears
Dim the sweet look that Nature wears."
"An honest man's the noblest work of God."

While Robert Grahame and Donald Montrose are proceeding leisurely on their way towards Springfield—over a road now winding over hills yellow with the ripened grain, and now through dales where substantial farm-houses, with ample barns and orchards ruddy with the ripening apples, or a saw-mill with its pretty pond and fall of water, occupied the places on which thriving towns now stand—we will disclose to the reader the event to which the former had referred as the most joyful of his life. Long and wearisome had been the toils of Robert Grahame in the execution of his father's will, and the fulfilment of that vow which he had made beside his bed of death, and repeated over his just covered grave. For many years no hope had cheered those toils. He had indeed said his father should yet have a noble monument, but it might be the monument of his son's labors and his life. The life of his life he had indeed given. The hopes which animate the soul of the youth, the dreams of ambition or affection, a life of ease or a life of honorable aspiring, these were not for him. He had laid them down on the altar of duty, and from the still small voice within him, and the smiling heaven above, must come his reward. The impetuous sanguine spirit of the boy became subdued, as years showed him more and more of the hopelessness of his undertaking, into a stern quietude. But for the devotion of that gentle sister who had shared his home, and more of his thoughts than were communicated to any other, he might have grown hard; but she kept the waters of affection ever flowing in his heart. Still she could not wholly counteract all the other influences of his life, and the evil direction in which his nature had developed, that which marked him of a fallen race, was the tendency to a proud self-reliance unbecoming in a dependent creature; and to an uncompromising severity in his judgment of others. Yet for the follies into which exuberant spirits or an undisciplined heart sometimes lead the young, he had great indulgence, as he had shown in the case of Donald. But to a man unfaithful to his obligations, to one who showed himself habitually too weak to resist temptations, to one who lived a life of self-indulgence, and more than all, to one who was not brave enough to be always true, he was severely rigid. He gave to such no second trial. Was he an agent, he was dismissed without an opportunity of remonstrance; was he a friend, he would find himself barred from the heart which had trusted him. Yet no word or action would give him a right to complain of injustice. His rigid self-restraint extended even to the gratification of his inexpensive tastes, and the employment of those few hours which he might honestly call his own. For many years these had been given to the continuance of his classical studies, and many a gentleman entering the machinist's shop, or the superintendent's office—for he had at different times filled both these places—had been surprised to find on his shelf, a volume of Greek tragedy or of Roman satire. But of late these had given place to works on mechanics, statistics of manufacture, &c. He had said to himself, "Whatever may advance my success in my work I am bound to do, and if by these studies I can manufacture more and better cloth with less labor or less expense, it is my duty to pursue them." But in whatever line he engaged, his was not a mind that could be contented with mediocrity. The studies which had been commenced as a task, were continued as a pleasure. Through the pleasant evening hours, and often far into the night, he might be seen bending over books full of crabbed figures, in which there was no line of grace or beauty. Then he began to draw such figures himself, and to make model machines. Mary laughed at his new passion, as she called it, but his was not a mind to be roused to such intense action without an adequate motive. There was a defect, a glaring and acknowledged defect, in all mechanical powers he had yet seen; a defect which caused a great waste of power; how might it be remedied? This had been the problem it had cost him years to solve. No less disciplined mind, no one less practised in rigid self-control, could have continued so long such intense application with so little encouragement. Again and again, when he thought he had grasped the principle, his embodied idea failed of success; but gaining something from each failure, he began anew, "bating no jot of heart or hope," and the reward came. He found himself the inventor not of a particular machine, which must be confined in its influence to a certain class of objects, and the demand for which would consequently be limited to the place and the time in which there would be a demand for such objects, but of a power supplying a defect hitherto felt in all machinery. The invention was one of which all had felt the need, one which, used by some, none could afford to want; it was a mine of wealth, and his heart leaped with a sensation long unfelt, at the thought that his life's labor was near its accomplishment.

And now, ye who hold that ideas should be free as the light and air of heaven, that no man should appropriate to himself the right to use them, or tax his fellow for their use, but that he should throw them out for the good of all, reserving to himself no advantage unless it may be that of the more complete development of his own principle which each man is supposed to have the power of making; was this joy selfish? Should the long hours of thought and labor, the sacrifice of so much of life to uncongenial pursuits, give no claim to the inventor to demand from his fellow-men, some return for the advantages they may derive from his toils?

Robert Grahame at least thought not so. His first act was to test the value of his discovery in the mills under his control, and having proved it all he expected, he immediately went to Washington with his model and obtained the patent, which should secure the profits accruing from its use to himself for a certain time. This was during the last winter, and he was now, as he had told Donald, about to sail for England, to obtain a patent from that government for its use there. But before he sailed, one joyful and triumphant day awaited him. Years of labor and economy had enabled him to do something in the payment of his father's debts. As he was not legally responsible for these debts, he had made his own conditions in assuming them; and these were that he should be completely untrammelled, both in regard to the time and the order of his payments. Making a list of all the creditors, he had divided his savings amongst them according to his conviction of their necessities. To the larger, who were also the wealthier creditors, he had paid comparatively little. There were thousands still due, but these thousands a few months had been sufficient to bring him, from the sales made of his invention to some, and of the right to use his patent for certain districts of country to others. And now the day was come for which he had labored and longed, but hardly hoped. His creditors were invited to meet him at his own house near Springfield. They were told it was to make some communication to them of importance to their own interests. Something of payment was intimated, enough to induce them all to attend, yet not enough to forestall entirely the pleasant surprise awaiting them. Of these creditors there were four, the original number that had joined Mr. Grahame in the erection of the mills twenty years before. Of these, two were residents of Boston, and two of Springfield. Of the two gentlemen residing in Springfield, as they will not again be brought within the range of our narrative, so we have nothing now to say except that they were of that numerous class which the world calls honest men, of whom their tombstones would probably declare—always provided they were not greatly tempted before these were erected—that they were good sons, husbands, and fathers; and valuable members of the community. With Mr. Browne, the reader is already in some degree acquainted. The other Boston creditor, Mr. Gaston, was a man of different stamp; but let his acts speak for themselves. The only other guests invited were Donald and Mr. Holmes of Boston—the honest lawyer of whom Robert Grahame had spoken. He had been his college chum, and had always continued his friend.

The day has come, the day of fulfilled hopes—a day which comes to how few! Wearied as he had been by the journey of the preceding day, Robert Grahame could not sleep after the dawn of that morning's light. He rose early and walked abroad, but not in the direction of the factory. His course led towards the house of which Mary Grahame had spoken to Donald as of her former home. At about half a mile above his present abode, where the river had swept a deeper and wider channel for itself, the road was intersected by a broad avenue bordered with lofty elms. The trees wanted pruning, and the avenue was grass grown; for except two or three summer months, the place was inhabited only by an old woman, whose business was to take care of the house, and the little furniture kept there by the proprietor for summer use. Robert entered the avenue, and walked on beneath the shadow of the old elms, where for twelve years his feet had never trodden. The avenue proceeded in a direct line for nearly a quarter of a mile, skirted on each side by beautifully rolling ground, dotted here and there with forest trees; the moutain ash, the maple, and silver-leaved willow. In the taste with which these had been left, when the forest was cleared away, he recognized his father's hand. He remembered how he had pleased himself with the thought of reproducing in America the English country-seat, at which the happiest hours of his boyhood had been passed. But now the avenue makes a wide circle, sweeping around a lawn which he retained in his memory, as being of velvet-like smoothness and softness. The grass had become wiry and rough, for it was now rarely shorn. The house was approached through this lawn. On one side of it was a shrubbery,—on the other, where the elevation on whose brow it stood began to slope towards the river, the ground had been formed into hanging gardens. These had been closely associated with his mother in his mind. He loved to think of her as he had seen her in his boyhood, before sorrow had paled her cheek, or disease stolen its roundness from her form: bending here over her roses and carnations, or sitting in the summer-house built down near the water side, embowered with honey-suckle, woodbine and sweet-brier, occupied with a book, her pencil, or a needle; while the perfume of the flowers, the cool refreshing breeze from the river, and the lulling sound with which its tiny wavelets broke on the shore just below her, steeped every sense in delight. Unseen by any one, he descended from the lawn through the gardens to the summer-house. The flowers were not entirely rooted from the garden, but they were choked with weeds;

the summer-house was still standing, but much of the lattice to which the vines had clung, and part of the flooring, had decayed and fallen away; and except a stunted sweet-brier, over which a woodbine had thrown its flaunting tendrils, nothing of the vines remained. He stood long here listening to the dashing of the waters on the shore—that was the same, for God's works decay not. A succession of images rather than of thoughts were sweeping through his mind, as he stood thus. The gladness of the present was shadowed by them. Tennyson had not then written, or he might have used for the expression of the feelings of that hour, those lines so simple and so touching:

"Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, oh sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead,
Will never come back to me."

But the sun has risen above the hills, and now flashes its light upon the broad surface of the river. The sudden brightness aroused Robert Grahame from his reverie, and with one long look around him, he turned and proceeded slowly, lingeringly up the garden. Among the weeds some flowers were blooming; close beside the purple flowers of a tall thistle, was a white rose in full bloom, with a half-opened bud beside it. It was his mother's favorite flower, and was his accustomed morning offering to her when he was at home. He bent over the bush for a moment with a swelling heart, then taking out his knife cut the branch carefully off, and carried it to Mary. She wore the roses in her hair at dinner that day.

The invited guests were punctual to their appointment. As they entered the dining-room, Donald noticed two pictures hanging over the mantel-piece, which he had never seen before, they were the portraits of the father and mother of Robert and Mary, and of the absent Richard too, whom the first portrait greatly resembled, so greatly, that Donald found himself speculating on the probable similarity of character which had made the father a sanguine schemer, and the son, under different circumstances, a gamester. Mary and Robert were more like their mother, though it was from the father that Mary inherited her clear brown skin, black hair and dark eyes, while Robert's fairer complexion, gray eyes, and light curling hair and beard, were as evidently the gift of his mother.

There was no attempt at any unusual show in the host and hostess. Their only waiter was the servant maid whom Mary had taken as a little ignorant girl, and trained for herself. Good soup, excellent fish caught at their very door, roasted chickens, with vegetables from their own garden, home-made bread and butter, and a dessert of fruits, made a good yet inexpensive dinner of four courses. What pleased Donald best, was the well-bred ease and courtesy of both brother and sister, qualities which he justly thought the circumstances of the day and the relations in which they stood to their guests would have made it difficult for any to assume, who were not to the *manner* born. Respectful, but with no taint of servility, cheerful, but with no touch of exultation, they seemed neither depressed by the past, nor elated by the present. As there were no wines, when Mary rose from table, the gentlemen also arose to accompany her, but at a motion from Robert she resumed her seat, and they remained where they stood, waiting the result.

"Please resume your seats, gentlemen, for a few minutes," said their host, "I have a communication to make to you which should be made *here*,"—glancing as he pronounced the last words at the portraits, as if he would have said "in their presence."

"I have been indebted," he continued, "to some of you for money lent to my father—that he could not pay it, was the bitterest sorrow of his death hour; he bequeathed the obligation to me. Slowly and by small degrees I have paid you some portion of it; by a fortunate accident—nay, nay, by a good Providence, I am able to pay you all, principal and interest. On these papers," and he drew a package from his pocket, "I have made a statement of the amount due to each of you, and with each statement you will find a check for that amount."

He passed the papers around. They were received and examined in silence.

"You will find them all right, I believe, gentlemen," said Robert Grahame.

"No; I do not find mine right," said Mr. Gaston, "it is all wrong; you owe me no interest, indeed, I can hardly think you owe me any thing; for though the valuation affixed to the Mills when we took them from your father, left him still in our debt, they would, if sold now, more than cover it all; and the enormous profit of the last few years, a profit for which we are solely indebted to the enterprise of your father, and to your own judgment and fidelity leaves us certainly no claim for interest. I cannot receive that check," and he threw it on the table.

It had been Donald's chief interest during this scene to watch the brother and sister. He had seen the cheeks of Mary flush, and her bosom heave with her quick and labored breathing as Robert spoke; but in him, in Robert himself, there had been hitherto no sign of agitation, unless it might be that his tone of voice was somewhat deepened; but now he spoke rapidly and earnestly.

"You will—you will receive it, Mr. Gaston. You are too kind to lessen the satisfaction and the joy of this day; and greatly would it be lessened, if there were but one left who had a right to complain of my father."

"Complain of him! I have long felt that we and the whole country had much for which to be grateful to him

We are enjoying the fruits of a foresight, and a courage, which deserved a better reward."

"That was all which was wanting to make this day perfect," said Robert Grahame as he grasped Mr. Gaston's hand. "May I hope that you all, gentlemen, feel with Mr. Gaston, that you have nothing with which to reproach my father's memory?"

"Nothing, certainly nothing *now*," was the measured answer.

"Then my labor has not been in vain."

The tears were running down Mary's cheeks like rain, and Donald's eyes glistened as he looked from her to her brother. The scene had awakened in him emotions strangely mingled of joy and sorrow, of exultation and regret. He saw clearly, and felt deeply, the unpleasing contrast which he presented to Robert Grahame. His life had been that of an idler, Grahame's that of a laborer. There they stood, the gentleman and the mechanic—which was the nobler man? On selfish dissipation, he could scarcely call it pleasure, he had wasted hundeeds, and the hundreds had become thousands, through his indolent and childish surrender of himself to the guidance of others, and those, men of whom all he knew was calculated to make a wise man cautions. Robert Grahame, while yet a boy, had assumed the work of a man, and he had done it. *He* was about to bring sorrow and shame upon his father's head, Robert Grahame had vindicated his father's memory, and won unwilling homage to it, even from those who had been his enemies. *He* felt most painfully, that in losing wealth, he should lose all that had ever given him a claim to the world's consideration; Robert Grahame in poverty, and bearing a sullied name, had secured more than a common respect wherever he was known. And yet, a year ago, he had dared to look down on that man, and to fancy that he did him honor by his friendship!

Donald went forth from that dinner a humbler and a wiser man. Of his interests Robert Grahame had not been unmindful; he induced his friend Mr. Holmes to remain for the night, and when the other guests had departed, he entered on the subject of Donald's difficulties, and of the discrepancy between his recollections and the notes held by Mr. Browne; copies of which he had taken for Donald, with the permission of that gentleman.

" If I understand aright," said Mr. Holmes to Donald, " you had taken a receipt from Mr. Browne, for the payment made to him for Mr. Richard Grahame."

" I have such a receipt: at least, I had," said Donald, coloring as he made the correction.

" Can I see it; or," continued Mr. Holmes, as he read the expression of Donald's face, " can you remember whether it was a receipt for payment *in full?* This is of the utmost importance, for such a receipt would set aside all claim arising from a note of earlier date; Browne probably knew this, however, and would avoid such a form, in dealing with one whom he supposed too incautious to question his proceedings. The only thing to be done, therefore, in defence, is to prove the notes, what I doubt not they are, in whole or in part, forgeries. This," he continued, touching the copy of the note to Browne himself, as it lay on the table before him, " cannot be claimed till you are in actual possession of Montrose Hall."

" Which I never will be, if I have to tell my father all, in order to prevent it."

" The very best thing you can do—it will make that note worthless as an old rag—for the other, your best defence will be Richard Grahame's testimony—where is he?" he asked, turning to Mary Grahame, who had remained at Donald's request.

"In South America."

"That is a somewhat indefinite address; how do you send your letters to him?"

"Through Mr. George Browne, who obtained the agency for him, on which he has gone out. He did not know, himself, when he left me, where he could be addressed with most safety."

"Mr. Brown has looked ahead, I see; but we will endeavor to circumvent him yet. Your course would be to take the initiative in this business, and bring a charge against him, for endeavoring to obtain money under false pretences. Such a proceeding would carry the case into the criminal court, and all action in the civil process, which he might institute, would be null till the criminal case was decided. Our want of proof, however, must make us more wary in our proceedings. At present, nothing better suggests itself to me, than that you should empower me to see Mr. George Browne, on my return to Boston, and to endeavor to arouse his fears of detection, without positively making a charge, which it would not do to make without proof to substantiate it."

"And, suppose his fears cannot be aroused?" questioned Donald.

"We must then reserve ourselves for an answer to his action; we must then lengthen out the process by every art of the law; in such a case, I shall consider them all honest; and in the mean time, our friends here must do all they can to get Richard Grahame back. His deposition would save us."

And thus the affair was left for the present, Robert and Mary Grahame promising to do all in their power to secure safe communication with their brother.

"But do you think," said Donald afterwards, when he saw Mr. Holmes alone, "that Richard Grahame could be depended on, even were he here?"

"Oh yes!" then, as he saw the still dubious expression of Donald's face, he added, "I see you do not understand my friend Richard, he is more weak than wicked, a distinction not altogether without a difference. George Browne I call wicked; he will do a great wrong to another, either from pure malevolence, or for the sake of a small gain to himself. Richard will only do wrong when he can persuade himself that some great good is to result from it, or when it seems to him the only way by which he can escape from some evil, greater to his apprehension than that he inflicts; this is weakness."

"And thus, weakness leads to wickedness," said Donald, thoughtfully.

"As it must ever do in a world where evil predominates over good; for the weak are borne helplessly on the strongest current."

"Helplessly; passively; then where is their fault? where their responsibility?"

Donald spoke with the solemn emphasis of a spirit searching after a great truth; for to the weak he felt that his past life united him. There came no immediate answer to his question, for it was one which Mr. Holmes had never asked for himself. At length the silence was broken by a low, tremulous voice, speaking not on the piazza, on which they stood, but from the other side of a window, where in the dim twilight, in the shadow of a muslin drapery, Mary Grahame sat unperceived.

"Their fault is forgetfulness of Him, who ruleth in righteousness, and who maketh the evil-doer to 'eat of the fruit of his doings.' In Him the weak may find strength."

Touched by her earnestness; grieved that she should have overheard their remarks respecting Richard; neither Mr. Holmes nor Donald attempted to continue the subject, yet the words she had spoken were not forgotten; they were words of truth, and it may be, that to one of them at least, they shall one day prove words of power.

The next day all the party had dispersed. Donald accompanied Mr. Holmes to Boston, and then by his advice hastened homeward, to lose no time in inducing his father to make such arrangements as would disappoint Mr. George Browne's expectations. He travelled with a heavy heart, for a painful and humiliating confession awaited him, at the end of his journey. Again, and again, he rehearsed the scene of that confession as he went, and still he closed his eyes with a shuddering pang, as his mother's proud, disdainful eye, and his father's look of sorrowful reproach, rose before him. Were he to be the only sufferer from Browne's success, rather a thousand times would he lose all, and become a laborer for his daily bread, than stand before them condemned as a cowardly deceiver; it might be even as one, who, in his cupidity, could regard with satisfaction the death he had suffered himself to anticipate. Twenty times was he on the point of returning to Boston, and making any terms with the holder of his notes, which should preserve his secret, till those whose condemnation he most dreaded, should have passed away; but still the thought, that in the complete sacrifice of his father's property, which must then be made, others must suffer with him, and perhaps not less—for when were earthly motives pure and unmixed—his hatred to Browne, and determination to prevent his triumph, urged him on.

From New-York, he took a packet for Savannah, mailing a letter to Capt. Wharton, on the day he sailed, to announce his change of plan.

Leaving him to follow by the slower impulse of winds and waves, let us to Montrose Hall with the speed of thought, and see what awaits his coming.

CHAPTER XIX.

"I cannot doubt that they whom you deplore
Are glorified; or, if they sleep, shall wake
From sleep, and dwell with God in endless love."

"Silent and slow, and terribly strong,
The mighty shadow is borne along,
Like the dark eternity to come."

It was the last week of September, and the parching heat of summer had given place to a chill drizzle, more comfortless, by far, than a pouring rain. This had continued all day, with the wind blowing from the northeast. In the afternoon the wind increased, coming not steadily, but in gusts, which bent the tops of the stout trees, and kept the waters of the receding tide from sinking to their usual level. As evening closed in, many a gazer in that land of the hurricane, felt his heart fail, as he watched the scud driving with frightful rapidity over the face of the pale moon, and of a sky all of one sombre hue, except at one point, low in the horizon, where the clouds occasionally lifted, showing a line of light for a few minutes, and then settled down again.

"It is the equinoctial gale; we are going to have a hurricane," said one to another, and prudent men drew up their boats far from the water, and put props under their carriage houses, and saw that their doors were bolted and their windows well secured.

At Montrose Hall alone, no such precautions were taken, for within those walls was a destroyer more powerful and more dreaded than the storm, in whose presence all other terrors were forgotten. Beneath His power, the strong man lay bowed in all the feebleness of infancy.

For the first time, since his boyhood, Col. Montrose had been attacked, soon after Donald left the Hall, by the fever prevalent in the warm climate in which he lived. The attack had been marked, from the first, by peculiar virulence, and as one by one, the usual remedies were tried without success, and a weakness he had never felt before, crept over him, the conviction forced itself upon him that the hour was come to him, which comes sooner or later to all; that his earthly relations were about to terminate, and a new state of being to begin. In such circumstances, there is but one important question for us. What will that approaching state be to us? This was a question which Col. Montrose had not left it to a dying hour to solve. The impressions of a religious education received from a pious mother, had, it is true, faded away amid the opposing associations of a long life; but the consistent, unobtrusive piety of his brother's widow had reawakened them, and the earnest sense of responsibility as a Christian, expressed by Alice, more in action than in words, had, as he himself acknowledged to Donald, given them new power. Simple, truthful, and fearless in all, to entertain a conviction and to express it were one, with Col. Montrose; and but a few weeks before his death the gray-haired veteran and his young niece had knelt together at the altar, to receive that rite, whereby they acknowledged themselves partakers of the divine grace and mercy, through the atonement of a Saviour. Blessed memory that, to those who now watch beside his bed of death!

Little cared they who kept that watch, for the howling of the storm without. Perhaps, they would not even have known it, had it not kept their old pastor from the bedside of him who was fast passing away. Mr. Dunbar had himself been ill, and spite of nurse and physician, he had been twice to the Hall, to administer the consolations of religion to the failing mind of his friend, but to-day he could not come, and they had wisely concealed from him the great need of his presence. That need was felt by the loving hearts that surrounded the dying man, not by him. To him, but one human desire remained, it was to see Donald. Letters had been written to him within a few days, and sent, some to Virginia, some to Boston, enclosed in a few lines from Mrs. Charles Montrose to her brother, requesting him to deliver them, if Donald was in that city, and urging the great necessity for speed; and some to Savannah, with the faint hope that he might be already so far on his way.

And now the evening hour has closed in, dark and wild. Louder and louder blow the winds. They roar in the old chimneys like the sound of ten Niagaras, drowning the noise of the waves that are rushing to the shore. Giant trees are uprooted, and fall thundering to the ground; the ocean covers them, and still it is driven onward—higher—higher. The highest wave throws its spray over the steps of the house.

"God grant he come no nigher!" prays old Cato, the only one within that room who heeds the storm, or watches the approach of the sea.

No noise breaks the death-sleep of him who lies there within the shadow of the grave, or attracts from him one look, or one thought, of the hearts which swell to bursting with every labored breath he heaves. Still Cato goes and comes with anxious looks, they heed him not, but in a lull of the gale, there comes the sound of some one knocking violently at the outer door.

"Can it be Donald?" is whispered from one to another.

Quickly Cato goes to the door.

"Tank Far'er!" he says as he draws back the bolt, "he come to dis 'are door—if I open t'oder I neber shut him again."

The door is opened, and there rush in, not Donald—but several dripping and frightened negroes. Their tale is soon told. The kitchen has been blown down, and escaping from its ruins, they have made their way with great difficulty, "fighting the wind," they say, over the fallen trees to the house. With their assistance, Cato bolts the door again, and takes them to the parlor, where he had made up a fire early in the evening. They throw on more wood, and sit around it on the floor, drying their wet clothes, and talking to each other in whispers.

"Hi!" exclaims one "de wind gwine tek de roof off de ole house."

"De roof safe enough, sister Judy. De wind no come for dat to-night—He come for more nor dat. Aint you see how Bro' Cato look? Ouw! wha' we gwine do when we loss we massa?"

"Maussa! Him no maussa—him we far'er—him we ebery ting. Aint you want to look 'pon him 'gen, sister Judy?"

"Yes; an' I gwine to look too. Ef he see me, he wont say notin', else he jis' say, how d'ye, Judy."

Suiting the action to the word, Judy rose, and leaving her more timid companions behind, advanced on tiptoe to the room, softly opened the door and entered. She stood for a moment unnoticed at the foot of the bed, gazing on him who had been in her eyes the mightiest of men, but who now lay there so powerless. From him she glanced to Alice and Isabelle who sat hand clasped in hand, and tears flowing down their pale cheeks, too much exhausted by grief and watching, for the exhibition of violent emotion; she saw the fixed look of the wife who felt herself already a widow—she marked the sorrow in the countenance of the sister-in-law, who tenderly moistened from time to time, the pale, parched lips of the dying—then folding her hands together, she turned away with streaming tears to make her report to her friends in the parlor. Grief gives them courage, and when she returns, they follow her one by one, and stand in almost breathless silence in a dark line at the foot of the bed. They are seen, but none ask whence or how they came. Their right to be there is recognized by all, for they too are mourners.

But hark ! is it the wind that shakes the front door so violently ? Cato has been hearkening to it for some minutes, now he approaches the door, stands near it for a moment, returns to the room, and whispers to two or three of the negroes who follow him out.

"Dat's mass Donald," he said when they had left the room. "Somethin' tell me dat's mass Donald. He must come in, an' yet I most afraid for open dat door, an' Cap'in Sullivan's trumpet wouldn't make him hear ef I was to tell him to go round to t'oder one, so you must stan' jist here, an' when I draw de bolt you press 'gainst de door, so mass Don can jist get trou, an' den hold 'em fast tell I put de bolt in agen."

They did as he commanded, but found it a difficult task to accomplish. It was done however,—but was it Donald indeed who entered, wet and weary, his coat where it was not tightly fitted to him blown into ribbons, his hat gone and his head bound with a handkerchief, which was soaked with blood, from a wound received from the branch of a falling tree ? Yes it was he who had been for hours wandering within a few miles of his home, unable amid fallen trees, and through the whirl of the storm to recognize the old land-marks, or keep the well-known way. The last two miles he had come without his horse, which he had been compelled to leave in the woods, too exhausted to leap over the logs constantly obstructing their path. Those two miles he had come creeping, running, leaping, making efforts and incurring perils from which, at any other time, he would have shrunk appalled, but of which he was now scarce conscious. He had room in his heart for but one feeling, in his mind for but one thought—his father was dying, and the future fate of many rested on his seeing him before he died.

"My father!" he said with gasping breath as he entered.

"He alibe yet, maussa," said Cato, in a voice which no training could have refined into softer or gentler compassion.

Without a word Donald staggered rather than walked into the room where his father lay. But what is this? Is the dead about to rise? It may be that the sudden rush of the wind into the house and room, had broken that heavy death-like sleep, or it may be that the just flitting spirit had been recalled by the voice it had so longed to hear, but the watchers are startled by an unexpected change, the breathing becomes quiet, the limbs move, the eyes of him whom they had regarded as well-nigh dead, open, and as Donald approaches, turn upon him with intelligent but feeble expression, and the pale lips quiver in the effort to syllable his name. The stimulants which had been laid aside as useless are offered again and accepted eagerly, though swallowed with difficulty. Revived by them he is able to whisper feebly, "My son! kiss me, Donald."

Donald bows down and presses his lips to those pale ones. How gladly would he have breathed into them half of his young life.

"Oh father! father!" he cries in agony; "live if only for one day—one hour!" and he falls on his knees and kisses the hand which feebly clings to his own.

Again the feeble voice of the dying is heard slowly whispering, "My Heavenly Father has granted my last wish; I see my boy, my dear boy." He rests awhile, then, after another reviving draught, speaks again. "My poor wife!" he says, as his eye rests compassionately on her tearless face.

She bows her ear to his lips, that she may not lose one precious word.

"God lives, though I die—love him, pray to him. He has promised to be the husband of the widow"—after a pause—"Isabelle, come here by Donald."

Isabelle kneels sobbing beside her brother.

"My darlings, God bless you! Love him, pray to him, and Alice—" she was kneeling on the other side. He tried to move towards her the hand his wife held, and Mrs. Montrose guided it so as to rest upon her head; "Good child—God will bless you. Tell Charles good-bye for me," he murmured, "and my good sister and my people—some of them are here"—turning his dim eyes towards the foot of the bed—"tell them all good-bye; I believe they all love me. Poor things, they will grieve for me, but you will be good to them, my darlings; you will not let them miss me."

Loud sobs from the colored people filled the room at this last proof of care for them. There was a longer pause, and then the dying man spoke again.

"Mr. Dunbar, pray," he said.

None answered for a moment, then Cato advanced to the bedside.

"Mr. Dunbar aint here, maussa; will you hear poor Cato pray?"

"Good Cato! yes."

All knelt, and amidst hushed sobs joined in Cato's prayer. We give it in his own broken tongue.

"Our Far'er in Heaben! de hearts of dy poor chillern is broke widin dem. De good Lord gib we a good kind maussa, an' now he take 'em away; an' wha' can we do, Far'er? wha' can he wife an' he chillern, an' he friends an' we all do? No doctor can help we, no friend can help we; only God Almighty can help we. So now we come to we Far'er in Heaben, an' we say, please good Far'er gib we back we kind, good, dear maussa for a little while, jis' for two, tree year more, we lub 'em so much, Far'er, he bery hard to part from 'em; but we all belong to we Far'er, an' ef He can't spare 'em longer to we, oh good Far'er, we pray take 'em in dy own arm bery softly, jis' like a mudder take a suckin' baby, an' carry 'em safe an' easy up to de Heabenly home; an' let we all, de wife o' he bosom, an' he son, an' he daughter, an' he brudder wife, an' de little one wha' he bring up in he house, an' he man-servant, an' he maid-servant, all join 'em da' to lub 'em an' to sarbe 'em again in de Heabenly home, an' to sing de song o' Moses an' de lamb wid 'em for eber an' eber. Year dy poor chillern, Far'er, for de Blessed Jesus' sake. Amen."

A whispered amen from the dying lips, then suddenly a gasping sigh—another—after an interval which seemed endless to their waiting eyes, another, and all was still—still for ever in that cold, pale body—"Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." For the friend they loved, he was not there; God had heard their prayer and taken him in his arms safely and easily up to the heavenly home.

Even as he left that room of death Cato went out from the rear of the house to gauge the tide, which during the long hours of the night had continued to rise, till the waves had flowed over the yard some distance beyond the house. Now, at four o'clock, he found that the waters had receded, and the wind lulled, and that though the east was dark and hazy, the stars were shining in the western sky. The inhabitants of Montrose Hall did not know till long after, that while they were absorbed in contemplation of the approaching death of one of their number, Cato was trembling for the lives of all.

The storm had rendered the roads impassable for any ordinary conveyances, but gentlemen on horseback or on foot penetrated through all obstacles the succeeding day, to the various plantations of their friends, to learn the extent of the injuries suffered. The intelligence which awaited them at Montrose Hall, caused every thing else to be for a time forgotten. The gloom which darkened around that dwelling, threw its shadow over many others; and no token of honor was withheld from the dead, or of interest and sympathy from the mourners, because of the difficulties which the storm had opposed to its exhibition. Gentlemen who might have been supposed to be sufficiently engaged in repairing their own losses, turned out upon the roads with all the force they could command of laborers, and so cleared those leading to the Hall, that when the rites of burial were performed for him they honored, a large concourse of friends assembled to see him laid to rest beside his fathers. Mr. Dunbar, yet pale and weak from recent illness, was there, sorrowing yet rejoicing. The ladies of the family were not seen; indeed it was said that Mrs. John Montrose had been seen by none, but Isabelle and an old nurse, since the hour she had been led from her husband's death-bed to another apartment. Donald appeared with bloodshot eyes, and wild and haggard expression. Those who observed him closely, saw that he changed color frequently, and some attempt was made to dissuade him from accompanying the procession from the house to the grave; but he answered the attempt with almost fierce determination. Even the colored people who had assembled from the several plantations of Col. Montrose on this sad occasion—and more than a hundred of whom stood at the entrance of the graveyard, as they divided to permit the passage of the body and its escort—were heard amidst their wailings to exclaim, "Ah, poor mass Donald! jist see how he look!" Many manly eyes were wet with tears that day, as the solemn rites proceeded, but Donald's remained dry. With folded arms and gloomy brow he stood motionless near the grave, riveting his eyes upon the coffin; as it was lowered into the grave, he was seen to make a step towards it, and as the dull, hollow sound of the falling earth struck on his ear, he tottered forward and would have fallen within the grave, had he not been caught in the arms of those who had been observant of his movements, and who now placed themselves in his way. He was lifted into a carriage and taken home senseless, and for a fortnight lay hovering between life and death, under an attack of brain fever, the result of long and intense excitement, aided by the exposure he had encountered and the exertions he had made on the night of his father's death. Youth triumphed over this attack, severe as it was. He was restored to life and consciousness—consciousness of suffering. The burden of his secret sorrow and apprehension doubtless retarded his recovery. Often as he saw his mother, roused from her own abandonment to grief by his condition, bending over him with a tenderness in her eye which he had rarely seen there since his childhood, he turned away from her with a groan, which was the expression not of physical, but of mental anguish, at the thought of how soon that tenderness would be succeeded by cold displeasure. Under the weight of this anticipation his own manner became cold and sullen. The affection of which he feared they would soon deem him undeserving—the affection for which he believed himself indebted solely to their ignorance—lost all value in his eyes. Pity had given to the feelings of Alice for him a softness they had never known before, and he might now, it may be, have impressed on those feelings the character he desired. But even to *her* timid efforts to win his confidence, and soothe his sorrow, he opposed a chill reserve.

A month had passed away since the death of Col Montrose. All marks of the storm had not disappeared; more than one tree lay still prostrate where it had fallen, the sedge which had been borne by the advancing tide far beyond its usual limit had not yet been removed, and the carpenters and masons were still engaged in repairing the damage done to buildings. Nature now, however, wore a face of the serenest beauty. The waters of the bay slept tranquilly beneath an unclouded sky, the old oaks waved their gray drapery to a gentle breeze, and though October had come with its cool mornings and evenings, there were birds still chirping amid their branches, in the warmth of the mid-day sun.

Donald sat in the library in which he had held his last conversation with his father, and looked with a heavy heart and languid eye upon the beauty surrounding him. He was alone, though the murmuring voices of his mother and aunt, Isabelle and Alice, came to his ear from the adjoining room, where they were engaged in the sad task of making up their mourning. He had stolen away from them under the pretence of writing letters. But he was not long alone, his mother entered bringing him a letter. He rose to receive it, and seeing the handwriting to be that of Robert Grahame, he turned to a window, and stood there to read it, while Mrs. Montrose seated herself in his vacant chair. An exclamation of dismay attracted her attention, and turning she saw him leaning against the casement, looking pale and faint. To her anxious question he replied in a feeble voice, and as if but half conscious to whom he spoke, "Richard Grahame is dead."

"And what is there in his death to cause you such emotion, Donald?"

Her tone of surprise aroused him. He hesitated but a moment, for he felt the time had come when he must either reveal all, or practise a duplicity from which his nature shrank with abhorrence.

"Mother—his life—his testimony, was all that stood between me and ruin!" was his answer.

"My son, you are not well," she said, as, standing beside him, she laid one hand tenderly upon his forehead, and sought to feel his pulse with the other.

"You think I am ill, mother, that you are again listening to the ravings of delirium; but you are mistaken. Sit down by me, mother,—listen to me—with you I shall need no witness to my truth; however you may condemn me, you will not doubt me, mother?"

"Certainly not, Donald; the son of a Montrose and a Wharton, falsehood can have no part in you."

"Thank you! thank you for that, mother!" he exclaimed, as the color returned to his cheek, and the light to his eye. "Oh that I had told you months ago! something might then have been done. Now—"

He paused as if in thought, and Mrs. Montrose asked, "And why did you not tell me, Donald?"

"Because I was a coward, mother; because I dreaded your disdain of my weakness more than sword or bullet; and even now," he said, as a flush rose to his brow, "I read that disdain in your eye."

"You give a harsh name to the feeling, but I acknowledge, Donald, I cannot honor the man who does an act and fears to meet its consequences; such were not your father's lessons:" her lips quivered, and her face grew pale at this first mention of the name of the dead; but she shed no tear.

Donald's eyes were more moist, as he answered, "Ah! but he would have remembered mercy in his judgment: he would have said, were I making this confession to him, my son has been a boy, but now he shows the strength and courage of a man. Ah, mother! if you only loved me as he did!"

The mother's pale face flushed, and Donald thought for an instant that her eyes were moist; but all emotion had disappeared, and she was again calm and pale, when she answered, "This is no question of affection, Donald; I have declared my confidence in your truth, and I wait for your confession."

"Confession, indeed!" said Donald; and beginning at the circumstances occurring at Newport, he revealed to his mother all with which the reader is already acquainted, of his connection with George Browne and Richard Grahame. He was interrupted but once. When he mentioned the *post-obits,* his mother, clasping her hands, exclaimed with startling vehemence, "And you could allow yourself to anticipate that! Oh, Donald!"

"Never: never, mother; this was to me but a form of words; satisfying a creditor, yet postponing an evil day, and shielding me from reproaches."

"And now this man holds your notes for more than sixty thousand dollars, and against this claim you have nothing to set but your simple word?" said Mrs. Montrose, as her son concluded his long recital.

"Which, however it may satisfy my mother and my friends, I can scarcely hope will prove a valid defence in a court of law."

"I thought a gambling debt was irrecoverable in a court of justice."

"You thought rightly, and for that very reason, it is a principle with gentlemen never to dispute a gambling debt. In this case, however, I have again no proof but my simple word, that the debt was contracted in gambling—the notes are 'for value received.'"

"I see no redress."

"There is none; a lawyer whom I consulted in Boston, and who expected from Richard Grahame's testimony more than I did, writes me—his letter was inclosed in Robert Grahame's—that he sees no possible line of defence which is tenable, under such circumstances."

"And what do you intend?"

"To pay, as far as I can, this unjust claim, but to do so under protest of its injustice, and an avowal of my determination to leave no means untried to prove the villain what he is."

"Then, Montrose Hall passes into the hands of strangers!" Her eyes became fixed upon the distant graveyard—Donald's followed them.

"Oh mother!" he exclaimed, "that is the worst. How can I outlive that thought!"

"It shall not be," said his mother, with her gaze still fastened on that distant point, and speaking in the tone of one who registers a vow. "That shall be prevented," she added after a pause, turning to Donald, "but that is not the worst."

"What worse can there be?" he asked with surprise.

"Have you thought of your people; of those whom your father commended to you with his dying breath? Have you thought what treatment they were likely to experience from this remorseless villain?"

"Oh, mother! mother! spare me!" cried Donald, as he started from his seat, and strode back and forth, with the pace of a caged lion.

"Had we not better look the whole difficulty in the face, Donald? How shall we else provide for it?"

"Provide for it! How can that be done?"

"I cannot say now, but I think you had better send for Mr. Clarke and Mr. Symonds. Mr. Clarke has been named by your father as one of his executors. Mr. Somers, who drew the will and has it in his keeping, may assist us by his legal knowledge."

To this, Donald had nothing to object, and messages requesting the presence of these gentlemen were dispatched.

"And now, have I your permission to make known what you have told me to Isabelle?"

Donald hesitated.

"I see you are reluctant to permit this, but it must be, Donald."

"And why, mother?"

"Because, in order to do any thing that will be of service, in the present circumstances, I must be joined by Isabelle, and she shall make no sacrifices and incur no risks, without a full acquaintance with the subject."

"You and Isabelle make sacrifices! incur risks!—and for me? never!" exclaimed Donald.

"It is not for you, Donald; it is for the servants born in our house. Donald, could you bear to see him who prayed beside your dying father, the property of this man?"

"Mother, how can you ask such a question? Cato will never belong to any man—he is free; but were he not, do you suppose that such a man as Cato, known so well as he is, need look long for a master he likes? There is not a gentleman in the county who would not gladly buy him, and give us our own price for him."

"That is true; but there are others; your father commended all to our care, and all must be cared for."

Mrs. Montrose left the room as she spoke, and Donald remained sunk in gloomy silence. Every thing wore to him, a reproachful look; every thing seemed by its aspect to remind him how in his passionate abandonment, and selfish grasping after present release from the pang of disappointed desire, he had disregarded and flung to the winds his own obligations, and the well-being of others. There was no release for him now; the iron chain of necessity was upon him, and he must eat of the fruit of his own doings. And the desire, whose disappointment had driven him to this madness, had he not, in truth, interposed the most invincible obstacle to its gratification? Two years hence would he have a home or a support to offer Alice? home! support! where would she find them now?

"Donald, I have brought you a biscuit and a glass of wine; you eat no breakfast this morning," said a gentle voice, and Alice stood before him with a small silver salver in her hand, and a subdued, patient sorrow in her face, which accorded well with her deep mourning dress. "You will take it since I have brought it to you, Donald," she added, while a slight color rose to her pale cheeks, at using such an argument.

Receiving the salver from her, he placed it onthe table beside him, saying, "Thank you, Alice, I will take it by and by." He could not reject what was so sweetly offered, yet the swelling at his throat warned him not to attempt to swallow.

Alice did not leave him, as he had supposed she would, but after standing a moment, she drew a chair forward and seated herself; yet with a timid, hesitating manner, as if half doubting the propriety of the movement.

"I have a letter from Mary Grahame, and I thought you would like to hear of them, Donald."

"Well, what does she say?" he asked, endeavoring to appear interested.

"They have had some sorrow, too—Richard Grahame is dead."

Alice could not speak of death, without a lowered tone, and saddened manner—the shadow of his presence was too near her.

"There is little sorrow in that; men, who, like Richard Grahame, have brought grief and shame upon their families, had better die," said Donald, bitterly.

The gentle spirit of Alice was shocked. After a moment's silence, she said, "I do not think with you, Donald; they had better live to repent, and to repair the evil they have done—to bring joy for the grief, and honor for the shame."

"And suppose they have also brought poverty to their homes—such poverty as shuts out the hope of better things to come."

"Shuts out hope! that is impossible; it is only death which is hopeless; and as to poverty, I think it must be a light ill, when there are loving hearts to bear it with, and for each other. Mr. Grahame thought me very silly for the fancy, I believe," she smiled and colored slightly, "but I did fancy once that I should have rather liked to be poor enough to work for my mother and Charles; it must be so pleasant to give your time and thoughts, and as it were your very life, for those you love."

There was a quiet enthusiasm in the eyes of Alice, as she spoke thus, which gave a new character to her beauty, and Donald, for a moment, forgot all but that. He was recalled to more painful memories by the entrance of his mother.

Mrs. Montrose seated herself, with a preoccupied air, and Alice, with that quick perception which we call tact, felt that her presence was not just then desired, and rising, she said, "I came to bring Donald a biscuit and a glass of wine, aunt; perhaps you can induce him to take them."

Mrs. Montrose looked at Alice while she spoke, but she evidently did not hear her. There was a stern concentration in her manner, which showed even to the inexperienced Alice, that her whole thoughts, nay, her whole being, was engrossed by one subject. As Alice passed from the room, her eyes followed her till the closing door shut out her form, and Donald was startled at the sternness of those eyes as they returned to him.

Pride had been through life the ruling passion of Mrs. Montrose; a pride not altogether ignoble, for it was based not on wealth, or position, or any accidental circumstances, but on the blood which, according to her belief, had given her, as a birthright, nobility of nature. Her principles of morality were embodied in the one command, to do nothing unworthy of her birth. Her religion was a name, or at best consisted in a regular attendance on the ordinances of the church, and a correct repetition of its forms of service, which she considered as a proper example to those below her. And to those below her, let it be said to her honor, that Mrs. Montrose was ever kind and courteous. Her very pride secured her from arrogance to those who did not oppose her. In Col. Montrose, she had reverenced the representative of a noble name, who had added by his own high qualities to its lustre, and *her* husband—in Donald, she had seen the union of two families of equal claims to respect, and with even more of pride than of tenderness she had gazed upon his boyish beauty, marked his opening talents, and predicted for him a high career. As this was best attained in America in political life, his education at West Point and consequent entrance into the army had disappointed her; but she comforted herself with the belief that the required two years of service, would be quite enough to wear out his military ardor, and that with his connection and fortune, a transition to a distinguished place in the political world would be easily secured. On this pride and these designs, the communication of the morning had fallen with crushing weight. She knew enough of the value of her husband's property, to be aware that the clear one-third of it left to Donald, in addition to Montrose Hall, which was considered his by right, would not more than pay the amount of the debt, thus iniquitously charged upon him. Montrose Hall she determined to redeem at any sacrifice; it was identified with the family; they could not and must not be severed. Better for a Montrose to live there on bread and water, than elsewhere on luxuries. But, as she had said to Donald, this was not all that must be redeemed; the dependents of the family, those whose fathers, and whose fathers' fathers had served them, must be saved from the grasp of the stranger. In this last determination, it is true, there mingled a more womanly feeling than pride, a feeling compounded of reverence for the husband, whose dying breath had commended them to her care, and of compassionate interest in those who had so long called her mistress. Yet it cannot be denied, that these better feelings found support in the knowledge that no step was so unpopular at the South, when voluntary, or considered so indicative of utter ruin, when involuntary, as the sale of slaves. These must be saved then, though it should be done by so burdening the whole property, that her remaining years of life, and the youth of her daughter should wear away in poverty and toil. But as she came to this resolution, a hatred of the author of that calamity which had forced her to it, arose in her heart, so bitter and so stern, that but for the woman in her nature, and the refinement impressed on her by education and habit, it might have become murderous. Donald's faults were overlooked, or excused as the result of coquetry in Alice, who shared with Mr. Browne her anger and her hatred. "She has his blood in her veins; she shares his nature—soft and serpent-like—she has stung the hand that fed her."

Fired with such thoughts, she had sought Donald again, to communicate to him her determination, and the ready assent of Isabelle to join her in any act necessary to save her brother from suffering, and her home from desecration, when she found Alice with him.

"Donald," she said, as Alice disappeared, and her voice was hard and stern as her eyes, "Donald, you must not marry her."

"Not marry Alice! and why?"

"She has his blood in her veins. We shall have little left but pure blood—an untainted name: I will not consent that this shall be endangered. You must renounce her or me."

"Mother, do not add to my misery. Remember how my father loved Alice."

"He did not know what we do. I repeat, if you marry her you renounce me."

"Do not let us speak of it now, mother. You know that for two years I am forbidden by Alice herself to speak of love, and then,"—he paused.

"What then?" asked his mother in the same tone she had hitherto used.

"It may be that, even should you relent, my own poverty may compel me in honor to release her. Now let us talk of other things."

"It is time, for here come Mr. Clarke, and Mr. Symonds," and following her glance to the window, which looked toward the road, Donald saw those gentlemen approaching, attended by the messenger who had been dispatched for them; their residences being only at the distance of two or three miles from Montrose Hall. He rose to meet, and welcome them, but his mother placed herself in his way.

"Hear me, Donald," she said; "for the sake of this our home, for your own sake, for the sake of the many whose whole fate rests on you, promise me never to marry that girl. Hear me, hear me, ere you speak,"—she exclaimed as with an indignant gesture he would have interrupted her—"refuse me this, and I leave you to your fate; promise, and this man's claim shall be met without sacrifice of any thing you hold dear, though to meet it the whole estate must be heavily burdened."

"And you and Isabelle suffer for my fault! mother, I thought you knew me better. I will consent to that on no terms, much less will I sacrifice Alice to secure it."

There was no flash of the eye, no rising color to tell of the passion at her heart; but the lines of her face became yet more rigidly set. Whatever she might have said was prevented by the entrance of the visitors.

Mr. Symonds supposing that the summons to him was probably for the purpose of hearing the will of Col. Montrose read, had brought it with him, and both gentlemen wore the gravity of manner becoming such an occasion. Mr. Symonds having adverted to it, Donald observed that this had not been his object, but that it would be as well, perhaps, to preface the business on which he had taken the liberty of requesting their presence, by reading the will.

"It will be necessary I suppose to call my sister," he said, referring to Mr. Symonds.

"Yes, and Mrs. Charles Montrose and her daughter, who are both mentioned in the will." Donald went himself for them, and returned followed by Isabelle and Alice, his aunt leaning on his arm. We will not linger to describe the feelings of the listeners as Mr. Symonds proceeded to read that instrument, in which, through all its legal technicalities, the kind heart of the testator was plainly manifested. After a few trifling legacies had been named, as marks of esteem and affection to particular friends, Montrose Hall was bequeathed to Donald, with the expression of a wish that it might be always the home of a Montrose, and the remainder of his property, real and personal, was divided equally between his wife and children, with the exception of ten thousand dollars in United States Bank stock, which was left to Mrs. Charles Montrose, subject to her sole control during her life, and to be the property of Charles at her death, should he survive her; should he die before her, it was at her death to belong "to my beloved niece, Alice, who should have had an equal share with my daughter in my fortune, as she has ever had in my affection, had I not believed her to be already well provided for."

At this clause Donald sought his mother's eyes, but in vain; she kept them steadily fixed on the floor.

Cato was left free, and the ground on which his house stood, with an acre around it, was to be given to him should he remain at Montrose Hall, or an equivalent in money should he choose to go elsewhere.

The consultation of Donald with Mr. Clarke and Mr. Symonds, after the reading of the will was finished, was productive of little satisfaction. Convinced as even the astute and somewhat suspicious lawyer was of the simple truth of Donald's statement, he was obliged to confess that it would be hardly possible to hope for a verdict in his favor from a jury, when the only evidence to oppose to his genuine, undisputed signature, was his own word or even oath, in a case in which his own interests were so fatally involved.

"Had not this Richard Grahame died so inopportunely, and could you, as you think, have proved by his testimony that there was fraud in the one note, it would have gone far towards obtaining you a verdict on the other; but as it is—"

"As it is, you think I must pay the penalty of my folly in my ruin;" said Donald sadly, as Mr. Symonds paused, apparently unwilling to complete his sentence.

"We will wait at least till this man makes his demand before we talk of ruin," said Mr. Symonds, endeavoring, though hardly with success, to speak cheerfully.

"We need not wait, the demand has been made;" said Donald as he drew from his pocket, and handed to Mr. Somers, a letter received from Mr. Browne two days before.

It was a formal demand for the payment of sixty-five thousand dollars, the amount of the two notes already so often referred to.

"Suppose you let me answer this," said Mr. Symonds; "I may intimidate the man into some concession. I have always found a knave easily frightened."

"Have you so?" exclaimed Mr. Clarke, who had hitherto kept silence in deference to his lawyer friend. "Then tell him that he will have to fight every man in the county, and

James Clarke of Fairhope at the head of them, before he can put his hand on a dollar of the Montrose property that does not rightly belong to him."

"We will leave that threat," said Mr. Symonds, with a smile at his friend's literal understanding of intimidation, "till he comes among us, lest he should have you bound over to keep the peace, and so deprive us of your support when most needed."

To the proposal of Mr. Symonds to write to Mr. Browne for him, Donald readily assented. The letter was dispatched, but three weeks must pass before an answer could be received. Three weeks of suspense—what an age!

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