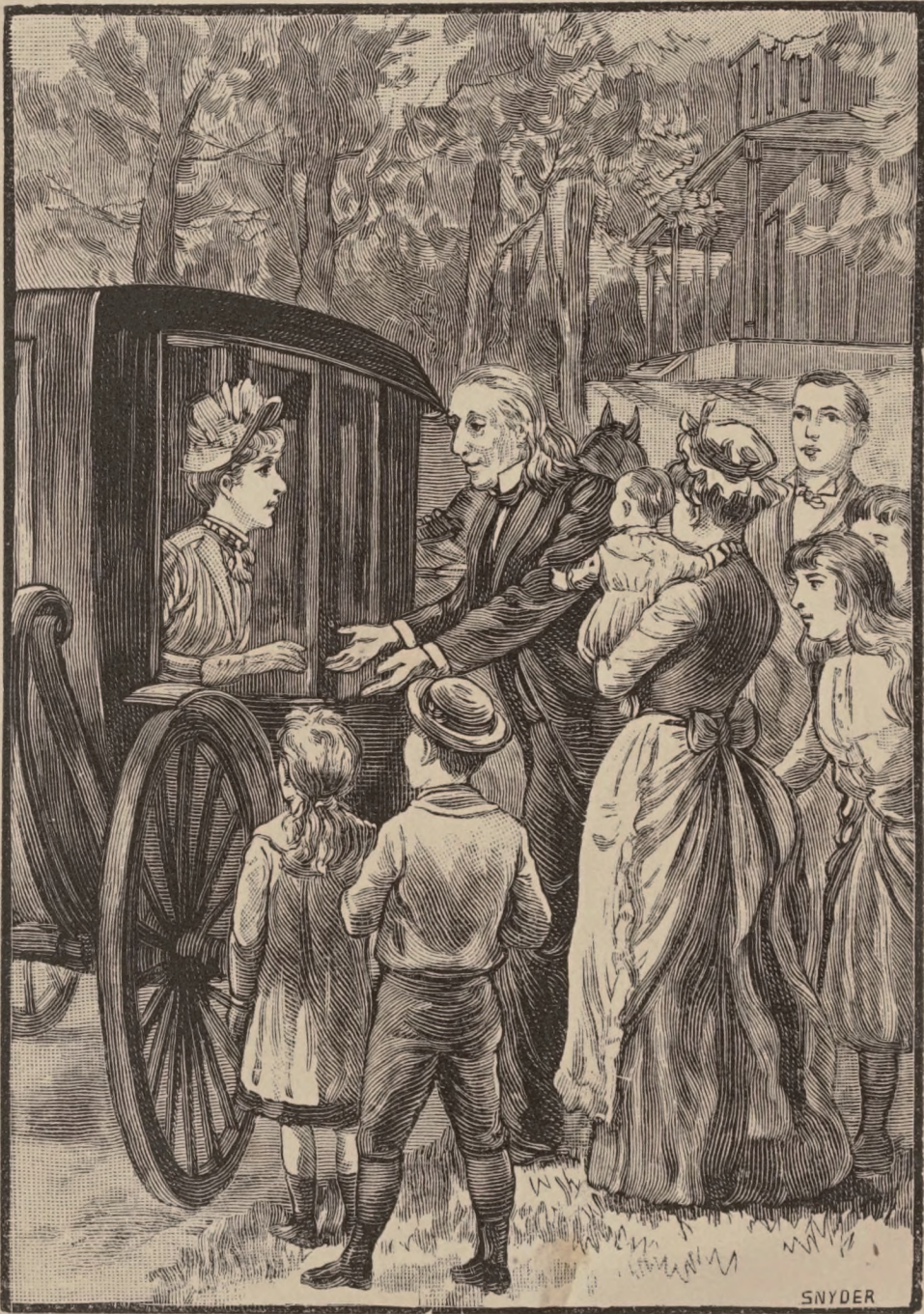


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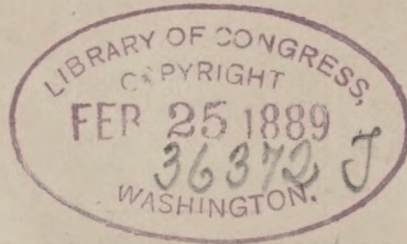
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.



Woodlawn.

UNDER THE PRUNING-KNIFE.

A STORY OF SOUTHERN LIFE.



BY

MARY TUCKER MAGILL.

35



PHILADELPHIA :
PRESBYTERIAN BOARD OF PUBLICATION
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UNDER THE PRUNING-KNIFE.

CHAPTER I.

GEORGE DALRYMPLE'S MARRIAGE.

IT is rather embarrassing to me to be called upon to give my testimony in this case, because, for one thing, I am too old to make a first claim for authorship; and besides, I am an interested party, and so in law could not be called in as a witness. But I am only one among several speakers, and, as my journal has faithfully recorded every event, I cannot refuse to do my part in giving to the world a strange and tender story, the actors in which have, so many of them, stepped off this mortal stage.

Forty years ago! How strange that it should be so long! I was then twenty-five years of age. There! I have let you into the secret about which all unmarried women are said to be, and are, perhaps, sensitive. Yes, however much they may brave it out, there is somewhere a twinge which asserts women's nature when they tell their age.

Well, forty years ago I laid away my youth with

its lost love in one grave, and, planting some sweet flowers of memory to mark the spot, watered it with my tears and turned away, saying, as many another has done before and since, "I will never know happiness again. I will endure life till my summons comes and I go to join my loved and lost beyond the floods of time."

But we seldom guess aright about our future. Joy has come to my life many times since that day—not the wild, exuberant joy of early youth, but the calm happiness of the Christian, seeing the Father's hand in the blessing bestowed and feeling the Father's love in its denial, with the blessed consciousness of the Father's eye and care upon every step of the pathway of life. It was but the first volume in the book of my experience which closed with this episode; the second opens with the present story.

I once went with some friends to visit a great fruit-farm belonging to an old Scotchman. As we lingered under the beautiful apple trees, hanging heavy with fruit and bearing ample testimony to the skill and intelligence of the owner, our eyes were attracted by some gnarled and twisted specimens with their wormy trunks and their defective fruit strangely out of place. We asked an explanation, and the owner's answer contained a life-lesson which was a sweet comfort to the sore, tired heart I bore about with me.

“Well, leddies,” he said, “I feel ashamed of myself to see those sad blots on my orchard, but I will soon remove them. Just look at these two trees side by side—this with its smooth, straight trunk, its loaded branches and its beautiful fruit, and that with its knotted bark, its worm-holes and its dwarfed and wretched fruit. Yet this last has had ten times as much labor expended upon it as that, and here is the explanation. Some years since, I bought this place with an orchard upon it, but so misused and neglected was it that most of the trees were fit only for firewood; so I cut them down, with the exception of one here and there, the best of them, which I reserved till my new trees should be of bearing age. But for the most part it has been labor thrown away, for they have given me more trouble than they were worth. I have had to work round the roots and cut out the worms even to the hearts of the trees. I tried to straighten the trunks and to smooth the bark to make them more sightly. I do like things ship-shape, and, first and last, what with pruning and digging for worms, half of each tree has been cut away. But they were too old to accomplish any good. Just see here and here and here!” and the impetuous old man plucked apple after apple from the branches above his head. “Not a sound one amongst them. The worst of it is that the worms get at my young trees and give me still more trou-

ble. I shall cut them all out another year, and shall depend on my young ones.

“Now look here,” said he, turning with pardonable pride to a beautiful specimen of his care and skill. “I never saw a more unpromising twig than this was. I had to tie it to a stake in five or six places before I could make it grow perfectly straight. The worms from its neighbor, there, had a wonderful fancy for it, and I had to cut them out time and again; but the trouble seems as nothing now, when I see its straight, smooth trunk, its vigorous branches and its beautiful shape. It can’t be hurt now, and, except an occasional gentle pruning, it requires next to no care at all. The fruit is perfect.”

This was my lesson. Are not Christians as trees in the orchard of God, our great Father, often misused and neglected till they are crooked and gnarled, deformed by worms at the heart, while the scars of past wounds disfigure and mar the beauty of their lives? They suffer severely from God’s pruning-knife, which cuts deep to eradicate the evil. Their branches are one after another pruned away, and still the fruit borne is imperfect; and before the work is completed the measure of their lives is filled out and they must make room for others.

I thank God the work in me was begun early in life; and although I was but a crooked stick at best, and had to be bound with chafing thongs to

the upright stake, yet I was conquered at last. Many trees have gone far beyond me in fruit-bearing, yet God has helped me to bring some fruit into his garner; and now, though my trunk is bowed with age, I can still bring forth fruit to his glory. And when my time and my work here are done, I shall be transplanted to bloom in perpetual youth and vigor in the garden of my Lord.

It was one of these thongs which was chafing my spirit when I received the following letter from Judge Lyle Wallace, an old friend of my father and well known in his State and beyond it as one of Virginia's most gifted and revered sons:

"RICHMOND, March 15, 1844.

"MY DEAR ELLEN: You have been much in my thoughts of late, particularly since your last sad affliction, and I only wish it were in my power to help and to comfort you. Perhaps it is; at any rate, the hope impels me to write to you. I think, my dear—excuse the freedom of an old man in calling you so—that there is nothing which so binds up heart-wounds as occupation, and so I have occupation to propose to you as a panacea.

"But, while it is my earnest wish that you may see fit to accept my proposition and that it may prove congenial, I am obliged to confess some selfishness mingled with the desire for your good, as my proposal is that you will come to the assist-

ance of Mrs. Wallace and myself in the upbringing of the children of George Dalrymple. You knew George, did you not? He was often at your father's house when you were a child. At any rate, you know—as does all the world besides—the story of his sad misalliance.

“That marriage eventuated even more sadly than our worst fears could have anticipated. His father aged under it, and as a last hope advised George to accede to his wife's wishes and take her back to Paris, thinking that with this question—which had been productive of such painful discussion between them—once settled he might gain that control over her fickle, vain nature which was the only hope of any domestic happiness for them. So it was agreed upon; the plan was carried into effect, and Mrs. Dalrymple—I can hardly give her the honored title—readily consented to leave behind her two infant daughters, the younger, Linda, being not quite a year old and Eva less than three.

“The tender affections of the unfortunate young father, as a solace for other disappointments, had centred upon his little daughters; so that it was almost like rending soul and body apart to separate from them. But, alas! he too well knew that his wife would not give to them that care their tender age demanded and was in no respect fitted to train their developing minds and characters; so with a sad heart he departed, and my poor friend, his

father, brought the children to my wife, who gave them the place in her heart and home which has always been held by our children and grandchildren.

“The history of the next few years was full to the brim of disaster to the Dalrymples. George was absent five years, and, although he wrote constantly, his sensitive nature, almost womanly in its refinement and shrinking delicacy, seldom touched upon the subject of his grief; but it was not hard to trace its ravages in the melancholy strain of his letters, though he often made an effort to hide it by assuming a playful tone to the children, sending messages from mamma which we elders knew emanated from himself alone.

“At the end of his five years of absence George suddenly made his appearance at his father's house alone—a man so broken that it made the heart sick to see him, and with the story of his loneliness so plainly written in his face that none asked him to give speech to it. I heard from his father, in whom alone he confided, that the wretched woman left him to escape his reasonable remonstrances against the dissipated life she persisted in leading and his earnest entreaties that she would return with him to their children. George never held up his head again, and, in despite of the strong tie his children held upon his life, in less than a year after his return he sank under the disease—consumption—which had laid his young mother in an early grave.

“During this time he never heard one word from his wife, and from that day to this no certain tidings have reached us, except that in answer to researches made by agents of my friend we heard of the sad death in a burning theatre in Paris of a nameless young woman who in some particulars answered the description of George Dalrymple’s wife. My dear old friend John did not long survive his son, and, dying, bequeathed his little granddaughters to my care; and they have ever since been objects of our most tender solicitude. Their peculiar disposition makes a stronger claim upon the generous heart of Mrs. Wallace than even her own offspring, for whom nature secures all nature’s rights.

“This is now a critical period in the lives of the little girls, and, unwilling to trust such precious charges out of our sight, we are anxious to secure for them the services of one who will complete and fill out our plans for them. We want not only a governess, but a friend. Mrs. Wallace is growing old, and finds it difficult to give to the children that care which she used to give, and which they require now. My dear friend, will you come to our help in the matter? It will be a work of great interest, I feel sure, and I think the children will reward your care.

“Now for business arrangements: . . .

“Yours faithfully,

“LYLE WALLACE.”

For the benefit of my readers I will here fill out Judge Wallace's narration.

The friendship of Lyle Wallace with John Dalrymple was lifelong, a thing inherited. Their fathers—the one from New York, and the other from Virginia—were friends. John was on a visit to this friend of his father when an event occurred which cemented the affection of the two boys. They were out swimming, and Lyle, sinking from some accident, was saved by his friend from drowning. From that time, like David and Jonathan, they were united closely as brothers. John made his home in Virginia near his friend, and married in that State, Wallace soon after following his example. But from now their lives ran diverse. Mrs. Dalrymple died within the first year of her marriage, leaving one son, who was named George Wallace. Although still in his early youth, the bereaved husband never married a second time, but devoted his life to his son. There must have been something staunch and enduring in the nature of this man, so tenaciously did he hold fast to the affections of his youth. This nature he bestowed upon his son, to whom he strove with strength and gentleness to supply the place of the mother he had so early lost.

As the boy grew into manhood the father seemed to renew his youth, sharing his studies and pleasures; he seemed cheated out of his maturity by his

son's joyous nature. After George's college course was concluded his father planned for him a tour to Europe, that in the sober age of the Old World he might supplement the youth of the New. They parted, father and son, regrets for the separation mingled with bright anticipations of their reunion, when both would profit by the gains of the one.

Alas! who could have predicted the fatality of the step? One year passed away charmingly, profitably, to the youth, drinking inspiration from historical founts, poetical aspirations rising as he followed the bard up the blue Rhine, lingered beside the beautiful Lac Lemman, traced the course of the great military leader over the St. Gothard pass, and at last arrested his footsteps in fascinating Paris, where he was content to rest a while.

Returning late one evening to his hotel, as he passed into the main entrance his attention was arrested by cries of anguish, and, impulsively following the sound, he entered a chamber where he found a golden-haired childish figure thrown upon the body of a man who lay upon his bed with a ghastly wound in the temple—dead. Paris was too busy to linger long over such a scene; one or two came and looked upon it, and went away. Not so the young American; on inquiry he found that that dead man was Monsieur Alante, an adventurer well known in the gambling-salons of Paris, where he had gained a precarious living for himself and

his young daughter. How he had met his tragical end none knew; he had been found dead, and had been brought home.

Perhaps George Dalrymple would have been less quixotic had it not been for the despair of the beautiful daughter, a girl of sixteen. He strove to soothe her grief, and buried her father; then, having done so much, he found there was literally no one to do anything else. When he inquired for her relatives and friends she passionately declared herself alone—utterly alone—and looked so beautiful in her helpless grief that George fell desperately in love with her and, blindly following the impulse of his mad passion, married her, thinking, with the confidence of youth, that so much loveliness of person must have a like loveliness of mind and heart.

So the news came, with the half-told story that George was married—yes, married to a girl about whom he had nothing to tell except that she was beautiful as an houri and that he loved her. It was a terrible blow to his father, but he obeyed the claims of the inevitable and forbore to give expression to his disappointment and fears when such expression could do no good. He even sent words of affectionate welcome to the young wife and bade George bring her home, and then set to work to prepare his home for the young mistress. He even tried to cover his apprehensions of evil by drawing mental pictures of the future happiness of

his home, in which pictures the new daughter held a conspicuous place.

The ardor of the youthful lover had not colored too brightly the beauty of Matilde. I perfectly remember her appearance. She was not the style we associate with nativity in France; I have often thought that her mother, at least, must have been of Saxon blood. She was as fair and golden as a sunbeam. Looking upon the exquisite exterior, one almost pardoned the folly of the enamored lover. By her own account she had passed a wandering life at German watering-places in summer and at Paris in winter, sometimes at school for a little while, but generally mistress of her own time and movements. Petted and caressed for her dangerous gift of beauty, she grew up a creature undisciplined and wild as a Bohemian, following each impulse as it came. If it had not been for the meeting between herself and the young Virginian, her lot might have been a very different one.

George was not long in discovering that the beautiful child he had married was not all his fancy had painted her. Her want of education shocked him, her vanity made him tremble, but he was still under the spell of love, and rejoiced that she was so young, pitied her for the misfortunes of her life and planned to educate and train her into all he could wish—a perfection suited to her exquisite beauty. Alas for the disappointment which awaits any such schemes!

A husband is seldom a good educator for a wife, and in this case there was but little underneath the fair exterior to work upon.

Mrs. Dalrymple had imbibed a passion for the only phase of life she had ever known; she was not willing to exchange the flattery of the world in general for the more sensible devotion of her husband. He wearied her by his admonitions; she did not marry to learn lessons. The stateliness of the society she met in Richmond was inexpressibly tedious; she was continually committing some act which outraged polite usage and mortified her husband and his father, until she became clamorous to return to Paris that she might enjoy the only freedom she at all appreciated, that she might get rid of the trammels which bound her to a life she hated. The husband still hoped that her woman's nature would develop with her motherhood. Vain hope! The birth of her two daughters in the first two years of her marriage served only to show how utterly nature and nurture had combined to constitute a woman wanting in every element necessary to fill the sacred position of wife and mother. The children wearied her; she was too young to settle down to a nursery. In short, it was an irreparable blunder, which worked the dire devastation of the Dalrymples, father and son, and left the innocent little ones without the care which nature provides for the opening life of childhood.

This brings me to the point taken up in Judge Wallace's letter. It did not take long to decide upon accepting the offer made me. I wanted an object in life—to feel that I had still a place in the great human family and could be of use to my kind, making others happy if I could never be so myself. My woman's heart lightened at the prospect of having little children about me; the charge of training their dawning beings had a charm to me. The offer came, too, at a time when it was necessary for me to provide a support for myself. This did so amply, but still all this, I thought, was but a device to fill out the measure of my days. God would let me help others; for me happiness was over. We often find, like Solomon, that when we ask our heavenly Father for gifts which will enable us to do his will to the best advantage, he adds to us blessings that we had not dared to include in our supplications.

CHAPTER II.

WOODLAWN.

IT was the habit of Judge Wallace to spend his winters in Richmond in the performance of the duties of his profession, but as soon as the spring suns brought with them their enervating results the hospitable doors of Woodlawn—his mountain-home—flew wide open to admit not only his own family and descendants, but many friends.

Woodlawn was a hereditary possession—one of those homes now so rare in Virginia—known everywhere for its liberal-hearted hospitality. Virginians are not less generous and warm-hearted now than were their forefathers, but, alas! we have fallen upon evil days where thrift and toil are absolute necessities, when the crust is hard to earn and the dainty bit which dogs were wont to pick up under their master's table must perforce be dispensed with. But in those halcyon days of the old State it was different, and, whilst we must admire the courage which has faced misfortune without flinching, yet, as the captive Israelites hung their harps on the willows and wept as they remembered

Zion, so do we drop a tear over the beautiful past—a past in which the old mother played so graceful a part, and with such grand courtesy, so winning, so dignified, obeyed the gospel injunction, “Use hospitality without grudging, for God loveth a cheerful giver.”

So it was to Woodlawn I went when I had accepted the offer tendered me by Judge Wallace. I shall never forget the manner of my arrival and my welcome. I wish I could lend you the ears and the eyes of my memory that you might see and hear as I still seem to do what transpired that sweet summer afternoon so many years ago. I shut my eyes upon the present and recall the past.

It was before the days when railroads had latticed the face of Nature and locomotion was not by any means what it now is. I had been riding all day, and was hot, tired and dusty. The driver had just pointed out a clump of trees with the white walls of a house glittering through them as the end of my wanderings, when my ears were attracted by the music of children’s voices, and, looking out, my eyes took in this picture: Just at the entrance of an avenue of elm trees, standing in the glorious golden sunset, was a charming group of children of various sizes and ages, from the bright boy of seventeen to the fair-haired baby in its nurse’s arms. They were clustering about the stately figure of a venerable man whose uncovered head allowed the

breeze to play at hide-and-peek with his long white locks. A sunbeam rested upon him, crowning him as with a halo far more radiant than any of earth's coronets, though set with earth's brightest jewels. The children raised to him their smiling faces, bright with youth, health and happiness. There was a pause in the babel of voices and laughter as the old gentleman made a funnel of his two hands and uttered through the aperture this sentence, the first part of which, in spite of an immense display of effort, was spoken in a very low tone, and the last two words alone shouted with the full volume of his voice :

“If these boys don't learn their lessons, must I whip them?”

Breathlessly the audience listens, with bent heads and sparkling eyes, and away off in the recesses of the woods and hills comes a stern voice repeating three times and growing fainter with each repetition :

“Whip them ! whip them ! whip th—”

“If these girls don't learn their lessons, must I whip them?” is the next question propounded, and the same mysterious voice reiterates with no loss of determination,

“Whip them ! whip them ! whip th—”

Then, in obedience to that great disciplinarian Mr. Echo, who has ordered their chastisement, the old gentleman drops his hands and dashes into the midst of the screaming, laughing throng, and, seiz-

ing one after another, then and there inflicts summary chastisement, while the mysterious voice sends back weird, mocking laughter and shouts which seem carried from one point to another till the woods and hills re-echo with gleeful sounds.

This group, containing many of the *dramatis personæ* of my story, is standing, as I before said, at the entrance of an avenue of elm trees whose branches, meeting, form an archway over the carriage-road. This avenue comes to an abrupt termination at a great gate with enormous side-posts giving an idea of solidity and firmness. The gate opens very wide and seems to send a hospitable invitation to outsiders to come in and be blessed. Within the enclosure the carriage-road divides, and the two branches, running in opposite directions through an apple-orchard, form a wide circle, meeting at the great entrance of an old-fashioned but very beautiful mansion whose stuccoed walls glitter in the evening sun like a mountain of new-fallen snow.

Extending from the front of the house to the gate and dividing the orchard in two is a smooth-shaven lawn whose green surface is broken on either side by broad flower-borders in which no flower is allowed except the rose, but where an infinite variety of this prolific family finds its place. In the full glory of their rich bloom, these roses scatter their many-hued leaves in lavish profusion and load the air with their delicious perfume. With the ex-

ception of this avenue of roses and a few climbers on arbor and trellis, there are no flowers at the front of the house, but the grass is most luxuriant. Passing around the house to the west, one is entranced by the river, at the distance of some two hundred yards. The ground slopes upward, culminating in a mound which forms the centre of this most beautiful garden, which must cover nearly three acres. It is enclosed by a hedge of purple lilacs, Mrs. Wallace's especial pride, and it is hard to imagine anything more beautiful than this rich green-and-purple wall shutting in a garden which might have been modeled after the garden of Eden.

But all this time have I been garrulously wandering on over familiar scenes about this beautiful old Virginia home, and I have left the group of children at the entrance to the avenue, while my carriage lingers near.

As Judge Wallace darted in and out among the group of children he caught sight of the carriage with my head out of the window; instantly coming forward, he gave me a hearty welcome, excusing himself by saying laughingly,

"Ah, Ellen—for I must drop formalities with your father's child—you find the old man playing the boy. Don't accuse me of second childhood, but lay it all to the rejuvenating effects of the mountain-air." Then, turning to the children, he said, "Make your best bows to Miss Ellen Maxwell,

young folks, and run home. She is too tired to be made known in broken doses to such a multitude; she may take her time at that. Scamper home, you rogues! See who will get there first and tell the news."

Off flew the children, filling the air with their merry music, while the judge, taking a seat beside me, questioned, as we rode, of my journey with a kind courtesy which set me quite at ease with him.

The children had already announced my arrival, and the portico was filled with a formidable group.

"Welcome home, my dear," said the judge as he helped me from the carriage, while a stout lady with a basket on her arm came forward with a charmingly welcoming face and was introduced as "My wife." She kissed my cheek and repeated "Welcome home, my dear." Then one after another was introduced; but I grew bewildered—as you would do, my reader—with the number of introductions, all kindly gracious people, but people who have no place in my story.

"And this is Eva," said the judge, leading forward a blushing little rosebud of a girl who with an innocent confidingness which won me at once put up her mouth for a kiss. She was wonderfully like that vision of loveliness which had lured George Dalrymple to ruin, but the fact brought no prejudice to my spirit; I was only charmed by the idea that I was to train the mind and the heart of the

beautiful child, to make her all that under happier auspices her unfortunate mother might have been.

“Where is my little Lin?” said the judge, turning about in the group. “She did not go out to call the echo, and promised to be the first to welcome Miss Maxwell. Where is the child?”

No one knew, but Mrs. Wallace suggested with a laugh,

“Buried in a book somewhere.”

“Yes,” said the judge; “and when that is the case, you might burn the house down and singe off the end of her nose without much disturbing her.”

“Humph!” uttered some one behind me, so ominously disapproving that I turned to see whence the voice came.

“Let me introduce my cousin, Miss Betsey Briggs,” said Mrs. Wallace; and my eye took in a vision of a female in attire too youthful for the years imprinted upon her visage.

Miss Betsey was all ends and furbelows, curls and crimps, conveying a sort of impression of being out in a high wind. I afterward learned that she was a distant relative of Mrs. Wallace and a pensioner upon the bounty of the house, the single drop of blood making large claims when backed by need. She simpered with her hand before her lips, as if suppressing a laugh, as she said,

“You will find Miss Lin in the library, book in hand, and no doubt with holes in her stockings.

This child is my dear cousin's weakness, as you will find, Miss Maxwell."

There was something very disagreeable about Miss Betsey's manner, and I did not wonder at the slight contraction of the judge's brow as he led the way, saying,

"Well, let us hunt up the culprit in her usual haunts."

He led the way to the farther end of the hall, where a door opened into a cool green library whose walls were covered with books of solid worth. The bright Venetians seemed to wave a welcome as they were moved by the light breeze, letting in from the rosy setting sun starts and flashes of light which were like beaming smiles on the face of the home-like apartment. A window filled a recess, at the front of which was a large arm-chair covered with green morocco. This was pushed close against the window, the Venetians of which were raised, and the last rays of the departing god of day rested upon the bent head of a little girl whose limbs were folded up out of sight as she reclined with ungraceful freedom in the ample dimensions of the chair. She held in her hand a book, over which she bent; her back was toward us, and only the top of a very tangled head was visible. Our entrance did not in the least disturb her until Eva ran forward and, seizing the book, brought the student back to the realities of every-day life. Spring-

ing to her feet, she looked around in dire confusion, while all joined in an irrepressible laugh at her appearance.

“This is the way you meet Miss Maxwell, is it?” laughed Eva.

“I—I am sorry. I forgot,” stammered the little girl, catching her grandpapa’s hand and nestling to his side as a shipwrecked man would seize a spar in his way.

I am afraid the good judge was open to the charge of undue tenderness for this little girl; it was disclosed in every tone of his voice when he spoke of or to her. As she stood thus with bowed head, only a corner of a red cheek visible, awkward, embarrassed, the contrast with the pretty, graceful Eva was painfully striking; and, with that proneness to judge by first appearances, I found myself rapidly comparing and contrasting, turning to the beautiful Eva with joy at the prospect of having her always near me, and fears, on the other hand, possessing me that the little Lin was to be the alloy in the cup of my satisfaction.

“Never mind, darling,” said grandpa; “Miss Maxwell will excuse you, I know. Look up and let her see if you are not like your Dalrymple grandfather.”

Whether even this encouragement would have imparted the requisite confidence I do not know, but, putting his hand under the girl’s chin, Judge

Wallace lifted the drooping head, and I was almost startled by the vivid likeness to the people from whom she had sprung, the great gray eyes and the strongly-marked features—too strong for comeliness in one of her tender years. I exclaimed,

“Oh, so like your father and your grandfather!”

“Dalrymple outside and in,” said the judge as he stooped to kiss into peace the troubled look on the little upturned face. “They ought to have for their standard a stalwart oak, and for their motto, ‘Staunch to the core.’ This child receives in her nature a rich inheritance from her fathers; I am much mistaken if she ever shrinks back from the path of right.”

I looked at the two sisters standing thus. Eva, inattentive to this last scene, was merrily laughing at some whispered joke of Tom Hastings. “An apt representation of sunshine and shade,” I thought.

This was my introduction to the two young lives with which my own has ever since been entwined.

CHAPTER III.

THE SISTERS.

ABOUT one hundred yards from the handsome dwelling-house of Woodlawn there was an old-fashioned, long, low, rambling house which went by the name of "the old house." It had been the home of the last generation, as Judge Wallace himself had built the "great house" to meet the greater wants of his large household. This cottage had received additions and remodelings until, if it had ever possessed an order of architecture, it was entirely lost. On one side it opened upon the great garden and reaped all the benefit to be derived from the mound of flowers. Old forest-trees surrounded the other three sides with their leafy foliage, making about it a sort of perpetual twilight. The entrance was through a small rustic porch with a bench at each end. This porch served as a trellis for a Virginia creeper, which by means of the support thus afforded clambered to the house itself. It must have taken root many years ago, as it not only made a perfect bower of the porch, but covered the entire side of the house, embracing various window-frames in its progress,

and never resting until it hung its rich fringe of bloom about the tops of the chimneys, where at the bidding of every passing breeze it waved in gratified ambition.

The use to which this cottage was devoted in the household economy was as a sort of honorable retreat for the overflowings of the great house. It was also named by the young men "Liberty Hall," from the fact that they there enjoyed a larger license in the matter of slippers, lounging and cigars than was admissible in the more dignified mansion.

I was charmed to find that three rooms—a school-room and two chambers—in this edifice had been set apart for myself and my pupils. I felt in my independent position, with my delightful rooms and my charges entirely under my control, quite as if I had set up a home of my own. It was some days before I shook myself well into my nest; this done, I set to work to study the characters of my pupils with a sincere desire to reward the trust so generously reposed in me by bringing from the plastic materials at my hand the best results possible. My heart was in my work,

"And the heart giveth grace unto every art."

I knew too well that nothing could be accomplished alone, so daily I strengthened hand and heart at the great storehouse where human nature is privileged to resort.

It is not my purpose to dwell at any length upon the childhood days of my interesting pupils, as the story I am telling centres about their later life, but, for the proper understanding of the characters they developed, I deem it necessary to make my readers acquainted with the natural elements composing these characters.

Eva's remarkable personal attractions were supplemented by qualities of mind completely in unison; Nature, in her most lavish mood, seemed indeed to have moulded her of every creature's best. She had a face fair as the flowers of the Cape jessamine, set in a framework of fleecy, shining locks which had caught and imprisoned a sunbeam in their meshes, eyes as blue as the heavens, soft and melting at one moment and sparkling with merriment the next; the whitest neck, arms and hands, beautifully dimpled and models in form. She was small for her age. There had been no disproportioned growth, no long, awkward, undeveloped limbs; she grew evenly and gracefully from babyhood to womanhood with perfect smoothness. Added to this, she possessed that subtle power—innate in some favored few—of attracting others, and the tact which always suggests the right word in the right place. The malapropos remark which often proceeds from a lack of self-confidence and appreciation was never chargeable to her; the knowledge of what to say and when to say it was one of her rare

endowments. She had all of the attractions of girlish diffidence without its reality. Her delicate complexion, deepening and fading with every change of expression, gave one the impression of great sensitiveness and modesty, when, in truth, she was as self-possessed as a woman of the world. The most serene consciousness of her own attractions pervaded Eva's whole being, accompanied by a self-love which secured their development to the utmost. Whilst her companions, in the enjoyment of country freedom, required constant admonitions in the matter of bonnets and gloves, Eva was never at fault: her beautiful hands would emerge from their warm gloves unkissed by the tanning sun, and her fair face would look through the folds of a thick veil blanched and softened by the protection, and all this without any thought being given to it. It was as natural to her to take care of her beauty as it was for her to be beautiful; the outside appearance was everything to her.

Now, for completing the picture, truth compels me to veil a little of its brightness. Except for the purpose of enhancing her natural attractions, Eva had no desire for accomplishments or for cultivation. Her voice was like a bird's, in laughter or song striking true notes of music. For drawing she had a talent which, had there been an earnest nature behind it, might have developed the gifted artist. No wonder my heart rejoiced at such a foundation for my work.

A few weeks sufficed to impress the lesson learned long before—that the shining pebble may glitter more brightly than the precious ore. With that serene self-approbation of which I have spoken, Eva believed superfluous any unnecessary exertion in perfecting her accomplishments. Hers was a luxurious nature content to rest its laurels upon personal endowments; her energies, ample for the pursuit of enjoyment, fainted before the exertion necessary for improvement of her gifts. For the first few weeks I was electrified by her marvelous aptness; then came the end. The novelty gone, exertion became drudgery, and Eva dropped into pretty, graceful idleness, answering my remonstrances with her characteristic egotism:

“It is too much trouble. And what use can there be in it? I can already sing and play well enough to please in society; that is all it is for. This everlasting bother is quite unnecessary; no one listens to scientific music.”

Eva's fingers would move lazily over the keys, fashioning an airy little melody, or in the intervals of the conversation she would warble a snatch from a song as a commentary on her words.

After one of these contests I thought it best to appeal to Mrs. Wallace; the judge was also called into the consultation. I represented my difficulty as mildly as possible. I could not get the children to practice or to pay the attention to my directions

I felt to be necessary. Eva was summoned, quite sharply reproved and ordered to play the music given to her. She did so. To the ears of Judge and Mrs. Wallace, who knew nothing of music, she played as well as a professional, while to mine she made only musical jargon without sense.

“She has certainly improved,” said the judge.

“Does you infinite credit,” remarked Mrs. Wallace.

“Plays better than Linda will do should she practice a thousand years,” snapped Miss Betsey Briggs, who had come in most inopportunately, and who never missed an opportunity to contrast the two sisters to Linda’s disadvantage.

“But,” I remonstrated, “the point I complain of is that she does not count time nor read her notes.”

“Eva, my dear,” said grandpapa, with a sternness not skin-deep, “you must count time and read your notes. I expect you to obey Miss Maxwell implicitly.”

“Yes, my love,” echoed grandmamma; “I hope Miss Maxwell will insist upon perfect obedience.—And please, Miss Ellen, let us know if there is any further trouble.”

The conclave then adjourned, leaving me with my refractory pupil, who looked at me archly for a moment, and then, breaking into an irresistible laugh, threw her arms around me and said,

“Oh, you are so angry! and I am sorry, but you look so funny!”

“You are very rude, Eva,” I said, disengaging myself from her and feeling utterly baffled and discomfited.

“Oh, Miss Ellen, forgive me,” she exclaimed, trying to control her laughter. “It was really too much—too droll! Grandpapa and grandmamma don’t know a thing about music, and I knew if I played my very best they would think it was all right.”

“You acknowledge your duplicity, then?” said I, indignantly.

“Please, now, dear Miss Ellen, don’t be cross and call my joke by such ugly names, and really I will be a good girl. But, as to reading those black-headed things, I cannot do it, and ‘one, two, three,’ ‘one, two, three,’ just puts me in a passion. I shall do very well without so much trouble; it is all right for Lin, who has no talent for music.”

I was forced to see that my eldest pupil was perfectly superficial, and to abandon any bright hope of ever making her anything else.

These were grave faults enough, but I shall hint another. Have you never met with a person who had as great a horror of falsehood as of theft or murder, yet in whose make-up there was an undercurrent of untruthfulness which undermined the whole character? It developed itself in the soft word of flattery, asserting its presence in the hesitating word of half-

praise—more fatal, often, to the absent than the open anathema. And oh the power in such a character of the sweet, winning voice, the seductive manner and the beautiful face, like the delicate flower whose fragrant leaves conceal the insect with poisonous sting lurking beneath, ready to inflame whatever it touches!

Now I turn to my second pupil. The verdict of the world was very much what mine had been. What freak of Nature had sent out from one fountain such diverse streams? It was as if the natures of the parents, diametrically opposite and alien in blood, refused to mingle in their offspring, the one child absorbing not only the wonderful beauty of the mother, but her characteristics, while the other was, as Judge Wallace expressed it, "all Dalrymple within and without, God bless her!" Shy, painfully self-depreciative and shrinking from observation, the latter was misunderstood and underrated except by the few who saw the sweet kernel beneath the unattractive shell. This was inevitable; such natures must always suffer by such contrasts as those to which Linda was subjected. While Eva laughed and chatted at her ease, not a whit more than was pretty and proper, poor Lin, feeling how impossible it was for her to do the like and conscious of dullness so near the glitter, would creep off to a corner, or perhaps, making a spasmodic effort at ease and gayety, would end with some maladroit

remark, the child of her embarrassment, over which she would sensitively brood, then would creep away and be seen no more.

Far from possessing the beauty of her sister, Linda was generally pronounced just the opposite; yet in the face of the child there were elements in which the physiognomist would have found pleasure. At first glance one marked only the irregularity of the features, the sallow complexion, the awkward length of limb; another and deeper glance disclosed a wonderful degree of undeveloped strength in the face and a foreshadowing of truth and candor in the broad open brow which proved sure indications of the character afterward developed. The redeeming feature of her face was her eyes. Talk of your sparkling black eye, the liquid blue, the languishing brown! The finest eye, after all, is the gray, and the finest gray eyes I ever saw were set in Linda Dalrymple's head. They were eyes which instantly expressed every change of feeling—earnest, intense, obedient to the most transient feeling of their owner. The rest of the face was not pretty, not even handsome, but those eyes redeemed it from homeliness.

After the eyes, her hair was perhaps Linda's most expressive feature. When she was reading or thinking she had a way of running her fingers through it until it resembled a lion's mane more than anything else. As this dishevelment was in

exact proportion to its length, Miss Betsey may be excused, perhaps, for one day seizing the scissors and shearing the obnoxious fleece, to which operation Lin did not submit without a struggle and a burst of passion. Not that she cared for the hair, but she resented Miss Betsey's assumption of authority and recognized the reproof—more than implied—in the act; and blame did cut so cruelly into the little girl's sensitive nature! But Samson's locks of strength grew after they were shorn, and so have many another's; so, certainly, did Linda Dalrymple's, and were again dangerously standing up. Miss Betsey waved her scissors. I pleaded for the locks. Tom Hastings, the wit of the family, reported that for three nights he heard me mournfully singing under Miss Betsey's window,

“Woodman, spare that tree!
Touch not a single bough.”

But before my cause was gained I had to engage a special pleader in the person of “grandpa,” and I fear Miss Betsey never again counted me in the list of her favorites. With sweeping eloquence she classed me with Judge Wallace and Harry, who “Never see a fault in that child!”

“Fault”! That was a mistake; there were plenty of faults—enough to make me often feel discouraged in my work. But in battling with them I found so much to reward effort that I kept

good heart. She was honest to the heart's core. I have seen her sensitive organization cower and shrink from the necessity of confession of sins of omission and commission, but I never saw it fail. One secret of her troubles was her dreamy absent-mindedness, an absorption in whatever interested her which often made her forget important duties, and which was greatly to be deprecated.

Harry Wallace illustrated this peculiarity of Lin's by an amusing incident of her early days, which I give for what it is worth. When reading was yet in its primitive stage with Linda, she was one day summoned to the parlor to bid farewell to a little companion who was leaving Richmond for a distant home. Unfortunately, Linda on her way picked up a Watts's *Child's Catechism*, opened it and became absorbed in its contents. A second messenger was despatched for her, and with somnambulistic tread she came into the room where the family were assembled about the little stranger. Her eyes fixed upon the book, she read aloud with the greatest solemnity,

“ ‘ Q. Can-you-tell-me-child-who-made-you? A. The—’ ”

“ Linda,” said Mrs. Wallace as the absorbed child stumbled against that lady, “ Helen has come to say ‘ Good-bye ’ to you.”

Without taking her eyes off the book, Lin extended her hand as she continued to read aloud :

“—Great-God-who-made-heaven-and-earth. Q. And—”

“Linda Dalrymple!”

It was Miss Betsey's voice this time, and, as it always proved a painful disturber of Lin's dreams, she shook Helen's hand up and down like a pump-handle, saying, without enthusiasm,

“Good-bye, Helen.—‘What - does - God - do - for - you? A. He-keeps-me-from-harm—’”

Not from the harm of Miss Betsey's hasty hand, which snatched away the book; and Lin awoke to find herself disgraced in the presence of the assembled household.

I have never seen such avidity for books. Anything to feed the hunger and thirst. Story-books first; but if they were not convenient, history or poetry would do, and one day I surprised her with Hervey's *Meditations among the Tombs*. She was more frequently delinquent at her lessons than Eva because of her dreaminess, but, once arouse her interest, she was insatiable. Often the hour for dismissal would come in the midst of some explanation. Off would fly Eva, eager to claim her freedom, but Lin never; those great gray eyes would nail me to my chair and her “Miss Maxwell, please tell me the rest,” was not to be resisted until she was satisfied.

But it was a long time before I felt I had advanced a step in bringing Lin to a sense of those

practical duties so important in the life of a woman. I think there was naturally a depression where her bump of order was due, while Eva's was almost too fully developed; Eva seemed to have received her own share and Lin's also. I have before me a package of papers yellow with age, scribbled over with the quaint characters of a childish handwriting; I smile as I recall it—the fruit of a suggestion to Lin that she should keep a diary. The novelty of the idea seized her fancy. I read:

“*August 21.*—I am twelve years old to-day, and I am going to keep a *Dairy*. I will begin with some good resolutions I made this morning:

“1. I will think what I am about.

“2. I will darn my stockings and mend my clothes whenever they need it.

“3. I will not leave my things lying round.

“4. I will try and not get angry when Cousin Betsey scolds me.

“5. I will be glad when Eva gets praised and I get blamed.

“6. I will not get angry with Eva, because I must love her. She is all the sister I have, and no father nor mother nor brother, though Harry is just like one.

“7. I will not read so many story-books, but more serious ones, to improve my mind.

“8. I will try to do everything that is right, no matter how hard and disagreeable and stupid it is,

because God knows all our trials and troubles, and loves us when we do such things.

“*August 22.*—I really do not see much use in good resolutions. I never can keep them; it is always the same. I wrote down my resolutions yesterday because I thought that would make me remember. I wrote them before breakfast; and when the bell rang, I hurried off to the house, and had to go back because Miss Maxwell called me to put my things away. I felt very badly at having broken my resolutions so soon. I could have cried if it had not been on my birthday, but then I would have cried all the year around, and so I did not.

“I was late at breakfast, but nobody scolded, because it was my birthday, and my plate was piled up with presents. Oh, it was too nice! Grandpa gave me *The Lady of the Lake*, and grandma a workbox with scissors and needles and thread; and Harry gave me a ring, and Eva a sash, and Miss Maxwell a pretty book. I certainly was happy to see how many friends I have. If I could only be a better girl! Birthdays certainly are pleasant. I felt as if could never be angry again, but I was. Eva was very provoking to me, laughed at me, and I was as angry as I could be, and forgot all about her present till she said,

“‘You ungrateful thing! I never will give you anything again if you have a thousand birthdays.’

“Oh, I wish she would not, because I do not believe I will ever help getting mad with her, and it makes it so dreadful to be told you are ungrateful. I just had to go away from her quick then to keep from saying anything else and being more ungrateful.

“Then I thought I would begin my history-reading, but I took a look at the story-book Miss Maxwell gave me, and I forgot all about everything till dinner-time; and then it made me very miserable to think how many of my resolutions I had broken already. I went to Miss Maxwell and told her about my discouragements; she always comforts me in my sorrows. She just kissed me and smiled, and said,

“‘Ah, little Lin, little Lin! You are just learning one of life’s lessons. All the road is resolving and failing, a picking ourselves up and going on again, and so on to the end.’

“If she says so, I suppose it is true, and I must pick myself up and go on again; but it is hard to believe that Mr. Bunyan and the Shepherd of Salisbury Plain and all the good people in the Bible had as hard a time as I do.”

I think in my whole long life I never saw two natures more absolutely antagonistic than were the natures of these sisters. They were diametrically opposed to each other. Eva was beautiful, and knew it; the knowledge of the fact made her su-

premely happy. Linda was wanting in beauty and exaggerated her lack of personal attractions, and, I am afraid, often made herself supremely wretched. Eva had a calm self-satisfaction with herself in every particular which was the very opposite to her sister's impulsive, nervous self-torture, which made her constantly draw a contrast unfavorable to herself between herself and others. I think she always had an inward consciousness that there were compensations in her being which others knew not of; she felt as if she wore some impenetrable disguise which penned her better nature in and hid it from the common gaze. Eva was universally pronounced "so sweet-tempered," while poor Lin suffered from gusts of passion which shook her life and made her unhappy, and which left Eva—who generally provoked them—as calm and self-satisfied as the white moon. Yet in my hands, with Judge Wallace, Mrs. Wallace and Harry, there could not possibly be a child more easily controlled than Linda; she felt we loved her, and where love ruled she was a lamb. I think it safe to affirm that Judge Wallace did not even guess that his little pet was a tornado at times.

Long and diligently I studied my pupils, and as the study progressed the strongest affections of my heart centred about the child whose great pent-up nature, if properly developed, promised such rare strength and grandeur. I used to wonder why the

great All-Father who determines the thickness of the clothing necessary to enable the wild beast of the North to withstand the cold of the polar regions, who guides the little bird away from the harsh breath of the winter storm, who preserves the wonderful harmony of nature in the spheres, should have placed these two dispositions where the finer nature was rasped and tortured by the contact. But as time went on and I saw self-control avert the passionate outburst, as I saw unselfish conscientiousness growing, I knew that as the storm has for its mission the strengthening of the roots of the strong trees, so there was some appointed work in life the child was to do for which her nature was to be purified and strengthened; and when my door would open hastily and Linda rush in as if pursued by a phantom she feared, then seat herself quietly by my side, but with panting chest and flashing eyes, I learned to know that the hunted animal was flying to a place of safety from the weapons of death.

One day, however, the tempest burst as Lin buried her face in my lap. Sobs shook her frame, and cries of anguish which alarmed me. A word of sympathy and comfort, and the torrent of words flowed:

“I know I am dreadfully wicked, and I cannot help it. No one thinks that Eva does anything to me, and maybe she don't and it is all my dreadful temper. Every one says she is sweet-tempered and

gentle, and maybe she is, but I cannot help getting angry with her. She always seems right, and I always seem wrong. Oh, Maxy, will it ever come straight?"

I soothed and petted her, and, like the tired child she was, she sobbed herself to sleep on my pillow; then I opened the door which led into the girls' room and went in, softly closing the door after me. Heaven could scarcely present a more perfect vision of peace than that which reigned around the pretty little chamber. Everything was in the most perfect order. The vine-bowered windows were opened to admit the soft breeze, and at one of them sat Eva as the presiding genius of the place, her soft hair gently waving about her angelic face, her pretty hands moving nimbly as she deftly twined flower after flower—of which her lap was full—into the tasteful bouquet.

"Is not this beautiful?" she said, smiling, as I entered, and holding up her work.

I seated myself at her side, feeling as embarrassed as if I had been overtaken in a fault; I saw no room for accusation. She relieved my dilemma by saying, as she shook her head pensively,

"Poor Lin! I suppose she has been complaining of me and you have come to know the truth."

"Not at all," I said; "Lin has made no accusation against you. Had she done so, I should have to look no farther for the truth."

Eva turned her innocent blue eyes on my face with a look of unfeigned surprise as she answered,

“Do you mean that I would not tell the truth, Miss Maxwell?”

“No, but Linda assuredly would,” I answered.

“Of what has she accused me?”

“You, of nothing,” I said—“herself, of much.”

Eva rocked herself contentedly as she added a white rosebud to her bouquet, saying, at the same time,

“I am glad of it. I certainly have done nothing to make her angry; her temper is a great trouble to herself and to every one else.”

“What was the matter?” I asked.

“Oh, nothing, as usual,” sighed Eva. “You know I cannot live in disorder; and when I came in I found Lin’s bureau emptied and her clothes scattered over the floor—‘fixing,’ she said. I bore it patiently till she got hold of a book, and I knew that was the end of it, so I remonstrated; and when that did no good, I got up and put her things away myself.”

“Very kind!” I said. “Did she wish you to do it?”

“Oh no; that was the trouble. She threw away the book and insisted I should not touch her things, she would put them away herself.”

“Ah! I see. And you persisted?” I inquired.

“Yes, because I knew it would never be done if I did not. So she ran out of the room in a rage, while I finished her work—only see how beautifully the clothes are arranged—and I sprinkled them with rose-leaves. I knew she was telling you, but of course, if she took all the blame—as she ought to have done—it is all right.”

Eva had risen as she spoke, holding up her muslin apron full of flowers, and, opening one after another of the bureau-drawers, displayed them in perfect order with the dainty rose-leaves over them.

What was I to do? Where was the blame? As Lin said, Eva always made her cause seem right, and yet I knew all was in seeming. I said,

“You should have let her fix her own things; she had just left me very full of the idea of fixing and keeping her clothing in perfect order.”

“She makes that resolution, to my certain knowledge, about once a week, and breaks it as often,” said Eva, smiling sadly, “and I cannot live in disorder.”

So the matter ended, and was succeeded by so many more of the same sort that I was tempted to give up in despair. But my interest in Linda and my affection for her were too great for me to give her up; the child had twined herself about my heart in a way for which I could not account. I felt as if I was God-appointed to watch her life that she

might not be swept away from her moorings by an influence I distinctly recognized as baneful.

I would not for an instant have my readers imagine that the life of the two sisters was all storm; by no means. Linda in her self-accusation often unduly submitted to the influence of her sister, allowing herself to be sent hither and thither by her, bowing to her superiority as lowlily as a princess could have wished; but ever and anon a tempest would come, and Lin and I knew where lay the blame.

My effort to solve the difficult question sent me one day to Judge Wallace's study, where I surprised him by asking,

“Did you ever try, my dear sir, to mix fire and water?”

“Rather a hazardous experiment,” said the judge, courteously leading me to a chair beside his own and smilingly waiting an explanation.

“Yet,” I said, sententiously, “both are excellent elements apart.” He assented in silence. “Well I am afraid we are trying this experiment. I feel sure that I have these two elements in my two pupils. Eva is the beautiful cold water; Linda, the warm, glowing, sparkling, and often fierce, fire. If kept apart, these two will do well; if mingled, I fear they will destroy each other.”

A look of grave concern took possession of the judge's face as he exclaimed,

“Eva and Linda! I cannot understand.”

I explained fully, and did not conceal the fact that I considered Linda's disposition the finer of the two, that the sisters were antagonistic, that it was not the least baneful result of George Dalrymple's unfortunate marriage that the alien nature which had refused to fuse with his own had reproduced the same repulsion in the persons of his children. I told Judge Wallace that at this stage in their lives I especially feared the result upon the high-strung, sensitive nature of the younger sister. It was true that with judicious training the very trial might be the means of gaining for Linda self-control over what her most partial friends must recognize as a troublesome fire in the blood; yet in the seasons of repentance which followed, in the desire to atone for her faults, the impulse led her too far: she not only added immeasurably to Eva's unwarrantable self-satisfaction, but humiliated herself and ran the risk of losing her self-respect, and with it the finest ingredients of her nature.

Judge Wallace listened to me with the gravest concern. These children he regarded as a sacred bequest, and their interests were paramount. He had been vaguely conscious of something wrong, and so had provided for them a special providence in the person of their governess; and now to be told that there was a mysterious influence to battle against filled him with alarm, if not with dismay.

In the silence which followed my explanation he continued to regard me with an expression in which these feelings were easily discerned.

“My dear sir,” I said, laying my hand on his arm, “don’t take the matter too seriously.”

“‘Too seriously’!” he ejaculated, excitedly, as he rose and paced the floor. “That is impossible. Will the dire results of that French marriage never end? It has laid two noble hearts in the grave, and now you tell me the nature of that woman lives in these children.”

“Not in *these children*,” I said, “in only one of them. Linda has not a taint; I only fear its existence in Eva. But consider, judge, the plastic nature of a child. If that poor woman had had bestowed upon her childhood a tithe of the care which you have provided for these little girls, the nature which has been so fatal to the Dalrymples might have developed very differently.”

“I cannot believe it, Ellen. It may be prejudice, but so dearly do I love the child, and so bitterly do I deprecate the idea of her inheriting the nature of that woman, that with my own hands I would open her veins and let the mother’s blood run out if I could with it eradicate her nature.”

I could not for my life help smiling at the idea of the soft-hearted old judge lending himself to such a bloody experiment, but I only replied,

“I did not mean to intimate anything very ex-

travagant, my dear sir, but only to suggest that at this critical period of their lives the girls would be better apart."

"'Apart'? Why, Miss Maxwell, they are sisters! I never heard of a case where it was better to bring up sisters apart; they lose the sweetest influence of their lives."

I represented to the judge that those with whom he had been acquainted were made of different stuff from these anomalous sisters under discussion; that Linda's nature wanted repose—a repose which was not possible while she was dominated by Eva's attractions and self-esteem. She wanted to be more a centre of affection, and it was almost as necessary for Eva to be away from home for opposite reasons—where she would find others as beautiful as herself, where she would not be so much the object of flattery and attention as she was fast becoming. I advised that she should be sent for a few years to a good boarding-school where her really rare talents would be cultivated, and where her little vanities and æsthetic tastes could be made subservient to more solid requirements.

Our conversation was a long one; and when we parted, Judge Wallace promised that he would take the matter into deep consideration, and if not of my opinion after consulting with Mrs. Wallace he might be able to present such a modification of my plans as would satisfy all parties.

CHAPTER IV.

CHILD'S PLAY.

IT was the custom of Judge and Mrs. Wallace in these summer flittings to their mountain-home to gather with them as many as possible of their descendants—children and grandchildren—now a goodly host, that the season of vacation might also be one of domestic enjoyment and a renewal of associations which are so powerful in keeping alive the home affections. In this way sister and brother retained their hold upon each other; their children grew up like members of the same family instead of drifting apart with no common interests, as is too often the case. Thus the goodly sons and the fair daughters belted about with growing infancy gathered each summer at the old homestead, and the parents taught the children their own old plays on the lawn and in the groves, making their very pastimes a thing of inheritance.

The present patriarchs of the flock having early begun life together, their family presented the strange anomaly of children and grandchildren of the same age. Thus, Lyle Wallace and Tom Hastings, the

two grandsons, were the same age with Harry Wallace, their young uncle, a noble-looking boy of seventeen. They shared one another's sports and studies, and, half in joke, half earnest, he went by the name of "Little Uncle" with all the children, including the two Dalrymples.

As the pastimes of the Woodlawn children have a bearing upon my story, my kind reader must perforce stop with me and play with them for a little while.

As I have said, these sports were inherited, and so, by the natural laws of growth and development, were brought to a larger degree of perfection than it has ever been my lot to see elsewhere. The plan of their plays was carried out from summer to summer in the midst of scenes replete with the associations not only of a lifetime, but of generations of lives. By the magic of their young imaginations the old gray limestone rocks were transformed into town-house and country-house, as was required, with the necessary adjuncts of kitchen, dairy and laundry. Here the young housekeepers took their first lessons in woman's rights and woman's privileges, and were as much in earnest as if in reality they occupied the responsible positions they assumed. There was an old tool-house with "Farmers' Bank" in flaming characters over the door, and here Lyle Wallace, Jr., presided with great dignity and ability over the banking interests of the community. Hav-

ing found an old blank check-book, they filled out the blanks to represent bank-notes, and with this bloated currency traffic was carried on to an unlimited extent. Fortunes were made and lost with incredible rapidity. Sometimes, for the interest of the thing, a millionaire, for the pleasure of making another fortune, would die, leave his fortune to his heir and begin life as some one else.

Tom Hastings fell upon that plan once, making his will and leaving his fortune to Lin, telling her he was going to do so. In her elation she told of her great expectations to the rest. Tom made another will, and cut her off with a shilling for being so mercenary as to rejoice in his death because she would gain filthy lucre by it, and Lin was really afflicted both by her loss and by the cruel imputation.

Tom was the head of a mercantile establishment and vended a variety of articles. There sugar was sold by the acorn-cupful and at starvation prices; there rice and coffee were sold by the grain, and fruit which could be had from the trees for the plucking in the mad love of traffic commanded astounding prices. Fresh butter from Annie's churn was displayed on grape-leaves, and Lin and Tom together one day manufactured some ice-cream which they lauded to the skies, and which Tom sold for fifty dollars a saucer, Woodlawn currency; but upon tasting it Eva discovered that the salt had been put

in the cream to make it freeze instead of in the ice, and the manufacturers were laughed at for their pains. Tom enjoyed the joke and laughed louder than the rest, but Lin first got angry and then crept off to hide herself and her mortification.

But the pride of the Woodlawn children, after all, was the *Woodlawn News*, which was issued every fortnight, and of which Harry Wallace and Lin Dalrymple were joint-editors, Lin choosing a manly *nom-de-plume*, her own proper title being out of place for the duties of an editor, but her own proper person being too valuable an adjunct to be despised because of her sex. I peeped into the office one day when the paper was being made up, and it was equal to a visit to the theatre with stars on the boards. Harry sat at a desk, before him a great sheet of foolscap—which served instead of the printed sheet—writing most diligently, while Lin, at the same desk, had brought herself up to her partner's level by means of a high three-legged stool from which her feet dangled ungracefully. With her expressive hair in the wildest confusion, she was "composing" a poem which I afterward found adorning the "Poet's Corner" of the next number—a remarkable production, beginning,

"'Twas on a dark and stormy night;
The waves were dashing high;
I saw a horrid, awful sight
Which made me shriek and cry."

Her style was eminently tragic, and she was reserved for the sensation columns of the *News*. Harry was more romantic, and undertook the heavier work. Lyle Wallace once contributed an able article on "Science," but he was never permitted to repeat the offence. Tom said it was not fair that such heavy facts should be stuffed down a fellow in vacation, when rest was desirable after the labors of the year. (I have always observed that this rest from labor is insisted upon by those who require it least. Tom Hastings certainly never exhausted himself in the pursuit of knowledge.) Eva supplied the fashion-plates and descriptions thereof for the *News*, and did it well, too, having a taste for drawing, and certainly a keen eye for anything which looked to the adornment of her pretty person. Annie Hastings contributed jokes, riddles and such lighter matters, while Tom and the small fry collected small items, such as "Mrs. Vixen" (a setter dog) "has five fine children—two of them black, one spotted, and two yellow, like herself;" "The celebrated Mr. R——, a member of the Virginia Legislature, is visiting at Woodlawn now;" "There was an exciting scene in the poultry-yard on Tuesday. The youth and beauty of Woodlawn turned out, and were on the fence to witness the contest between the big yellow rooster (Julius Cæsar) and the little Dominica (Napoleon Buonaparte). The ladies waved their fans and the men shouted wildly as Julius Cæsar turned

tail and ran off the field pursued closely by Napoleon Buonaparte, who crowed wildly and exultingly over his victory."

But all this is a digression, as I had summoned my reader to an editorial conference.

I had been walking in the garden one morning, when, attracted by the murmur of voices, I drew near to the schoolroom window and saw the editors thus engaged. I placed myself quite out of sight, but in hearing, so that I might enjoy without interrupting business. A silence had fallen upon the workers for some moments after I entered upon my surreptitious post of observation, but I saw from the growing confusion of Lin's locks that a thought must find vent in words before very long. It came at last :

"Little Uncle, what rhymes to 'mighty'?"

"'Flighty,'" suggested Harry, gravely, without looking up.

Another silence; Lin was trying to use the suggestion.

"It won't do!" The voice had a despairing accent and the tawny locks tossed wildly.

"'Highly-tighty,'" said Harry, laughing; "and if that won't do, you will have to alter your line and put some other word at the end."

"Don't laugh, Little Uncle," pleaded Lin, "or I will never get on."

"'Laugh,' my dear fellow!" said Harry, growing

instantly grave. "I assure you I never felt less like laughing in my life; I am too much in the mud myself. You stop for a minute and help me. What would you do? I will undertake your rhymes afterward. Here is Horace— You know the story I have been writing for the last three numbers of the *News*? Well, Horace is about to fight a duel with his rival, Frank. I don't want to kill either, and thought I would make them both fire in the air; but if both live, it is so hard for Ellen to decide which she will marry. They are both good fellows, and she don't know exactly which she likes best."

Lin listened devoutly, with her head on her hand and with the point of her pen sticking like an exclamation-point up through her hair. At last she spoke:

"If Frank marries Ellen, is there no one for Horace to marry?"

"No one; there are only the three characters in the story."

"And you couldn't bring in another girl?"

"No, indeed! It is too late for that. I must finish it off this time. I am so tired of the old stupid thing, and I have a splendid plot for another story."

"Then"—Lin spoke decidedly—"Horace must die. It was a mistake to make both such good fellows and so handsome, and all that; it is a great deal easier to make one die when one is better than the other. But, anyhow, Harry, it isn't anything

when you get used to it. I remember a long time ago, when I first began to write for the paper—last year, wasn't it?—I had to make one of my girls die, and I was afraid to go to bed that night. But it got easier and easier, and now I rather like it. When you don't know what to do with them all, it is so easy just to kill them; and it is a comfort it is not sure-enough true."

Harry did not laugh, although I knew he would have liked to; but I was obliged to beat a hasty retreat, for fear I should betray myself.

I watched with especial interest for the *Woodlawn News* that week. Horace died and the rhyming difficulty was satisfactorily adjusted.

The evenings at Woodlawn are lovely spots in my memory. We elders used to assemble on the front portico, while the children had games of romps on the lawn in front—such old-fashioned games as "Prisoner's Base" and "King King Cantaloupe." I was surprised to find how the dreamy Lin waked up and enjoyed these romps. Her awkwardness forgotten, she displayed the agility of a young Indian in the performance of athletic feats, while her laugh rang out merrily. "Little Uncle" always took her under his protection; she insisted on going on his side, and he never allowed her sensitive nature to be touched by the thoughtless jokes of the others.

CHAPTER V.

OUR NEIGHBORS.

AT the time of which I write the plantations of Virginia often consisted of thousands of acres, so there were no very near neighbors, as there now are, when a short walk brings one to the house of a friend. Nevertheless, three of them were in easy riding-distance and must at least be mentioned. The names of these places "re-echo the murmurs of the forest trees;" they are "The Oaks," "The Elms" and "The Bower."

The first named was the residence of a quaint old couple—Mr. and Mrs. Campbell—whose children had left them for homes of their own. Mr. Campbell had never in his dress conformed to the usages of more modern times; a gentleman of the last century he was, and retained its costume. He looked like an old picture just stepped out of its frame, with his buckled shoes, silk hose, knee-breeches and swallow-tailed coat, his hair powdered and tied in a queue behind, and his two body-servants—patriotically called Lafayette and Washington—dressed in the same style, but their clothing of much coarser material and their woolly heads without powder.

But Mrs. Campbell indulged in no such ancient fancies, and brought her guests from Mr. Campbell and the past to herself and the present with bewildering rapidity. A very remarkable character was Mrs. Campbell; she had been a beauty and a belle, and her present husband was her fifth. She talked about each one with the familiarity and freedom of constant association. Her frequent matrimonial connections she seemed to regard as so many tributes to her charms, and, as is frequently the case with ladies who have enjoyed a reputation for personal attractions, she retained the jaunty and coquettish manner of her far-away youthful days. Her conversation was copiously interlarded with stories of her triumphs. She counted her husbands as an Indian counts his scalps, but she was apt to get her spouses mixed, and would correct herself until she brought out the whole list, as thus :

“Now, my dear, Mr. Wilson said— No; I think that must have been Mr. Murray. Or was it Mr. Thompson? Well, it may have been Mr. Blair, after all. Well, I declare! I believe it was dear.—Dear, was it you who made that flattering remark about my blue head-dress?”

“Dear” never failed to show a great distaste to these domestic hashes, and always indignantly disclaimed being made heir to the complimentary sentiments of former husbands, saying,

“No, my dear; I don’t remember that you ever

had a blue head-dress. It must have been one of the other fellows."

At "The Elms" lived Mr. Taylor, a great, burly giant large in heart as in body, with a gentle little wife who set him off, as he did her, by force of contrast. They had a large family of girls and boys, and a visit to them was always a treat to grown people and to children.

At "The Bower" lived Mr. Taylor's widowed sister, Mrs. Mason, with her four children. Her husband had been a good-hearted, dashing spend-thrift—one of whom the world says, "He is his own worst enemy"—always pursuing a phantom of success and never constant enough of purpose to catch it. At one time he spent more than his income in sheep, and laid out the imaginary income which was to accrue as the profits of the investment in refurnishing his house and restocking his farm. The sheep proving a failure, he next imported cattle; they died off from change of climate before they were paid for. His last chimera was blooded horses. Before its brief day had passed he met his death by being thrown from one of them, and left his estate mortgaged and his young wife and children to struggle with poverty. His wife, who had trusted and loved him, refused to allow the world's judgment against him. In spite of the remonstrance of her friends, she determined herself to vindicate his wisdom. She took up one after another of his

schemes, and developed them successfully. She accepted all the advice she could on this subject, and, like many another woman, succeeded where the man had failed; and when her sons and her daughter grew to manhood and womanhood, they were unable to trace their father's folly in the unmortgaged estate flourishing in all its parts. One alone of her husband's fancies she never touched, and that was fine horses; she never saw one without a shudder. She was a lovely woman, dwelling quietly with her children. The romance of her life over, she lived for others, always cheerful, but with a subdued cheerfulness which such sorrow as hers ever leaves behind it. She was always ready with helping hand at the wedding-feast, the bedside of the sick or the open coffin. Her short season of joy and her baptism of sorrow had fitted her for all experiences.

Wyndham—a county-town of a few thousand inhabitants—about eight miles away, contained the necessary adjuncts to country comfort—the church, with its pastor, the physician's office and the post-office, besides the stores, where the fashions, if a little obsolete, were as eagerly sought for as in Paris itself.

CHAPTER VI.

DESERTED.

IT was not until late in September, when the woods were beginning to assume their autumn tints, that I heard again of my suggestion to Judge Wallace regarding Eva and Linda Dalrymple; then I found every arrangement concluded as I wished, and with a wisdom in the details which I had not contemplated. Eva was to go to a country boarding-school kept by an old friend of Mrs. Wallace, and Linda and myself were to remain at Woodlawn for the entire year. Then followed that particular phase of the arrangements which threw Lin into spasms of delight and completed my satisfaction. Harry, Tom and Lyle were to remain with us, and while acting as our protectors were to attend the instructions of a tutor employed by Mrs. Macon. All parties were charmed. Eva was happy at the prospect of a new field in which to conquer, and Lin and the boys made the most extensive plans for the enjoyments of the winter. Even while September suns were scorching us they began to construct a sleigh which would hold all parties. I was to have the oversight of the housekeeping, but, as

“Mammy” was my assistant, it did not involve much trouble. “Uncle Robin” was major-domo of the establishment, and the other positions in the bureau of domestic affairs were distributed amongst the negroes who were left at Woodlawn, and to whom the winter was generally nearly a holiday. As there was little farm-work to be done and only the cattle to see after, they lived at their ease, with plenty of fuel and clothes, and with no anxiety about their future, which they knew was in good hands.

Mrs. Wallace was not sorry to have a new sphere in which to exercise her administrative ability, and was most energetically engaged providing for our every possible comfort. A portion of the house was to be closed and we were to be snugly settled in three or four rooms. In short, her careful mind knew no rest till our little household was fully equipped and in working order.

That a full supervision over us by the neighbors might be secured, a great dinner was given at Woodlawn just before the autumn flitting, to which they were all invited, and were then and there led to pledge themselves in a solemn manner to keep a vigilant eye upon us in our loneliness and to provide for any and every emergency. Dr. Brown, the family physician, was ordered to make a professional visit to Woodlawn once a week, whether sent for or not, to ward off any sickness which might by chance

be lingering in the air ready to pounce upon our devoted heads.

“Ah, cousin!” said Miss Betsey; “I am sorry to see you have so little trust in Providence.”

“Only using the means, Betsey,” answered the judge, laughing. “I am like the old woman in the Revolution who prayed that the British might not burn her house, and when she saw them coming set it on fire to ensure herself against an undue trial of her faith.”

The good pastor and his wife were also there, and congratulated themselves that Woodlawn would not be quite deserted during the winter.

The autumn departure from Woodlawn was an extensive affair; it was like moving a colony. All the vehicles, private and public, were called into use for the first part of the journey. I recall the scene on that bright October morning as I stood on the steps with the three boys, Lin, Mr. Campbell, Mr. Taylor and Mr. Gordon, who had come over to give the last assurances of their interest in us. On the outskirts were the negroes, noisily taking leave of the nurses, cooks and chambermaids who were part of the company. There was the immense yellow-bodied stage from Wyndham, piled high with a promiscuous jumbling of servants, children, lunch-baskets and shawls, with *etceteras* too numerous to mention. The anxious mothers preferred seeing servants and babies started in this before they got

off themselves. Harry said it was the dregs of the party; if so, the dregs were certainly stirred this morning.

“Hetty, don’t let that child cry,” says an anxious mother.

“Laws, mistis, he jes’ want de whole stage to hese’f, dat’s all. Hush! Sh! sh!”

“Whar’s dat carpet-bag?” calls another.

“I do ’blege to hab dat carpet-bag.—Oh, Mars’ Tom, pleas’ see ef dey dun put dat little red carpet-bag on top. I mus’ hab it.”

“Oh, here it is! I’se settin’ on it,” exclaims another.

“Oh, marster, kin I hav’ my ban’-box in here? It hab my Sunday bonnet in it, and I know it will be mash’ on top.”

“No place in there, Milly?” asked the all-suffering “master.”

“Plenty of place, sir. Jes’ giv’ it to me. Thank’e, sir;” and it was added to the pile within.

“Good-bye!”—“Bring me one coat from Richmond!”—“Bring me one handkercher!”—“Bring me one hat!”—“Bring me some sugar and coffee and ’bacca!”—“Bring me a stick of candy!” resounded from the stayers at home as the great coach with its load of live lumber moved off to make room for the next vehicle.

Judge Wallace saw all off before he mounted. While Robin held his horse he went around and

shook the hand of each negro, even to the smallest little woolly-head in "mammy's" arms, and I observed that each one bowed low, saying, "Thank'e, master;" from which I inferred that he left something in each palm to purchase 'bacca, which is as necessary to the happiness of the Virginia negro as is candy to that of the white child. Judge Wallace's last farewell was to Lin, and then for the first time her tears fell. I think if the choice had been given her then she would have gone with "grandpapa."

These partings have their uses: they bring to the surface the best feelings of nature. I saw Lin throw her arms around Eva's neck and heard her whisper,

"I am so sorry, Eva, I have been so cross often. Please forgive me. I will try and be better when you come back."

Eva whispered with a complacent little smile,

"Yes, dear, I forgive you, and I dare say I too shall be better when I come back."

Handkerchiefs waved until each vehicle bore a resemblance to a ship covered with canvas; then all entered the grove and were out of sight, and we turned into the house feeling very desolate and deserted. I do not know if I too would not have changed my mind had the choice been given.

There is much pleasant pastime for my memory in those autumn days when I brought back to my heart a youthful glow with those joyous boys and my Lin, who every day developed some new grace,

and her spirits, without the drawbacks upon them which had beset her life, were wild often to excess. She was just in the right position to develop healthily and break up her old dreamy habits. The centre of the affection of those around her, she lost her self-depreciative mood, grew confident of pleasing and was naturally merry and witty without contrasting herself with others. Every bright day we took long walks together, and would return laden with bright leaves, ferns and mosses, which we would weave into ornaments for the house; and soon we presented quite a bower-like appearance. The library was our sitting-room, and here in the cool evenings we gathered, I either with workbasket or with book, and the young people clustered around the green-covered table at their lessons, while an astral lamp shed its soft light upon their faces. The blazing fire of well-seasoned hickory crackled and sputtered merrily upon the wide hearth, and the old-fashioned upright clock ticked soberly away in the corner and chimed the hours which brought new pleasures to our little colony in the great house at Woodlawn.

Soon came from our travelers letters full of anxiety and love. The anxiety we laughed merrily over from our secure fortress, and our answers dispelled their unreasonable fears. Some of them, I know, changed their regards for us from piety to envy; the judge, at least, would willingly have dropped

his wand of office to share our simple enjoyments. Eva's first letter from school was so absurdly characteristic that I transcribe it entire :

“EDGENWOOD, Oct, 21, 18—.

“MY DEAR LIN : Grandpa brought me up here a week ago, and already I begin to feel quite at home in my pleasant room. I have three room-mates, all pleasant girls with one exception—Mary Reid, who is quite too sanctimonious to suit my taste. Alice Dangerfield is my favorite ; she is beautiful and graceful, and so admired ! She is only fifteen, and has already had three *offers*. But she has no idea of marrying ; she is determined to see a good deal of pleasure first. She tells me all her secrets, and I tell her all mine ; but you must not think she takes your place in my heart. No ; when you get older and wiser, you will be my *confidante*, of course. I am so glad we made up everything before we parted ! I assure you your tearful, penitent face quite touched me. And you need not worry any more over those old troubles ; I shall never think of them again. I never do when I forgive, and I have no doubt when we next meet you will have gained control over your temper and we will all get along beautifully.

“I feel very anxious to hear how you are all making out. I suspect you will find it fearfully dull, but I hope you will keep busy with your books and

music; and that will prevent you from feeling it so much.

“My teachers seem pleased with me so far; I have no doubt I will improve. Miss Bruton would frighten you to death, she speaks so decidedly and as if she meant every word she says. But you know I am not much afraid of people, and I have no doubt we shall be very good friends.

“Harry said you would keep up the *Woodland News*. I will send you the fashions, and you must send me the paper.

“God bless you, dear Lin, and help you to control your temper. With love to all,

“Your devoted sister,

“EVA.”

I smiled over the letter, but Lin accepted it in good faith. Eva far away was covered with a veil of charity impenetrable to adverse criticism, and I have no doubt Linda made greater effort to gain the mastery over her besetting sin in the hope of retaining Eva's approbation. But truly with the departure of Miss Betsey and Eva seemed to have gone all temptation. Linda never was fretful, and there was now no place in our lives for passionate outbursts. She was also becoming quite notable and orderly under my especial supervision, and delighted in helping me to keep the boys' clothing in order.

As I wrote to Judge Wallace, I was more than ever delighted with the working of my plan. Our neighbors were very attentive, and we always spent Saturday with one or the other of them. I persuaded Mrs. Macon to let her little Katie come over and take lessons with Lin, so that a sweet little companion was secured to her when the boys were at school.

CHAPTER VII.

A WINTER IN THE MOUNTAINS.

THE rainbow-hued leaves of beautiful October had fluttered and died, and the trees were bare and naked-looking. Old Winter sent some icy breaths to remind the earth that he was on the way. Soft Indian Summer with her vapory veil passed by and smiled, and December with its whisperings of Merry Christmas had begun its reign before the long-wished-for snow arrived. The homemade sleigh was improved and finished. Lin, with my help, lined and padded it to make it more comfortable, and now all was in readiness.

The evening talks about the library fire were all of adventures in the snow. Tom Hastings had spent a winter in Canada with his uncle, and he told of the wonderful coasting on the hillsides, of the skating on the river. Oh, if for once we could only have a regular first-class snow, how grand it would be! I was continually called into consultation for my opinion whether the air was not full of snow, but the snow did not come, for all the wishing, until the early days of December, and then Lin and

myself were wakened very early by shouts from the boys' room, which was next ours, and by Harry calling loudly,

“Wake up, Lin, and look out of the window. The old woman up above is picking her geese in good earnest now.”

Lin was up in a moment, and responded with a scream of delight when she saw the air thick with snowflakes, while the ground was completely covered and the box bordering the flower-beds looked like beautiful iced cakes, she said. It was a beautiful snow, certainly, and, as it continued to fall heavily, the boys went off to school in their sleigh, leaving Lin gazing rather disconsolately after them, though cheered by their promise of a splendid ride in the afternoon.

It was a long morning, I remember, and Lin found it very hard to fix her mind upon books, which for the first time were “stupid.” But the sun at last beamed out so brilliantly, making the surface of the new-fallen snow glitter like diamonds. The longest lane must have a turning, and so the end of that morning was announced by the merry sleighbells, and Lin, looking out, proclaimed in joyful tones the fact that not only were the boys returning, but another sleigh bore them company, containing Mrs. Macon and her whole family. We were soon in the midst of merry greetings. Mrs. Macon had called only to pay a short visit, as she

was on her way to Wyndham, but we persuaded her to leave Katie with us, promising that after our ride in the afternoon we would return her in safety.

We hurried through our dinner, and, with fresh horses to the sleigh and with Robin as our driver, started off, the keen frosty air bringing the blood to the cheeks of the children; and the merry laugh and song rang out gleefully in the old woods. We first went into Wyndham, where we found letters from our friends, all so characteristic of them, the burden of the judge's letter to Harry being—

“See that Mr. Slemins” (the overseer) “has plenty of well-seasoned wood always on hand, and that the stock is well fed. Draw freely on me for any money which may be wanted for household affairs, and see that there is no stint in anything. And, my boy, I depend upon you and Tom and Lyle to take care of Miss Maxwell and little Lin. I hope the doctor comes out regularly, and that none of you have been sick.”

Mrs. Wallace wrote to me:

“Be sure to see that Mammy airs the parlors every week. Have the covers removed from the furniture and everything well dusted. Tell Robin to see that the wood-boxes are well filled all the time, and do, pray, keep roaring fires. I have to comfort the judge about you all every cold day, as he insists that you are going to freeze. Make Mr.

Slemings supply you with whatever you want in the way of fresh meat, and don't spare the smoke-house."

Eva wrote to Lin :

"I shall spend my Christmas in Richmond, and I suppose I shall go out a great deal to make up for my dull time here. I have a new silk dress, which fits me beautifully, and every one says my hat is very becoming. I am learning some new songs to sing when I go to Richmond; my teacher says I sing them beautifully. I hope you are making some progress in music. Do practice! I shall be quite ashamed of you if you have not any accomplishments, and you know, dear, when one has not beauty, it is so important to cultivate other things."

On our return we stopped to pay a visit at the Elms, and old Mr. Campbell came out himself to meet us, followed closely by Washington and Lafayette, and between them Lin, Katie and myself were lifted out of the sleigh, and our bricks and foot-stove were taken off for a fresh warming.

As we entered the house Mrs. Campbell met us, all smiles.

"Ah! what bravery! How I envy you your youth! I used to love so to sleigh—Willy and myself; that was my first. But Mr. Jackson never would let me sleigh at all for fear of the cold, and Mr. Morris—men are so different!—was the mer-

riest man I ever saw, and he had such a charming sleigh, and we did enjoy it. And Mr. James—”

“Oh, well, well, my dear, take the ladies to the fire and finish your domestic catalogue,” said Mr. Campbell.—“And, Washington, bring some cake and cordial.—Walk in, boys; take off your coats.—Harry, you grow more like your father every day. A chip of the old block, ha, ha!”

“He! he! Dear will have his jokes. So it was with my—”

“My dear,” interrupted Mr. Campbell, “will you please see to that cake and cordial?”

“Certainly, dear, but I know it will be here directly. Men have not a particle of patience.—Having had five husbands, my dear Miss Maxwell, you will acknowledge I ought to know;” and, giving Mr. Campbell a coquettish little tap on the shoulder as she passed, she tripped from the room.

“Well! well!” said the old gentleman as she closed the door, rubbing his hands violently over his features until it almost seemed as if the roots of his nose must give way, and taking a final sweep through his gray hair. “My wife is a—a very fine woman, my dear Miss Maxwell, and has been greatly admired in her day;” and he turned almost fiercely upon me, as if to challenge my contradiction; but I merely responded that I had no doubt of it.

Further deliverance of opinion was prevented by the entrance of the gallant generals Washington

and Lafayette—one with plates and napkins, and the other with a waiter of cake and cordial, of which we partook generously.

Mrs. Campbell returned with them :

“Do, Miss Maxwell take some of this peach cordial ! Every one likes my peach cordial. I got the recipe from Mr. Jackson’s mother, and both Mr. James and Mr. Morris used to declare it surpassed anything they had ever tasted. To be sure, I suppose that was partly because I made it, he, he ! But dear here is not so gallant ; he prefers his old Madeira, he says, to any home-manufacture.”

We all bore ample testimony to the merits of the elder Mrs. Jackson’s recipe. It was certainly excellent cordial, and we left Mr. Campbell to enjoy his Madeira alone, notwithstanding his assurances that it was not at all necessary for us to martyrize ourselves to please his wife. It seemed impossible for him to credit the fact that it could be a matter of preference with us.

As the winter afternoons were short and we had to take Katie home—which would extend our ride considerably—we were obliged to pay a moderately short visit to the country, as it was not customary in those days to make calls of two minutes and a half upon neighbors one had ridden three or four miles to see.

The stately old generals, in their quaint attire, were despatched to reclaim our bricks and stoves

from the kitchen-fire, and, having given a promise to come again soon, we took our leave, Mrs. Campbell saying to me at the last moment,

“I really must see more of you, my dear Miss Maxwell. I have just found out who it is you are so like: it is a sister of my former husband Mr. James. Perhaps you are related to the Jameses of Maryland?”

Here Tom was seized with a violent fit of coughing. Harry hurried out most precipitately to the sleigh, and Lin and Katie became instantly interested in a picture over the mantel representing Mrs. Campbell in the garb of a shepherdess—very pink and white as to complexion and very wooden as to figure—overshaded by skies of the brightest blue contrasted with the grass of impossible green upon which she stood. I disclaimed the connection, but promised to allow her the gratification of a further acquaintance.

“Lyle,” said Lin as we drove off, “you are the living image of my poor Willy;” and she put her handkerchief to her eye with a droll imitation of the much-married lady.

“Come, my dear!” responded Tom, taking Mr. Campbell’s position. “I am sick and tired of your departed husbands; let us bury them once for all and be done.”

“Come, children!” said Harry, even while he joined in the laugh which was irresistible; “this

is too bad. I have something of the Indian in me: after I eat a man's bread he is sacred to me. Don't let's laugh at them."

"And I suppose cake and cordial is still more binding," said Tom the incorrigible.

"I thought it was only smoking the pipe of peace which secured inviolable friendship, Harry," said Lyle. "Now, as the old gentleman did not invite us to smoke, I think we may laugh just a little."

"No; I think Little Uncle is right," said Lin. "I am sorry not to laugh, because I think we can be so very funny over Mrs. Campbell, she is such a curiosity; but really I think it is more noble not to."

We all laughed heartily, but the move toward amiability carried the day, and the Campbells were permitted to rest.

"Well, here we are, Katie," said I as we drew up to the door of the Bower.

Mrs. Macon came and insisted upon our getting out, and the boys were perfectly clamorous for a visit; but we resisted their entreaties, and, having deposited Katie, we went on, hoping to reach home by sunset. This we were not destined to do, for just as we passed the point of road which turned into the Oaks a stentorian voice behind us called,

"Stop! stop!"

We obeyed, and the rubicund visage of Mr. Tay-

lor presented itself before us. He was mounted on horseback and came up at a Jehu pace, both horse and rider smoking at the mouth as if there were a furnace within. He said, panting,

“What do you mean by passing by my house?”

We explained that, as it was growing so cold and as night was coming on, we thought it would be better to get home.

“Nonsense!” he exclaimed. “This clear, cold air never hurt anybody, and there is no cold that buffalo-ropes and hot bricks cannot defy.—Robin, turn about and drive in.”

This last peremptory order was delivered with a nod of the head in the direction of the house.

I remonstrated. It was of no use; we were left under his care, and he would make himself responsible for the safety of the party.

“Robin, drive in,” he repeated. “Why, I would not dare to go home and tell my commander-in-chief that I had encountered this sleigh-load and had not succeeded in making a capture. Capital punishment would be awarded at once—ha, ha, ha!” and as he laughed it was like the thunder of a volcano.

Lin whispered,

“Actually, I heard the dead leaves fall by hundreds and the bare branches rattle as in a storm.”

Well, there was no appeal; so Robin obeyed

orders, and we scudded away over the frozen snow, the horse's feet crushing its surface as we sped after our leader, who never slackened his pace until he stopped at the great gate leading into his grounds. In another minute we were at the door, and saw through the windows the blazing fires sending a welcoming glow, which we seemed to feel as well as to see. In a minute the great voice sounded, sending its reverberations through closed windows and doors and creating a stir through the entire building :

“Hallo! Betsy! Mary! Lucy! Are you all dead? Bring your hot blankets, your lemon-punch, and anything else for a set of frozen wretches I picked up in the woods—ha, ha, ha!” and all the time he was deafening us with his thunders he was lifting us out of the sleigh as if we had been feathers, Lin and the boys laughing in chorus with him ; and by the time we were on the doorstep the household was aroused and had rushed out to see what was the matter. “Hallo, general! I have merited approval this evening,” he said, kissing the little mite of a woman who was smiling and cooing a welcome in her treble tones as she kissed each one of us and hurried us in to the fire.

“Father, actually you are the noisiest man in Virginia,” exclaimed his merry daughter, Jane, who was himself in miniature, though she was by no means small. “I thought it was the house on fire, or something else quite as dreadful.”

“Oh dear!” chimed in the treble part of the duet; “it is so cheerful! We all like to hear him announce his coming.”

“I believe you would think it all right, mother, if he lifted up the roof,” said Jane; and all laughed as her mother responded contentedly, “Well, I suppose I would know he had some good reason for it.”

The giant sung his base with hearty good-will, and kissed his loyal-hearted champion with as much zeal and with more unreserve than if they had been married only yesterday.

We were soon divested of our wrappings, and rejoiced in our capture. Jane was the only daughter, and, indeed, the only child at home, as the two sons were away at the college in Williamsburg.

It was a charming evening; every particular of it is as fresh in my mind as if it were yesterday—the substantial supper-table glittering with old family silver and delicate china, and the great round of beef which seemed so appropriate to our host, who shaved off the little thin curled wafers—a mingling of rosy meat with the white fat—with a skill I never saw equaled, and the broiled chickens, the white bread, steaming coffee, all so grateful to us after our ride, and the seasoning of a hearty welcome which made it a feast for a king.

We stayed till the moon rose, and then, well protected under a fleecy mountain of shawls and buffalo-ropes, with a perfect furnace at our feet, we started

for home. I remember so well the beauty of the night—the pure white world bathed in the beautiful silvery moonlight, the gaunt trees looking blacker and barer than ever by contrast with the soft tender hue of the landscape. A subduing influence was upon us. We left the bright fireside with words of mirth and jollity upon our lips, and expected a merry ride home ; but gradually our voices sank away into silence. Tom was the last to succumb, and tried to rally the rest, but he too failed at last, and we pursued our ride in silence. Lin, snugly wrapped in warm coverings, drew closer and closer to my side, and at last laid her head on my shoulder. As we turned into the Woodlawn avenue I looked to see if she were sleeping ; but no : her great shining eyes were fixed upon the starry skies above with an expression which made me ask,

“What are you thinking of, Linda?”

She whispered,

“I was thinking of the little child who thought the stars were the eyes of the angels, and I wondered if my beautiful mother, my father and Grandpapa Dalrymple might not be looking down at me.”

CHAPTER VIII.

A RETROSPECT.

SIX years have elapsed since the events related in my last chapter—years which in passing have touched the boys and girls of my story and have transformed them into young men and maidens, have brought some gray hairs to the middle-aged and infirmities to the aged, but which, happily, have not removed any of the family circle wont to assemble every year at Woodlawn.

Eva has grown into a beautiful woman. Time in touching her has only softened her charms; she is all she promised in beauty, and perhaps more than she promised. Her school-life, after all, did her good. If she does not think more soberly of her perfections, she has learned to conceal the fact, and according to the universal testimony she is a girl in a thousand. With her graces and accomplishments, it is no wonder that she has scores of lovers, but she has too good taste to boast of the fact—only blushes prettily when she is accused, and neither denies nor accepts the imputation.

Lin is much more changed than Eva. We think

she is very handsome, her miniature face and figure having developed into great comeliness. She is exceedingly tall for a woman, and, although her features are by no means regular, her complexion is a clear olive, and her mouth, if too large, is redeemed by a row of beautiful white teeth. Her unmanageable hair is now a splendid suit, black as a raven's wing and so long that the glossy coil covers the whole of the back of her head without any foreign aid whatever. She has quite overcome her besetting sin, though it has left her a strong, determined will apt to carry her through any purpose deliberately formed. Fortunately, this is controlled by a loving heart, a temper almost morbidly sensitive and a strong religious conscientiousness; for Lin, I hope, is an earnest Christian, though wanting the developing touch which the discipline of life is always sure to afford. She is still the favorite with the boys, and, although "Little Uncle" returned from a European tour a few weeks ago to find her quite grown beyond being patronized, he does not seem to lose his interest in her on that account, and we—that is, "grand-papa" and some of the rest of us who love both parties—think there may be a closer tie one of these days, though it is best to leave these matters to develop themselves.

Mrs. Macon's boys have scattered—"the one to his farm, another to his merchandise"—while Katie is a sweet, bird-like little girl whom everybody loves,

and Lin particularly, though there could not be imagined two girls more utterly unlike. Poor Tom Hastings thinks Katie the first of her sex, and Katie perhaps has a little tenderness for Tom in spite of his failings; but she cannot acknowledge this, because "mamma for some reason would not like it," as Katie is too much the true little woman to acknowledge to any one that Tom is somewhat of a scapegrace. The qualities which go to make up his being constitute him an agreeable companion and he has been sought after by all, and so he has gone astray, there is no doubt. Friends look grave. His mother and sister watch him anxiously when he comes into the room. His grandfather talks earnestly and affectionately to him of the critical position in which he stands. His father scolds and refuses to pay his debts, and poor Tom himself makes spasmodic efforts at reform, resolves stoutly to settle down to business, and walks about with wrinkles in his brow and a law-book under his arm, but, alas! with no foundation which is not undermined by his own frailty. Until this summer he has not been to Woodlawn for four years, but "grandmamma" suggests it would be pleasant to have him come more, hoping for the power of old innocent associations; and so he comes and meets with Katie, who used to be his sweetheart when they were "tiny tots," and now she is the one influence which may draw him from evil companions and dissipated habits.

Lyle Wallace is a "grand fellow," everybody says, bearing about his handsome face the stamp of a long race of refined progenitors. He has just returned from Europe with Harry, and I think rather plumes himself upon his superiority to those who have never had that portion of their education finished. He talks learnedly about art, is enthusiastic about the old masters, pities poor mortals who have never dived among the classic ruins of Athens and Rome, talks after the manner of an acknowledged connoisseur about "fine women," compares our beauty—Eva—unfavorably with those he has seen upon the "Continent," though he does not dare to tell the young lady so to her face. But he is a little disdainful even of her, and, although perfectly courteous to all women—his grandfather would not countenance anything else—still, it is with a new-style courtesy, to us plain Virginia people an exaggerated, complimentary style which I think is a foreign importation.

Nothing could be more totally different than Harry, who has come back as he went away—except with more manliness, of course, but with the same warm heart—and Woodlawn makes a boy of him again. He thinks Eva wonderfully pretty, but Lin is still his favorite. In short, it is that season of their lives when young birds begin to pair and gather the things with which to build nests of their own.

CHAPTER IX.

ROMANCE AND COMMON SENSE.

IT was a bright morning in September when I was wakened by a shower of warm kisses on my face and opened my sleepy eyes to find Lin standing laughing over me, looking, with her rich bloom and her dark locks, the realization of Autumn. She was dressed in her riding-habit, and the pretty little cap was as becoming to her style as it well could be.

“Why, Maxy,” she said, giving me the pet-name I had learned to love ever since our winter together at Woodlawn, “you looked the impersonation of the enchanted princess when I came in, and I was the prince who cut my way to you and kissed you into life.”

I was accustomed to Lin’s fanciful style of talking, and it would be hard to say how many characters I had borne during my acquaintance with her.

“But,” I said, “you are a regular Di Vernon. Where are you going so early?”

“Well, yes; I *am* Di Vernon. Frank Osbaldistone wants me to ride off to the mountain-top to

see the sun rise. Frank is a troublesome fellow, but I like to do what he wants."

"Are you always going to do what he wants?" I asked, half laughing and half serious, making a dive into my pet's young heart.

"Well, I would not be surprised, Maxy, if I did," she said, the color deepening in her cheek as she answered the thought concealed in my mind. "You see, it is such a lifelong thing with us two. Little Uncle and I have been partners in everything all our lives, and I could not play partners with anybody else, you know; for if he were to come in, it would break up all other arrangements."

I had spoken at random, and was utterly surprised to find how far matters had progressed. Raising myself in bed and drawing Lin down to me, I said,

"Child, what are you telling me? Have Harry and yourself been making any serious arrangements?"

She nodded her head, then said,

"And why not? Is it any harm? Grandpa would like it, I know, and it seems the most natural thing in the world."

"When did all this happen?" I asked, still surprised.

"Last night only. We had a good sensible talk by moonlight, and we are to finish up matters this morning and then tell them all."

“But do you love Harry?” I asked, astounded at Lin’s coolness.

“What a question, Maxy! Of course I do; I could not help it. He is the dearest fellow in the world; I could not be happy with anybody else.”

“Lin! Lin!” called Harry, under the window.

“Coming, Little Uncle,” she called, throwing open the window and leaning out above him. “There! I sprinkle you with rose leaves for a good omen;” and she showered down upon him a handful of the flowers she held.

“Why, you look perfectly glorious, my Juliet,” he said, laughing. “‘I would I were the glove upon that hand, that I might kiss that cheek.’” This very melodramatically.

“You can do it, then, when I come down, without being an old glove. No; don’t let’s be Romeo and Juliet. They were quite too sentimental; I prefer Di Vernon and Frank Osbaldistone. And now I am coming.”

Away she flew, and as they rode away I heard their young voices making music on the fresh morning air. Of course I was glad—it was what we had all looked forward to—but still there was a shade of disappointment in the manner of her telling the little romance of her life. “Romance”! There did not seem a particle of it; she hardly blushed, and yet of course she must love Harry. How could it be otherwise?

I lay there in a waking dream until Eva knocked at my door and came in, just out of bed, too, with her long hair streaming around her and her sleepy blue eyes half opened.

“Has Lin been telling you of her engagement to Harry?” she asked, yawning.

“Yes,” I answered. “Did she tell you?”

“Of course; she could not keep it hidden. She is just as she used to be when she got a new doll—not satisfied until every one had seen it.”

Eva yawned again and threw herself lazily into a great arm-chair, shaking her dimpled little feet out of their loose slippers and looking down at them with a glance of approbation.

“Well, every one will be very much pleased,” I said.

“Oh yes; it is a made-up thing. Grandpa has had his heart set on it all the time. I never could understand why he passed me over in his family arrangements;” and the young lady glanced at the mirror and pulled the long golden hair around her, so as to be more becoming. “I suppose it is because I am not like the Dalrymples; they say I am like my beautiful mother.”

“You are very like her,” I said.

“You saw her, then?” she said, turning round upon me. “Maxy, where is my mother buried? Why will no one tell me?”

I had often evaded this question, and only gave

the answer I had before used, which had become stereotyped :

“Your father took her to Paris, and she never returned.”

“Oh, if I could only have seen her ! Was there no portrait of her ?”

“No.”

“What a shame ! Such beauty ought to have been preserved for her children. I am glad I am like her. I consider it an honor.”

I always came out of these little contests feeling humbled, as if I had lost something of my truth and sincerity ; for though the words I had spoken were true, yet they conveyed a wrong idea and so had in them the spirit of falsehood. Yet what could I do ? I could not tell these children what Judge and Mrs. Wallace jealously guarded them from ; and then, too, while I often accused them of weakness in not telling the entire truth, I was conscious of a great shrinking in my own spirit from the idea of my high-spirited, noble Lin knowing that which would cause her to bow her head. She had said to me so often, “Maxy, I could bear any trouble but disgrace. If any of our boys or any of our friends did anything disgraceful, like stealing money or getting drunk, or other humbling things, I would die. But there is no danger. I am so glad we are honorable people, and so were my own grandpapa and my father.”



Lin announcing her Marriage.

We were all at the breakfast-table when Harry and Linda came in ; we had heard them laughing long before we saw them. They were not a sentimental pair of lovers. There was a little scuffle outside before they made their appearance, and Lin said, "Harry, stop ! I will not take your arm," and came running in trying to disengage her hand from his.

"Oh, Linda Dalrymple, will you never get over your hoydenish ways?" murmured Cousin Betsey, shaking a despairing head.

"Yes, Cousin Betsey ; when her head gets a little gray," said Harry, as usual taking up the cudgels for Lin. "We like her just as she is now."

Grandpa, in the mean time, was giving the young girl's fresh cheeks a morning kiss ; and it was very shocking, but she wanted to give him pleasure, and leaned over and whispered something in his ear. It was this :

"Harry and I are engaged to be married."

"Not really, Lin?" I heard him say.

"Yes, really. He was to tell you after breakfast, but I could not wait."

"May God bless the children !—Harry, you have made your father very happy ;" and tears of joy stood in the old man's eyes.—"My dear," catching Lin fairly in his arms and taking her to Mrs. Wallace, "this is to be our little daughter.—Harry—Ah, you scamp you ! The idea of your thinking of being married !"

“Not too young, father?” said Harry. “Twenty-three my last birthday.”

The scene cannot be described ; it was made up of tears and laughter. The old people blessed the young couple and Lin cried ; and when Harry came to stop the tears, she snubbed him a little, but smiled on him a minute after. Then Harry would have her by him at table, and actually did succeed in embarrassing her a little by his lover-like attentions. Miss Betsey alone fanned herself discontentedly over the pretty scene, and Eva looked dissatisfied that Lin should usurp all the attention of the company.

It was certainly a very matter-of-fact affair, we all said, as we laughed over it, and Lin said,

“Of course ! What was the use, when people had been raised together, of making a fuss and concealment about such a thing as this ?”

But when the marriage came to be talked about, the young lady took a new turn. She was not ready to be married ; it was a great deal better for them to be engaged a long while—ever so long. The idea of a child like herself talking of being married ! She should wait until her elder sister was disposed of. It was in vain Harry urged the matter ; she was obstinate. If she was not worth waiting for a while, she was not worth having. Besides, she would not for the world be married anywhere but at Woodlawn, and, as it was nearly time to return to Richmond, they must wait, at any rate. In short, she refused

to listen to any arrangement looking to an early consummation of their plans. I was not sorry for this, as I also thought it was quite too early for the child to take on herself the cares of married life, and very discontentedly Harry was obliged to agree to wait.

There was a great contrast in these lovers. Harry was as ardent as the most exacting mistress could desire; he never lost sight of his *fiancée's* claim upon him, and delighted in paying her all the delicate little attentions which are so beautiful in a lover. If he went into town, he always brought back to her some little token to prove that she had been in his thoughts while he had been away, and, no matter how short his absence had been, was never satisfied until he had found her and received her welcome home. Mrs. Wallace privately whispered to me that he was just such a lover as his father had been, and Miss Betsey ejaculated under her breath,

“Poor young fool! To waste himself upon a girl that doesn't care the snap of her finger for him!”

I knew that was not so, but still I felt it to be true that, while Lin loved Harry truly, yet the depths of her heart were still unstirred. She had not yet learned to make a distinction between the love for her playfellow—“her little uncle,” as she called him—and the first passion of a woman's nature. As to her loving any one else better than

she loved Harry, I knew too well her staunch, true nature to suppose such a thing. Her feeling would develop for him with the growth of her womanhood. She was yet but a child, and felt as a child and understood as a child, but the time would come when she would put away childish things.

Eva said one day to Harry,

“Lin will not marry you now, and she is right. She wants to have a little fun this winter in Richmond—a few flirtations.”

He turned on her almost fiercely :

“It would not do to judge Lin by your standard, Eva ; she values one true whole heart more than a score of broken ones. I should be wretched indeed if I could not trust her to take care of my honest love. I would as soon doubt the sun in the heavens as doubt her perfect truth and purity.”

Eva shrugged her pretty shoulders and said he had better take care—that she knew the sex better than he did. But he turned on his heel and walked away, and Eva well knew she had offended him, but she did not in the least care for that.

Harry left for Richmond some weeks in advance of the rest of the family, as he was to begin the practice of law there and must make some preparations beforehand. Then it was I first caught a glimpse in Linda of what is almost the stereotyped feeling with a young lady in her position. Before this parting came she seemed to think her whole

duty consisted in consoling Harry, who, I think, after all, would have been more comforted by an exhibition on her part of excessive regret than by all her comforting, loving words.

“Harry, you are a perfect goose!” she said. “One would think we were going to be parted for a lifetime instead of for three weeks. Why, that will pass like a flash.”

“Not to me, Lin,” said Harry, disconsolately; “I feel as if it would be a perfect age. You see, I have become so accustomed to having you around. And you: how will you stand it? Will you too not miss me, dear?”

“Of course I shall miss you. How could I help it? You are always with me. And our walks and our rides are all over now;” and the quick tears filled her eyes.

Harry was quite encouraged by the symptom. Seizing Linda’s hand, he drew her to him and kissed her as he said pleadingly,

“Oh, Lin, if you would only marry me now, before we go to Richmond! You could go along with me; we need never be separated again.”

“No, Harry; it is of no use to ask such a thing. I am not ready to be married now. Maybe I will be ready next summer, when we come back to Woodlawn, but certainly not before; and if you are not a very good, patient Little Uncle, I will not then.”

“But, Lin, if you only felt as I do! If you only wanted to belong to me as much as I want you, darling!”

“Nonsense, Harry!” and Lin’s forehead puckered with vexation at his unreasonableness. “I belong to you just as entirely as if Mr. Gordon had said all those words over us.”

“Eva says,” said Harry, “you only want to have a little girlish fun this winter—flirtations, and so on.”

“And did you believe her?” Lin’s face fairly flamed at the accusation. “Harry, did you dare to believe her?”

“No, dear child,” said Harry, soothingly; “I told her you were above any such nonsense as that.”

“‘Above any such falsehood,’ you ought to have said, Harry.” Lin turned her face out of sight as she made the rare confession. “I know you think I do not care for you as you do for me, and maybe it is different; but I feel as if I had in me that which would stand a lifetime of wear and tear by your side. Don’t you believe me?”

Harry was in ecstasies:

“Believe you! I should think I did, you darling! I would doubt my own existence before I doubted this staunch, true heart.”

Harry went away next day looking very disconsolate, and he would have been gratified, I think,

could he have seen how Lin moped without him ; she did not seem to know what to do with herself. Grandpapa rallied her on her strange mood.

“I shall write to Harry,” he said, “and tell him how disconsolate you are.”

“Do !” she said, brightening, with a laugh. “Harry would be so pleased ! It doesn’t seem right in him, but I believe he would like to have me perfectly miserable because he is not here.”

“And are you ?” asked Tom Hastings.

“Well, I don’t know,” said candid Lin ; “I just feel as if I did not know at all what to do with myself. I miss Harry here and Harry there and Harry everywhere. I feel pretty much as Katie Mason does when you go away, I expect, Tom. Ask her.”

Lin here laughed mischievously, for Tom and Katie were very shy lovers, and the idea of their sacred feelings being talked of in the broad garish light of the sun was so startling that Tom, usually so ready to respond to a joke, was entirely out of countenance. He only said stiffly,

“I assure you, I’ll— I have no reason to suppose Ka—Miss Mason, I mean—would feel anything if I were to go to the North Pole.”

“Ah, Tom !” said grandpa, laughing heartily ; “she has you there. It is dangerous to play with edged tools, Tom, and my little Lin is an edged tool, I think ;” and the old man hugged Lin in approbation.

“It is dangerous only for people who live in glass houses and throw stones, grandpapa,” said Lin. “But Harry and I are more sensible than most lovers: we don’t have any secrets.”

“And you lose the most beautiful part of the romance,” said Eva, who had just come in. “But you could not keep anything to save your life; you would not value it if it could not be handed round to the community. I should not be at all surprised if you had talked the whole matter over with Mrs. Campbell and had her sympathetic account of the loves of the angelic departed as a case in point.”

“Eva, you know that is not so,” said Lin, flushing indignantly. Eva still had the power of exciting Lin more than any one in the world.

“Well, confess, now,” she said: “did you not talk the whole matter over with Mrs. Taylor?”

“Of course; there was no harm in that. Mrs. Taylor is always so sweet and sympathetic, and I thought I ought to tell her.”

“Did you tell Mrs. Macon and Katie?” asked Eva, provokingly.

“Eva, how can you be so disagreeable? Just think how beautifully Mrs. Macon loved her husband! When she asked me, was I to behave like a goose and not say a word, when she has known me all my life?”

Lin’s eyes were flashing now.

“And did you tell Mammy too?” asked Eva.

“Grandpa, make her stop,” said poor Lin, turning to him in dire confusion, half laughing, half crying. “She makes me a perfect sieve.—Yes, I *did* tell Mammy. I was obliged to, because she nursed me.”

There was a shout of laughter following this confession, and Lin, just as she used to do six years before, ran out of the room crying over her own discomfiture.

CHAPTER X.

AN AUTUMN FLITTING.

THESE journeys to Richmond were always very beautiful, occurring as they did just at the change of the leaf, and we came down from our mountain-eyry leaving Woodlawn in a perfect bouquet of gorgeous hues, sober and stately as ever, but looking so desolate, Lin said, as we left her with only the negroes about the front porch and old Mr. Slemins in their midst.

We never hurried very much, often taking two or three weeks in the flitting, as dotted all along the way there were friendly houses which claimed a call—some of an hour or two, some of a night, though this was not often, as the party was too large to admit of the infliction. But we carried great baskets of provisions, and there were houses of entertainment where for forty years the Wallaces had stopped going back and forth, and where the children were all welcomed as old acquaintances; the freshest eggs, the fattest chickens, the richest milk and the most golden butter always greeted us at these country farms, the good cheer rendered the

more delicious by the long day's journey over rough roads.

In these days, when the world moves by steam and electricity, and when mankind grumbles over "only twenty miles an hour," such locomotion would be wearisome in the extreme, but it was very different then, and one bore heroically the creeping over rough stones day after day at the average of three or four miles an hour. Yes, incredulous reader! not only bore it, but enjoyed it—more even than we do our journeys now-a-days. And as I look back along the line of years all recollection of weariness has passed away, and I remember only the charm of it all—the long stories with which Judge and Mrs. Wallace enlivened the way, the songs and jokes of the young people which made the woods resound, the substantial feasts by the side of cool shaded springs, the adventures which marked particular spots or the stories of past adventures recalled by such spots, and the delightful relief afforded to cramped limbs by a walk at sunset, when the children would gambol about us like young kittens, and even the girls and the boys grown into the neighborhood, at least, of manhood and womanhood ran races and romped with the youngest. Surely, if we gain much in these rapid times, there is something lost from the sweet associations of a life.

Halfway on our journey Harry met us, and I never doubted the reality of Lin's love for him when I saw

her in the delightful surprise of that meeting. When I think of the bright happiness of those few days, I rejoice in them, because the clouds so soon lowered over their young lives, so sadly obscuring their sunlight.

A lady's riding-horse accompanied the party, and the saddle was soon unpacked ; Lin found her riding-habit very easy to come at in her trunk, so we saw very little of either Harry or herself for any length of time.

It was a very tired but a very happy party that landed at the great white house on Main street which claimed Judge Wallace as its owner. We had been two weeks on the journey, and altogether, being human only, we were glad of the change to a quiet, luxurious home-life. Still, I think there was mingled a little regret that the pleasant journey was over. Then followed the excitement of getting fairly shaken down into our winter quarters. The establishment was in as perfect order as if the family had never left it, as Mrs. Wallace always took care to leave in charge servants upon whose faithfulness she could rely, and as a class these trusty old Virginia negroes were never surpassed ; and then Miss Mary Tazewell, Mrs. Wallace's sister, lived only a few squares away, and she always received Mrs. Wallace's orders and supervised their execution.

Though I have never mentioned this lady, she is

worthy of a formal introduction to my reader, and she certainly merits a particular description as one of the most exquisite specimens of single-womanhood I ever met with. A few more such would effectually silence the profane babbling of the world which carps at and ridicules this much-enduring class, which at best has furnished to the world of suffering and sorrow its most disinterested, unselfish philanthropists, its tenderest, most sympathizing nurses and most effectual comforters. Whether or not Miss Mary had a page of romance in her life I never knew, but doubtless she had, as years after, when she had gone to her rest and lay with folded hands and closed eyes in the parlor of her own little home, I was, with Mrs. Wallace, looking through an old secretary which stood in her room. You do not see such now except an occasional family-piece kept for the sake of old associations. The top drawer was half the depth of the whole affair, which in appearance was a high bureau with white glass knobs to the drawers. The front of this top drawer let down and rested upon slips of mahogany which were pulled out like long arms, and thus was constituted a writing-desk. At the back of the drawer were a number of small drawers, and Mrs. Wallace was looking through these for some article—I don't remember what—when suddenly we came upon a package of old letters tied with a faded blue ribbon, and fastened in with the letters were the

remains of a withered bouquet. This was all I ever knew, as Mrs. Wallace simply said she wanted these buried with her ; and they were laid upon her bosom, the record of a dead past upon the dead woman's breast.

But, whatever this ghost was, it certainly had not left one drop of bitterness in the old lady's nature. She was one of those who give you a glimpse of heaven here on earth. I always felt, when I was with her, as if the curtain which shuts out the future world were drawn a little aside that we might have an idea of what the angelic nature was like. She lived as close to the Throne as it was possible for one inhabiting an earthly tabernacle to live ; and when I have sometimes gone in upon her and found her sitting in her own room with an open Bible or some book of religious devotion upon the stand beside her, I have known, by the light still shining upon her face, that she has just come down to meet me from the mount where she has been talking with God. But her life was not confined to this room, nor was it here alone that she held communion with her God ; far from it. Her life was one of labor in the cause of Christ. There was not an obscure street in the city to which she and others like her had not bent their steps, seeking out the needy, ministering to the sick, giving the cup of cold water to the " little ones " of the kingdom and bestowing of her substance to relieve their wants. She was one of those happy

people who have found their work. I said to her once,

“I wonder you never went as a missionary.”

“Why, my dear,” she said, “it was not needed. Surely there are heathen enough at home.”

But, although her life—so much of it—was passed amid scenes of suffering and distress, she never brought into society the sadness with which they must have touched her spirit. She was always welcomed as the light of the company, and her beautiful, bright old face always shed a halo over every circle in which she moved. She was very old when I first knew her—some years older than Mrs. Wallace, whom she never could convince herself was beyond the prime of life.

“Well, my dear,” she said one day when Lin and Eva were laughing at her about this hallucination, “this thing of growing old is at best somewhat a thing of fancy. Now, I have known some persons of sixty who were much younger than others of not half their years. It is not altogether a thing of time; the spirit often retains its youthfulness long after the body has yielded to the power of time, and again many a youthful body bears an old, wasted spirit. And as you grow older you will all find that your memory recalls so vividly the scenes of youth and childhood that it is wellnigh impossible to realize the years that have passed.”

“But, Aunt Mary,” said Eva, “grandma seems

so very old with her gray hair and cap and spectacles. And then only see her grandchildren!"

"It is true," said Aunt Mary, sagely bowing acquiescence at the indubitable evidence thus summed up, "Ann is no longer a young woman, but she bears a young spirit still, thank God! and when I think of the years between us, and feel, looking back to my youth, that what is so vividly present with me cannot be far off in the past, I never can feel that she is an old woman. She is young to me, at any rate, and I like to feel it so."

I never saw any one who so set forward the love of the gospel as she did; others talked of the terrors of the law, but she spoke only of the tender love which redeemed us. Did one talk of the Judge upon his throne? She told of the Advocate by his side. The law of charity was the law of her life. Did one speak of an offender? She was sure to bring a mantle of charity to cover him over. No wonder every one loved her, one was always so safe in her hands. I can see her now coming forward to welcome me with her face beaming with real, unaffected pleasure at seeing me. Eva once said there was no temptation for Aunt Mary to tell little society stories, because she did love every one and was always glad to see people; and this was true.

She lived in a small cottage about two squares from Judge Wallace's, alone—that is, if it can be

called living alone, for she was seldom by herself. Her one spare-room was sure to be occupied. Perhaps it was some poor child who had been sick for a long time and wanted a change, or a woman who had no home and would stay with her until one was procured for her ; or it was some poor soul groaning beneath both poverty and sickness who was under her healing power ; and the more aggravated was their distress, the more sedulously did this dear Christian soul minister to them. She would come in sometimes in her brisk, busy, cheerful way.

“What do you want, auntie?” some one would say as she went peering around searching for something.

“I only wanted to hunt up a few flowers to put in my guest-chamber to make it look cheerful. I am going to have a poor girl there to-day who has been sick so long, and I think the change and cheerful society will do her good ; and a few flowers will help the business immensely.”

Many a cherished bouquet has she wiled away even from self-indulgent Eva, who was not over-much given to denying herself anything for others.

Lin loved nothing better than to go round and help “auntie” to entertain her company or to go with her to visit her poor people, and many a delightful hour have I spent in the bright, cheerful room, with its wonderful healing power, seeing the tender influence of Christian love working its way

to some sick, weary heart as well as strengthening the sick, weary body.

There was a little girl—Allie Gray—who was a special favorite with us all. She had come to light in one of Miss Mary's raids into the dark alleys of the city—a little feeble body distorted and crippled, twisted with cramps and weary from long suffering, surrounded by such poverty as denies even the ordinary comforts of life to its victims, and without that knowledge which, by assuring a happiness a little beyond us, helps us to bear the weight of sorrow here. Miss Mary had entered the dark home like the first beam of sunrise dispelling the night. She had whispered sweet words of consolation, had introduced comforts hitherto unknown and had borne the little weary sufferer again and again to her guest-chamber, where, surrounded by all the comforts her kind hand could bestow, Allie tasted a happiness of which her life had never before dreamed, and for the future drank in a hope which made the pains of the present comparatively easy to bear.

When Allie was announced as Aunt Mary's guest, both Lin and myself were prone to run away from the gayeties of home for the quiet room and the little peaceful white face on the pillow in Aunt Mary's guest-chamber.

CHAPTER XI.

A DISCOVERY.

AS my readers will guess, Judge Wallace's position, his wealth, his hospitality and the beauty and accomplishments of his young wards secured for them the choicest society the metropolis afforded. Linda Dalrymple's engagement to Harry Wallace deprived her of the *éclat* which might have attended her entrance into society, though her sensitive reticence among strangers would always have excluded her from the honors of belleship—if honors they are—and also prevented her entering upon her gay career with more than a tempered enjoyment.

In Eva's heart there was one point of dissatisfaction which, though the world bowed at her feet and did her homage, still rankled in her egotistical heart; and this was that her younger sister, whose attractions she had been wont to rate so low, had secured a lover for herself; and the blood mounted to her cheek when she thought that the time might come when she, with all her beauty and graces, would be compelled to enter society under the chaperonage of Mrs. Harry Wallace *née* Linda Dalrymple. So, although she affected to laugh at the childish engage-

ment as a thing gotten up by the family, she secretly chafed at it and determined to secure for herself as soon as possible a brilliant *parti* which would throw in the shade the absurd little domestic affair.

The winter was but beginning when there arrived a stranger who seemed to bring all the requisites even Miss Dalrymple could require. She had never seen him in jackets and aprons. He was wealthy and handsome, and bore the aristocratic patronymic of Harrison—Dr. Charleton Harrison, a young graduate of medicine from Baltimore, who came to recruit in Richmond society before entering upon the labors of his profession. He brought letters of introduction to Judge Wallace, who welcomed him with his usual warmth, and as a first step toward promoting his enjoyment introduced him to his own household. I knew Eva so well that, in spite of her perfect self-possession, on that first evening I recognized her intentions with regard to Charleton Harrison. I saw her casting many glances toward the handsome head bowing so courteously to Mrs. Wallace. He was one of the proudest-looking men I ever saw. It amounted almost to haughty arrogance, though, as in every respect the Wallaces were his peers, this trait had no opportunity for display.

As my story has little to do with the romance of Eva's life, I pass it over in a few words. Charleton Harrison bowed his proud knee at the shrine of her beauty, and she, weighing his many attractions, lis-

tened with a willing ear to his suit, exulting in his very pride as another tribute to her charms. I really think Eva loved him as much as it was in her nature to love any one except herself. He "filled the bill," if I may be forgiven for once in my life making use of a slang expression. There was so far no ripple on this very transparent stream of love. Everything was satisfactory, and Charleton Harrison was welcomed in the household as Eva Dalrymple's accepted lover, to the great chagrin of the rejected aspirants, who looked on with envious eyes.

Eva was a little shaken out of her usual self-possession by the rapid course of these events. She was happy and exultant, as was natural, over the prospect before her. As soon as possible after the engagement letters from his mother and sister welcomed her into the family with great kindness, though in their expressions there was a stateliness which bordered on stiffness. Charleton loaded her with presents, and his usual grave dignity seemed almost endangered by the ardor of his devotion.

Matters had just reached this point when something happened which startled us all from our condition of happy security. It was in this wise: Linda had gone out one morning, as she was apt to do, for a walk with Harry before he settled down for the day. She did not return so early as was her wont, but to this we did not give a thought. About twelve o'clock Dr. Harrison was announced, and

Eva, arrayed in her most becoming costume and blushing like a rose, went down to meet him. It was about half an hour after that I heard Lin come in at the front door, and, passing with lagging footsteps very different from her usual buoyant movements by the parlor door, she came up the stairs, and, different from her usual custom, went into her own room without coming in to speak to me. Struck by the little variation from her usual habit, I rose and, putting down my work, went to seek her. I found her sitting, with her hat and cloak on, gazing into the street below her. She did not turn as I entered, being seemingly absorbed in her occupation.

“Lin!” I said.

She turned to me with an expression upon her face which alarmed me because I had never seen it there before.

“What is the matter?” I asked.

Instead of answering me, she asked me a question which sent a thrill of fear to my heart:

“Maxy, what is it about my mother?”

“What have you heard?” I asked, breathlessly. I saw that the old stereotyped answer would do no good; there was some real knowledge at the bottom of her question.

She told me this: Harry and herself, after taking a longer walk than usual, separated at the door of Aunt Mary’s house, he going to his office and she to spend an hour or two with the old lady. She

was vexed to find she had already gone out. Stepping into the little parlor, she found a most tempting fire burning in the grate, and after warming her cold fingers she determined to wait there for Aunt Mary's return. She drew the large arm-chair to the window, and, taking a book, seated herself most comfortably, first opening the door into the hall that she might be sure of hearing the old lady when she came in. The heat of the room, after coming out of the sharp air, overcame her, and before she had read a page she was asleep. She wakened with a start. What was it that had wakened her? There were voices talking at the front door, and she distinctly heard Miss Betsey Briggs say,

"I cannot believe Cousin Lyle is going to allow that fine young man to marry Eva Dalrymple without telling him about her mother. If he chooses to mix that vile French blood with his own stock, it is all well enough, but to allow another family to walk blindfold into the ditch is another matter."

"My dear Betsey," said Aunt Mary, "you need give yourself no anxiety. Lyle is perfectly honorable; he will do what is right in the matter."

"I hope so," was the answer, "but Cousin Lyle is so wrapped up in these girls it is a great temptation to him to conceal a matter which might prevent this most desirable match."

"He will do what is right," reiterated Aunt Mary; and then they parted.

Aunt Mary went directly up to her room, and Lin did not call her; she felt so miserable, so anxious, that she just wanted to get home and ask me to please not hide anything from her, but to tell her the truth.

“Linda,” I said, “I cannot tell you; I have no right. You must ask those who know more of the matter than I do.”

She started up directly:

“Grandpapa is not here, but grandmamma must tell me. I *will* know! Oh, Maxy, is it anything very disgraceful? I can stand anything but disgrace. ‘Bad French blood’! I can’t get the sound of that out of my mind.”

I shook my head; I dared not say anything.

Lin left me, and before she came back she knew the worst. Her face was as pale as that of a ghost, and her eyes were red with weeping.

“Ah, Maxy!” she said; “grandpapa did it for the best, but I think we ought to have known this long ago. I feel like an impostor.”

While we talked Judge Wallace knocked at the door. He had heard of the accident, and came to comfort the child. He took her in his arms and went over the sad story gently and tenderly as he could, dwelling much on the poor young mother’s sad disadvantages, her husband’s devoted love for her, her beauty and attractiveness, and touching as lightly as possible upon the last act of the sad tragedy. He told her, while she sobbed on his shoul-

der, how every step had been taken to trace the unfortunate woman, and how at last they had heard something which satisfied them she had died.

Lin cried so bitterly that I cried for sympathy, and the first words she spoke were,

“Oh, grandpa, indeed, indeed, I don't think I ought to marry Harry. I have bad blood in my veins, and yours is so pure! Oh how dreadful!”

“Bless your heart, darling child! you are all Dalrymple. Harry has known this all the time, and loves you so much the better because you are all his and no one else has a claim to you. You have bad blood, indeed! It is the best kind of blood;” and the old man kissed her.

Harry had known it all the time! This also was a surprise. Everybody seemed to have known it but herself and Eva. Oh, Eva! What would she think? Then, when we thought she was getting comforted, came another great cry and burst of tears:

“Oh, grandpa, only suppose she should be alive and come back! Oh how wicked I am to wish that my own mother is dead—I, who have so often wished I had a mother like other girls! But indeed it is so dreadful! The idea of having a mother who is not an honor and glory to one!”

Poor child! I never saw greater suffering in one so young. Lin was not ordinary in anything, and her proud, sensitive nature cowered and shrank at the touch of shame.

Of course Eva too had to hear the sad story, and the contrast was never more apparent between the two sisters than in the way she looked at it.

“What am I to do?” Eva cried, passionately. “My prospects in life are ruined—I, who have the world at my feet!—Grandpapa, you will not let any one know this?” The fact is Eva was a grand egotist by nature.

It was touching to see Harry’s trouble about the matter; and when Lin shrank away from him and said, with her great gray eyes full of tears, “Harry, I think it is better we should not be married, on account of the bad blood in my veins,” he laughed at the idea.

“You silly darling!” he said. “Every drop of your blood is as pure as the crystal dewdrops. And besides, Lin, if your veins ran thick with the blood from a long line of robbers and murderers—only think! robbers and murderers!—and you were this precious Lin Dalrymple, it would not make the slightest difference to me. I have not the least desire to marry the blood of your ancestors; I want you just exactly what you are, and I would not give up one drop of your precious blood, I don’t care where it came from.”

“That’s very sweet in you, Harry dear,” said Lin, with grateful humility; “but just suppose it should come out some day? Bad blood does sometimes, you know, later in life.”

“You goose, you!” laughed Harry. “If it should ‘come out,’ as you call it, I’ll catch every drop of it and bottle it.”

“Oh, Harry, please don’t laugh. Indeed, it is a very solemn thing.”

But Harry would not take a solemn view of the matter, and at last laughed Lin out of some of her sorrow and dismay; but her manner to him was changed: it lost the perfect freedom which had so characterized it. She was more shy with him, and it looked strange enough to see her blush when his steps sounded in the hall as ordinary young ladies do about their lovers. But I think she was more conscious of her deep love for him now than she had ever been before; the cloud in which she stood had developed the child’s rare nature into woman’s earnestness. Lin was never again quite what she had been.

Nor was the discovery without its effect upon Eva. She was nervous and excited, and insisted in the most moving terms that Dr. Harrison should not be told. He was to leave on the morrow, and there was no more reason than there had been before.

“That may be,” said the judge, very quietly, “but I take a different view of the matter. I have been so much in the habit of looking upon you as my own children, or solely with reference to your father and grandfather, that I have perhaps ignored the other

side of the question too much. My duty is now plain, my child: Dr. Harrison must know every circumstance.

Eva cried piteously.

“Nay, my child,” he said; “why distress yourself so needlessly? If he is worthy of you at all, this will make no difference to him, and surely, if he is not, it had better be known now than later.”

But this view of the matter did not afford much comfort to Eva, and she still persisted in her entreaties that Dr. Harrison might not be told. Here, however, Judge Wallace was immovable; once convinced of the course it was right for him to pursue, nothing could turn him from it. So he sought an interview with the young man, and told him all the circumstances. It was evidently a terrible shock.

“My dear sir,” he exclaimed, “this is a great—I may say a most unpleasant—surprise to me. I had imagined, sir, that Miss Dalrymple could bring to me an escutcheon unstained as the one I bring to her.”

“And, since that is unfortunately not the case,” said the judge, with stately severity, “you wish to withdraw from your connection with her? Be assured, my dear sir, you will have no difficulty; Miss Dalrymple does not wish that you should feel humiliated by your marriage with her.”

“My dear sir,” answered the young man, rather overawed by both the manner and the words of

the old gentleman, "you misunderstand me. I am sincerely attached to the young lady, and cannot give her up; but, sir, you must make an allowance for my natural complaint that I was not told this before."

"There," said the judge, his cheek flushing, "I feel that I have been to blame; but really the thing passed so long ago, and we all think of these children as so entirely belonging to the noble Dalrymples, that I overlooked its importance. In considering the marriage of my own son with the younger sister I never gave the matter a thought, and this is my only excuse for neglecting to communicate it to you."

"Well, I suppose it ought not, judge, to annoy me in the least; but I come of a proud stock and of pure blood, and I do not wish to— I naturally, perhaps, shrink from being the first to sully the stream."

"Young man," said the judge, laying his hand upon the shoulder of his companion, "I suppose that my 'stock,' as you term it, is as good as your own, but I have lived long enough to know that the best guarantee for the happiness of a couple meditating matrimony is mutual warm affection. Preserve that upon a basis of firm principle, and it matters but little about the stock. Grafting improves upon the original, and I have never discovered that the French graft upon the noblest native stock I ever saw had produced anything of which

to be ashamed. I produce my little girls as a proof of that."

There was a noble pride in the old man's words, and Dr. Harrison was moved by them.

"True, true, sir!" he said; "they in every respect support your argument. And the mother, you say, is undoubtedly dead?"

"I think there is no possible doubt of that, sir. George Dalrymple caused every inquiry to be made, and gathered that a young woman answering her description died in a hospital from an injury received in the burning of a theatre in Paris a very short time after he left there."

"That is a satisfaction, at any rate," said the young man, with a very decided expression of disgust upon his aristocratic lineaments at the most ignoble end of the unfortunate mother of his beautiful *fiancée*.

"Now, my dear sir," said the judge, a little offended by his manner, "let me insist that you shall not prosecute this affair at any sacrifice to yourself. I consider Miss Dalrymple a match for the noblest in the land, and that she honors any man upon whom she bestows her hand in token of her affection for him."

"No one can appreciate Miss Dalrymple's attractions more highly than myself, sir," said the doctor, a little stiffly, "and I have no intention of seeking a release at her hands, and this unfortunate connec-

tion need never be known by my family ;” and so the matter ended.

Dr. Harrison left for Baltimore the next day, and Eva soon forgot everything in the preparations for her marriage, which at his earnest request was to take place before the Wallaces left Richmond for the summer.

CHAPTER XII.

THE RETURN OF THE WANDERER.

“**S**UCH a plague !” ejaculated Eva, puckering up her pretty face as she threw a note across the table to Lin one day in January as we sat at the breakfast-table. “I do not see any use in running so continually after poor people as auntie does.”

“What is it now ?” asked Mrs. Wallace.

“Ah ! Aunt Mary is not very well this morning, and wants Lin and myself to go to see after little Allie Gray and take her something tempting to eat.”

“Is that the little cripple auntie makes such a fuss over ?” asked Harry as he read the note over Lin’s shoulder.

“Yes,” Lin responded, with the enthusiasm she always threw into any subject which interested her ; “she is a darling. She is Aunt Mary’s most frequent guest, and I do love to go and read and talk to her, and to watch the little pale face light up as you have seen the sun come out of clouds—first a beam here and there looking out, and then bursting out in full glory.”

“How absurd you are, Lin! I never heard a more inapt comparison—that poor meagre little beggar and the sun! I have no such philanthropic tastes, I am happy to say. I shall content myself with giving a certain sum to charity and let other people take the trouble. I expect Harry and yourself will set up a hospital in your establishment. You will never be happy without your guest-chamber, as Aunt Mary calls her room.”

All this Eva said with her pretty little scornful air which looked down upon such low tastes from an immeasurable height of superiority.

Harry replied rather defiantly :

“Yes, Lin shall have just as much of our house as she pleases for the purpose of cultivating tastes so honorable to her.”

Lin blushed and smiled gratefully up at Harry, while Eva elevated her eyebrows contemptuously as she said,

“Everybody to his liking; but I am afraid you will be sadly at a loss when you come to see me, as I will not be able to furnish you with any such choice society. Well, I suppose we shall have to go on this mission of mercy, as Aunt Mary calls it. She doesn't often ask such favors, and we cannot refuse.”

“Of course not,” said Lin. “And besides, Harry, it is an opportunity too good to be wasted, for the future Mrs. Harrison to give an example of

her beautiful amiability upon which we can meditate when she is no longer with us ;” and Lin and Harry laughed at their own wit.

“ Well, I am sorry, sir, that this expedition has come in to interfere with our morning walk, but I suppose, as self-sacrifice is the order of the day, I must submit and go off alone to exercise my patience in waiting for that client—so long looked for—who never comes,” said Harry, and he went merrily away. Ah ! how often afterward did he recall that bright parting which he so confidently expected was to last only for a few hours at most ! How often did he long for the opportunity of going back to say some word and to do some deed which would have prevented the catastrophe which so soon followed.

As Harry went by the station the passengers poured out of a train of cars which had just come in, and the engine still stood blowing its noisy breath, as if wearied with travel. The wonderful achievements of steam were then fresh in the eyes of the world, and Harry paused as he was going by to wonder over them. While he stood there the passengers hurried by him, and went on down the street in the direction of the Exchange Hotel. Suddenly a voice by him said,

“ Monsieur !”

Harry turned, and standing beside him was a woman in the faded, tattered garb of the children of want. Her scanty locks, besprinkled with gray,

escaped from beneath her miserable bonnet. Notwithstanding the evident poverty betokened by her dress, there was a strange air of jauntiness about the manner with which the poor creature held up the fragments of the shawl, and the faded bonnet was adorned with flowers still more faded.

Harry never could tell why it was, but a sort of shudder ran through his frame as his eye took in the details of this strange figure.

“Monsieur, have pity;” and the tears were in the light-blue eyes otherwise so expressionless.

“Where did you come from?” ejaculated Harry.

The woman pointed to the cars:

“I came to find my husband. Knew you—”

“Harry!” called a voice behind him. He turned: it was Lyle Wallace. “Grandpapa is waiting at the Capitol for you, and says will you hurry as much as possible, as he wants you to attend at once to that affair of Brown & German.”

“Certainly; I will be there in a moment. Where are you going, Lyle?”

Lyle gave quite an elaborate account of his plans as they walked to the corner.

“There!” said Harry, starting and turning back; “by the bye, that forlorn woman! I ought not to have left her without help.”

Lyle laughed:

“Are you going to undertake the *rôle* of *chevalier des dames*? I think the unfortunate creature you

were talking to as I came up went on down the street."

"Pshaw!" said Harry; "I am very sorry. There was something queer about the poor woman, and she said she had come here to hunt for her husband—some drunken creature, I suppose."

"Harry, you are a strange boy," said Lyle. "The idea of getting up an interest in that fantastical-looking figure! You are well off to have gotten away from her, I fancy."

"I don't know," answered Harry, gnawing at his finger-ends—a bad habit when his thoughts were perplexed. "There was something about her face which struck me as if I had seen her before. She looked so sad, too, as if she wanted help. She looked hungry, Lyle, and a hungry woman is a deplorable object, you know."

"Well," answered his companion, shrugging his shoulders in his most foreign style, "I am nothing of a philanthropist, and on the Continent, you know, one gets so accustomed to wretched beggars that it is a little calculated to harden the heart. Hey?" and the two young men walked on down the street toward the Capitol and very soon forgot all about the forlorn woman with the jaunty, poverty-stricken air.

Brown & German absorbed the one, and the other, passing on down the street, encountered Tom Hastings with a law-book under his arm:

“Where now, Tom?”

“To my business, Lyle. You know I am in R——’s bookstore now, and I really am very hard at work, and like it too. One feels so energetic and— You know: so well satisfied.

“But what means this?” said Lyle, touching the book.

“Oh, that is *Tucker on Blackstone*. You know, of course—although I am very glad to have this situation for the present emergency—that a fellow of my birth and standing altogether owes something to his family; so I thought I would read law, and borrowed this book from the store and read last night until one o’clock. And, really, I don’t see so much in it. I don’t at all see why a fellow of any quickness could not get a license to practice in a very short time, and, with grandpa to help one, why, really, one might mount up quite rapidly, you know, Lyle.”

“Let me tell you a story, old fellow,” said Lyle, smilingly, linking his arm into Tom’s as they walked together. “Once upon a time there was a milkmaid who was going home with her bucket of milk upon her head.”

“Now, Lyle!” remonstrated Tom. “I say! it ain’t kind of you, when a fellow is doing his best to settle down, to laugh at him like that. I call it a very shabby trick.”

Tom was really hurt, and showed it. As all the

family had a sort of tenderness for poor good-hearted, careless Tom, even Lyle the elegant might have condescended to bind up the wounds he had made had not a diversion occurred in the shape of two bright faces glowing from the keen morning air: they were no other than those of Linda and Eva Dalrymple.

“By George!” exclaimed Lyle. “Eva certainly is a beauty—so French in her appearance. Looking at her almost tempts one to make an effort to cut out that lucky dog Harrison.”

“I really believe you have the vanity to think you could,” said Tom, a little heat from the spark which had touched him lending a glow to his words.

Any further speech was interrupted by the near approach of the girls. Each one of them bore a neat little basket covered with a napkin.

“Where are you two Red Riding-Hoods going?” said Lyle.

“Going to see our grandmother, good Mr. Wolf,” said Eva, coquettishly answering Lyle’s admiring glance, which rested upon her face.

The fact is, Eva, who was never ignorant of her conquests, had been conscious of a growing interest upon Lyle’s part for some time past, which had been promoted by the admiration she excited in society. Lyle was just the stamp of man to be influenced by an overwhelming majority, and this growing sentiment might have developed into a

matrimonial desire, haply, but for the appearance upon the field of the young stranger, and after that he was passed by a little disdainfully, or, at best, used only in the absence of the successful suitor. This being the case now, the young lady's smiles were very gracious. She could not do without a chevalier—that was certain; and the handsome Lyle was not to be despised. Besides, it was some tribute to her powers that he who had dared to despise her fascinations for a time now yielded in some degree to their sway; so she courtesied back very roguishly when she assumed the character of the heroine of romance, little Miss Red-Riding-Hood.

“And have you the same old pat of butter and curds which the young lady has had for so many years?” said Lyle, lifting up the napkin. “No; quite an improvement, I declare! An iced cake!”

“Ah, girls!” said Tom, forgetting his ill-humor; “let's play I am the grandmother, and you need not have the trouble of going any farther. I'll take my part right here.”

“And I would prefer continuing my character of wolf and taking a morsel of little Red Riding-Hood herself at the end of the race,” said Lyle, gallantly bowing to Eva's pretty freshness.

“Oh, Tom,” said Lin, “the little girl up in the mountains is putting the work into you, is she not? I see you are really busy.”

Tom blushed, and boys and girls parted. How often they recalled this meeting and parting! Perhaps it was a commentary upon Lyle's admiring glances which made Eva say as they tripped along,

"I really think Dr. Harrison ought to be very good to me."

"Of course," said Lin. "But why particularly?"

"Oh, because I give up so much for him. It is such a sacrifice!" and the young lady sighed.

"'Sacrifice'! I don't understand you. I suppose you would not marry him if you did not wish to. I really do not see how you sacrifice so much."

"Oh, of course you cannot understand; you have had such a different life from mine;" and Eva assumed that air which spoke such volumes of meaning of Lin's inferior capacity for enjoying her elevated tastes. "Lyle Wallace says he does not know any young lady in Richmond who has had such a career."

"To what do you refer," asked Lin, determined not to understand.

"Pshaw, Lin! how stupid you are! Why, do you know I was counting up last night, after you went to sleep? I have had twenty-seven offers, and I am not twenty yet."

"'My dear, I have had five husbands, and I certainly ought to know all about men,'" quoted Lin, with such an exact imitation of Mrs. Campbell that

Eva was obliged to laugh, though her cheeks flushed with annoyance.

“And, Lin,” continued Eva, “I am not altogether selfish in thinking of my new home. I have already thought of your room, and of how much I am going to do to make you enjoy your visits to me.”

“Thank you, dear,” said Lin, provokingly, “but I don’t know whether Harry will spare me to go. He is a very grasping, unreasonable sort of fellow to deal with, and, I expect, when he once has the power, he will use it.”

“Yes, Harry is very fond of you, I know; but I would not like to settle down, just as you will do, where I’ve lived all my life; and with Harry it would be almost like marrying one’s brother.”

“‘Every one to his taste,’” said Lin; and as the wind tossed her draperies about she skipped with a little dancing motion to face the enemy and right her attire. “I would not change Harry for ten thousand of the best men on the earth;” and Lin snapped her fingers with an air which plainly included the absent physician in the ten thousand.

“What a dreadful place to come to!” exclaimed Eva as they turned out of the thoroughfare into an alley.

“Perfectly respectable, I assure you,” said Lin, taking the lead; “I have been here often with Aunt Mary. It is full of her people.”

The girls walked on until they emerged into a more open street—or, rather, a by-path—which bordered on the muddy canal familiarly known as “The Basin.”

“Not very attractive-looking,” said Eva, glancing over the poverty-stricken dwelling before which they stayed their steps.

“Well, now, Eva, there is a great deal in imagination; and if we just imagine very hard indeed, we can fancy ourselves in Venice with the limpid waters at our feet. And look what comes to aid us—a fairy-gondola;” and as she spoke Lin pointed to a dirty canal-boat which at that moment happened to be coming in sight.

“You certainly are a goose,” said Eva, laughing, though, very merrily at the conception.

Just then, in answer to repeated knocks, a pale, careworn woman opened the door, and upon their stating their errand led them into the house and up a rickety pair of stairs, saying,

“Allie, poor child! will be glad enough to see you. She has been very droopy these last few days—seems too weak even for her basket-making. Come in;” and she opened a door at the head of the staircase and ushered the visitors into just such a room as one would have anticipated from the outside of the house, excepting that it was clean. But the few articles of furniture were in the last stages of dilapidation, if we except a low cot-bedstead with

snowy coverings, all of which with perfect safety one could vouch were marked "Mary Tazewell." On this lay the little invalid, her scanty hair brushed back from a brow contracted by pain; but the thin lips expanded into the ghost of a smile and the soft brown eyes lighted up at the sight of the two young ladies.

"Ah! you are suffering to-day," said Lin, kneeling on the floor beside the lounge. "I am so sorry!" and she drew off her glove and laid her cool, soft hand on the pain-marked brow.

"Yes, ma'am; my back was very bad all night. I can get no ease," said the child, in a weak voice.

"You see," said the mother, "she cannot change her position at all; she has to lie just so. A change would be such a relief."

Eva uncovered her basket:

"See here, Allie: Rachel made you this;" and she displayed the pretty white cake, which just filled the space within. She felt repaid for her walk and ceased for the moment to wonder at "Aunt Mary's tastes" when she saw the light of gratitude which for the time quite drove out the expression of pain on the little worn face.

"Auntie is sick, or she would have come herself," said Lin.

"'Sick'! Oh, I am so sorry!" and the sensitive blood flashed into the little cheeks. "Not much sick, I hope, miss?"

“Oh no ; only a slight cold.”

“Allie thinks ’most more of Miss Tazewell than she does of me, her own mother, I believe, miss,” said the woman.

“Ah, no, mother ! not that ; but, you know, she is so good to we all, and so many other people too. I don’t know what any of us would do if anything was to happen to her.”

“Yes, she is like an angel of mercy to poor people, certainly.—When she comes here, miss, she finds my poor child there, so low sometimes, and she just kneels down by her and prays to God to help her ; and she really prays like she thought he was just in the room by her, miss—she do, really. Now, some people halloo loud like he couldn’t hear without, but she just talks low and soft and easy, and it do seem like the blessing comes right down. Everybody feels better, and Allie, poor child ! seems to feel like the pain is not so bad.—Ain’t it so, Allie ?”

“Indeed, it is, mother. If angels ever do come down here and get in human people, I think one lives in Miss Tazewell.”

The tears stood bright in Lin’s eyes as she rose to go, and even Eva seemed softened by the tributes to “auntie.”

“It would be something worth living for to have people speak so of one,” said Lin as she and Eva walked away.



Lin and Eva meet their Mother.

“Ah, well! Maybe when we get old we will grow good. I intend, when I am fairly settled, to give so much every year to the poor. You know the Bible says, ‘He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.’”

This was said by Eva, and Lin was about to make a laughing comment upon her sister’s disinterestedness when they were stopped by a woman who said in broken English,

“Mesdemoiselles, will you not *donner* assistance to one *pauvre* unfortunate?”

The speaker certainly looked a suitable object for charity, and both girls turned kindly toward her.

“What can we do for you?” asked Lin.

At the sound of Lin’s voice the woman regarded her attentively, and then said,

“Kind young ladies, you see before you *une femme misérable*. Once I was like to you—young, beautiful—and had plenty of fine clothes. Now I grow old and de world forsake me, and I have nothing—not so much as de bread to eat.”

Such a strange fantastic figure was this that the young girls involuntarily exchanged glances and smiled. In a moment Lin’s generous nature reproached her, and, taking out her purse, she said,

“We are very sorry for you, my poor woman! You must let us help you;” and she pressed a coin upon her.

To the girls' surprise, the applicant put it back with a gesture of pride which sat strangely upon her, and said,

"I beg not for money; I come to seek for my husband."

"Is he here in Richmond?" asked Lin.

"Yes, in dis Richmon'. Know you him? I find not his house; I forget. Not here," she added, looking around at the wretched street and pointing to the hill towering in sight upon which were built beautiful residences. "Like dat."

Eva laughed at the droll idea. Linda clutched madly at her sister, but was too late to stop the question:

"What is his name!"

"George Dalreemple."

That was the woman's answer, and then she looked in amazement at the ashen faces of the two young girls, who gazed at her without a word—stupefied, stunned, sick. Yes, it was true: this was their mother. They knew it in a moment as one knows when the horrible earthquake cleaves asunder the solid earth beneath his feet and he recognizes the yawning grave waiting for him.

Look at these women as they stand there, the mother and her fair young daughters, that tender tie so redolent of beauty and bliss—those fair, graceful young ladies so refined and elegant in their dainty adornments, and that woman in her tawdry rags be-

side them! Ah! it is cruel, cruel, cruel! and they gaze helplessly upon one another, without the power to utter a word.

At length the stranger, dismayed at the dismay she dimly recognized as her own work, laid her hand upon Lin's arm and said, trembling,

“*Qu'est-ce que c'est?* What have I done?”

The girl shook off the grasp, exclaiming, with all the vehemence of her passionate nature, while her eyes blazed with the fire of a furious animal.

“‘Done’! Ha! She asks what she has done! Why, she has trampled out beneath her feet the joy of our lives. She has destroyed us, and now asks what she has done!” and then, the divine impulse within her wrestling with and conquering the triumphant devil, she cried out, “God help us!” and burst into tears.

“Oh, pity me, yong ladies! I know not my fault. Tell me of my husband; I will den go away.”

“He is dead!”

Eva spoke, and her voice sounded hollow as the grave.

“‘Dead’! *Mort!*” exclaimed the poor creature, wringing her hands.” “Oh, say not dead. I work for dis day, I lif for it, and now dead and no word! All my travel, my hunger and pain, for noting! Dead!” and the great drops rained down her cheeks, prematurely furrowed as they were.

Neither of the poor woman's auditors spoke a word; both only gazed at her as at some horror.

"Pity me! pity me!" she cried, stretching out her poverty-stricken hands toward the two fair girls. "I come from Paris to seek my husband, and *il est mort!* He is dead!"

"When did you come?" asked Eva, with a sort of choke in her voice, as when one's throat is dry and parched with fever.

"I have arrive but now—de cars. I sell all my clothes for de passage. I eat noting. I say I will have plenty when I have come to my husband; and he is dead. *Mon Dieu! Il est mort!*"

This refrain seemed to contain all her sorrow. Suddenly looking up, she exclaimed,

"De fader! Where is he? He luf me not, but for de son he will be good."

"He is dead too."

Eva spoke this time also, and in her tone there was an accent of revenge and triumph.

"Dead too! All dead—de little children, de babies! *Enfants!* Ah! speak not; I see. I cannot bear all tings. Tell me not; I know. All die!" and she sunk into a sort of stupid trance of grief upon the steps of a deserted house in front of which they stood.

Then the sisters turned to each other: "What are we to do?" Their eyes more than their voices spoke. One minute they stood thus, and then a

mighty energy seemed to seize upon Eva. She turned desperately to flee, dragging Lin after her.

Suddenly Lin waked from the stupor into which she had fallen, and, disengaging herself from the grasp of her sister, said with the calmness of desperation,

“What are you doing, Eva? What are you doing? That is our mother; we cannot leave her.”

“Hush, Lin! For the sake of mercy, hush! I will die if you say such a thing. Take her with us? That thing? Horrible!”

“God help us!” cried Lin, the agony of her soul going forth on the wings of the cry and then rebounding to settle like a pall upon her heart.

“Come; let us go. Don’t stop; she is coming toward us,” entreated Eva. “Lin, would you ruin my prospects? Do you not know that her presence changes my whole life? Come, Lin! Oh, come!”

“I cannot, Eva; I cannot go and leave our *mother* to die in the streets. Besides, do you not know she will tell her frightful story to the next person she meets?”

This consideration had the effect of staying Eva’s flight, and she turned to meet the woman, who had again come up by their side.

The second look at this new-found relation did not much mend matters. The tears she had shed had trickled through the rouge upon her cheeks and

rolled in colored drops upon her soiled attire, making stripes of alternate white and red upon her hollow face.

“Come this way; we want to speak to you,” said Eva, looking anxiously round to see that no one heard her, and then darting down a dark alley, followed by Lin and the woman.

Halfway down they stood breathless, looking in each other's faces. Suddenly the woman approached them closely, peering into their eyes.

“*Qu'est-ce que c'est?* Who are you? Once I was *si jeune, si jolie*, like you—wid hair so like dis;” and she would have laid her hand upon the shining locks, but the dainty Eva shrank away. “*Ah, je vois!* You do not like me touch you? Yet I was once *charmante* so as you. All men say, ‘How lofely!’ And now!” and she spread out her hands before her with a gesture of deep despair.

Eva looked away as if to hide the beauty which might betray her. The woman turned to Lin, who had resumed her attitude of statue-like repose as a covering to her despair.

“And you—you seem— I see you at somewhere. Do I see you somewhere?”

“I do not remember,” said Lin, and her voice was hoarse and dry.

“I haf *enfants* at somewhere, but dey is *tres petites*. Knew you some *enfants* Dalreemple! Be dey *mortes aussi?*”

Before Lin could answer, Eva dragged her aside, and, saying to the woman, "I must speak to my sister. We will help you; only wait."

"What are you going to do?" she asked, almost fiercely.

"There is but the one thing I can see, and that is terrible—take her home with us."

"'Home with us'! Never!" exclaimed Eva. "Grandpapa must not know it; he would think he ought to tell Dr. Harrison, and then my life is changed."

"You think only of yourself," said Lin, wearily. "We must do what is right, not what is pleasant. And, besides, grandpa must know it. Do you suppose she is going to walk about the streets telling her story to every one without its reaching his ears?"

"But she must not walk about the streets; she must not be seen."

"I do not very well see how it can be helped," said Lin.

"She must go away from here. Oh, Lin, save me and take her away!"

Lin only looked her amazement at the proposition, and Eva went on:

"Lin, I have money: grandpa gave me a hundred dollars yesterday. It is here. Only take her away for a time. Only think, Lin, of the disgrace we bring upon the whole house! Only think of grandma, of Harry, Lyle—all!"

Lin buried her face in her hands; this was the great source of suffering to her unselfish nature—to bring such grief into a house which had befriended their orphanage; for well she knew it would be a bitter mortification to the Wallaces.

Eva saw her advantage, and at once proceeded to follow it up :

“Lin, I am resolved this shall never be. I propose that you shall take her away for a while because you are so much stronger, less sensitive than I; but if you will not, I am ready to do my duty. Go she must, and we cannot, as you say, send her away alone.”

How well Eva knew her sister! There had never been a time in their whole lives when, if there was a sacrifice to be made by one of the two, Lin had not been the one to make it.

But before Lin thus offered herself up on this altar she turned to look at her for whom it was to be done. Weariness had overtaken her; even as she watched the two girls she had sunk upon the doorstep, and now slept. Her bonnet, with its faded flowers, had fallen back, and the scanty hair straggled about her face, down which the tears had streaked their course and striped it red and white. One hand clutched the bundle which doubtless contained all she had in the world, and her foot, soiled with the dust of travel, protruded from beneath her skirts.

Eva followed Lin's glance, and her face expressed the utmost disgust.

"Is anything more terrible?" she said. "What have we done that such a misfortune should come to us? She must never be seen. I will take her away;" and she burst into a passion of tears.

"You are right," said Lin, hoarsely; "she must never be seen. *They* shall not be disgraced by us. And then our father's honored memory! Only think of *that* as his—"

Lin finished with a laugh more distressing to hear than a groan would have been.

"What is to be done?" said Eva, still weeping convulsively. "Where shall I take her?"

"You!" exclaimed Lin, as if she had never even heard the proposition. "Oh no; of course I will be the one. It is always so."

"You speak," retorted Eva, "as if the picking up of our mother in the street and running off with her was a daily pleasure. No! I am the oldest; I will go;" and then she glanced furtively at her sister and trembled with fear while Lin hesitated before she replied. But she knew her fate and was taking leave of the associations of a lifetime—the loving old grandparents, Aunt Mary, Maxy and—Harry! Yes, there her thoughts lingered longest, and the true, staunch young heart just coming to a sense of its full powers was taking its passionate farewell of its romance.

CHAPTER XIII.

LIN DISAPPEARS.

EVA came home alone at dinner-time. If she looked pale, no one remarked it. She had parted with Lin on the street, she said, and nothing more. We inferred that Lin was dining with Aunt Mary, and Harry grumbled impatiently over her absence, as he always did, and said he would call for her and bring her home to tea; and he took his hat and went out. As he opened the front door he found a letter lying upon the step, and returned with it, looking curiously at the superscription.

“Father,” he said, handing the letter to the judge, “this is strange—a letter to you lying in the door, directed in Lin’s handwriting.”

The old gentleman took it, and looked wonderingly, but with no shadow of apprehension, at the bulky missive, and then opened it. There was one for Harry within.

No words can describe the scene which followed; I despair of giving the faintest idea of it. Dearly as we all loved the child, I never knew how strong

a hold she had upon our affection. In the midst of the grief and dismay Eva fainted, and when recovered fell into such paroxysms of grief as would have been alarming had we not all been absorbed in our sorrow for the strange catastrophe which had befallen our Lin.

I copy her letter to Judge Wallace :

“DEAR, DARLING GRANDPA : What will you say when you read this letter and know that your little Lin has been obliged to go away from you for a long time perhaps? I can hardly write this for crying. I am not the least a bad girl, grandpa, and I don't just see how I am to stand it all, but I suppose God, who has sent this trial, will help me to bear it. That is what Aunt Mary and Maxy would say. You have all been so sweet to me that I have never known anything about it from my own experience. But oh, dear grandpa, how can I say farewell to you and Harry, grandma, Maxy, Eva, and all? Such visions of my past life rise up before me as almost break my heart, and I cannot write about it. The horrible thought comes to me, too, that you may all misunderstand and think I am very wicked ; but, grandpa, you must all believe in me and know that your little Lin never found it so hard to do what she thought was right in her life before. And yet I cannot explain ; only a terrible misfortune has happened. If I do not go away, it

will fall upon all of you ; but if I go, I alone will be hurt by it.

“ I have not time to write any more, grandpa, except to say ‘ Good-bye, ’ with my dearest love to all around you. God may let me come back to you sooner than I think ; if he don’t, I will die.

“ Remember, grandpa, grandma and all, believe I have not been a bad child, and go away only because it is right. God bless you all.

“ Your loving and unhappy

“ LIN.

“ P. S. Please don’t try to find me or to let anybody know about this, only say I have gone away, and everybody will think you know where. And oh, grandpa, if you love me, don’t put anything about me in the papers. I will write to you again.

L.”

This letter was so blotted with tears, that we could hardly read it. No one saw Harry’s, but he cried like a child over it.

And now Eva’s state demanded our anxious care. She was really ill for days, and so nervous that we dared not mention Lin before her.

Everything that could be done was done without giving publicity to the affair. Judge Wallace very quietly employed the police to look around the city and see if Lin was still there. Harry we hardly

saw; he was out all the time. After the first few days his expression of wild, restless anxiety gave place to a settled weariness and dejection very painful to see upon his young face. Mrs. Wallace grieved as for the death of a young child.

Aunt Mary was the light and comfort of all. Her unwavering trust in God was our strength also.

“Lin,” she said, “is a Christian, and as such is in the divine keeping. She thinks she is right; and even if this is an error of judgment, God will overrule it for her good.”

Neither Harry nor Judge Wallace could listen to this doctrine or see how any good could come out of such a dire mistake. But still Aunt Mary tranquilized even them; the touch of her hand was mesmeric, I think.

But, after all, those were dreadful days—days which even now, after the lapse of years, it is hard to think and to write about. There was a shadow over the house which nothing but the restoration of our dear child could lift. Her promise to write again was all we lived upon, and for weeks we had to wait in suspense before the letter came. The police failed to discover any trace of a lady answering her description.

Once our hope was raised. An acquaintance of Judge Wallace met him one day on the street and said to him, “Judge, is not one of those little Dalrymple girls in Lynchburg?”

“Why do you ask?” said the judge as composedly as he could.

“Why, I was there the other day, and met on the street a young lady who was amazingly like the youngest of your *protégées*, except that she was paler and thinner. I was so struck by the resemblance that I was just on the point of speaking to her, but she was gone before I had a chance to do so.”

This seemed a clue, and off for Lynchburg started Harry and the judge. We waited with the most intense anxiety for news of them, but their search was in vain.

When Eva's health became improved, we hoped to be able to get some clue from her by which to trace the fugitive, but we had to approach the subject with the greatest precaution, as she was overwhelmed with distress whenever she spoke of Lin, and all we could gather was that when they parted Lin gave no intimation of her intention.

I suppose the Wallaces were naturally unsuspecting people; free from guile themselves, they fancied others also were free. Certainly, there was no suspicion of Eva's complicity in the matter, and she was an object of the greatest tenderness on account of her evident affliction.

Mrs. Gray was questioned, but could tell only that Lin returned alone to her house with writing-materials. She sat in Allie's room and wrote some letters, crying all the time, but they did not like to

ask her what was the matter ; and when she went away, she kissed Allie and told her there were sorer trials than hers in this world.

It seems strange now, in view of all the developments, that our conjectures never hit upon the truth ; but for years the death of George Dalrymple's wife had been so undoubted, we thought, that we never connected her with the matter. Judge Wallace insisted that Lin's morbid conscientiousness about what she called mixing her bad blood with ours had led her thus insanely to remove herself from the temptation of Harry's importunities, but this did not seem to be a very plausible solution. To her honor be it recorded, no one ever thought of suspecting the simple, high-toned girl of any wrong.

Miss Betsey did purse up her lips one day and say,

“Bad blood will show itself, cousin.”

This was to Miss Mary Tazewell and myself, and before even my hot speech could find vent in Lin's defence the trembling voice of Miss Mary said,

“Betsey, it behooves you and me to be silent and not dare throw a stone to injure that spotless child. I fear an imprudent conversation which she overheard at my door was the first page in this tragedy ;” and then she clasped her hands and raised her eyes, and ejaculated with genuine fervor, “God in his mercy and love have her in his keeping and bring her out of this furnace purified and cleansed !”

When Lin's promised letter came, it was post-marked "Richmond," and gave no clue within as to her whereabouts. This is the letter:

"DEAR ONES ALL: It is hard to believe I have been away from you only three weeks; it seems a lifetime. I don't believe in a thousand years I would ever get accustomed to doing without you. You must not make yourselves miserable about your poor little Lin: it will all come right after a while, maybe; and if it doesn't, we must try to be together in heaven. I am getting very tired, anyhow, of living, we are subject to such terrible trials here.

"It seems strange I should have a secret to keep, doesn't it, when you all used to laugh at me so because I had to tell everything? But that seems a long, long time ago.

"I cannot write any more; it almost kills me, and I have nothing to say except that I am well. Sometimes I think maybe there might have been some other way of arranging matters without my going away; but there is not any use regretting now.

"God bless you all!

"Your own loving

"LIN."

That was all—not a clue by which to trace her except the city postmark.

Again Harry spent his time on the streets; again his face took that eager, wistful look, and again the settled weariness took its place, for Lin was not found.

Dr. Harrison had expected to visit Eva once before the time appointed for her marriage; for some reason he did not come, but wrote that he hoped that the day might be named for an earlier instead of a later time if possible, and so May was decided upon. We all fondly hoped that our absent one would find her way back before that time, as it would be but a gloomy affair without her.

Eva did not recover from the shock at all, and we all silently wondered; we had not given her credit for such devotion to Lin. She was a poor pale flower now, and seemed also to have lost all interest in her trousseau, positively declining to add anything unnecessary. Yet when Judge Wallace, in his kindness fearing she was denying herself some gratification on account of the expense, offered her a considerable sum of money, she took it almost eagerly; and when she caught a somewhat puzzled expression upon his face, she said with a little embarrassed laugh and blush,

“You don't know, grandpa, how glad I am to get this. I do not care to spend it on any mere finery, but it will give me a full purse. I suppose every girl feels badly about going penniless to her husband.”

“My darling child,” said the old man, kissing her, “did you imagine I would allow that? Spend your money, dear; there is more where that came from.”

So passed the snows of winter, the blasts of March and April with her showers, and no news came of our lost one except occasional short notes postmarked “Richmond” and telling nothing but that she was well; and, though she did not say so, there was about her letters a growing tone of despondency which revealed to us, her anxious waiting friends, that she was very unhappy.

It was early in April, though, that poor Harry came home with a long letter from Lin telling him that the mystery that had taken her from us must separate them, and, while she expressed for him far more passionate devotion than she had ever seemed to feel in the bright early days of their love, she took leave of him in terms which forced us to believe she was in earnest.

Harry read me a portion of this letter, crying like a child.

“What will you do?” I asked.

“‘Do’?” he said. “I can do no more than I have done. Of course all this is mere folly unless she were to tell me she no longer loves me. There is nothing which can break our engagement. Oh, the mystery of these letters!” he added, looking at the postmark. “Do you think she is in the city?”

“No ; she cannot be. But I am convinced that in the city there is some one who knows her whereabouts, if I could only find out who it is?”

As the time drew near for Eva's marriage increasing gloom settled upon us all. It seemed so terrible, the idea of going on with the plans of the family just as if this shadow did not rest upon us. But Eva insisted that it was best everything should go forward, and she seemed so restless, so altered in spirits, that it was decided the change of scene and circumstances might do her good by diverting her mind from our strange affliction.

We were astonished, when the time for Dr. Harrison's arrival came round, to find that Eva had not told him of Lin's disappearance, and she entreated Judge Wallace that it might not be done.

“Only allow him to infer that she is away on a visit,” she pleaded.

But Judge Wallace was immovable. There should be no concealments from Dr. Harrison, he was determined, and he could not forbear expressing his astonishment that Eva should not have sought for consolation at the hands of her future husband, as seemed so natural.

“Oh no !” she said ; “I feel as if I were disgraced in some way by Lin's going away.”

“Disgrace, my dear,” said the judge, with a tone of grave reproof, “should in your thoughts never be coupled with your sister's name. That

she has erred in leaving us in the way she has I freely admit, as there is no circumstance which could justify it; but it is an error of judgment, and I feel the most entire confidence that when this sad mystery is brought to light my little Lin will be found all right as to heart, though her head is wrong."

Eva's only resource was tears, but, though the old gentleman kissed and petted her, the tears did not change his determination. Then she dried her eyes and seemed suddenly to agree with him, wondering that she should ever have thought otherwise, but claimed her right to tell the whole story, which was, of course, conceded.

The groom came at the appointed time, but, as he had been written to that the marriage would be but a private affair, he brought with him none of his friends.

We all wondered to see how the usually self-controlled Eva was broken by late events; the least thing startled her, and she would faint on the smallest occasion. She was but a pale-looking bride, to be sure, and Dr. Harrison was shocked to see her, particularly as she showed the most unaccountable agitation at meeting him. She revived somewhat when the elegant gifts from his friends were presented, and showed a little of her old spirit as she fastened in her bosom and in her ears the lovely pearls which were his choice, laid upon her white

neck the delicate clusters and stood before the glass to see if they were becoming.

Oddly enough, perhaps—though I never suspected Eva of the enormity of being privy to our poor Lin's strange disappearance—I could not feel so cordially toward her as I wanted to do. I felt, somehow, as if she were bearing all the sunshine of life and leaving to our darling all the clouds.

It was a sad affair altogether—that wedding. Eva and the doctor were married at home, with only a few friends present. Eva, in her white draperies, seemed something too fair for earth. Lyle Wallace said he involuntarily looked for the wings to appear upon her shoulders. The poor girl trembled so violently during the ceremony that Dr. Harrison had to change the position of his arm and throw it around her to hold her up; but when it was all over, she revived, and was in the most excited spirits during the whole evening, laughing and talking with a deep flush upon her cheeks very different from the extreme pallor which had been so striking before.

During all this time poor Harry wandered about like a lost spirit; no one but myself, I think, saw him leave the room hastily as the bridal-party entered it. He did not witness the ceremony, though he came afterward and kissed Eva, preserving an outward composure with a face which showed the consuming fires beneath his cold exterior.

CHAPTER XIV.

A CHAPTER OF LIN'S STORY.

IT suddenly occurred to me to-day that it would be a relief to the tedium of my life to keep a record of these strange things which are happening to me. I can make it a link between me and home. I will say it is a letter to Maxy—dear Maxy!—and then I will hope that the time will come—maybe far away in the future—when she will see it. Perhaps I may be dead, and they will all read with blinding tears the sad, strange story. Or it may be that God will let me go home again, and I know I will not want to talk about this unhappy time; so I will just get out my blank-book and hand it over to them, and one at a time they can read it. So I will begin:

MY DEAR MAXY: Your loving Lin is going to write down everything as it occurs, so that you will know all about the time which passed so sadly away from you all.

We—Eva and myself—met our mother, Maxy—

such a strange, dreadful mother that we could not let any one else see her or even know of her existence. I really don't remember a great deal about the meeting. I felt all the time conscious that something dreadful had happened to me, almost as if some one had dealt my head and my heart a terrible blow when she said,

“Know you no Dalreemple here? George Dalreemple is my husband.”

It just seemed as if some one had killed me, and as if I heard everything else from my grave.

Then I think Eva proposed taking her away, but I do not suppose she meant it, though, of course, I am not sure.

Well, I was the one, and Eva said she would watch—the woman while I went to Mrs. Gray's to write my letters; for one thing I was positive about: I would not go away without a word, as Eva wished; so I wrote to grandpa and Harry.

My poor Harry! I wonder what he does without me? I could never, though, marry him with this burden hanging to me.

Well, after my letters were written I came back, and, though it had been two hours at least, there *she* lay asleep still in the door of the vacant house with Eva standing a little way off watching her. Eva told me she had found that a canal-boat left in a few hours, going up through the country, and she thought *we* had better go on that. I do not

remember that I made any remonstrance. I did not care where I went; all places were alike to me if I had to leave everybody I cared for and go away with—*her*. I remember thinking how like it was to the punishment which long, long ago used to be awarded to murderers—to have the dead body of their victim bound to them and go about with the decaying horror always present. But I was not a murderer, and why should I have this living monster tied to me? Oh, it was, and is, too terrible!

Well, we went and waked *our mother*—we, her daughters—and both of us turned away when she woke up, and I said,

“Oh, Eva, it is no use! I can't go with her.”

But of course I had to go. I do not know how we got her on the boat, but we did; and then, as it would not start for some time, Eva went off and bought a plain bonnet and cloak, which covered all her rags. As first she declared she would not put them on, but she seemed to stand a little in awe of us, and we got her to wash her face and dress herself decently. And oh, then, for the first time, I could see how she could ever have looked like Eva. But such a likeness! I saw that Eva observed it also, and I think she must have hated her own face. I know it is not right to speak in this way of my mother, but how can I honor her? God cannot expect it. Oh, how could my father ever have given his children such a mother?

The parting between Eva and myself was terrible; I just felt as if I were going off into a howling wilderness and taking my worst misery with me. I think *she* was in a sort of bewilderment all the time too, and as I sat there crying so bitterly after the boat started I felt some one put a hand upon me, and turned to find her standing there looking at me—oh, so curiously! As I raised my head she said,

“*Qu'est-ce que c'est?* Who are you? What for do you take me away? What for give me dese ogly—what you call it?—*habits?* What for you cry so? You is Dalreemple—you is Dalreemple! Your eyes look like *mon pauvre man's, mon George.*”

I turned away and could not tell her I was her child.

“An' de oder one, *très jolie*—so like de days of my yout'. Who is she? Oh, lady, tell me. Why take you me away?”

“Because I am obliged to,” I said, sullenly, angrily.

“‘Obliged’! Who make you?”

“My conscience. Do you know what that is?”

I spoke so violently that I felt shocked at myself, and in the same breath cried out, as I buried my head in my hands,

“Oh, forgive me!”

“Forgive you! *Ma pauvre petite!* What forgive? You do noting. I grieve for you. I me too have be miserable. Why weep you? Why

go you away from your sister if you wish it not? Oh, it is all a mysteree. I no understand it."

Still I could not enlighten her. I felt as if it would make some dreadful change in my life, binding me to her, if I told of the claim she had upon me; so I only sat silent with my face averted, and she went on:

"Want you money? *Helas!* I have not any. I have noting eat to-day."

This roused me, gave me something tangible to do, released me from her curious questions. I called the chambermaid and told her to get us something to eat, as my companion had been traveling and had had no opportunity of getting anything. We were the only female passengers, and the few men—rough farmers returning to their homes—were on deck or in the farther cabin, so we had the room pretty much to ourselves.

When the woman brought in a plate of coarse, unpalatable food, which my mother ate ravenously, even I, hard as I was, pitied her when I saw how hungry she was and thought of how she must have suffered—uncomplainingly, too. As to myself, I could not have swallowed the rarest dainties from the imperial Selim's feast. I was realizing in the most dreadful fullness my situation. And now what was to be done? I, who had never been obliged to think for myself, was obliged to think vigorously not only for myself, but for another. I

had plenty of money, as Eva had added the contents of her purse to mine.

While I was considering vaguely these things with my burden seated opposite to me, the chambermaid came up, and, speaking to her, she said,

“Madame, how far will you go? The bell rings for the passengers to buy their tickets.”

“‘Buy’? Oh, I have no money,” said she; but I interrupted her:

“I will pay.—What is the fare?”

“‘Fare’!” and the woman laughed. “That depends, miss, on how far you go. You can go all the way to Lynchburg, for—” She named some sum; I do not know what. I took out my purse and paid it, and so, because she mentioned Lynchburg, our course was decided upon.

Those weary hours! How they dragged! Night came on, and still I sat there. There was a bustle in the cabin; the uncleanly preparations were made for the evening meal, to which we were invited. I could not eat, but my companion did, though not so ravenously as she had eaten before. Her appetite was satisfied. I was glad when she consented to occupy one of the little berths and go to sleep, as it released me from the continual questioning glance of her pale blue eyes, which said, even without any assistance from her broken language,

“*Qu’est-ce que c’est?* Who are you, with George Dalreemple’s eyes? Why do you cry?”

It was so strange to me to be sitting up there all alone during the early hours of that night, wakeful and miserable. I had heard so often of persons lying awake all night, and it seemed so strange how they could do it; but now I was getting into that sort of troubled life myself. "Getting"! I was already in it. No one—grandpa, grandma, Aunt Mary nor any of the old experienced people I could think of—had ever had such trouble as mine; none of them had ever been obliged to run away with a dreadful French mother whom they could not love. I will not deny that in the midst of my real wretchedness a little inward feeling of satisfaction mingled itself at the thought of my greater misery, and I did feel provoked with myself a little when I felt sleep demanding its usual attention.

I sat up a good while after this, but had to submit to imperious Nature, and dreamed all night of home and Harry, and waked up with a start and crying aloud at the thought of what must have been their anxiety about me all that long night. I think the waking up in trouble is worse than anything else—it all rushes on one with such terrible force—and I felt more than ever that I had no strength to go through with the task I had undertaken. Then I thought of Aunt Mary's voice, and could hear her saying, "'My grace is sufficient for thee. My strength is made perfect in weakness;'" and I remembered that in my sullen, angry grief I had not

even said my prayers last night, though I am a professing Christian. No wonder I had been so miserable; no wonder this trial had been permitted to come upon me, who had been so ungrateful for the blessings of my life; and then—horrid thing that I am!—it occurred to me, “Why should I have to bear so much more than Eva, who is certainly not more grateful than I am?” “Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth.” I remember Aunt Mary’s saying once that it was just like a loving, judicious father punishing his children because he loved them. That must be it. I am, I hope, God’s child, and he is punishing me for my ingratitude; but oh, it is so hard! I could bear anything else better than this. I cannot, I will not, stand it! Oh, if God would only take the trouble away, I would promise never to do wrong again. I am so wicked! Even now I am wishing that this strange, dreadful mother would die and leave me at liberty; and that is murder. What shall I do? I have no power to resist these terrible wishes which take possession of me; and then the worst of all is I am willing that to relieve myself she should be lost for ever. God forgive me! Oh, if he will only take away these dreadful thoughts, I will try and do my duty to her.

I thought all this that first morning on the canal-boat, and got into such a state of excitement and agony that I suppose I must have cried aloud, for all at once my mother’s voice sounded by me:

“ *Qu'est-ce que c'est ?* What is de matter? Who are you?”

I put out my hand and pushed her from me, and then, frightened at my wickedness, overcome by the terrible thought that I had almost struck my own mother, I cried out, without knowing what I said,

“ Oh, forgive me, mother, forgive me !”

“ What say you? What say you? Oh, do you call me ‘ moder ’? Is it so? Yes, it must be. You are George Dalreemple’s child. Ah, *mon Dieu!* I see my child! I deserve it not. God is good! I have been one wicked woman;” and before I had the power to prevent it she threw herself upon me and kissed me with dreadful fondness.

To save my life I could not help shrinking away. She felt it, and, loosing me from her embrace, sank into a chair:

“ Ah! *mon enfant* hate me! *Helas!* let me die! I have no one to love me!”

“ Why did you come back?” I said, sternly. “ We were all so happy without you, and now I am wretched.”

“ I will go away again,” she said, very meekly, wiping her eyes and speaking in her broken English, “ if you will tell me where to go to. I have no money; I have no friends. I have none but my child, and she hate me.”

I bowed my head in my hands; I could feel

more like a Christian when I did not see the dreadful reality.

“No, mother,” I said, with a mighty effort to do what was right; “it is my duty to take care of you. God will help me to do what is right, but you must give me time to—to get used to it. We thought you were dead.”

“And you were glad?” she asked.

For the life of me I could not say a word.

“And you were glad?” she repeated, with touching earnestness.

“Until very lately I—we—never knew anything about it,” I said. “We thought you had died in Paris, when my father came home without you.”

I suppose I reproached her by my tone, for she said,

“Ah, *mon enfant!* forgive me; I was thoughtless. You American peoples were so cold—so— I know not what, but so different from my own peoples. I was so wretched in America! I was so young! I thought not of anything but the life I had left in Paris; only to return there. Your fader was good to me. I go back.”

“Yes,” I said, bitterly, “and left your children—you, our mother!”

She hung her head:

“It is true. I had no moder in my heart, but it come after. When I have been alone and poor and sick, I have long so for my little ones.”

“And you went away from my poor father, who loved you so much,” I said, feeling bitter hatred in my heart for her own confession of utter selfishness.

“Ah! but, *mon enfant*, you know not how wearisome it was to be scold all de time. Pity me! There were so many that praise me, and George alone blame me. Should I not in my unwisdom seek those again who gave de good word? I thought not of de time when beauty would go and the world forsake. I come back penitent, and, *helas!* my husband is dead and my children hate deir moder! Ah, me *misérable!*”

“Every word you say,” I said, “makes it worse. Where did you go when you left my father?”

“I mean not to go away. Ah! it is one long, bad story. Dere was one in Paris who persuade me to go to Italy. George would not go; he like not de peoples I like. He say no, he go not; den I leave him, and Marie—*mon amie*—paint de beautiful journey, and I go. I return; George is nowhere. I look for him; I write to him. I know not for long years that Marie tear my letters. She die three year ago, and tell me all. She love me not all de time, but more than all she love not George because of his great pride. He love not I should be wid her, and so, to revenge her on him, she take me away and den for fear burn my letters.”

“What have you done all these years?” I said.

“Oh, many ting,” she answered, raising her hands. “I sew, I embroider, I dress de hair, I wait on de lady. Sometimes I starve. When Marie tell me all, my hope was to come to America and find my husband ; for dis I work, for dis I starve. I come, and he is dead ;” and she cried and wrung her hands.

I was as hard as a stone ; I remembered only that our mother had deserted us when we were babies—had left my father, who had died of grief, had caused the death of my grandfather, and now, to crown all, had returned and robbed me of my happy home. I hated her, though I hated myself for it.

Better thoughts came afterward when I knelt down to say my prayers ; I suppose God put them there when I asked him to help me to do my duty, but he did not make it easy to me.

That was a dreadful journey, but it came to an end at last, and we landed in Lynchburg. Instinct, I suppose, made me avoid the large hotels, and we got rooms in a little strange place where the people were so different from any I had ever been thrown with. I could not stand it, and determined that as soon as I could get some clothing for my mother and myself I would leave Lynchburg and go to Baltimore, where after a while Eva would be ; and then, I believed, all would be right.

I had only a few clothes, which Eva had secretly brought from home before I left Richmond, and my mother had nothing. How it was all done I do not know; I only know that everything was hard because I carried a heavy heart in my bosom and went about my duties with lagging footsteps and utter weariness. The trial became harder to bear every day, and yet often I felt tempted to run away from my self-appointed task, and, leaving my mother to her fate, to return to my happy home and to Harry, for whose tenderness I yearned with a love I had never before been conscious of possessing. But then the cowardice of running away from a trouble, of forsaking a duty! the impossibility of telling my dreadful story! the impossibility of giving Harry a wife with such a dreadful mother!

Oh, those days of sullen anger when I used to sit there in that room with that mother opposite to me, neither of us speaking a word for hours, but she never taking her eyes off me!

A change came after a while. We had been in Lynchburg about three or four weeks, when, feeling as if I should go mad if I did not get rid of those eyes, I put on my hat and cloak, and, covering my face with a veil, dashed out into the street for a walk. I did not know nor care where I went; one street was the same as another to me, since there were none of them in which I could drop and leave my misery.

Suddenly, as I turned a corner, I ran against a man, and, both starting back—he with an apology—I encountered the familiar face of Mr. Lewis, from Richmond. I saw at once that he recognized me. I was determined not to acknowledge my identity; so, when he started forward, exclaiming wonderingly, “Why, Miss Dalrymple! is it possible?” I only drew back and bowed without speaking, leaving him to infer that he was mistaken.

“I beg your pardon,” he said, deceived for the instant by my refusal to acknowledge his acquaintance; but as I turned the next corner I looked back, and I saw him standing where I had left him, and gazing after me.

My heart beat so violently after this encounter that I could hardly get home, and such was the perversity of the temper I was in that one moment I felt as if I must fly to the ends of the earth rather than be found, and the next my heart bounded at the idea that Mr. Lewis would tell grandpa and Harry and my wanderings would come to an end. But when I looked at my companion, I shrank with a greater horror than ever from being caught and from having to acknowledge my obnoxious relative.

A night of thought followed this adventure, and before the light dawned I had determined to leave Lynchburg before Mr. Lewis could report his meeting with me. There were more reasons for this than fear, however. My store of money was melting

away in a manner which astonished me. I, who had never been accustomed to make any great outlays, had imagined myself possessed of a fortune with my hundred and fifty dollars, but by the time I had bought necessary clothing and paid board for two I found this sum so reduced as to fill me with the utmost alarm. It is true Eva had promised to keep me supplied, but I had not the fullest confidence in her promises.

This subject had added not a little to my perplexities, and I had turned over in my mind what I could do to make some money, as the horror of being left without was terrible to me. I was afraid to make any attempt to get work in Lynchburg—or, indeed, anywhere in Virginia, as grandpapa was too well known in the State to admit of a possibility of my not being recognized by his friends. I might have gone on thinking vaguely of this until I was really reduced to penury but for the meeting with Mr. Lewis. This decided me, and, as it happened, I got a letter from Eva that very day.

Eva and myself correspond under feigned names. I receive letters directed to "Miss Lucy Simpson," and write to her under the cognomen of "Miss Eliza Cash."

Well, as I said, a letter came directed to Miss Lucy Simpson the very day after my meeting with Mr. Lewis. This is the letter :

“RICHMOND, Feb. 15, 18—.

“MY DARLING LIN : I am afraid you have wearied for news from home, but I have been very sick, and, as I could not send your letter to the office, I had to wait until I got well enough to take it myself; so yesterday I crawled up, and, declining Maxy's kind offer to go with me, went to the P. O. and found your letter. I am so glad you are getting on so well.” (I am sure I do not know from what Eva gathered this piece of information, as I have been most particular to let her know just how miserable I am. But she always did have a way of believing just what she wanted to believe.) “I am sure I could not have managed half so well.

“I have been very wretched—so much so that I have made them all very uneasy about me. My dear Lin, be thankful that you have not such a sensitive nature as your poor sister. It is certainly a great source of unhappiness.

“We are very quiet here now. All miss you dreadfully, but I know you are at the post of duty, and that comforts me; and, although they do not know all I do, yet they believe you are doing right. Aunt Mary says she has no doubt you are just in the place and undergoing the discipline appointed for you by your heavenly Father, and that you will come out an honor to yourself and a pride to all.

“Now, dear Lin, this ought to comfort you very

much, and I have no doubt it will. You have now the opportunity of overcoming the very faults which have been so much trouble to you and have given me so much anxiety about you; and, after all, it is only as if you had gone away to school for a while, for it cannot last long. When I am married I will make it all right. And you know you did not want to marry Harry for a while yet; and if you had been here you would have been obliged to do it.

“Harry is tolerably well. Of course he shows his anxiety about you, for he loves you truly, though I never did think you and Harry could have the same romantic devotion which Dr. Harrison and myself have. Having been brought up together makes you more like brother and sister.

“I hear from Dr. Harrison constantly. He is wilder than ever about me. Indeed, I believe if anything should happen to separate us, he would never survive it; or if he did live it would be bereft of reason.

“I think grandma and grandpa think I ought not to be married until you return, but you and I know how important it is that I should be, as then I can help you and *her*. I am glad to feel that I am not selfish in this matter. No; I shall always be ready to do my part. But, my dear Lin, do be firm now. After being so brave as you have, don't turn coward. I depend upon you.

“Grandpa gave me some money yesterday to buy

some things for myself, but I send it to you. Don't worry, now, dear, for fear I am depriving myself of anything absolutely necessary. I can get along pretty well, and it is a real pleasure to be unselfish.

"Are you quite safe in Lynchburg? If you should think it best to leave there, let me know, and I will continue to write to you and send you what I can.

"There is no news which would interest you. Everything is so quiet, and none of us go out at all. Lyle Wallace comes very often, but he knows it is no use; but, really, he is a very nice fellow, and it is pleasant to have some one about who admires you, even if one is engaged.

"But I must stop. God bless you, my poor darling! Write soon to

"Your devoted sister,

"EVA."

I cried for hours after I got this. Really, I do believe Eva thinks she has the hardest part of this trial to bear, and what she tells me to comfort me doesn't have any such effect. I feel only as if they were all taking my disappearance so quietly—even Harry; though, somehow, I don't believe that at all, and I do think it is presuming a good deal in her so coolly to make Harry's and my plans for us. Anyhow, I could not do what she is going to do—marry a man without letting him know all about

the stain upon her name. I cannot yet believe she will never tell him a word. I will write about that to her. It seems too dishonest to credit.

And then, as to this discipline being necessary to me, my faults— I know I have faults—dreadful faults—but no more than some other people I could mention who are put through no such schooling. No; it is all wrong, somehow or other. Eva always did get me mixed up and confused about right and wrong, and I am no wiser than when I was a child.

My poor Harry! The idea of your going round moping so for me, and the cool way in which *Miss Eva* sets us down with a mild little brother-and-sister attachment so inferior to the grand Harrison passion! Well, truly, my sister is an enigma past my solving.

After all, Maxy, there is something I do know—that I am not doing my duty to the woman I must call mother, and, what is more, I find the longer I do not do my duty, the more does this unnatural feeling of shrinking from her grow upon me. If I think she is going to touch me—even to brush by me—in passing, I draw away from her; and once or twice, weak and silly as she is, I know she has seen this, and has looked at me beseechingly with tears in her eyes. And when I have gone on, stonier than before, she has gone away in the next room, and then I was more miserable than ever.

I wonder if Harry could love me if he could see me now? I doubt if he would know me with these dark rims around my eyes and not a bit of blood in my cheeks. If I was at all sick, I would think maybe I was going to die, I am so changed in appearance, but I am as well as I can be. Ah, well! I wonder when it will all end?

I have not been to church since I came here, because I am afraid of being seen by some one who knows me, this place is so near home. When I go to Baltimore—for I have determined to go there tomorrow—I will seek out some quiet little church, and maybe I will be in a more Christian temper then. And I will take the woman with me. I need not sit by her; I don't think that is necessary at all. I don't think I could listen to anything, and I am sure she would not, but would be watching me all the time.

BALTIMORE, April 25—.

I have not written anything in this history for a long while. I remember what stopped me the last word I wrote. My mother came into the room and stood beside me for a moment without speaking. I was used to that, and did not even look up. At last she said,

“My child!”

“My name is ‘Linda,’” I answered, without raising my eyes.

“Ah! ‘Linda’! I remembare de little babe. Ah, yes! it is so!”

In her voice there was something which touched even my hard heart. I do not know what it was—sorrow, penitence, memory and tenderness all combined. I know I said,

“Sit down, mother.”

She responded with a grateful look, as if I had done some great favor to her, and then said, while she wiped her eyes,

“Linda, let me speak to you dis once. We will die—you and me—if dis life go on. You grow so white and what you call tire,” passing her hands over her person to assist in conveying her idea. “You weep; you speak not to me one day and other—I, your mother.”

I looked up with an impatient gesture which always expressed my feeling when this connection was recalled.

“Pardon, my child! Linda, I mean. I come to say I go away dis day. I will beg my road back to de boat, and will go back again to Paris and die. You shall nevare see me more—nevare hear from me more. You go back to your sister, and no people will know dat de poor woman is in de street. You vil be happy. I am satisfied.”

I looked at her in astonishment. In the weeks we had been together she had scarcely uttered so many coherent words. But, though I was troubled,

I was not melted, and my voice sounded cold and hollow to myself.

“Oh no!” I said; “of course, that is impossible. No matter what the past has been, you are my mother, and it is my duty to take care of you.”

“*Non! non!* I was no moder to you. I leave my children for de amusements—de joy—of Paris. You owe me noting.”

“That is true,” I said, “but still it does not change things. You brought me into the world; that is an obligation I suppose my life must be spent in paying.”

As I promised, I write everything faithfully, Maxy, as it occurred, though I blush as I record this against myself.

The poor creature sat with folded hands and shook her head as she said,

“I ask it not; I demand not anyting. I grow old; I no longer haf de beauty to make love me. 'Tis better I die. Let me go, my Linda.”

“We will both go away from here to-morrow,” I said more kindly. “I will try and do my duty to you. God will help me.”

“‘God’! Know you God? No; he helps not, he hears not. I ask him for bread, and I starve; I ask him for my husband, and he is dead. My children hate me—hold away de robes dat dey touch not de moder. No, believe not; dere is no God.”

Ah! what was I doing? I, a professed follower

of the meek and humble Saviour, who when he was despised despised not again, and I, not content with destroying my own soul, dragging another—and that other of my own parent—down to destruction! I do not know how it was, but all at once the strength seemed to go out of me, and I fell on the floor with my head against the knees of this despised mother, crying,

“Ah! I am so wicked! Forgive me, mother, forgive me!”

It was another reproach to me that my mother, either from surprise or from some other cause, started away, exclaiming,

“‘Forgive’! What forgive? I am noting.”

“You are all the mother I have,” said I, hanging my head. “I have been a very bad child. But mother, you say I am like my father. He bore patiently with you, and I will try.”

“Like George Dalreemple! Yes, like, but not like. There was no despise in his eyes. Grief and anger often, but no despise. But, *helas!* den I was yong and *très jolie*. No, I stay not; I go away. To your friends go you—de sister who is so like to my yout’. Tink no more of me. It is but your sleep; you have visions—bad dreams. You wake; it is noting. You hear no more from me; I go away;” and as she finished she started to the door and picked up a bundle which lay there, containing, I found, her clothing.

Starting forward, I seized her dress—the first time I had ever voluntarily touched my mother, the first time I had not shrunk away bitterly from even chance contact with her.

“Stop and let me speak!” I cried, for the second time in that hour sinking on the floor at her feet. “I have been very wicked. God is angry with me. Oh, do not bring down his curse upon me. Stay, and let me try once more. I will try to be better. Let us go away and begin a new life.”

She came back, and, sitting down with her bundle in her lap, broke into bitter weeping, and with a voice all incoherent from agitation cried,

“Ah, when you speak like dat, I have no power to leaf you. Let me stay. Your domestic I will be. I work for you, I die for you. But hate not me; it kill me. God is just; I am punish. But oh, forgive! De moder is in de heart now. I am old before my time.”

As my only answer I rose, and, stooping over her, kissed her forehead. She looked up wonderingly, and there seemed an impulse about her arms as if she would embrace me; but she was too much afraid of a repulse until I said,

“Yes, mother; put your arms about your child.”

Suddenly all my angry hatred seemed to have melted away. I felt humble and penitent—just as I used to do after my terrible outbursts of passion when I was a little child.

CHAPTER XV.

LIN'S STORY CONTINUED.

THE next day we left Lynchburg and came to Baltimore. I found my mother could help me a good deal in making economical arrangements, for she knew so much more than I about poverty and struggling; and after a little while we succeeded in getting quite comfortable rooms with a poor woman who was to do our cooking for us. No one can ever know of the discouragements and heartachings of those early days, but I learned something, at any rate: I had learned to try to do right, and leave the events with God.

I must tell how I was helped in this. The first Sabbath after we got settled. I said,

“Now, mother, we must go to church.”

“‘Church’!” she said, and stared at me dismayed.

“Yes, mother; we are trying to do right now, and the way to learn the lesson is to go to the house of God.”

“*Non! non!*” she exclaimed, more in a tone of remonstrance than of absolute refusal. “I love not to go to church; I haf not de clothes. Oh, ask me not!”

I have no rouge for my face ; my bonnet is what you call very oogly ;” and she looked with disgust at her plain straw bonnet, which I held in my hand.

“ But, mother,” I said, “ I want you to go. And, mother, you will not, I know, when I ask it of you, use any more dreadful paint on your cheeks. Ladies here do not.”

“ *Ciel !*” she cried, starting back ; “ I cannot. I no longer have you ; I do for myself what I can to restore it.”

“ But, mother,” I entreated, “ we do not care. You and I have only each other. I do what pleases you ; you do what pleases me. Is it not so ?”

“ Ah, my child, you are good ; you are one angel ;” and she came toward me with that humble little gesture which in my changed feelings toward her had become so touching. It was as if she wished to kiss me, but feared to propose it.

I readily yielded to her wish, and said,

“ I love you, mother, and I love you better without paint on your cheeks.”

She looked so humbly grateful ! It was the first time I had ever approached such an avowal to her, and it gained my point.

I do not know whether it was my altered feelings and the blessing God was sending on me in answer to my prayers and efforts to do my duty which made everything seem different, or because the light of

happiness in my poor mother's life had worked a change in her appearance; certainly, she did not look to me at all the same person I had met two months ago in Richmond. I could so plainly trace her likeness to my beautiful sister now, and each day seemed to develop the growing gentleness and an expression I scarce know how to define. I suppose it was, as she expressed it, the *mother* in her heart which irradiated her features. Only think! she is not yet forty years old—quite a young woman—but the life she has led, which I do not like to think about, the suffering and actual want of its last years, have made her an old woman. She looks older than grandma or Aunt Mary, though, really, she is young enough to be their daughter. But this is a digression, as I want to tell about the first time we went to church.

I shrank sensitively from the large fashionable churches, and sent a natural sigh back to the rosy life I had put away. Yes, I had entered upon another state of existence—one which each day seemed to separate me more from my aristocratic friends. I was no longer a fit wife for Harry; I belonged to the lower class of the population. So I asked our landlady if there were no church where plain people go to worship God. She laughed good-humoredly, and said,

“Well, I attend a Methodist meeting-house a little distance off; you can go with me if you have

a mind to—though I must say I consider myself just as good as them what goes to the fine churches.”

Without waiting to discuss this question, off I went and made upon my mother's outposts the attack which I have already told about. She hated the plain, dark-colored clothes which, without consulting her, I had made for her; and if she could have laid hands on them, I know she would have stuck flowers in her black straw bonnet, but I was safe there, and we walked off side by side, following Mrs. Perkins and “her good man” to the “meeting-house,” to hear Brother Harris—“a rail sound, stirrin' gospel-preacher,” as Mr. Perkins reported.

If Harry had been beside me, I know I would have laughed when, after the preliminary services, Brother Harris gave out his text: “Eat such things as are set before you, asking no questions for conscience' sake.”

It did seem such a funny text, and Brother Harris did talk through his nose, there is no doubt; but I was not the first person, I suspect, who began to listen to a sermon with a laugh in the heart and ended with a prayer. If ever God puts words in the mouths of his ministers for a particular end, he spoke through good plain Brother Harris to *me*. This is a part of his sermon:

“All the world are either obeying or disobeying this injunction of St. Paul. The child turns away

from the healthy food set before him to cry for unwholesome sweets, and willfully asks why they are denied him, lacking the sense and the wisdom to discern the palpable reason. The sick man turns with weary disgust from the delicate food prepared to tempt his morbid appetite and thinks the fault is in his meal, when it is in his own diseased stomach, which requires medicine more than food. The rich man grumbles discontentedly over his dainties because his richer neighbor has some dish which he has not been able to procure, while the poor Christian sits down to his dish of bread and potatoes and, humbly raising his eyes to heaven, cries, 'God, we thank thee for this and all thy mercies!'

"But," he continued, "this text of the apostle's is not a mere admonition to good manners; it has a far deeper meaning: it maps out our lives for us. The whole world is at a feast, and the table has been prepared by your Creator, who better than any other knows the frames he has made and just what is best suited to them. Before one he sets a dish of riches and bids him help himself freely; another, just next him, has only the poor crust of poverty seasoned with tears. One man has talents and honors; another, a dull brain and great physical powers. One woman has beauty and the wonderful power of attracting others; while another has a plain exterior covering a wealth of heart which is a richer gift; and the Lord of the feast says,

'Eat such things as are set before you, asking no questions.' This is our part—to use well and thankfully what he gives us, trusting His wisdom and love who made us and knows just what is the food best suited for the growth and welfare of our immortal souls. Beware how you question his providence. Many a man kneels down in the morning and prays, 'Give us this day our daily bread,' and rises up to grumble over this same bread, given in answer to his prayer, because, forsooth, it is made of darker flour than his neighbor's, not knowing that the additional bolting required to make that flour whiter took from it the very element needed to preserve the life of his soul.

"Our duty is simply to eat what is set before us—in other words, ask God's blessing, when you sit down to the feast, and then do heartily and earnestly the first work which comes to your hand, believing God sent it; accept the seat at the table he points out to you, not looking round to observe how many of your neighbors have softer chairs or finer dishes than yourselves; that is, accept the position in which he puts you and do your whole duty in it, 'asking no question.' Don't kneel down and pray, 'Choose thou my path for me,' and then, when that path seems a little rough to your feet, a little steep for your climbing, try to get out of it by saying, 'This is not God's path; man made this. I prayed to God to choose my road, and as a reward he

would give me a good, easy, pleasant one to travel. I will try and find it; and you start off and get lost in the wilderness, and finish up to your neck in the 'Slough of Despond.' And when God has pity on you and leads you back to the same path, though not a stone has been taken out of it, not a steep leveled, and shows you the light of heaven at the end, you don't mind the bruises on your feet at all; and if you do breathe a little quicker in climbing, it does not make any difference.

"Man has nothing to do with these things: he is simply the instrument in God's hand; so you go ahead onward and upward; and if you trust in him, your bread and water will be sure. And if it is only bread and water, what does it matter? If you are bidden to the marriage-supper after your day's toil is over, there every longing shall be satisfied; and one can stand a meagre meal with the certainty of such a feast before them."

Surely, God can send his messages by any one he chooses, and mine came by Brother Harris. I never before in my life felt so under a sermon. All the time he was speaking I was lifting the cover of my dish and observing its contents. I found my mother there; then I took the hard seat at my table, and determined simply to take the soul-food set before me, coarse and unpalatable as it was, and use it as God intended I should, asking no questions. I determined to look at the light at the end of my

rough, steep road, and to try to mind less the bruises to my feet, to thank God for such fare as he provided me with, believing that at the marriage-supper I should be satisfied.

As was natural, I glanced round at my mother as I made these applications of the sermon, and found she was evidently listening, though with rather a puzzled face, and as she caught my eye she shook her head most emphatically. Until we got home I did not know what her dissent meant. She said,

“*Mon enfant*, dat man he knows not anyting. In Paris, ah ! so many peoples are dead because dey haf no bread. I myself many times do be hungry, wid no morsel, and no big supper in de efening neder.”

I laughed more heartily than she had ever heard me laugh before as I said,

“But, mother, hunger was your dish, and it led you to a better feast.”

“I no understand,” she said, but looking pleased, nevertheless, to see that her sullen child could laugh.

“Why, I am your dish, and you are mine, *ma chérie*,” I said, courtesying before her. “We must take each other and ask no questions.”

“I no understand,” she repeated, “but you laugh ; it is right. But I will not eat you, *mon enfant*.”

Just then Mrs. Perkins entered with our frugal dinner, and I said,

“Then, mother, we will take your view of the subject, and take our dinner.”

I think I have been different ever since I heard that sermon. Before that, duty was hard work ; I am afraid I had been looking for an easier path and got lost in the wilderness. Now I learned to believe that God had ordered my path, and determined simply to go on without looking to anything different.

In this spirit I wrote to Eva and told her of my change of feeling. I said that, as our mother was not an old woman, she might live many years, and I was determined to walk in the path I had entered. My duty was to her, and as I never would marry Harry so long as he would be considered degraded by the connection, and never could impose the charge of my poor mother on even so generous a person as himself, I was determined to abandon all thought of any change in my circumstances, and, as I was sure dear grandpa, grandma and Harry would never agree to this if they could find me, I should conceal from them the secret of my present residence, get some work which would at least help support us both, assume the simple name under which she had written to me and altogether map out my life by the rule of duty, letting desire alone. I did not write all this calmly, for no one can know what it was to write it ; it seemed like closing the door of hope. I shut myself up in my own room to elude the watchful eyes of my mother, and such bitter

tears as fell at every line fully attested how terrible was the wrench which severed my ties from those I so fondly loved. I also wrote to Harry and enclosed the letter to Eva, to be mailed, as my others had been, in the Richmond post-office. This was my letter :

“MY DEAREST HARRY: I very well know by my own feelings in writing this letter how bitterly you will grieve in reading it, and this thought more than my own trial wrings my heart.

“Harry, I know you love me very dearly—this conviction has been my only consolation during these two months of despondency—and Harry, dear Harry! if I had the ordering my destiny, I would go right to you and tell all my troubles into your sympathizing ear. But this is impossible, Harry. When I left Richmond, I did not imagine I could be gone more than a little while; if I had, I do not think I could ever have had the courage to go through with it. But now I cannot help seeing that there is not the least prospect of my coming back to you for many years, if ever, and in such circumstances, dear Harry, do you not see what is my duty? Can I go on binding your life to mine? If there was any way for it to be made right for me to come back and fulfill my promise to you, it would be different, but there is not. What was nothing but impulse at first has become a strong

necessity—a binding duty which to avoid would be a crime. So, Harry, I must say ‘Good-bye’ to you. Ah! can I—*can* I—break the tie of a lifetime? I never knew what that tie was until this minute, when I find that to break it is like tearing out my heart. But it has to be done, and I cannot but think, if you knew all the circumstances and it were anybody else than you and me—one of your friends, for instance—you would see it as I do. At any rate, dear, dear Harry—my ‘Little Uncle,’ my associate editor in the dear old *Woodlawn News*, my partner in everything—you must not forsake me now. Stand by me, Harry, as you used to do in the dear old days when Cousin Betsey was hard on me, and when I was such a poor, passionate, sensitive child. Harry, all that keeps me up now is the hope that you will not doubt me, but will believe that, though everything is so strange and you do not understand it at all, you believe in me even when I tell you you must not think of me any longer except as a dear sister.

“Ah, Harry! it almost breaks my heart to think of you all going back without me to dear old Woodlawn next summer. If trials make us better, I ought to be an angel after this.

“Harry, there is one thing, and only one, you can do to comfort me, and that is to put in the *Richmond Enquirer* just these words: ‘I trust you. HARRY.’ I shall look out for this, remember.

Put it in on the 10th of May. And now I must say, 'Good-bye,' dear, darling grandpa, grandma, Maxy, Aunt Mary, Tom, Lyle, Annie, and even Cousin Betsey. I would love even Cousin Betsey if I could see her now. And last, dear Harry, I must say 'Good-bye' to you and to our happy engagement, for we must not think of each other any more. The past is past, and the future we must shape by the duties and dictates of conscience.

"God bless you, Harry, and make you good and happy is the daily prayer of one who was so proud to call herself

"Your own loving
"LIN."

In a very short time came an answer to my letter to Eva. If the door of hope had not been quite shut, with the latch down and the key turned, her letter would have secured it firmly:

"RICHMOND, April 30, 18—.

"MY PRECIOUS SISTER: Your noble, self-sacrificing letter reached me only two days ago, and I hasten to answer it that I may tell you how my heart thrills at the thought that one capable of such noble self-devotion should be my sister. It is certainly a privilege to have the opportunity to act the part you are doing, and I am sure you will be rewarded for it.

“I cannot help feeling how providential it was that you insisted so upon being the one to go the day we parted, as I feel so sure I could never have acted the heroine as you have done. No; your poor little Eva would have crept back to Richmond with our disgrace tacked to her back, or have died of shame. I say it with regret, dear Lin: I am not made of stout enough stuff for a heroine; I am fitted only to be taken care of and petted. I could not bear the rough contact with the world which you are having. All that you say is so true, so *pious*, and your plans show wonderful wisdom. It is a most unfortunate occurrence, of course, that the woman did not die long ago, but that can't be helped, and it only remains for us to make the best of it.

“I think your plan to get something to do is a good one, though, of course, I will continue to send you money. That is one reason I am listening to Dr. Harrison's entreaties that we should be married in May. I am obliged to confess, my dear Lin, that I have never told him of our misfortune. This has not been difficult when I only had to write to him; but when he comes, he will have to hear a part. Not about *her*, though. Never! never!

“I cannot tell you how I have suffered about this trouble. Every one thinks me fearfully changed. The least noise startles me, and sometimes, when there is a ring at the door-bell or any one comes in suddenly, I imagine it is either you or *she*, or some

news that you have changed your mind and given up what is so manifestly your duty, and come back. This is only my nervousness, as, of course, *I know you too well to do you any such great injustice.* You have a noble nature, dear Lin, and it gives me pleasure to encourage you by bearing my testimony to the fact which few give you credit for as fully as I do. I think it is right hard that the time in a girl's life which is generally so happy, so full of bright anticipations, should be so clouded for poor me.

“I will be married on the 20th of May. No one will be here but the family, and I will be married in the parlor, and not go to church. Grandpa would not agree to have any company because of the mystery about you. I have no wish for it, either. Of course, though, it does seem a pity that my lovely dress should not be seen by some one, does it not? I expect the Harrisons will send beautiful presents, they are so rich. They have written me lovely letters—rather stately and formal, though I know they are as proud as Lucifer, and this fact makes me more anxious to keep our secret from creeping out. Dr. Harrison talks so much of his mother's grandfather, the youngest son of a lord who came over with Lord Baltimore.

“So, dear Lin, in view of all these circumstances, you cannot wonder that I thank you again for your noble determination. My part will be to supply you with the means of living, or as much of it as I can,

as, of course, having to send it without Dr. Harrison's knowing it may delay it often, and therefore it will be a relief to all parties for you to get some little easy work to do. It will amuse you too, dear Lin; it must be so lonely for you, and, as grandpa says so often, there is no panacea for the blue devils like employment.

"I will not write again before I am married. We will go to New York. I wish I could manage to see you when I pass through Baltimore, but, of course, I must deny myself that pleasure, as I will be surrounded by the doctor's friends. We will have a reception at his mother's, in which, of course, I don't feel much heart, but, as he is the eldest son, they make a great matter of his marriage, and I suppose will load me with everything. We will be in New York two or three weeks, then return to our own home on Charles street; then I will certainly manage to see you. If it were not for our secret, I should be perfectly happy, Dr. Harrison is so devoted and so rich, though not so handsome, I must say, as Lyle Wallace.

"Tom Hastings is studying law in grandpapa's office; he is very steady. I suspect Katie will finally marry him. Frank Macon and Jane Taylor are married at last. We are all going off, are we not? Well it is our fate, I suppose.

"I must stop, dear Lin. As I enter Baltimore I shall send a thousand kisses in the direction of where I think your little home is.

“God bless you, my darling sister, and reward you as you so richly deserve for your noble self-sacrifice, is the prayer of

“Your devoted sister,

“EVA DALRYMPLE.”

I sat a long time with this letter in my hand, thinking not very pious thoughts about my sister, I am afraid. Sometimes I fear my love for Eva has never been as deep as it ought to be, and I fairly tremble when I think of what our Saviour says: “He that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?” and, of course, a sister is just the same. But it does seem to me that Eva is a little selfish in this matter. She evidently thinks the money she sends me with her thanks for what she calls my “*noble conduct*”—I have hated that word all through her letter—is her entire obligation, and the idea of her being willing to marry that man under false pretences seems too dreadful to think of. I do not think I am any better than Eva in many things—maybe not half so good—but I could not do that.

Then there is another thing: will it be right in me to take Dr. Harrison's money for our support without his knowing it? Now, let me reason that out, as grandpa would say. Here is my and Eva's mother and myself on one side and Eva and Dr. Harrison on the other, and his money between the

two. Then I took this position under a promise from Eva that she would send me money to live. Well, so long as this came from dear grandpa I did not think about it, though, now my conscience is alive, I do not know that it was exactly right in me to let Eva send me the money he had appropriated to another purpose, though he would have given me that, and a good deal more, if he had known I wanted it. So I cannot feel very, very conscience-stricken about that, because I know I would be so very welcome if he only knew; and then we would have starved without. But it is a different thing with Dr. Harrison. Ought I to encourage Eva in commencing her life with a regular *lie*? It is not worth while to mince matters when I am reasoning out a thing on the pages of my own blank-book; and it can't be called anything else, *possibly*. I remember reading a story once about a young wife who before her marriage bought an expensive bonnet which she depended upon paying for afterward out of her husband's purse, and all the evils to which this led. She would not tell him about it because she was too proud, but she got after a while not too proud to tell stories about it, and it brought her under all sorts of suspicion with her husband. He would give her money to pay a certain bill, and find that only a part was paid; and so it went on and on until they became so miserable that they had to separate. Now, it would be still worse with Eva; it

would be a continual drain, having to send us money. And oh, only think what might be the consequences! No! Clearly, unless Eva will tell her husband the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, it would not be right for me to let her send the money, though what I am to do without it I cannot imagine.

Now, stop! there is one other point which I have not reasoned about—one which may make a difference. I hope it will. Is it not Eva's duty to furnish the money for her mother's support, as it is mine? And when she marries Dr. Harrison, does not his money belong to her? Yes; that seems a clear case. But then, again, does it belong to her in such a way as to make it right for her to use it without his knowing it, and in a way of which he might not approve? Well, I think that is a matter I have nothing to do with; if she chooses to do it, it is none of my business, and it is fulfilling her part of our contract. It seems clearly her duty to do something. Yes; that decides the question. I will just stop bothering about it and eat what is set before me, "asking no questions." I am so glad I heard that sermon! it is so good to be able to apply it! and I think God has sent it now to comfort and decide me in this matter, because it is very plain I cannot do this work by myself, and God works by instruments; and Eva is his instrument.

Written the next day:

It certainly is very hard to know and to do what

is right, and very humiliating to have to feel, after all your reasoning and reasoning, that the devil is at the bottom of it. If God would only speak to a person as he did to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and tell him in so many words what to do, it would be so much easier to know what is right; but when Satan is whispering in your ear in a voice which sounds like God's, and when your own coward heart is suggesting all kinds of fears, and you are altogether such a mean, contemptible, faithless creature, it is just ten to one whether you go right or not.

Now, after my little wise reasoning I went to bed and tried to sleep, but all the time something was coming into my head which kept me wide awake. It was something I heard grandpa and Harry talking about the law—that in a robbery one privy to the intention is made a party to the act. I just shut up my ears and eyes, but it was no use. Perhaps it was God whispering to my conscience; at any rate, I was obliged to do my reasoning over again, and have come to the conclusion that if I let Eva take that money without telling her husband I am almost as bad as she is; and if God chooses I can get along without it, and if he does not I suspect it would be better for us to starve than to do wrong, though starving is a pretty hard thing to do, and I hope God will keep us from coming to that.

So, before I had time to change my mind, I wrote to Eva and told her that unless she would tell her hus-

band the whole truth and get him to send the money for the support of our mother I never would receive a cent. I begged her to do this, because it certainly was wrong to deceive Dr. Harrison; and if he loved her it could make no difference, and if it did she had better settle the matter before she was married. I did not get any answer to this letter.

In the mean time, I had two or three things to think about which kept me very wide awake. First and foremost, the tenth of May was coming, and would Harry put that little drop of comfort in the paper for me? Mr. Perkins was employed to engage me the papers for a week about that time, and I looked forward to it with the most intense eagerness. Next, would Eva do the honest thing and tell Dr. Harrison everything? and if so, what effect would it have upon my life? My heart bounded so sometimes when I thought of what might happen! I felt like a prisoner who has a hope held out to him of release. And then, if she did not do this—and I confess my mind misgave me very much when I suffered myself to think soberly about it and weigh all the facts—what was I to do? This sent me to my knees. I studied the columns of the newspapers to see if I could find any field there for my limited resources.

CHAPTER XVI.

HARRY'S MESSAGE.

IT is the 12th day of May, dear Maxy; the Richmond papers of the 10th get here to-day. You have not forgotten that they are to contain my little drop of comfort from my dear Harry? But only suppose he should not write! I think it would kill me, almost, not to find the message. Other people may read it and wonder what it means, but at last it is for me alone, just as if it were folded and sealed up in an envelope. Mr. Perkins promised to get me the paper as soon as it comes. Ah! no one can understand my eagerness excepting one who has starved and is promised a feast.

Eleven o'clock.—I have just heard the car-whistle; it seemed to me to shriek out, "I have news for you!" Then the cars, as they came into the station, said, "I've got your paper! I've got your paper!" Now, don't laugh at me, Maxy dear; I can't stand it.

Six o'clock.—Mr. Perkins takes dinner at the unfashionable hour of one o'clock, and I spent the whole hour from twelve to one running to the window to see if he was coming. Katie Macon never

looked for Tom with half the eagerness, but Harry need not be jealous : Mr. Perkins is red-headed and pock-marked and wears No. 20 shoes, I suspect, if that is very big : I don't know anything about men's shoes. At last I saw him in the distance, and ran down the steps two at a time. Maxy, forgive me, dear. I know this is against rules, but the extremity of the case ! Forgive ! Thank you.

“ My paper, please, Mr. Perkins ! ” I exclaimed.

“ ‘ Paper, ’ miss ? I thought the house was afire. ” He certainly is the most stupid man ! I don't know what made Mrs. Perkins marry him.

“ Oh, Mr. Perkins, my *Enquirer* ! ” I exclaimed. I was half crying now.

“ I did not have the time to get that paper before dinner—you see, I was so busy—but I will bring it up this evening, sure. ”

I had just to turn and run up stairs quick to keep myself from hitting him hard. And then those long hours I had to wait ! But my patience—or impatience, you will say, Maxy—was rewarded. Mr. Perkins had the paper, and 'way off in a corner, where no one but myself would think of looking, is Harry's precious little message : “ Come home, L. ! We can't do without you ! Yours, ever,
H. ”

Not at all the words I told him to put in, but I don't care at all. I want that paper put on my heart, Maxy, when I die, because no love-letter

was ever like it for preciousness. It has put new spirit in me for my hard, unpalatable life. Though I can't go home, it is such a comfort to know they can't do without me!

MAY 23.

So much to tell you, dear Maxy! To-day I have seen Eva. "Mrs. Harrison"! how strange it seems!

All day Wednesday I was thinking, "Eva's wedding-day!" and I pictured the scene to myself—the home circle. Oh, did you miss your poor Lin? My dear Harry looked pale; he was thinking of his absent one. If I had only done as he wished last summer, all this could never have happened; but worse would have happened, so don't let us murmur, but learn the lesson set for us. Oh what a hard one it is!

That very afternoon came an invitation directed to Miss Lucy Simpson. Only think how astonished you would all have been if I had accepted it and walked in upon you! Well, Maxy, I knew that this afternoon would bring Eva to Baltimore; so I said to mother,

"Mother, I want you to go out with me to-day. Come! smooth your hair and put on your best dress—your brown one—and your beautiful bonnet." She always makes a wry face at the plain black bonnet, but the honor of being asked to walk with her undutiful daughter was too great to be despised, and overcame to a certain extent even the objectionable

bonnet. So off we started, I very closely veiled, so as not to be recognized by my new brother-in-law. We were a little too soon for the cars, and so looked about the shop-windows.

"Ah, *mon enfant!*" said my mother; "could see you de windows in Paris, you look no more at dese *pauvre* tings;" and she turned in disgust from our inferior show.

"Are they so beautiful?" I asked.

"Ah, so *beau*—tiful! *Magnifique!* *Superbe!*" and then she went off into floods of eloquence in which her French so completely conquered her English that I cried,

"Mamma, stop! I do not understand one word you say. Say it all over in English."

Before she could translate her rhapsodies some one brushed against me, and, looking up, I saw no less a person than Frank Macon. I knew him instantly, though he has been from home for four years. The change in me must, however, have been greater, as he had turned at the sound of my voice, but, obscured as my face was by my veil, he did not recognize me at all, and, raising his hat apologetically for his involuntary contact with me, he passed on. I suppose he does not know I am lost, or he would have been more apt to have discovered my identity with Linda Dalrymple of those dear old happy days. As for me, I felt stunned, overwhelmed, and for an instant a feeling akin to the keenest disappointment

possessed me. If he had only recognized me, my trial would now be over ; I could go back to those old times once more. These thoughts were interrupted by the car-whistle in the distance, and we hurried off to the station.

Apart from the crowd of hacks and carriages waiting the arrival of the cars was an open vehicle drawn by a pair of prancing, mettled steeds, the driver and footman in livery, and standing around were one or two other carriages, in which were richly-dressed ladies and gentlemen who eagerly watched for the arrival of the cars. My mother and I drew off into a corner out of this gay crowd, and I will have to confess that tears of bitter anger were coursing one another down my cheeks at the thought of my position, crouching out of sight. Maxy—I am very wicked—if I had followed the bent of my inclination, I would have shaken mother well as the author of all my troubles.

At last the great cars came lumbering into the station, and there was a stir in the crowd of the finely-dressed ladies and gentlemen, who stretched forward their necks, and presently I heard, “There they come! Oh, is she not lovely?” and I too looked. Yes, Maxy ; it was Eva with Dr. Harrison by her side, looking lovely and smiling—oh, in such a familiar way that my poor heart just leaped up and down with the fondest, saddest memories of you all. There was Eva—beautiful, dainty Eva, the

ladies and gentlemen crowding about her to give her a welcome and make a commotion over her. I heard every one say, "Oh how beautiful!" and a common porter with a trunk on his shoulder stopped stone-still just by my side, and said, "I golly! but she is pretty, now!" And she was the prettiest piece of flesh and blood I ever saw—my sister Eva. Oh, if only the inside were a fit match for that beautiful exterior, what a piece of perfection my sister—Mrs. Harrison—would be!

I had particularly observed two ladies in one of the carriages, because I thought they looked like Dr. Harrison; they were proud, hard-looking women, lolling back in their elegant coach. When it was announced that Eva was coming, they alighted and went forward, and I heard Dr. Harrison say, "My mother, my sister." They kissed her in a stately sort of way which would have frozen me, and then all returned to their different vehicles.

Eva was lifted into the beautiful open carriage, and—I could not help it—I pressed forward on the sidewalk—I, Lucy Simpson, with my mother upon my arm, and, as Eva's head was turned in my direction, I for one instant raised my veil and caught her eye. I was sorry a minute after; her eyes started forward as if she had seen a ghost, and then she fell back. I heard Dr. Harrison call to the coachman, "Stop! stop! Mrs. Harrison has fainted!" and then all was confusion. A drug-store just by

furnished restoratives, but oh what a commotion they did make over the "bride"! What would they have said if Lucy Simpson and her mother had pressed forward and claimed the place beside *his* proud mother and sister? But they did not.

There were such crowding and jostling that there was no room for uninterested spectators, so Lucy Simpson wedged her way out, and her poor humble mother and herself wended their way homeward.

"Ah, *mon enfant!* why cry you so?" said my mother when, safe at home, I threw myself upon the bed and fairly screamed with passion.

"Don't come near me now," I cried; "I cannot stand it."

She cowered away in a corner. I did not care how much I hurt her; she was the cause of it all. Maxy, I know it was dreadful; but if the evil nature in me could have had its way then, I would actually have done something cruel to my mother. Oh what a nature I have! I am sure I do not know how I should have wished to increase my suffering, but I felt as if I must see Eva at her reception that night. It was a sort of morbid passion with me which would not be denied, so, going down to meet Mr. Perkins that afternoon, I said,

"Mr. Perkins, is No. — — street very far from here?"

"Wall, yes, miss, it's a pretty smart piece; that must be between — — and — — streets."

“Mr. Perkins, is it too far for you to walk there with me to-night?”

“Certainly not, miss. Is it now you wish to go?”

“No,” I said; “not before nine o'clock;” and so it was arranged.

Lucy Simpson and the honest carpenter Mr. Perkins started out for their moonlight walk at nine o'clock, but not alone. I had not spoken to my mother all the afternoon; but when she saw me putting on my bonnet, she burst out into the bitterest weeping.

“What is it now?” I asked, impatiently turning toward her.

“Ah, *mon enfant!* You leaf me; you come no more back. I see it all. You go to the sister who is so like my yout'. Adieu!”

“You are mistaken,” I said; “I am only going to peep in through the windows at my beautiful sister. I would be turned from the door if I ventured farther.”

“Ah, *pardon moi!*” cried my mother, bending before me. “I meant it, but I luf you.”

I lifted her up and kissed her, and told her that I had no idea of leaving her; God had given us to each other, and, come good or ill, I was never to part from her until death came.

Maxy, I was crying when I said all this, and deeply penitent and sorry for my wickedness, but

an absurd idea crept in that I was pronouncing the marriage ceremony over my mother and myself. She was my bride "till death us do part." What lovely brides Dr. Harrison and myself have!

My mother, notwithstanding my assurances, could not be content to see me depart. Maxy, sometimes her fondness soothes me, and again it aggravates me dreadfully. This was not one of the soothing times, but, as I had been so dreadfully cross and unfeeling, I was obliged to let her go with me.

The walk was a long one, but Mr. Perkins, being an old settler, had no difficulty in finding the place, and as we stopped before the house he said,

"Why, sakes alive! it's that fine Harrison house, as I live! And what a sight of people, to be sure!"

There was "a sight of people," truly, carriages coming and departing, a stream going in and coming out. How were Lucy Simpson and her mother to get a look inside? Knock at the door and send word to Mrs. Harrison that her mother and sister wanted to see her? Wouldn't we have a reception of our own then! No; that would not do. How could we manage it? I stated our difficulty to Mr. Perkins. We had seen the beautiful bride arrive to-day; I had seen Dr. Harrison before, and wanted to see his bride in her bridal finery. Mr. Perkins laughed a little at the curiosity of "women-kind," but did not see how it was to be accomplished.

Just at that moment the policeman evidently on duty to keep away small boys and interlopers in general, passed by, looking at our party suspiciously. Mr. Perkins exclaimed with elation, "Hallo, Brown! you on duty? That's what I call confounded good luck. Here's two ladies what don't belong to the qual'ty, but is patients, or something of that nater, to Dr. Harrison, and is fairly dying to get a peep at the bride. You knows curiosity is 'lowed to the sect."

At first Mr. Brown declared it was impossible, and I—who never could behave myself, you know, Maxy—pressed forward and said,

"Oh, Mr. Brown, if you only knew how anxious we are, you wouldn't refuse us."

The officer turned and looked at me for an instant as I stood below the street-light, and then said,

"Well, I can't refuse a pretty young lady like you, seein' I'm lookin' out for a wife myself. Come along!"

Oh, Maxy, only think! a policeman who leaves off all his final *g*'s talking to me that way! Would not Harry have knocked him down? I felt utterly humiliated for a moment, and then the next forgot all about it in the prospect of seeing Eva. He led us through the area-gate—my mother and myself—up into a back porch upon which the windows of the back parlor opened, and we could see everything within perfectly.

There, between the folding-doors, stood the bride and the groom receiving their visitors, Eva in her white silk dress with lace overdress, its long train sweeping the floor, her neck and arms bare, but shaded by the veil of lace which fell around her. She had magnificent pearls in her ears, on her bosom, neck and arms, but they were no purer than her exquisite skin. She was far more delicate than when I saw her last, but so ethereal, so lovely, that I almost held my breath while I looked. I forgot all about Lucy Simpson and her wrongs, and just felt proud that that vision of loveliness was my own sister.

I was roused by sobs from my mother.

“What are you crying about?” I asked.

“Ah!” she said; “you no understand. How should you? I was like dat; your fader—he love me like dat. I cast it away in my folly.”

“Well,” I said, “it is no use grieving now.”

My voice sounded hard, for her words brought back the bitter reality. Here Eva had bread enough and to spare—bread of the sweetest and whitest—and I had only the hard, coarse husks. Suddenly something seemed to say to me, “Would you change with her? Would you take her guilty knowledge of your common secret, the deception she is practicing toward her husband, her poor coward heart and her great wealth, in exchange for your honest poverty, your clear conscience, your life of stern hard duty?” No! no! a thousand times no!

Then I put my arm about the form of my poor unhappy mother, and said,

“Never mind, mother dear. Am not I a comfort to you? If I am a mean, cross thing sometimes, I am going to take care of you, and you of me; so let us go to our home now and thank God for what we have;” and so we turned away, and, joining Mr. Perkins, were soon on our way home.

The next morning's mail brought from Eva a letter enclosing one hundred dollars and entreating me to keep out of sight.

“Such a risk as you ran to-day might be my ruin,” she said, “for, devoted as Dr. Harrison is to me, he would never forgive my deception. I will send you money from time to time if you will only keep away, and keep her away. Of course it is all nonsense, your not taking money from me; I have plenty, and to spare. But I cannot—no, I *cannot*—tell my husband.”

I took the money and laid it aside, determined that, no matter to what straits we were reduced, I would not spend it, but would return it to Eva as soon as she came back from her wedding-trip. It was, or seemed to me, the price of blood. She told me that when I got the letter she would be on her way to New York, and would not return for four weeks.

CHAPTER XVII.

WAYS AND MEANS.

AND now, having taken this very decided stand about receiving money from Eva, it was necessary that I should look into my affairs. Our money was low, and we had as yet no way of adding to the stock. I had answered one or two advertisements, but I felt so overwhelmed with a sense of my own incompetency that I did not succeed in inspiring confidence in any one else. Maybe some of these days I will laugh over my experiences; they are sorry enough now.

For instance, looking in the list of "Wants," I saw "Wanted, a governess for three little girls. Apply at — ——" I started off at once. The house referred to proved to be very big and formidable. I am always afraid of such, because people who live in them belong to the upper-tendom and may have heard of the strange disappearance of Linda Dalrymple, and also may in some way confound "Lucy Simpson" with her, Maxy dear; so I quite trembled when I heard some one coming to answer my ring. I was ushered into great double

parlors, where I saw myself and my shabby clothes repeated in as many as four mirrors, until I was fain to sit down and cover my face with my hands to shut out the unwelcome sight. But I was not alone in the room. The mirrors reflected two other ladies, in shabby clothes, sitting very far apart and eying each other and myself with rather unfriendly looks.

Very soon the lady of the house came in. She was rather a kind-looking lady ; and if I had been alone with her, it may be I would not have behaved as I did. She spoke to us, and one of the ladies who were in the room when I entered said,

“I come, madam, in answer to your advertisement in this morning’s paper.”

“So do I,” said the other lady, coming to the front.

She looked at me as if she expected me to say something, but I could not have for anything entered the lists against those two martial-looking women ; I know I would have been scalped. So I just got up, and, while my face burned dreadfully, I said,

“I also saw your advertisement, but I am sure these ladies will suit you better than I could do. I don’t know anything about teaching, and have very little patience ; I only thought, as I had to get something to do, maybe I might be able. But it don’t make any difference ; I am very sure I could not do it.”

The lady smiled very kindly, and said,

“Will you not let me judge of that? It may be you are the very one I want.”

“No, indeed!” I said; “I would much rather not interfere with anybody else. Good-morning!” and I was out of the house before any one had time to say more.

One day, soon after this grand failure, as I was walking along the street thinking rather gloomily about my depleted purse and of the ways and means of filling it, my eye fastened upon a sign: “Ladies’ Depository.” At once there rushed over me the remembrance of the establishment in Richmond—one of dear Aunt Mary’s hobbies. There ladies took their work, and it was given out to the needy. You know, Maxy, all about it. How often we have had things made there! Now, what if I could get some work? I had given up having work done; I was one of the needy. Well, never mind; God did it.

You know, Maxy, I never was much of a needle-woman, though you labored over me faithfully, but I had found out one thing: with all her weakness and childishness, my poor mother had one accomplishment—she could sew. She constantly entreated me to let her make clothing for me; and when I got her the requisite material, she put the most beautiful work upon it, and it seemed a real delight to her—kept her occupied and happy. Could she not teach

me her art? I determined to try. I would consult her, too, about my plans. Perhaps I kept her too much in the dark; it should be so no longer. So, one day, when we were seated together—she with her work and I with a Richmond paper which I had been searching for familiar names—I turned to her and said,

“Mother, I have something to talk to you about.”

Her face flushed nervously, and I knew the nightmare of her life was pursuing her—a fear of my leaving her. Each day makes her more dependent on me, Maxy, more utterly submissive to my wishes; she seems in her simple way to have an idea of atoning to me for her former failures in duty as a wife and mother.

“You go away?” she exclaimed, laying down her work.

“No, no!” I said, smiling reassuringly. “But I must get some work to do. Our money is almost gone, mother; I must get some now.”

She looked appalled at first; then, taking my hand and looking at it, she said eagerly,

“Work you cannot, *mon enfant*; dese hands know not work. But me—I know it; I work for *mon enfant*.”

I was touched, but for the time turned the subject.

“Eva,” I said, “has been sending us money, but she is married now, and I will not receive her husband’s money.”

“My husband—*votre père, mon enfant*—had he not money?”

It was the first time she had ever asked a question concerning such matters. I told her of the losses my grandfather had suffered and of how we had been dependent on Judge Wallace.

“Ah! ‘Wallace’! ‘Wallace’! I remembare. So polite *gentilhomme*! His daughter I remembare. What did she?”

“He had two daughters,” I said; “both married before I recollect. Aunt Parke married Mr. Carter, and Aunt Lelia is Mrs. Hastings.”

“Ah, *ciel*! De change, de change! What folly was mine! Dere was—was to wed wid George; Lelia she was.”

“Aunt Lelia!” I exclaimed. “Oh, you are mistaken.”

“*Non, non, mon enfant*! He loved her not, but it was wanted—his fader and hers.”

“And she?” I asked, amused at this new page in family history.

“Ah! I know not well. I loved not any in dose days; it was only Paris. I was mad;” and her head lowered like a child’s in shame and penitence.

“Well,” I said, “it is not worth while to moan over this now; we must do the best we can for the present. I must get some work to do.”

“And I,” she said, eagerly—“I know much work.

Let me not sit so while *mon enfant* work ;” and she clasped her hands in her lap to illustrate her idea. “I can much embroider, I can make de flower, I can dress de hair. I show you ;” and with an animation of movement I had never seen in her she came to me, and, with dextrous hand undoing my long hair, with delighted exclamations of “*Magnifique ! Superbe !*” she commenced her operations. Her touch was delightful, and I sat, half laughing and wholly luxurious, while she manipulated her resources most dextrously. First standing off with many a gesture of admiration, she brought the glass, and I found myself suddenly transformed into a Parisian lady.

For a moment I was amused—perhaps a little flattered, as it was plain it was becoming and I was not without my little vanities any more than the rest of my sex—and then the bitter thought came into my heart, “What horror ! To have a regular hair-dresser for a mother !” What employment had not this woman engaged in ? I felt sunk, degraded, and with a hand impelled by the passion of the moment I tore down all her artistic work, exclaiming,

“No ! We are degraded enough without this. I will not require your help ; I will work for us both.”

“Ah ! you are angry, *mon enfant*. *Qu’est-ce que c’est ?* What do I ? I mean not anyting ;” and my poor mother sank into a chair and looked at me

with tearful eyes. I had been in such a different mood of late that she had ceased to fear me, and now I had undone all my labor of so many weeks.

All this wrought mightily in me as I twisted up my long hair, with an exaggeration of plainness, into a coil at the back of my head, to contrast as strongly as possible with its so late elaboration, but still I could not quite in a moment get over my passion ; it was not my way. I remembered—and you will remember, Maxy—Madame la Page, that fat, greasy-looking hairdresser in Richmond who used to dress our hair for us, and my only mental connection with that class of individuals was through her ; and the idea of having a mother like her would be worse even than the reality. So I dressed myself by jerks ; you know how I used to do long ago when I got mad. I put on my bonnet and was leaving the room, when my mother, who with tearful eyes had been sitting watching my operations, said in her meek little voice,

“Ah, *mon enfant*, I luf you ! De past is gone ; my heart is no more cold to *mon enfant*. You leave me ; I die. I offend I know not how. Forgive me, *mon enfant*.”

I was moved, but not conquered. I said very stiffly, the spirit warring against the flesh and the flesh warring against the spirit—and my will was one second helping me on one side and then on the other, but flesh was stronger—

“ You need not be afraid ; you have me safe. I never expect to leave you—that is the beautiful path spread out for my life—but certainly I may choose what profession my mother may adopt, so that we may not sink any lower than we already are. Madame la Page !”

This last exclamation was due to a little excursion my memory took back to Richmond, embracing old, greasy, garlicky Madame la Page, my especial aversion.

I suppose there must be some such thing as nature between even such an incongruous mother and daughter as we were. I know if my passion had been with Aunt Betsey or Eva I would have gone on without speaking, and I am sure that to no one else in the world would my unfortunate mother have had any attractions, but she looked so pitiful, so meek, and I— Well, she had no one but me in the wide world, and she had been hungry often, and had worked hard and loved me so devotedly. But I went out, nevertheless, and even got to the foot of the stairs before my good angel overcame. First I stood still a moment, then turned and walked slowly up the stairs.

As I quietly opened the door this cry met me :

“ Ah, *mon Dieu*, let me die, let me die ! I have nothing left. *Mon enfant* goes ; she leave me. Ah, let me die !”

“ Mother !” I said.

“Ah, *mon enfant*,” she ejaculated, coming toward me with clasped hands, “pitie me! I luf you. I would go away, but I cannot lif away.”

“No, no!” I exclaimed, full of contrition. “Where should you live but with your child? Don’t cry, mother; I am a dreadful creature, I know, but I will not leave you.”

“*Vous etes une ange!*” she exclaimed, joyfully; and so we were reconciled.

I explained to her that I was going to try and find work and would bring some to her, but she must not take up the hairdressing business; I did not wish it. That was sufficient; I knew she would never mention it again.

I smiled as I recalled a little home-incident. Aunt Lelia Hastings, you remember, spoiled her children dreadfully; and when Tom was a little fellow, he wanted to carry some unreasonable point which required more management than usual. His winning argument was,

“Now, mamma, you ought to do it, because the Bible says you must.”

“The Bible says I must?” said Aunt Lelia, surprised to find a theologian in Tom the scapegrace. “Prove it.”

“Well, don’t the Bible say, ‘Parings, obey your children’? There, now!”

I think Tom gathered this from the ordinary family discipline with which he was most familiar,

and I am afraid my interpretation of Scripture would have been pretty much the same. Certainly, no daughter ever had a more obedient mother than mine was to me, and I am afraid I tyrannized over her dreadfully too. A little power is a dangerous thing, and especially if it is the power of an usurper.

But if I tyrannized over my mother, I too had a master; for oh how my conscience did scold me during that walk! I will tell you our talk.

“Well,” said conscience, “this is a most laudable conclusion to all of your good resolutions! This is eating what is set before you, with a vengeance! What excuse can you make for yourself? What has your mother done?”

“Oh, she is unexpressibly irritating to me, with her meek, silly ways. I am sure I have given up everything for her—home, friends and a bright future. Am I to have no credit for that? Am I to submit to be dragged down—down to the dregs—by her?”

“It is true you have given up a great deal, and your heavenly Father has put it down to your credit; but has he not even now rewarded you? Look into yourself. Has this long struggle not been of profit to you? Has it not been the very discipline you needed to develop your nature, to give you self-control and power of self-denial? You boast of what you have given up. Has no one given up anything for you? Did your Sa-

viour not surrender heaven for those who had done far worse to him than any human being has done to you? Who put you in this position? Who gave you the opportunity of serving him by properly gracing it? Would you rather your poor mother had been lost soul and body in the streets of Paris than have been given to you by God that her eternal salvation might be secured? For shame! What are you doing for that soul? Missing an opportunity which may suddenly pass away and leave your life a prey to bitter regret. Soul, where hast thou gleaned?"

My head went down.

"I took my mother to church," I remonstrated, feebly.

"Yes, and laughed over her misunderstanding of the sermon instead of patiently explaining it to her and helping her to profit by it. To this day she has not the smallest idea of the real meaning of a sermon from which you yourself received profit, and which you might in a few words have made her understand fully. For shame!"

"I may have been wrong—indeed, I know I was; but that has nothing to do with the present question, and I do think it is perfectly natural in me not to want her to take a position which would degrade me."

"Degrade you? How would it degrade you? It is honest work, and your mother would like to

feel that she is helping; it would exalt her as much as anything possibly could."

This contest of the flesh against the spirit and the spirit against the flesh brought me to the door of the Ladies' Depository in a very meek frame of mind. I stopped for a moment at the window, and looked in. It was full of beautiful specimens of work—infants' robes, embroidered skirts and dresses for children and ladies. I saw that a high degree of skill was required for this work, but I felt very sure my mother was equal to the task.

Some time I stood there, my pride rising in rebellion at the thought of what I was about to do. One after another passed me; ladies with bundles of work got out of luxurious carriages at the door. Ah! how short a time since I had belonged to that class! Women with the marks of trial and want in their faces passed in with their packages. To these I belonged, and I could not easily keep back the tears, but I went in with the stream. At first there were so many of both classes of customers that I had no chance, and was glad enough just to draw back to the other side of the room and wait. At last, though, a sweet, kind-looking lady behind the counter said to me,

"Can I wait on you, miss?"

Then I felt my face flame and those provoking tears come in my eyes, and I could hardly hear myself say,

“I wanted to see if I could get some work.”

Oh, it just passed through my mind, “What would grandpa and Harry, and all at home, do, if they only knew I was in a ladies’ depository asking for work?” It almost scared me to think of the dismay it would cause.

The lady behind the counter—I suppose because I was well dressed: I had on the bonnet and the dress I had worn when I left home—looked surprised, and very sorry too, as she said kindly,

“Come here, my child, and tell me what kind of work you want.”

I was fairly crying now, and was so provoked with myself for drawing attention to me that way; but I could not help it.

“Embroidery, if you please,” I said, behind my handkerchief.

“Have you any specimens of your work?”

I had never thought of that necessity, but suddenly remembered I had on a collar which my mother had embroidered. I showed it, and said,

“I do not do the work, but my mother does—very beautifully.”

“That is certainly a good indication of her skill,” said the lady. “What is your name?”

To save my life I could not tell a story; so I hesitated a moment, and then said,

“I do not want to give you my real name; you may call me Lucy Simpson.”

The lady smiled very kindly, and, going to the shelf, took down a roll of white merino with a quantity of white floss silk in it.

“This,” she said, “was brought in to-day with the request that it might be finished by next Saturday week. Do you think your mother could do it?”

“Oh yes,” I exclaimed; “I think she would like anything so pretty as that to do.”

“Then she shall have it,” said the lady, just in the way one bestows a special indulgence on a spoiled child. Then, after a little hesitation, she said, “Our rules require that you shall deposit with us the value of the materials unless you have some security to offer.”

I looked at her in amazement. What did she mean?

“You don’t understand me?”

“No.”

“Well, it is a business arrangement. You see, when any whom we do not know come to us and get work, if they do not leave some security we might be robbed; and, although—”

I understood now. What an insult! I—Linda Dalrymple—was thought capable of robbing, stealing! What would grandpa and Harry have said to that? I felt my cheeks burn and my eyes flash with indignation, and without saying a word threw the package upon the counter and turned away.

I heard the saleswoman calling to me, but I did not heed; I only wanted to get into the air to get rid of the stifling sensation which seemed to be killing me. I was so blind with passion it was some seconds before I could unfasten the door; and when I succeeded, I rushed out, and as I felt my freedom I burst into bitter tears.

I stood for a moment utterly unable to proceed, and faintly heard the door behind me open and close. Then a gentle hand was laid upon my arm and a sweet, sympathizing voice said,

“My poor child, let me help you.”

I turned and met the dear, sympathizing face of a woman who stood beside me with the rejected package in her hand. With wise tenderness she explained to me that what had so offended me was a rule not made for me and enforced because I was an object of suspicion, but simply a necessary precaution against the attempts of the unscrupulous. Light came to me suddenly, and I was overwhelmed with confusion.

“How silly you must think me!” I said.

“Not at all,” she replied, smiling; “you only show how new a thing it is for you to ask for work. I have at home a young daughter who I suspect would do pretty much as you have done to-day. But here is your work; I had just bought the materials, and take great pleasure in handing it over to you without any security.”

“Oh, thank you!” I said. “I have not my purse with me; but if you will keep this—” and I loosened my breastpin.

Again she smiled so kindly :

“No, dear; keep your pin. I am not the least afraid to trust that frank, open face. Will you bring the work to me instead of taking it to the depository?” and she handed me her card, bearing her name, Mrs. David Sollis, with her address. I promised, and we parted.

I walked home with a lighter heart than I had borne for some time. I really bounded up the steps, in haste to tell my mother of the success of my enterprise and anxious to atone to her for my unkindness. I opened the door of my room—which was our sitting-room—crying, “Mother!” but she was not there. I went into her room, but there was no trace of her. Where could she be? It was a most unheard-of thing for her to go out on the street alone. Perhaps she was in Mrs. Perkins’s room. Of course! what more natural? She often went there. But it was strange she had not heard me pass the door and call her name.

I leaned over the banisters : “Mrs. Perkins! Mrs. Perkins!” She made her appearance. “Is my mother down there?”

“No, miss; she has gone out, and asked me to give you this.” She took from her pocket a piece of paper, and as she came up the steps said, “My mind

misgives me, miss, that something wasn't right with Mrs. Simpson. She was all a-crying when she come down and handed me the note and said, 'Will you give this to Mononfong?' That's a curious name of yours, miss."

I took the little awkwardly-folded note, and while I opened it my heart gave a mighty bound, for through blots and crooked characters I read:

"MON ENFANT: I go away! Think not I love you not. I can look not in you. *Mal heureux!* I mean it not, but I offend you much. So *je va allez vous* to Richmond. Happy may you be! I see you not any more. Think not of me.

"Adieu, *mon ange*. *Le bon Dieu* bless you!

"*Je vous aime, votre mère,*

"MATILDE DALRYMPLE."

For the first time in my life I fainted away.

CHAPTER XVIII.

NEAR THE GATES OF DEATH.

DEAR MAXY: I do not know how to describe what followed, it is all so weird and dreamy. I seemed sometimes to be at Woodlawn and living over the old scenes, but in a blurred and indistinct way, things getting mixed up and people changing places just as in a dream. One moment we were all boys and girls again and playing on the lawn or laughing over some of Tom's absurd jokes, when suddenly, without warning, I would feel myself dragged forcibly away, sometimes by one person and then by another. Now poor harmless Mr. Perkins was the tyrant, then Eva, but oftenest my mother. Once—such an absurd idea!—Eva tore me away from Harry without his having the least power to prevent it, and in spite of my shrieks and cries crammed me down in a dark hole and stamped furiously on my head, screaming down the hole to me, “You wish to prevent me from marrying Mr. Perkins, but you shall not!” and I found the hole was the canal-boat, and my mother was there, and said to me, “*Qu'est-ce que c'est?*” What is

de matter?" Then the negro woman came up and offered us loathsome food, which I refused; and when I did so, she held me, and in spite of my vigorous resistance rammed a spoon down my throat, saying, with Mrs. Perkins's voice, "You must take it, Miss Simpson, to make you well." Next, Policeman Brown was standing by me holding my hand, and I, insulted by his familiarity, struggled to get it away from him, when he said very gently, "I am only feeling your pulse, my dear," and I tried to look up at him; but my eyes were unsteady, and he wavered before me. I saw a white head, though, and found Policeman Brown had changed to dear grandpapa. So I just sobbed and cried, "Oh, grandpapa, I am so happy!" and sank off to sleep.

Sometimes I was vaguely conscious of my mother beside me sobbing and crying, and saying in her broken way that she had killed me, and calling on God for help, and then I would sink down—down—down, until voices sounded far off and indistinct.

One day, when these violent changes in the scenes through which I so rapidly passed were followed by this sinking out of sight, I thought I was dying. You were on the bed by me, and Harry and grandma and grandpa and Eva and Aunt Mary were all there, but, though around the bed, I could not get near to them. I was going away, and could not grasp their hands, though I tried so eagerly. I

seemed floating away, and suddenly, while straining my eyes to catch the last sight of all I loved on earth, there broke upon me a new atmosphere so bright that at first I was dazzled; but as my eyes became accustomed to it I saw it was full of bright forms which seemed to have the sun shining through and through them. There was something—a mountain, I suppose, whose top was up in the skies, and its sides were covered with these angelic figures going backward and forward, and three of them came and stooped over me, and, kissing me, said, “Sweet child, come with us,” and I knew they were my own grandpapa and grandmamma and father. And oh, there was such a chorus of beautiful voices singing!

“Where am I?” I asked as I was lifted in the arms of my three attendant spirits.

“In the land of the redeemed,” said my father—“saved through the blood of the Lamb;” and then, as if the word “saved” were a sudden inspiration, they all burst out into a joyous cry: “He hath redeemed us to God by his own precious blood;” and the chorus was taken up by countless voices: “Glory to God in the highest! On earth peace, good-will toward men!” and then I was taken up and borne through the air until we came to a beautiful city with walls and towers and pearly gates, all irradiated with this beautiful light which seemed to shine through everything, making it transparent. As we came near, the gates opened, and louder and

sweeter were the voices which floated from within, singing, "Glory to God in the highest! On earth peace, good-will toward men!" I seemed to hear a soft rustling like the wings of birds and the mellow sound of harp-strings, but the gates opened only halfway, and filling up the space between them there stood a beautiful majestic figure with a crown in his hand and a light about his head. He smiled upon me so sweetly as he held the crown over my head and extended his other hand toward me. Then I knew it was my Saviour and that I was in heaven, and, falling down at his feet, I cried aloud, "Saved! saved!" and my voice caught the anthem which rang through heaven.

I shouted with the rest,

"Glory to God in the highest! On earth peace, good-will toward men!"

Then the Saviour spoke, and his voice was sweet and tender and loving, as he said,

"Dear child, thy work is not yet done. Return to earth, take up thy cross; and when thou hast overcome thou shall receive this crown of glory;" and he held the crown just above my head.

Maxy, though I could not bear to come back, such a feeling of sweet submission filled me that I only bowed my head and said,

"Not my will, O Lord, but thine be done."

Then I felt soft kisses upon my cheek and lips and brow, and the voices of my loved ones said, "Fare-

well, precious child, for a little while," and my father whispered, "Bring my poor Matilde and Eva with you."

Then I seemed gradually to come out of the light and the beauty ; and when I opened my eyes, it was upon a dark little room with a faint light shaded in the corner, and with some one bending above me and holding my wrist.

When I tried to move, it was as if I were bound down to the bed by thongs, as I could not stir ; then a cool hand was laid on my head and a voice said to me, "Be quiet, child," and, looking intently at him, I found the face was strange. It was a man with gray hair, but not grandpapa. I was half-conscious of hearing him say, "She will recover," and then a half-softened exclamation of thankfulness in broken English, followed by choking sobs as they hurried my mother out of the room.

Mrs. Perkins put a cup to my lips and said,

"Drink, Miss Simpson ; it will make you well."

So I came back to earth, Maxy, and gradually a recollection of the real life returned to me. My mother beside me, I said,

"Mother, he—my father ! I have seen him ! He says I must bring you with me to heaven."

Mother thought I was still in delirium, and said,

"Talk not, *mon enfant* ; we go not yet."

"No ; so the Saviour said, mother. A little while, and then my crown of glory."

My mother gave a little cry of dismay, and I heard her tell Mrs. Perkins that I was wild to-day again, but I was not—only very weak.

Oh what a nurse one's mother is in sickness! Even my poor mother's hand was softer and tenderer than that of anybody else. I used to turn from Mrs. Perkins's manipulations with longing for the touch which had so much love in it.

Days passed before I had memory enough to call up events which transpired immediately before my illness; but one day, when, as usual, my mother was beside me, as I looked at her it seemed to me that there was something strange in her being there. I said to her,

“But why are you here? You were gone. How did you get back?”

Then, with many tears, she told me in her sad broken language how she had often felt as if for my sake she must go far away and leave me free; of how on that last day, when she had so grieved me—so she tenderly expressed it, sparing me any blame—she knew she was best away, and had determined to go while I was out; of how she had wandered about all day so wretched, and had returned at nightfall only to look once more on the house which held her child, and had suddenly encountered Mr. Perkins. He had told her of the desperate illness which had seized me when I read her note, and then she had become wild with grief at the thought that

she had dealt one more blow to my life—had perhaps killed me. She had come back and established herself at my bedside and listened to my dreadful ravings. I cannot do justice to her story, Maxy dear, it was so simple and touching, and displayed so much of the love which filled her heart for me. I could only reach out my hand and take hers in mine, and she covered it with tears and kisses.

Suddenly giving vent to a thought, I exclaimed, “The package, the package! Oh, what must she think? How long have I been sick?”

Three weeks had passed.

Mrs. Perkins was summoned, and produced the bundle of white merino and floss silk. I was so weak that I suffered intensely from the thought of how Mrs. Sollis was misjudging me, and I could not be content until I saw my mother seated at the window in full view, in her hands the pure fabric, upon which she rapidly wrought fairy-like wreaths of lilies and pansies; and as I saw the work progressing toward completion I became calmer with the thought that the kind lady would not long misunderstand the young girl in whom she had expressed such generous confidence.

At last the work was finished; and one day, when Mr. Perkins came up to dinner, I begged him to show my mother where to find the place as designated on the card, and she started off with him, elated at the prospect of doing something for me.

CHAPTER XIX.

MISPLACED CONFIDENCE.

THE family of Mr. David Sollis are assembled at the table eagerly disposing of a most luxurious breakfast. Mr. Sollis's portly form bears testimony to the uniform good cheer in which he indulges, and his broad, merry face bears as indubitable witness to his good humor. At the present moment it is expanding with laughter, and his hearty "Ha ! ha !" is re-echoed by a bevy of young Sollises who adorn both sides of the table. The only person of the company who does not seem to enjoy the joke is the lady of the house, and the reason is soon apparent ; the joke is against herself ; and it is a very rare thing that one really enjoys a laugh in such circumstances.

Mr. Sollis had just asked,

"By the by, my dear, has your workwoman ever brought home Annie's dress ?"

Mrs. Sollis might have laughed, possibly, if it had been the first time this interrogation had been propounded ; but when she had had to answer it

every day for two weeks, no wonder she found it a little tiresome. So regularly, indeed, was it brought to the table that the children would have missed it as much as a favorite dish.

Mrs. Sollis only answered, with a quiet expression of vexation,

“No; I have not received it.”

“Poor Annie!” said the gentleman, with much pity and patting the head of a flaxen-haired little girl who occupied the high chair on his right. “Did mother give away her pretty dress to a beggar-woman? Never mind!”

“Mr. Sollis, for shame!” and the lady’s gentle face flushed with positive anger.

“Why, my dear, what is the matter? I thought you did;” and Mr. Sollis looked the picture of injured innocence.

“Mr. Sollis, I have told you a hundred times at least that that young girl was as much a lady as your own daughter here;” and Mrs. Sollis pointed to a young girl beside her.

“Oh, mother!” remonstrated the young lady. “Don’t compare me with a thief, if you please.—Now, father, do you think she ought?”

“No, Pet, I do not; but this mother of yours doesn’t mean anything by these little eccentricities. She is better than most of us, after all;” and Mr. Sollis got up and went all the way round the table to bestow a kiss of peace.

But Mrs. Sollis was really worried, and resisted her husband's effort at reconciliation, saying, half laughing, half crying,

"No, David; I will not kiss you. You always do this—tease me to death and then think you make up for it all by kissing me."

"But, my dear Laura," said Mr. Sollis, still laughing, "I am the one aggrieved. You take the money I provide for clothing for the family and strew it broadcast, and then think I ought to ask your forgiveness."

"Papa," whispered David the second, coming up behind, "please tell about the deaf-and-dumb man. That's so funny!"

"Ha, ha! Well, my son, it is a good true story, I admit.—My dear, our son remembers the case of the dumb man."

Mrs. Sollis could not help smiling.

"Ah! I see you have not forgotten it.—But, Pet, you never heard it, did you?"

"Hundreds of times," laughed Pet. "But I am just as anxious to hear it as if I never had done so. Go on; I am all attention."

"Well, Pet, this good woman—my wife and your mother—one of her philanthropic days met in the street a biped erect who stopped her and, pointing to mouth and ears, signified that he could neither hear nor speak. The tender sympathies of my wife were at once awakened. 'Poor fellow!' she said; 'how

can I help you?' He made a circular movement in the palm of his hand, to convey to her the idea that he would not refuse a piece of silver if it were offered to him. Your mother, Pet, at once took out a silver half dollar and laid it in the outstretched hand, saying tenderly, 'My poor fellow, can't you speak a word?'—'Not a word,' said the man; and Mrs. Sollis, after adding another fifty cents to the first, to express additional commiseration, left him, and never thought until she was three squares off that during their intercourse the man had showed symptoms of both hearing and being able to speak, and then she turned back and rushed to the place where she had left him, confidently expecting she would find him there—which she did not; and now she will not even give a cent to the deaf-and-dumb asylum, because she is sure the inmates are all impostors—that everybody can speak if he chooses."

There was a perfect chorus of laughter, in which Mrs. Sollis joined heartily, declaring the story too good not to laugh at, and all true, too.

"Now," said Mr. Sollis, kissing her without any difficulty, "this time thus I bury the past. I will to-day get Annie a new dress; I will never allude to the little gift to your street-friend if you, on your part, will promise not to allow yourself to be taken in by every impostor who walks about on two legs.—What is it, John?"

The servant had opened the door, and stood re-

spectfully waiting a pause in the conversation to announce his business :

“A lady at de door want to see misstis ; got some work for her.”

Mrs. Sollis started up and clapped her hands ; Mr. Sollis looked as if about to be deprived of his very best joke ; the young people sided variously with mother and father. Only little Annie lisped,

“’Tis my jes.”

“Is she a young and pretty lady, John ?” asked his mistress.

“Oh no, misstis ; she is old an’ not so much a lady. Talks curis, like a furriner.”

The laugh was turned.

“Let her be brought in here, at any rate ; I am tired of this game of cross-questions,” said David the first ; and John went out, and soon returned with a plainly-dressed little gray-haired woman with a restless, timid air which might be accounted for by the fact of her being unexpectedly ushered into so large a company as she found upon her entrance.

“Ees madame here ?” she asked, with unmistakable French accent.”

Mrs. Sollis stepped forward, smiled and took from the stranger’s hand a package. She opened it, and exclamations of admiration broke from all at the exquisite work. She turned triumphantly toward her husband ; and if ever a woman’s face said, “I

told you so!" without any assistance from her tongue, hers did. Little Annie climbed down from her high chair to see her beautiful "jes."

"You come from Miss Simpson?" Mrs. Sollis inquired.

"*Oui, madame. Ma fille est tres malade.*" In her embarrassment Mrs. Dalrymple forgot to drop her French.

"Is ill!" exclaimed Mrs. Sollis.

"Ah, so seak! For one, two, tree weeks she know not what she say; she was—what you call it?—wild."

"Ah, yes! I see. She was delirious. Poor child! I do not wonder. The day I saw her I observed that she was pale one moment and the next the flush would mount on her face," said kind Mrs. Sollis. "Is she better?"

"Yees. She remembare noting for so long time; den dis week she remembare. I do it; I bring it. Dat is all."

"Your daughter, did you say she was?" said Mr. Sollis, speaking for the first time.

"Yees, my daughter. I deserve it not. She ees good to me—one *ange*. I luf her."

"Why, I did not think your daughter was French," said Mrs. Sollis.

"*Non; she Amerique.* She nefare see Paris."

Then, suddenly remembering that she was on dangerous ground, and that if she revealed who

she was Lin might be forcibly taken from her, her face flushed, and, rising, she turned to go. But Mrs. Sollis stopped her to give her the money due for her work, and, getting the location of the house from her, promised to go and see Lin that very day.

I suppose a woman is always particularly happy to get the better of her husband in a contest—it seems to be natural—but, after all, the great source of Mrs. Sollis's pleasure was in having her own mind relieved about the integrity of the young girl who had so much interested her. As for Mr. Sollis, his first words as the French woman left the room were,

“Laura, whom does she remind you of? Somehow or other, she takes me back to the past, and for the life of me I can't think to what point. Can you not help me?”

“No, indeed; I never saw any one she reminded me of. I only know that never were mother and daughter more unlike than these two. And I know another thing—that I am going to put on my bonnet right now and go to see about that child. I fear they are very poor.”

“Well, my dear,” said her husband, “as an atonement to you for my persecution, here is some money for you to sow round the city. It is such a pleasure to you that I cannot help ministering to it.”

“And to you too, David,” said Mrs. Sollis, laughing. “You make me the excuse, but you would be

very sorry to have a wife who would not act as your almoner ; and now you want only to secure my sparing nothing on my *protégée*."

Mr. Sollis laughed and blushed, as if he had been caught stealing a sheep, and then went off to his store feeling very secure that his charities were in such faithful hands ; but many times during the day he asked himself, " Whom does that French woman remind me of ? "

Let us settle that question for the benefit of the reader.

The fact is there was no one, if choice had been given Mr. Sollis, whom he would rather have befriended than the child of George Dalrymple. He had been a poor boy in Richmond when the elder Dalrymple took him by the hand, gave him a business education and started him in life. He was an inmate of Mr. Dalrymple's house while George was in Europe. He was still there when George brought home his bride, and was cognizant of all the circumstances attending the unfortunate marriage ; and although Mrs. Dalrymple did not retain a trace of her former self, yet so subtile are the tones of the human voice that it remains the same through all the ravages of time and sorrow. Thus it was that the French woman carried Mr. Sollis back to the past.

CHAPTER XX.

LIN SPEAKS.

WHEN my mother came back, Maxy, she handed me the money for the work with so happy a face that I was touched by it. And a liberal compensation it was, being five dollars, though three was the sum agreed upon at the depository. Then, seating herself beside me, my mother said, “*Mon enfant, dat gentilhomme*—I have seen him.”

I turned inquiringly toward her.

“De husband of de lady for de work. I see him in Richmond. He was friend to your fader.”

“And did he know you?” I asked, eagerly.

“*Non! non!* None know me for de beautiful Madame Dalrymple. But he look at me all de time. He remember something, but he know me not.”

That day dear Mrs. Sollis came to see me. She is so sweet, Maxy—such a motherly, tender woman! I just felt as if I wanted to lay my poor head on her bosom and tell her all my troubles. I did tell her this much—that I was entirely without means

and owed for the attendance of the physician during my illness and for my board to Mrs. Perkins. All this had given me great trouble, as I was so unwilling to use that money of Eva's. I felt as if I would a great deal rather take it from any one else than to allow Eva to get it from her husband on false pretences.

When I told Mrs. Sollis all about my troubles, without mentioning the money I had, she stroked back my hair and kissed my cheek, and told me not to worry about anything, she would see to it all; and, since my mother was such a beautiful needle-woman, she could procure her plenty of work from her circle of acquaintances. As for me, she said, perhaps I could come and help her to teach her two little girls, Mary and Annie; they were only little things, and would not give me much trouble. Such a beautiful, delightful plan! Maxy, she wanted me to come and live with her, but I declined leaving my mother; and so as soon as I get well I am to go there for four hours a day. Oh, surely God arranged all this for me. That is the great pleasure about it—that he is taking notice of all my little trials and providing for me.

Maxy, I feel so differently about all this since that strange vision of heaven—as if this world were only a school in which we are being trained for heaven. I never again can be as I have been; even to be happy with Harry would not make me feel as

if I had not greater happiness to look forward to. And that whisper of my father's as we parted lingers about me, and that is a trouble too. Let me tell it to you.

I do try to teach my mother about heavenly things. I read the Bible to her, and, although I do not know how to talk very much, I do tell her a good many things ; but it is so hard ! If she would only ask me some questions or seem to take an interest, it would help, but she doesn't. She will sit and listen all day if she thinks it gives me pleasure, but nothing seems to take any hold of her mind.

Now, yesterday, after reading to her, I said,

“Mother, you know when I first began to get well I told you I had seen my father.”

“*Oui ; oui, mon enfant. De fevare ;*” and she touched her head to signify that it was a part of my delirium.

“No, you mistake,” I said ; “it was not the fever. I was in earnest and in my senses. I had a vision of heaven, and I saw my father, and he said to me that I must bring Matilde and Eva with me.”

She started up in alarm, evidently thinking I was having a relapse ; but I laid my head on her arm and said,

“Mother, don't go. I do want to talk to you.”

She sat down as obediently as usual.

“Mother,” I said, “you know we all have to die.”

“ *Oui, mon enfant*, in long time. I want not to die.”

“ It may be long or short, mother ; we cannot tell. You know that I, young as I am, was very near dying when I was sick.”

She broke into a passion of tears as her only answer.

“ Mother,” I said, “ don’t cry. If you love me so, cannot you thank God that he spared me to you ?”

“ *Oui, mon enfant ;*” and then she fell on her knees before me and clasped her hands, and, looking up, said, “ I tank de *bon Dieu* dat *mon chère enfant n’est pas morte.*”

I know it was only done in obedience to my wishes, but I was touched by it. And that is the way it always is : her desire to give me pleasure is the highest aspiration of her nature.

I suppose the short interval she passed with my father was the only time in her life she was ever brought in contact with anything savoring of religious influence, and then—poor mother !—she was so full of other thoughts she did not have any to devote to God. I suppose if I were not so weak and ignorant I could do her some good, but I don’t know how to go about it, she is so utterly ignorant.

The kind, good doctor came to see me to-day. His name is Dr. S——, and he seems so interested in my recovery ! I said to him,

“Doctor, when you come again, will you please bring me your account? I cannot settle it now, but after a while—”

“But, my child, I have no account against you. Do you think I would let such a poor young child as you are work her life away to pay me money for time which has been well paid for in seeing you up again?”

“But, doctor,” I said, “I would not be content not to pay you, and after a while—”

“Well, after a while will be time enough to talk about it. If you ever are in a situation to pay me without your working for it, I will send you my bill; until then it is not the least worth while to ask me for it. And, moreover, if you don’t send for me when you require my services, I shall cut your acquaintance. Pshaw, child! don’t cry. Why, those are things that happen every day in the life of a physician. I am only casting my bread upon the waters;” and he went away.

That was a comfort to me. My heavenly Father can pay him; I trust it to him. Surely it is he who inclines the hearts of so many to be kind to me, ugly and unattractive as I am, away from my friends and poor; but I couldn’t help hating to be under obligations to people.

Mrs. Perkins informed me that Mrs. Sollis had paid her all we owed her and told her not to let me be anxious or worried about it, or about any-

thing else. I will just try to rest and feel that my Father will take care of me.

A week later.—Two days ago, dear Maxy, I went out for the first time. It was creeping, to be sure, but I felt as if I must go and see if Eva had come; her new house is not so very far away. Mother insisted upon going with me, but I would not agree, as I wanted to see Eva alone. I waited until I knew that Dr. Harrison would have gone out, and then started. I had to stop several times before I reached the house; it seems so strange for me to be creeping about like an old woman!

Well, Maxy, at last I stood at the door of the house—Eva's house—ringing the bell. A very stylishly-dressed negro opened it, and I asked if Mrs. Harrison were at home.

“Mis' Ha'son not very well dis morning, and begs to be excused,” was the answer.

I was prepared for this, and handed him a note, saying I would wait for the answer.

Maxy, I must look poor and common indeed, for actually this *negro* was going to leave me at the door while he took my note up; but I was not going to allow that, so I walked right by him into the parlors, leaving him staring at me. I never felt more disposed to declare who I was, and put an end to his impertinence.

Soon a handsomely-dressed maid-servant came and said,

“Mrs. Harrison being very unwell, will you walk up to her room?”

Actually, Maxy, I trembled so I could hardly get up the stairs, but soon Eva and I were locked in each other's arms. I think I must have fainted, or something—only think how good for nothing I am!—for I found myself lying on a sofa and Eva over me bathing my face with eau-de-cologne. Then I burst into hysterical sobbing which I could not help.

“Lin—my poor Lin!” said Eva. “Don't do so.—Oh, what am I to do? Some one will come in and find us, and then all will be known and we will be disgraced.—Please, Lin, control yourself. Think of me! How dreadful it will be!”

“Eva,” I said, sitting up, “the best thing which could happen to us would be for your husband to come in now and face an explanation.”

She fairly screamed with horror.

“Lin,” she said, “I would take my own life rather than outlive such an avowal. He knows nothing at all, and only think what it would be to have to say to him, ‘I have deceived you’!”

“Terrible, Eva, I admit,” I answered—“the way of transgressors is hard—but certainly you cannot expect me to live all my life as I am doing now in order to save you from telling your husband the truth?”

She bent her head, and said not a word.

“Eva,” I continued, “is that your idea—that my

life is to wear out in this hiding, secret way in order to cover your sin?"

"Oh, Lin," she said, falling down on the floor beside me, "what am I to do? The more I know of my husband, the more do I feel that he must never learn this of me. Pity me, my sister! I confess it is the extreme of selfishness, but I cannot help it."

I was perfectly dumb with amazement. Such an idea had never occurred to me; I had always put a period to my trial. First when Eva was married, and then when long years had passed and in the course of nature my mother should leave me, I thought of going back to Woodlawn—dear Woodlawn!—to spend such peaceful years to my spirit in the heart of my home as would enable me to recover from the trials of these sad days. There was a sort of horror upon me at the idea of this burial of my life which my sister proposed.

At last Eva spoke:

"I don't want you to go away, Lin—at least, I do not ask that now. In such a city as this you can easily keep out of sight, and I will see you all the time. I will come and see you as often as I can with safety, and you can come here at such times as I shall be alone."

"When I will not be seen by your fashionable friends, I suppose?" I said, with a bitterness I could not suppress.

"Oh, Lin, how little you understand me! I am

laying all sorts of plans of how I can minister to your comfort and—and hers ; and—

“Thank you,” I said, “for your efforts. So far as I can see, your plans are all the other way.”

“No, Lin. I could send you money regularly, and sometimes I would send a carriage to take out you and that woman.”

“Your mother and mine, Eva,” I said.

“I will never call her so,” said Eva, with compressed lips.

“I not only give her the name, but I love her, thank God !” I said. “Yet let me tell you at once, Eva, this plan of sending me money is thus answered ;” and I threw in her lap the one hundred dollars. “I never will take one cent of money from you unless you tell your husband how you dispose of it.”

“What folly, Linda Dalrymple !” said Eva, taking up the money and pressing it upon me. “I have plenty. Dr. Harrison makes me an allowance and never asks me how I spend it ; and I have enough, and to spare.”

“That has nothing to do with it,” I said. “I will never take a cent of it, depend upon it.”

“How do you propose to live? You must indeed be fertile in resources, to be able to assume these heroics.”

“I am provided for,” I said ; “God has most wonderfully taken care of my mother and myself.”

“You certainly don’t look as if you had been very well taken care of. You are fearfully changed, Lin.”

In Eva’s voice as she said this there was a little accent of tenderness which completely broke me down.

“I have been very ill, Eva,” I said—“for three weeks I did not know anybody or anything—but I was better then than now, because I was living over the dear old life again ;” and I broke into bitter uncontrollable tears.

“Poor Lin !” said Eva, smoothing back my hair.

I was actually afraid to submit to her caresses, Maxy, lest I should bind myself to her wishes ; so, starting up, I said,

“Eva, let me tell you that it is perfectly useless for you to beg me to yield to your selfish desires. I never will be a party to your deception, which will be your ruin, body and soul. Let me tell you, Eva, what happened to you in my illness ;” and then I told her of my strange vision. “Now, Eva,” I added, “I shall always believe that this was something more than the fantasies of delirium. I believe God sent it to help me in my hard life, and it does. I am doing my best, Eva, to win my crown of glory by faithfulness to the end, and I cannot do that if I become a party to your sin. Besides, Eva, I want to take you with me, as my father said. Oh, Eva,

be entreated! Do what is right and leave the consequences to God."

"Never, if what you call right is telling my husband everything. Eternity is too vague; it does not take the least hold upon me. The happiness of this present life is what I care for—now—and my own sister will not lend me a helping hand to attain even that."

"No," I said, "not in the way you propose, certainly. For the reasons which influenced me to leave Richmond when I did—that is, the fear of bringing trouble upon our friends—I have no idea of making any change in my situation now. I believe that as long as our poor mother lives my duty is to attend upon her—God shows me that every day—but should that duty be removed I would at once go back again to grandpa and—Harry."

"'Harry'!" exclaimed Eva. "It is that silly affair at last, is it, which is the root of all this cant you have been dosing me with? That is the reason why you will not do as I wish? I thought you had done with Harry?"

"Perhaps I too thought so at one time," I said, provoked almost beyond endurance at her manner, "but I have come to the conclusion, since I have found what a good God I have watching over my affairs, that maybe he will restore my dear boy and myself to each other; and if he does, I do feel as

if it would be almost the beginning of heaven to me.”

“Well,” said Eva, “all I can say is that if you want me to get ready for another world you will have to remove the terror of my present life. I have no time to think of heaven now.”

And so my visit ended. Maxy, I crept away weak and sick, leaving Eva in her beautiful home surrounded by luxuries, the petted and spoiled child of wealth, and yet for the wealth of the world I would not exchange my lot for hers.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE "LITERARY MESSENGER."

EIGHTEEN months had sadly passed away since the mysterious disappearance of Linda Dalrymple, and from the period of Eva's marriage, which happened five months later, no news had reached us of her. The veil of mystery which was thrown over the whole affair had never been in the least withdrawn, and the effect of the prolonged suspense upon the different members of the family had been markedly sad. The dear old judge had both aged and saddened, and there were times when, coming in, he would throw himself down in a chair with a sigh which I knew was due to the recalling to mind of his pet child.

We can stand anything better than uncertainty, and it was this in the fate of Lin which wrung our hearts. Bright, cheerful Mrs. Wallace was wincing under it, though I hardly think she suffered as much as the judge, and our poor Harry lost all interest in everything. About him all the time there was a restless, wandering look for which there was no difficulty in accounting.

Neither had Eva in her new home recovered from the effects of the shock. She spent at Woodlawn the summer following her marriage, but the state of her health and her failing beauty made her an object of the deepest solicitude to us all, and to her husband especially.

With the finished story before us, we can think of many things which might never have been noticed otherwise. One was Eva's clinging devotion to her husband; there was a sort of appealing manner toward him which was very different from what we expected. She was restless and unhappy when he was out of her sight, and once, when he left her to return to Baltimore on business for a few days, she clung to him, and was as much distressed as if the separation was to be for a lifetime. Sometimes I fancied he wearied of all this, but generally he was very tender to her and anxious about her. Many were the consultations he held with us all about the recovery of Linda, but nothing was effected by them, and a sad silence fell around our darling's name, while our hearts were brimming over with thoughts of her. We surrounded her with all the sacred reverence with which we adorn our dead, and mingled with it a hope of restoration on this side of the river which we cannot have in the loss of our dear ones by death.

I still remained with the Wallaces, because I had no other home, and because they would not hear of

any other arrangement. I was inseparably connected in their minds with Lin; and whenever I spoke of going away, some one of them would say,

“It cannot be. You must stay to welcome our poor Lin back again.”

Miss Mary Tazewell's faith continued to be a great support to us all. She held up before us at all times the thought that our darling was in better hands than ours, that in some way she was in pursuit of what she considered a duty, and God—her Father and ours—was going to take care of her and bring her back to us again.

Suddenly, at the close of our eighteen months of trial, there was a clue to the handling of the mystery. It happened thus. We were very busy getting ready for our flitting from Richmond to Woodlawn, and Mrs. Wallace was up to her eyes in work—a condition of affairs which especially delighted her. She was perfectly insatiable in the matter of stirring, energetic employment, and always managed to draw all the other members of the family into the vortex in which she was whirling. One day I was helping about the packing of woollens in camphor, and was down upon my knees before a big chest, when I heard Harry's step in the hall quick and buoyant, so different from what it had been in the past weary months that I started up and exclaimed,

“Harry has heard something!”

He came bounding upstairs two steps at a time,



and into the room—his mother's room, where I was. Dear suffering, brave boy! how his face beamed as he held out a *Literary Messenger* to me, saying,

"Hurrah, Maxy! News! News of Lin!"

"I knew it as soon as I heard your step," I said, laughing and weeping at the same time; and we all gathered about him, crying,

"Where is she? What is it? When will she be here?"

"Oh, you all are too rapid," he said, with a little fall of countenance when he thought of the meagre story he had to tell, and of how little it would fill our expectations. "I have no certain information yet beyond a clue. Look here;" and he opened the book and pointed to the title of a story—"The Winter in the Mountains." I seized the book and read eagerly. Yes, it was Lin in every line. I read through blinding tears. Woodlawn was in it, and, although the story was half fiction, she had interwoven so many facts in which we had all been actors that it left not the least doubt of the writer. Harry looked over my shoulder, and the rest clustered around as I read aloud.

I had scarcely begun, when Judge and Mrs. Wallace came in. Mrs. Wallace exclaimed at sight of the general idleness, for the maids stood with unpacked woolens in their hands, and I, the packer, was sitting down reading aloud to the company from a paper-backed book, her standing abhorrence. A few words

sufficed, however, to add the judge and his wife to my auditors, and there we sat, eager, absorbed, as if each line was to tell us where we should find our loved one. Judge Wallace had reached that age when tears come easily even to the sterner sex, and as he sat and listened and heard the dear voice of the child of his love speaking in every line, the drops fell over his face unheeded.

There was a pair of lovers in the story—what girl could write without them?—and we all laughed then because they were Lin and Harry; and there, too, were Tom Hastings and coy little Katie Macon, their portraits unmistakably drawn. In short, I closed the magazine feeling as if we had been reading a letter from the child, and Judge Wallace started up and said,

“What have you done, Harry? Have you traced her?”

Harry told very circumstantially how he had at once gone to the publishers—had seen Edgar Poe, and from him obtained possession of the manuscript. This he now drew from his pocket—Lin’s unmistakable characters. It was like her portrait to me, each familiar dash of the pen bringing her back with her copybook before her while I strove to evolve order out of the dire confusion in her chi-rography.

Harry said, laughing,

“And what name do you think she writes under?”

We looked our inquiries.

"Why, 'George Perkins.'"

"What a droll idea!" we all said, and grandpa added,

"Lin never did anything quite like other people. Most girls of her age would have chosen 'Chloe' or 'Salvia,' or some such fine affair."

There was one thing about it all which struck us with a sort of pang: the manuscript came from Baltimore. No one spoke a suspicion, unless Mrs. Wallace's remark could be called such. She said in a reassuring tone,

"Well, you know, Lin might easily be in a city like Baltimore without Eva's knowing anything about it;" and we all responded in conclusive tones,

"Oh, of course!"

We had not for eighteen months enjoyed so cheerful a meal as the dinner which followed. The silence which had crept about our darling's name like the hard coating in which Nature hides the delicate bud from the biting frost broke away in the spring sunshine of our hopes, and each one recalled some incident in which she was the figure in the foreground.

"Do you remember, Ellen, my dear," said the judge, "the day you came to Woodlawn, how we found the dear child curled up in the great chair in the library with a book, and how conscience-stricken she was?"

“And the day you found your *Lady of the Lake* in the orchard?” said Mrs. Wallace.

“How scared she was! but how bravely she owned her fault! She was the most truthful child I ever saw.”

Then I told about the editorial conference to which I had played listener.

“Yes, I dare say there was a great deal of good about Linda,” said Miss Betsey. “I remember when I had my headaches she would always come in and offer to bathe my head, and probably stumble over or into something before she got through, which would make the pain worse, after all. I hope she has been able to conquer her temper.”

Miss Betsey is still a little acrid, though I think age has softened her. She has resigned herself now to her fate, and wears dark dresses.

“And what do you remember, Little Uncle?” said pretty Mrs. Hamilton, who was with us.

Harry was leaning back with such a dreamy, happy, hopeful face and a glance which looked both backward and forward!

“Oh, so much, Annie!” he said, smiling and blushing; “but my memories and hopes are alike sacred. I start for Baltimore this afternoon.”

“And I too,” said the judge.

“And oh, may not I go too?” I begged. “It is on our way to Woodlawn.”

“Could you get ready in an hour?”

"In ten minutes," I answered; and before the permission came I was on my way up stairs.—
"Going to see Lin," I said to the servant who in answer to my summons came to assist me.

"Thank the Lord!" ejaculated Amy, who was Mammy's daughter. "I do b'lieve Mammy will get well if Miss Lin come home; she do grieve so for her! En, Miss Ellen, she will have it dat de furrin mother is at de bottom of it all."

"Nonsense!" I said, but I could not get the idea out of my head. I mentioned it to Harry and the judge as we rode down to the station.

Journeys were not accomplished even by the cars as rapidly in those days as now, so we did not reach Baltimore until the evening of the second day, and, as there were no lightning-conductors then and there had been no time to write, we were obliged to take Eva and Dr. Harrison by surprise.

Eva met us in the hall, looking so ethereal that it startled us.

"What is it?" she asked, her hand on her heart.

"Nothing to frighten you, dearie," said grandpa, taking her into his arms; "only news from Lin."

He was obliged to clasp his arms close about the sinking form, for Eva had fainted.

"Poor child!" said grandpapa as he put her in her husband's arms. "I was too precipitate; the joy is too much for her."

CHAPTER XXII.

A CHAPTER FROM LIN'S DIARY.

OH, Maxy, this dreary, dreary life! Am I to go on so for ever, never to see any of you again? Is there no end to my trial. Eighteen months since I left home, and I seem no nearer to the end than at first. There! I am murmuring. How ungrateful, when I can see just the why of it all! Let me go over it; that always sets me up all right.

Suppose I had taken my poor mother home that day when Eva and I first met her; what would have happened? Grandpa and all would have been kind to her even while wincing under the disgrace, but we would never have been permitted to stay with her, nor would we have wished it. I can see it all. Grandpa would have put her 'way off somewhere where we never would have seen her, and then what? Poor mother! This strange, beautiful mother-love never would have grown up in her heart to take the place of the pride and vanity which were so natural a result from the circumstances of her life. That love has been her salvation. All the errors of her past life—the bad propensities en-

gendered by the circumstances of that life—have floated away upon that gentle stream and left not a trace behind. No heathen could have been more ignorant of the way of salvation than was my poor mother, and it seems as if God had just brought her home from corrupt Paris and given her to me alone to train for heaven. Oh, I do feel thankful, Maxy! I suspect father prayed for her, and I like to feel that she was given to me in answer to his prayers. Surely no one but he—unless it were good Grandpapa Dalrymple—ever did pray for her.

I have told you somewhere in these pages, Maxy, of my despair about ever making her take an interest in these matters. At last I just began at the beginning, teaching her like a little child; for in many things, Maxy, my poor mother is like a little child. I discovered I had begun wrong. I expected her to feel David's Psalms and Paul's Epistles and the Revelation just like a real Christian would, but I found my mistake; so I just began at the beginning of the Bible and read and talked to her about it all—the Creation, the Fall and the promise of the Saviour—and then I began to show her how that promise was accomplished so long after. I suppose God showed me how to do it, because, you know, such a poor ignorant child as I was never could have known else. And it did me as much good as it did her, because, you know, I had to read and study so much to know how to teach her.

Dear Mrs. Sollis was a great help to me in this. Not that I ever told her anything about my mother's ignorance, but she used to come in when the little children had been good and tell them a Bible story. She thought it best, she said, to make it a reward ; it had a good effect upon them.

Well, at last I succeeded in waking up my poor mother. She became deeply interested, and it was wonderful how her mind seemed to expand to comprehend Bible truths. You see, Maxy, never having had any education and her whole life having been given up to frivolities, of course she had had no chance. She certainly is more to be pitied than blamed. One day I said to her,

“Mother dear, I want you to pray to God every morning and night.”

“*Oui ! oui !*” she said. “I tank him for *mon enfant*.”

Poor mother ! she has no idea of blessings beyond and above that one ; but she learned better after a while, and now, Maxy dear, she shames me by her simple, childlike faith in Christ. Her love for me is not less, but it is subservient to her love for Him who sought her out and brought her home.

One day I never shall forget. I was reading to her the parable of the Lost Sheep, and of the shepherd going into the mountain and bringing it home on his shoulders rejoicing. She broke out into a great cry of joy, and said,

“Oh, *mon enfant*, dat is me. Jesus come to Paris; dat was my mountain. He find me. Is it not so, *ma chère*? He bring me home; he bring me to you;” and then that strange impulsive nature of hers underwent one of its most sudden changes, and the expression of joy was shaded by a burst of tears. But the sun shone through, after all, and the rainbow of hope spanned it.

But, Maxy, I have told you only half of the good which has been wrought out by the discipline of the past eighteen months—hardly half, because I do not think my poor mother is as much benefited by it as I am. I think that in a wavering, heedless sort of way I was a Christian, though even that is doubtful. But my life was so happy! and if Harry and I had married, I would have been so well content with this world that I would never have been a whole-hearted Christian, and I can see that this has been just what I needed. It has forced me to think of others; it has made me self-reliant, and, above everything else, I have been obliged to learn to lean on the arm of my divine Father with all my troubles, because I could not bear them alone and there was no earthly help for me to lean upon. It has taught me to study out the ways of Providence, and sometimes my spiritual eyes discern with wonderful clearness the needs-be in all of God's dealings.

In short, dear Maxy, I have made more progress in my religious life in these eighteen months than I

possibly could have made in a lifetime of easy, happy years such as I had at home ; and, Maxy, though it is often dreary and I feel as if a sight of you all would make me fresh and new, yet when I ponder it over I think I do feel that even if I am never to see you all again, if my life ends in this hiding out of sight, yet I am not sorry it happened just as it did. God knew best, Maxy ; and when he sends the heaviest burdens, he does not leave us to bear them alone.

But oh, Maxy, the trouble that is harder to bear than any other is about Eva. I used to go to see her when she first came to Baltimore ; and although there were trials connected with these visits, arising from her growing anxiety that I should promise her never to let any human being know where or who I was, yet it was a comfort to feel, when these awful spells of loneliness came over me, that by walking a few squares I could see a familiar face—one that reminded me of home and happy days ; and, as Dr. Harrison was sure to be out in the morning and I was taken directly to Eva's room, there did not seem to be much danger of a disagreeable interruption. But one day poor Eva was more ill than usual, and was more pertinacious in insisting upon my yielding to her wishes. She had said to me something which cut me to the heart ; I cannot think of it now without a feeling of agony. This is what she said :

“Linda Dalrymple, I would not be as deceitful as you are for anything in the world. You can talk very piously of your anxiety about my soul, and all that, but let me tell you that if I am lost it will be your fault. If my mind was only at rest, I might be able to think about such things; but the tortures of my present life are so great that I do not even fear anything beyond.”

I said,

“I cannot feel, Eva, that encouraging you in falsehood to your husband is going to do your soul good.”

Before I could say anything more the door opened and that haughty Miss Harrison sailed into the room. Eva's self-possession was something wonderful. She welcomed her sister-in-law with the greatest impressment of manner, and then, turning to me, said,

“You can go now. If I conclude to employ you, I will send for you.”

I wonder she was not afraid to venture on this experiment, Maxy; she certainly risked a great deal. For one minute one of my old passions surged over me and nearly found vent. We looked into each other's eyes with Miss Harrison standing between us. The defiant expression of mine frightened Eva. I saw her turn pale and waver, and a pitiful expression crept over her face, as if she appealed to me to spare her. I could not resist it, and turned and went away.

As I left the room I heard Miss Harrison say, "I hope you don't think of employing that fine lady in the capacity of a servant? I never saw such a furious look as she gave you when you dismissed her."

I did not hear Eva's answer.

The next day brought me this note from Eva :

"MY DEAR LIN: Since our narrow escape of yesterday, I think you must see yourself that it is better for you not to come here. Our meetings, at any rate, only produce hard words. You, it is true, might make it different, but, since you refuse, the talks upon the subject only give additional pain. I will be glad to help you in any way I can if you will let me know, but I have to say that, as it is not safe, I do not want you to come here.

"I got letters from home last night. All well.

"Your sister,

"EVA HARRISON."

That ended it, Maxy. I never answered her note ; I never went to her house again. Every now and then, as I am going to or from my work at Mrs. Sollis's, if my mother and myself are walking, I see Eva lolling back in her luxurious carriage looking oh so pale and sad. I own I can only feel pity for her. I don't know whether she sees me or not, as I always wear a thick veil ; it is possible she does

not. Sometimes Dr. Harrison is with her, but of course he cannot recognize me through the protection my veil affords. Once or twice money has come directed to me in Eva's hand—evidence, I suppose, that she has some twinges of conscience—but I always direct another envelope to her, enclosing it back, and that is the last of it.

My work at Mrs. Sollis's is very pleasant; the girls are bright, affectionate little things. Mrs. Sollis expresses the greatest satisfaction with their progress. Through her influence I have obtained three or four music-scholars; only beginners, Maxy.

Mother also is almost constantly employed. Her skill as a needlewoman has rendered her quite the rage, and not only is she delighted to help in our support, but she enjoys the work. She has never said anything more about practicing her hairdresser's trade, but I ask her every morning to dress my hair for me, and she is charmed. She has become quite reconciled to her dark clothes, too, and in my eyes is a very lovable old lady; for, though she is a still young in years, she does not look so. Her gray hair she wears in smooth bands upon her brow, and her face has such a gentle, meek aspect upon it! She never looks at me without that expression of adoration, always with a little deprecating element in it, as if to assure me that the past when she had no "moder in her heart" has given place to a present in which Nature asserts her full

sway. I often wonder if she understands our position with regard to Eva; she seems to shrink from mentioning her. Once, when we passed her in her carriage, I said,

“You know who that lady is, do you not, mother?”

“*Oui, mon enfant*, I know. I like not to look at her; de bad past comes to me. I see me wid my folly and my sin. You, *ma chère*, look like *mon pauvre* George. I luf you!”

“Well,” I said, “it is very well you are satisfied with me. I don’t think you will often be taken back to the past by a sight of Eva.”

“No, I want it not,” she said; “it is best I tank de *bon Dieu, mon enfant*, dat your age will not be so as mine. Ah! could peoples live again dare lives, how different!”

Later.—Maxy, I have been feeling particularly weary of it all lately, and as if some communication with you all was absolutely necessary. I could not for a long time decide upon a plan, but a few days ago I contrived one, and have put it into execution. I thought of the *Woodlawn News* and of how Harry and I used to write for it. Why could not I write a story for the *Literary Messenger* and just put something in it which would let Harry and the rest of you know where it came from, but would not be a revelation to any one else? So, Maxy, I have done it; and if any of you read it,

you will know it comes from your poor lonely Lin, whose happiest hours are spent in the beautiful past with you all. Sometimes there is a whisper in my heart that maybe you have all forgotten me. I have faded away from home like the dead. But that whisper is not true, I feel sure; I am certain that you often speak of me. You call me "Poor Lin!" very tenderly, I know. My hope is that Harry will write something in answer to my little story, and I shall see it and find wrapped up in it some messages from my dear ones—some news of their welfare.

I did not know exactly how to do about sending the manuscript. I could not sign my own name, and I do hate "Lucy Simpson." I wouldn't sign that, so I thought, to destroy my identity altogether with Mr. Poe, I would just put "George Perkins."

CHAPTER XXIII.

FOLLOWING THE CLUE.

EVA'S fainting-fit threw quite a shadow over our arrival in Baltimore, and she acted so strangely on her recovery that it filled us with dismay. She threw herself into her husband's arms, entreating him not to leave her, not to send her from him, and became so excited whenever she saw any of us that we were obliged to leave the room.

Dr. Harrison came out after a while, looking very grave. Eva's condition gave him the greatest anxiety, he said, and had done so ever since their marriage: her nervous system seemed in such an irritated state that the least thing upset her; and then he gravely questioned us as to her disposition and health prior to her marriage. We told him that she had always been perfectly healthy and up to the time of Lin's disappearance as free from anything like nervousness as it was possible to imagine any one.

"Yes;" said he; "it evidently all hinges upon that. Every mention of her sister excites her most unhappily."

"Well, my dear Charleton," said the judge, lay-

ing his hand upon the young man's shoulder, "I really do not recognize anything very mysterious in the effect which her sister's loss has had upon your wife. A living trouble is far worse than a dead one, and I feel that with myself it has been the greatest affliction of my life. The idea is never absent from my mind of that precious child, that young, sensitive, refined girl, roughing it we know not where or under what circumstances from a devotion to something she falsely imagines her duty. Eva must naturally feel all this keenly, for a woman's nature is so much more sensitive than a man's. And her own sister, too!"

"Of course," said the doctor; but it was easy to see that somewhere under that "Of course" there was a reservation which we could not understand.

I turned to Harry. He was watching the doctor intently, keenly. Could it be that the same suspicion was creeping over him with which I was battling in my own heart—a suspicion which, in spite of myself, crept over me, and before I was aware seized me, got me down and held me—that Eva knew more about Lin than we had ever suspected, and had an object in keeping us from finding her? This power of one mind over another is wonderful; it belongs to the law of sympathy between the great human family. From the time I thought I discovered from Harry's intent searching eye fixed so keenly upon the doctor that he shared

my suspicions,—from that time I ceased to struggle against my conviction; and although I then thought we would never talk about the matter together, yet I knew by intuition that we were going over the same line of circumstances in our own minds, calling in the witnesses and summing up the evidence. I recalled the childhood of the two children—that subtle element in Eva’s character of which I have before spoken, the slippery foundation which gave way in an emergency. The many times I could remember when she had softly glided out of a difficulty at the sacrifice of the spirit if not the word of truth, and often left poor Lin floundering in the mire which she herself had made because the younger sister did not know any of those short cuts so familiar to Eva, or, if she had known them, would have disdained to use them! I remembered, also, how it always happened that if there was a sacrifice to be made, Lin, in her generous nobleness of soul, was always the one to make it, and how, as she said, Eva always could make wrong seem right to her. Oh, could it be that she had woven some such spell around our poor darling? My heart quivered and my eyes filled as I thought of it.

There was one other witness to be examined. It was utterly at war with everything I had ever suspected in the elements of Eva’s character that she should suffer so keenly, with such prolonged effects, from Linda’s disappearance; she was too much of

an egotist for that. There was some link which touched her keenly in the chain of circumstances, some iron which entered into her soul, but it was not anxiety about her sister.

As I lay awake hour after hour that night, and reasoned all this and compared every circumstance, suspicion became absolute certainty. I wondered we had all been so blind. I recalled most minutely every circumstance of Eva's return home on that remembered day, mercilessly dissected every change of expression, every variation of manner, and the jury without leaving the box brought in a verdict of "Guilty."

So perfectly convinced was I of the justice of this decision that when I rose next morning I felt as if I could not meet Eva as though nothing had happened, and was relieved to find she was so unwell as not to be able to leave her room; so the three gentlemen and myself sat down to the pretty little breakfast-table with its tasteful appointments, where nothing was spared which wealth could supply.

The judge looked disappointedly at the head of the table as he said,

"Your table, Charleton, lacks only the presence of its mistress to make it perfect. I had anticipated so much pleasure in seeing my little Eva preside as mistress of your household!"

"Yes, and I assure you she feels most keenly the

disappointment. Poor little thing! Certainly this terrible sensitiveness throws a cloud over our domestic happiness which is very sad," answered the doctor.

"Oh, well, it will all disperse when we find our runaway. Little puss! I think I shall have to scold her before I kiss her," said the judge.

"You have not told me yet, sir, what grounds you have for suspecting she is in Baltimore," said Charleton.

Harry laid the case before him.

"And now," he asked, "what do you advise as our best course? I suppose if we offered a reward for George Perkins a large portion of your population would step forward in male attire and claim it."

"Yes; it is hard to know what to do," said the doctor; and so we talked round and round the subject without coming to any conclusion, and rose from the table a little down-hearted at the difficulties before us.

I drew Harry aside and proposed a talk in the parlor; so there we adjourned. I said,

"Harry, you may depend upon it there is one in this house who could give us the missing link if she only would."

"You too!" exclaimed Harry, turning round upon me, catching my arm and in his agitation pressing it until I almost screamed. "You dare to harbor

the horrible thoughts which have so relentlessly possessed me the whole night through?"

"Yes," I said; "I can no longer resist the evidence against her;" and item by item I went over my chain of circumstances.

Harry listened intently, nodding his head at intervals, and then added,

"And, Miss Ellen, do you mark this: before Eva's marriage we heard regularly from Lin; the letters were always marked 'Richmond.' You remember how we searched the city over and over again; those letters must have been enclosed to some one in Richmond who mailed them."

"And that person was Eva Dalrymple," I said. "I remember, when she was sick, how I would go into her room sometimes and find her with her desk on the bed beside her. She was either writing or had been; and when I would offer to have her letters mailed, she handed me one to Dr. Harrison, or to others, perhaps, but never enough for the quantity of writing she did. I said to her once, 'Eva, you must not write so much; it is not good for your head,' and she said something about her diary. And as soon as she got well enough she crawled up and went out, declining my company, as she preferred to go alone. All this is very little in itself, but, taken with other circumstances, it adds confirmation to my conviction that Eva Harrison holds in her hands the clue to the unraveling of this mystery."

“But, my dear friend,” said Harry, “we must hunt for a motive. Can you divine any cause for this conduct on the part of the two sisters—any circumstance which would throw them out of confidence with all others and in confidence with each other?” said Harry; and he put his face close to mine as he said this, and his eyes seemed to pierce into my very soul.

In a moment I saw his drift, and, clapping my hands together in my excitement, said,

“There is but one thing, Harry, which could do this, and that is—”

“The return of their mother!” He took the words out of my mouth, and then we clasped hands over the chasm we had bridged.

But my heart sank at the bare idea of Lin in the hands of her unprincipled mother. I shuddered as I exclaimed,

“Oh, Harry, that dreadful woman!”

“And don’t you remember,” said Harry, “Lin’s morbid sensitiveness at the time she discovered the existence of this mother—her horror of bringing what she called ‘her bad blood’ into our family? If that mother did return, I feel very sure Lin would have shrunk from bringing her into our household.”

“Poor Lin!” I said, the tears falling from my eyes in tender pity for my darling. “How often have I heard her say, ‘Maxy, I would stand any trouble but disgrace’!”

“Stop!” said Harry, quickly starting up; “a recollection suddenly comes to me. The very morning I saw Lin last I went down town by Broad street. Just as I got to the station the cars came in, and as the passengers passed down, with that sort of idle curiosity which impels every one to watch the movements of strangers I lingered on the sidewalk and watched them. I was accosted by the oddest-looking woman. Oh, Maxy, she spoke broken English, too, and just as she was beginning to tell me some story or ask my help in some way Lyle came up and interrupted us; when I turned back, she was gone.”

“What sort of looking person was she?” I asked.

“I only remember that she was fantastically dressed, with painted cheeks and gray curls, and with every mark of the direst poverty about her. Oh, Maxy, could this have been my poor Lin’s mother? Is it possible she has been domesticated with her for a year and a half?” and the poor boy actually turned so white that I felt afraid he was going to faint.

“God forbid!” I exclaimed as I drew him down into a chair beside me. “But, Harry, our Lin is made of such stuff that we could trust her to come unscathed out of worse fire than that.”

“God bless her! He knows I do not distrust her for one minute. Doubt her! Whatever the situation in which she has been, she has graced it.

But the sufferings her high-strung, sensitive nature must have endured in such a furnace, if it is as we think, these eighteen months, must have been a lingering torture to my darling."

"Well, the end is nearly here, I hope and believe, Harry," I said, soothingly.

He started up again, his whole being on fire at the thought:

"But I cannot get at her! She may be only a few squares off, and, though so near, yet so far! I feel as if I want to get out and search every house, street by street, until I find her."

"Patience, patience, my dear boy!" I said.

"Oh, don't say the word again to me. It has been 'Patience, patience!' for so long, until I am old and weary with the effort quietly to endure my hard, hard fate."

Just then the judge and Dr. Harrison joined us, and it was decided that the gentlemen should go out and consult the chief of police and see what steps had best be taken.

"I will stay with Eva," I said.

"Do!" said Charleton; "I shall feel easy to know that you are with her. Just go to her room; I know she will be glad to see you."

I doubt if he would so confidently have left her with me had he known the unmerciful spirit I took to the interview, for I was fully determined to probe her to the quick and, whatever might be the

consequences, to get out of her her whole knowledge of the mystery.

I watched the gentlemen down the front steps, and just as I was turning to go in Harry ran back and said,

“Maxy, don’t spare her; she will be all the better for getting rid of the guilty secret. Get it out of her if you have to tear it out. My best hope remains with you, Maxy.”

I gave him a reassuring clasp of the hand, and he was gone.

CHAPTER XXIV.

RETRIBUTION.

AND now, like a careful general, I retired to my room to measure off the ground and consider my adversary's strength before I went into the battle, for that I would have to fight hard for the victory I had not the smallest doubt. I thought of David when Saul clothed him in armor which he rejected for strength greater than it would give him, and I too sought that strength. I bound the girdle of truth about my loins and took with me the shield of faith.

I tried to take out of my heart any bitterness to poor Eva, though this was hard when I thought of Lin exiled and suffering these weary months, and that Eva was the cause of it. Surely the powers of darkness were arrayed against us in the person of that young woman with the angel-face. I had no longer a shadow of doubt of her complicity in the matter.

As I was passing out of my room I remembered how it helps a woman in embarrassment or perplexity to have a piece of sewing—the needle is woman's special appeal—so I took from my trunk a piece of

worsted work, then much in vogue. It is strange how I can recall the very pattern even, for I never saw it after that dreadful morning. It was intended for an ottoman, and the design was a pair of lovers, the mottled youth and maiden both very much distorted in face and figure by the impossibility of adapting the square stitches on canvas to the regularity necessary in making features. They stood in an affectionate attitude amidst a bower of gaudy flowers the like of which I will venture to affirm never were made by the Maker of Nature.

I knocked at Eva's door, and, listening intently, heard her say,

“Don't let any one come in ; I cannot see any one this morning.”

The maid opened the door, and without saying a word I put her aside and entered the beautiful apartment, so redolent of wealth, taste and luxurious appointments. The young mistress was lying upon a lounge attired in a dressing-gown of the most delicate shade of blue, which set off to peculiar advantage the extreme purity of her complexion, and her golden hair, escaping at every point, curled bewitchingly about her face. I could imagine how a woman beautiful as she was in this charming *negligée* could wind her husband about her delicate finger. She raised herself with a little indignant flush upon her face, but I gave her no time to speak as I said,

“Dr. Harrison asked me to look after you this

morning, Eva, and I have brought my work to keep us company."

I seated myself beside her, and to give her time to recover her admirable self-possession I busied myself unfolding the canvas. I think she divined my intention on the instant. First, I had not kissed her as I entered, which would have been natural to our familiar affectionate intercourse, and one on the alert for signs of the times gives undue importance often to trifles. It was one of the straws which showed the direction of the wind's course.

"I told Alice to say I was too unwell to see any one this morning, Maxy," said Eva.

"Yes, I heard ; but a nervous person should not have too much time alone, so I took the liberty of coming in without leave ;" and I laughed.

She saw there was no help, and so in a moment was herself—calm, self-possessed, thoroughly on the watch and completely armed against me.

"You always would have your own way, Maxy," she said, taking my work out of my hands and examining it critically.

"Yes," I said, "it is one of my special prerogatives, and Lin and yourself will never be anything to me but children."

She winced palpably at Lin's name, and changed the subject :

"What an elaborate piece of work ! You did not formerly occupy yourself with such trifles."

“No; I did not have the time then. I had too many real boys and girls to deal with to spend my precious hours in fashioning this inferior type.”

“Very inferior, I should say,” she said. “This poor girl has the color in her cheeks put in squares, and the lover’s nose is the most wretched failure I ever saw; it looks as if it had been broken into fragments and stuck on badly afterward. And what eyes, Maxy!—little square dots of black and blue. Horrible! I don’t see how you can make such deformities.”

I said,

“I must say you shock me, Eva. I thought this work was esteemed beautiful, and I have been getting it ready for Lin by the time she comes back.”

She changed her fence to keep off the objectionable subject, and in a weak, nervous voice said,

“Maxy, don’t, please, talk to me about her; I am so weak this morning I cannot stand it.”

I knew Eva so well that I recognized mingled with the evident ruse a little appeal in her voice to my pity, but it had no effect on me. I said,

“Not talk about Lin—our Lin! What nonsense, Eva! I think if I had been with you all this time, talking to you about her, you would never have gotten into this condition, which makes you shrink at the mention of your sister’s name. Yes, it is of Lin, and of Lin alone, that I must talk this morning. Why, she will be with us soon, Eva.

Rouse yourself to rejoice. Perhaps she may be here to dinner. The poor darling!"

"Maxy, you are cruel—indeed you are. Dr. Harrison avoids every subject which can excite me at all when I am sick;" and Eva covered her face with the lace-bordered handkerchief she held.

I took into my vision the fragile blue-veined hand with its tapering fingers and rosy nails. Should I spare her? No! Lin's safety and Lin's happiness were at stake. Lin was in the power of that wretched French woman, and must be rescued at any peril.

"With all due deference to Dr. Harrison's skill as a physician," I said, "I do not approve of his practice in this particular. It makes it worse to feel that there is a subject which is to be utterly avoided; and if by chance it is touched upon, you give up, faint away, and all that nonsense. Rouse yourself, Eva; I want to hear all about the day you parted with Lin. You know you were the last of the family who saw her. Was any one with her? We have reason to think that she did not leave Richmond alone."

That brought the handkerchief down from the face, and Eva looked at me with frightened eyes:

"What do you mean? What have you heard?"

"Nothing," I said, going on with my work, "but Harry and I have been summing up our evidence together this morning, and the chain is complete.

Linda did not leave Richmond alone; there was some strong influence brought to bear upon her conscience and her self-sacrificing disposition which dragged her away from home and the friends she so dearly loved. Letters came from her up to the fifteenth of May, you remember, Eva: it was only a few days before your marriage. Since then we have never heard a word. That is strange, is it not? We are brought to the inevitable conclusion here that there must have been some one up to that time in Richmond who received and mailed her letters, as she was certainly not in the city. The silence since convinces us that this collusion with some one in the city ceased about the time of your marriage."

There was certainly a wonderful semblance of innocence in the indignation which flushed all over Eva's beautiful face as she rose up before me.

"I see now to what all this tends," she said—"this visit, ostensibly made for my good. Here, in my own house, when I am ill, my husband away, I am helpless in your hands, and you take advantage of this to come here to insult me. You wish to accuse me of complicity in Linda's strange behavior."

I was a little taken by surprise; I had no idea Eva would so soon bring matters to a crisis. I thought she would parry my thrusts in her soft way, pleading unconsciously and appealing to my sympathies by her very weakness, and undermining my intention almost before I knew it. She had

not the patience to try this game successfully; she was too broken in nerve and courage for it. Her present position was the last desperate rally of her forces. I saw it, and thrust home at once.

“Insult you! No,” I said—“accuse you. Yes, it is perfectly useless, Eva, for you to continue in your false position. A few hours will bring out into the full light of day all the mystery which has enveloped us; I come to you this morning to entreat you to save yourself while there is time.”

“Save myself!” she cried. “From what?”

“From utter disgrace,” I said—“from the contempt of those whose opinion you most value.”

An ashen hue crept over her fair face, but she did not yet surrender.

“This is the most unaccountable accusation, Miss Maxwell, I ever heard of. Upon what grounds do you make it? I know nothing more about Linda Dalrymple than you do.”

“Eva,” I said, laying my hand upon hers, “do I live to hear you utter a positive falsehood, and when, too, there is no use in it? Have you lost not only all principle, but all sense? You are throwing away a chance of retrieving the sad past. Tell me all about it, child.”

“I will not!” she exclaimed, violently drawing her hand from beneath mine; and, throwing herself back on the lounge, she burst into a passion of weeping.

Again I was surprised. Eva was not conducting the battle at all as I had expected. I thought I had brought her to the point where she would gracefully lay down her arms and throw herself on my mercy; I afterward learned of this one little circumstance which gave her the strength to hold out. That morning, while we were at breakfast, a note was despatched in great haste directed to "Miss Lucy Simpson." I have it before me now, and here it is:

"Oh, my dear Lin, have pity on me! Forgive me for my many faults to you, for my selfishness. Have pity on me, Lin; be generous. They are all here, Lin. Grandpa, Harry and Maxy have come to search Baltimore from one end to the other for you, because they say they know you are here. Lin, not my happiness only, but my life, is at stake. I will never live to be degraded and dishonored in the eyes of my husband. The hour you are found and it all comes out, that hour I will be dead. I am young, Lin, and not fit to die; I cling to life for this reason only. Will you not take pity on me—save me for repentance and salvation? I plead as a criminal on the gallows pleads for reprieve, and, Lin, if you will do this for me—that is, go away anywhere—I will gradually break the whole matter to my husband, and you shall be released—indeed you shall—and I will ask God to forgive me;

for indeed I am sorry for all the past. One more thing, Lin, I ask: If they should find you, do not tell them I knew anything. I ask only a merciful silence, that is all. Only write one line to say what you will do, and oh that it may be the word I need to comfort me in my misery!

“Your wretched sister,
“EVA HARRISON.”

The answer to this had not yet come, but it was upon the hope of what it would contain that Eva refused to yield.

I said to her,

“You tacitly admit, in saying that you will not tell anything, that there is something to tell.”

She started up:

“No, no, I do not! If I did, don't believe me. You madden me so I do not know what I say. I am not responsible; I do not know anything.”

Just at that moment there was a knock at the door, and the maid came in and handed Eva a note. My heart stood still for a moment; I thought I caught a glimpse of Lin's familiar handwriting. It was but a glimpse; I could not be certain, for Eva crushed the note in her hand and ran to the window, read it, then came back smiling and calm as if there had never been a ripple upon the surface of her life. This was the note:

“When you read this, my mother and myself will

be out of your way. I go trusting in your promise. Once more, Eva, I trust you."

I was perplexed. I saw her relief, and knew that it argued renewed obstacles for us. Oh, if I only knew their nature! If I could only obtain possession of that letter! I felt, as Harry expressed it, like tearing it from her; and she seated herself by me with that triumphant face.

"Come, Maxy!" she said; "I can't quarrel with you in my own house. You know, though you will not admit, that you have given me ample reason. As to my knowing anything, the idea is perfectly absurd. What motive could I have? Now, pray tell me, Maxy: what possible motive could I have? Only think how happy it would make me to have Lin with me all the time, the doctor is away so much."

"That question of motive puzzled Harry and myself for a time, Eva," I said, "but we feel confident we have hit upon the answer to that too."

"Indeed? It is pleasant for me to know that you two have been plotting against me in my own house. At what sage conclusion did you arrive?"

"That your mother had returned."

"My mother! You surely know she is dead?"

"No, Eva; we feel sure not only that she is alive, but that Lin, with your knowledge, has been with her for the past eighteen months; and this is the motive. You were probably actuated by a morbid

sensitiveness at first which might have been excused, but every moment has added to your guilt, because you have covered your knowledge with words which certainly were not words of truth, Eva."

"Miss Maxwell, even my regard for you as my teacher can scarcely justify me in allowing you to speak to me as you are doing, and that upon the silliest piece of imagination that ever was conceived;" and Eva drew herself up with an air of offended dignity which might have had an effect upon me had I not known her so well and been so fully convinced of her guilt.

"Eva," I said, "only tell me everything, and we will save you from any ill-consequences. Only think of what our poor dear Lin must have suffered!"

"What can I know of 'poor dear Lin'? That is the most perfect folly! If I only knew, I would tell. Don't you believe me?"

"No," I said; "not one word you say."

"Maxy," she cried, "I declare to you I have no more idea than the dead where Lin is."

"Then," I said, looking searchingly into her face as she sat opposite to me, "there is one thing I am sure of: the note you just received informed you she had gone away again. This is one of your plans, too."

She threw herself back in her chair and laughed heartily:

“You have the drollest ideas! How could I have accomplished such a thing, and I laid up in my bed sick?”

“Pshaw!” I exclaimed, thoroughly out of patience, and, more than that, thoroughly dismayed by the fear that Eva had been too quick for us.

“Maxy,” she said, “you are not very civil, but I am determined not to take offence. I can make allowance for the excited state of your feelings. Of course I know all about that; no one can feel Lin’s loss more than I do.”

This was too much. I threw aside my work and paced up and down the room in my excitement. I really think I was debating whether I would not be justified in seizing Eva and taking from her that note, which contained all I wanted to know.

“Eva,” I said, “if you do not give me that note or tell me its contents, I shall, as soon as Judge Wallace and Dr. Harrison come home, go to them and tell them everything. I cannot stand this any longer.”

“What note?” she asked, with the most perfectly simulated ignorance.

“The note Alice brought you a few minutes ago,” I said.

Eva clapped her hands and laughed as heartily as a child:

“Why, Maxy, how dreadfully suspicious you are! The idea of your imagining there is any-

thing in that note! To be sure you may have it. Stop! where did I throw it? Ah! here;" and she brought me a note which at first glance I knew was not the one I had seen. It was directed in a hand totally different from the bold, peculiar characters of which I had caught a glance. I handed it back to her and said with the indignation I felt at being thus played with,

"And do you think to put me off, Eva, by this paltry subterfuge? If you do, let me tell you that you are greatly mistaken. This it not the note you received. The other was directed to you in Lin's handwriting; and if you do not give it to me or tell me its contents, I will certainly think it my duty to relate to Judge Wallace and Dr. Harrison all I know. We have all been very blind heretofore, but I have no longer a shadow of doubt that Linda is in some way sacrificing herself to your wishes. If she is again lost to us, it is your work. Whatever may be the case, on one thing I am determined—to have the whole matter investigated before we are a day older."

"Maxy," she said, "you were always unjust to me; Lin was always first in your affections."

"I admit freely," I said, "that Lin always has been, and is, first in my affections before the whole world—she is like a dear child to me—but you have never failed to have justice at my hands; and that justice it is you would escape now. I have

not taught and studied you both without knowing you thoroughly. No, no! not thoroughly, for until the last few hours it never entered my mind that you could sink so low as you have."

"Really, Miss Maxwell"—and Eva straightened herself up as she spoke—"I must request you to measure your terms in speaking to me. I am no longer the little schoolgirl, to be browbeaten and frightened; in this house, at least, I claim the protection of my husband's name. Sorry as I am to do it, I only act as he would were he here when I ask you to leave my house at once. I have borne with insults and accusations; but when you threaten me, I can no longer stand calmly."

"I am sorry," I said, "to intrude, but I shall not leave the house until Judge Wallace's return, and then I shall do exactly what he advises."

Eva turned and pulled the bell-cord; her maid appeared.

"Tell Roger to have Miss Maxwell's baggage removed to Barnum's Hotel at once—at once, remember. Stop! have the carriage gotten instantly; she will ride, and her baggage can go with her."

What a queen she was! Now all her forces were up in arms, and she was in full command. She did not want even a crown or royal robes to complete the character. But I had no intention of leaving the house until the gentlemen returned; I should stand my ground in spite of her.

Dr. Harrison's house was in a very quiet part of the city. I had paused in my impatient walk up and down the room, and with my arm leaning on the window-sill looked down upon the street, now more quiet than usual. I was debating in my own mind what to do. It was hard to insist upon staying in a house out of which I had been most unceremoniously asked, but I could not allow her the first word: I knew her powers too well. No; I would stand my ground at all hazards. It took me some time to come back again to this point, from which I had first started. I had traveled all over the debatable ground of the subject, thoroughly canvassing it from every standpoint.

Eva was seated in a large arm-chair watching me. Neither of us had spoken a word since she sent the order for the carriage.

Suddenly the quiet of the street was broken by the tramping of many feet and the roll of a single vehicle coming slowly, slowly toward the house. I, scarce thinking what I was doing, and certainly actuated by no particular interest or curiosity, put my head out of the window, which was raised. The first object which caught my sight was a carriage from the windows of which the grave, sad faces of Judge Wallace and Harry looked, and the bent head of a woman I plainly discerned over their shoulders. Instinctively following the direction of their sad glances, my eye fell upon a sight which

paralyzed me with horror. Two litters borne upon the shoulders of men were almost beneath me on the sidewalk. On one was the form of a woman perfectly unknown to me. Her gray hair was dabbled with blood and the arm which lay on her breast was a mass of blood-stained wrappings. But it was not this ghastly figure which riveted my attention most terribly—no; for, horror of horrors! upon the other litter lay the still, white face of Charleton Harrison!

CHAPTER XXV.

HARRY'S STORY.

I SUPPOSE my face was to Eva a revelation that something was the matter, for she came hastily to my side. Everything else was forgotten in that dreadful moment except the impulse to keep from her the sight of her wrecked happiness, and, turning, I caught her in my arms, crying,

“God have mercy upon you, my dear child !”

She had seen the carriage only, now standing before the door, and out of it our poor Lin was stepping, but this was enough. I bore back a helpless figure, and laid it upon the lounge utterly unconscious of the terrible blow which had fallen, the retribution which had overtaken her. Happy would it have been for her in that hour if, her spirit ripened for the change, she could for ever have closed her eyes upon the wretchedness of this earth and opened them in another and a better state of existence; but the terrors of that hour she never knew—the tramping of the burden-bearers up the steps, the crowd in the room, the whispered explanations, the shrieks, the groans.

Neighbors came in ; kind hands were busy everywhere. Eva opened eyes which wandered unmeaningly and unknowingly over familiar faces ; when she spoke, it was with the wild ravings of a disordered brain mingling the scenes of to-day with those of long ago, living an unreal existence in which joy and sorrow, fact and fancy, chased each other in rapid succession upon her tongue.

The physician was, of course, called at once. He took it for granted that Eva had heard the sad intelligence, and every one else except myself thought the same thing ; I knew she had yet to learn the terrible news of her husband's death. Lin's return was the sole cause for her present condition ; to Harry alone I whispered this fact as we stood together at a distance from the sufferer.

I had been so absorbed with Eva's condition that I had heard only vague rumors of the tragedy, and had not even had time to cast a thought to the return of our wanderer, but now, seeing that there were plenty of nurses about Eva, I permitted Harry to draw me from the room into a little dressing-room opening into Eva's chamber ; here we seated ourselves upon a sofa, and I asked him for an account of the events of the morning.

"Ah, Maxy," he said ; "are we never to be done with George Dalrymple's fatal marriage ? It pursues us all like a Nemesis."

"What has it to do with our present trouble ?"

I said, turning suddenly upon him with a flying thought of the mutilated occupant of the litter.

“Is it possible you do not know—that you have not heard that Charleton Harrison came to his end in the effort to save George Dalrymple’s wife from death?”

I looked at him without the power to utter a word; I only felt conscious of a great bewildering horror which took from me the power of speech. Was there ever a more fearful retribution—the young husband a voluntary sacrifice for the wife’s sin?

Harry went on telling me the story.

When they left me, a few hours before (oh, could it be only a few hours ago?), they went at once to the chief of police and stated the case in full. Policeman Brown—a very prominent member of the police force—was summoned. Charleton Harrison at once recognized him as having been on duty the night of the reception after his marriage. The circumstances were stated. He looked up with sudden intelligence as Lin’s appearance was described, coupled with Dr. Harrison’s interest in her.

“Hallo!” he exclaimed.

“What’s the matter?” cried Harry.

“You say she was tall, black-haired and black-eyed?”

“Yes. Have you ever seen her?” exclaimed the judge, eagerly.

“I ain’t prepared to say jist yit, sir, tell I hears ’bout t’other one.”

“There is only one,” said Judge Wallace—“the young lady we have described to you.”

Policeman Brown’s countenance fell :

“Not a old one talks furrin-like? Certingly the young woman’s got her mother wid her.”

Harry started.

“It is as I suspected, father,” he said. “I have for some time been convinced that that miserable woman is at the bottom of all the trouble.”

This was said in a low tone to Judge Wallace and Dr. Harrison.

“Good heavens!” exclaimed Charleton, starting away; “is that skeleton to be digged up to disgrace us all?”

“My dear boy, calm yourself,” said the old judge, laying his hand on Charleton’s shoulder; “remember where we are.”

Policeman Brown then told how on the night of the reception, while he was on duty, he was hailed by an old friend of his—Isaac Perkins—who begged him to get his two companions a place where they could get a peep at the bride, as they were acquaintances of Dr. Harrison’s and had seen the bridal-party when they arrived that evening.

“The young ’oman I tuck special notice of,” said the official, “’cause she had a look sorter ’bove Isaac Perkins—a sort a proud, uppish look; en she had

black eyes and hair, and was turble set on seein' the bride. T'other one mout a-ben a servant er a fren'; I dunno. I did see a difference in 'em."

Policeman Brown further stated that he knew very well where Isaac Perkins lived and could there learn where he was "workin'" at present, and they could find out from him all we wanted to know.

So off they started, all together, and before long reached Isaac Perkins's house. In answer to a knock a woman came to the door, her eyes red with weeping.

"Good-mornin', Mis' Perkins!" said Policeman Brown, and Mrs. Perkins responded with a sort of choke in her voice.

"Could you tell me whar Isaac is holdin' out jes' now?" asked the officer.

Mrs. Perkins gave the directions of a new house on —— street, and we were just turning away when Brown suddenly changed his intention:

"I met Isaac a smart bit agone—mought be a year, maybe;" and he looked at Dr. Harrison for confirmation.

"A year in May last," responded the doctor.

"Wall, Isaac was tryin' to get a peep at this gent'man's bride at his deception or exception—whatever you calls it—when I cum on him and helped him. There was two ladies wid him, a young one en an old one. We want to hear some-thin' of em; leastways, these gent'men does."

Mrs. Perkins burst into tears, but either could not or would not give them any information.

Judge Wallace stepped forward with as much courtesy as if he had been speaking to a duchess :

“My good madam, I feel sure you will help us in this matter, for I see you can. Your manner shows that in some way our inquiries are connected with your present agitation. A dear child of mine, Miss Dalrymple—”

Here Mrs. Perkins looked up and declared she had never heard of any Miss Dalrymple in her “born days.”

“Perhaps,” said Harry—a little impatiently, it must be confessed, for the delay was very trying to his nerves—“you do not know her under that name; but the young lady who was with your husband the night you know of—”

“Is a precious child of mine,” put in the judge, “to whom we mean nothing but the greatest love and kindness, and for her own good it is essential we find her to-day.”

His manner evidently made an impression upon Mrs. Perkins, and she said,

“I promised I wouldn't tell ye ef you axed, en I can't break my word.”

“Then you do know!” exclaimed all at once; and Judge Wallace added,

“Oh, indeed such a promise is better broken than kept. It is for her good that we must find her.”

“Well,” said Mrs. Perkins, after a longer hesitation, “she ain’t here, and I dunno whar she have gone, if she be the one you was lookin’ for. Her name ain’t no ‘Dalrymple,’ nor nothin’ like it, but just ‘Simpson,’ and her ma call her ‘Mononfong.’”

“She is not here? Then where is she?” exclaimed the judge, and Harry walked up and down with ill-concealed impatience.

Then Mrs. Perkins told all. The two ladies had been living in her upper room for a matter of a year and a half. The old lady was “furrin,” and she had often wondered why her daughter should not be “furrin” too. The young lady had “teached,” at Mr. David Sollis’s, and the old lady “’broidered,” at home. That morning a note had been brought for Miss Simpson, which Miss Simpson answered, and then came in and said she was “’bliged” to go away.

“She was crying when she said it,” said the good woman, wiping away her own tears. “I, sir, had learned to love that child like she was some kin to me, so we just cried together; en she says, ‘Ah, Mis’ Perkins! there don’t seem no rest for me.’ I axed her whar she was goin’, but she said she didn’t know, en if enybody come axin’ for her I was not to give no satisfaction. So she went away wid her mother, and I heard her tell the drayman to take her trunk to the Philadelphia station.”

“How long have they been gone?” exclaimed all at once.

"They hardly had got to the end of the square when you knocked," said Mrs. Perkins.

That was enough, and off started the party like a flash. The Philadelphia train did not leave for half an hour, and by taking a hack they hoped to reach the station before Lin and her mother. They found a conveyance on the next square, and in a few moments reached the station without having seen anything of the fugitives. They alighted, and while Brown and Judge Wallace went inside to search the cars Harry and poor doomed Charleton remained without to keep watch over the arrival of the passengers. A few moments served to complete the catastrophe by a rapid change of scene for the full conception of which the eye alone is capable: words creep too slowly.

First, a pair of horses maddened by fear came dashing down the street. They were attached to a furniture-wagon, from which the driver had already been unseated, so that there was no restraint upon them but their own wild will. As they approached there was a general scattering of men and vehicles, and two ladies, veiled and impeded in their movements by traveling-bags and other paraphernalia, were left standing in the middle of the crossing, directly in the path of the furious animals. They had just discovered the danger, and now, bewildered by the cries which assailed them on all sides of "Go back!"—"Run forward!"—"Take care!"—"Don't you see the horses?" they stood for a second per-

fectly still. Harry and Charleton dashed forward together to the rescue, crying out, "Good heavens! they will be killed!" At the same instant the taller of the two ladies threw up her veil and disclosed the face of Linda Dalrymple gazing with frightened eyes at the horses, which were by this time within a few feet of them. She made one convulsive movement to seize her companion as Harry caught her and dragged her away, but her shrieks rang wildly on the morning air as she saw her poor mother just make a desperate effort to follow her, stumble, throw up her hands, and with a cry fall directly under the feet of the horses just as Charleton Harrison laid hold on her dress to snatch her away from the impending death.

Lin hid her eyes, crying,

"Oh, for the love of God, save my poor mother!"

When she looked up amid the confusion, she saw the prancing, dashing animals tearing wildly away, and upon the crossing-stones lay two motionless bodies, lying almost in each other's arms, and over these the heads of the gathering crowd were rapidly meeting.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE LOST SHEEP BROUGHT HOME.

I CANNOT tell this tragical incident as Harry told it to me, there was such power of eloquence in one who saw, heard and acted in it as he had done.

“And where is Lin?” I asked.

“By the bedside of her poor mother,” answered Harry. “She seems to have no thought beyond her, poor child!—just kneels there listening to catch every sound as if it were a something too precious to be lost, and whispering such words of tenderness as bring the tears to my eyes. Father is with her.”

I turned to him in astonishment:

“Do you mean to say she loves this woman, or is it only the pity natural for any poor wretch reduced, as she is, to a condition of helpless suffering?”

“Plenty of pity, Maxy, but evidently that is not all; I have rarely seen an exhibition of more beautiful, genuine filial love than Lin’s for her mother. And you know there is nothing of the hypocrite about Lin.”

“And she?” I asked.

“The woman’s chief cry was for ‘*mon chère enfant, ma fille!*’ and she was perfectly wild until the crowd parted, and Lin, all convulsed with grief, knelt down upon the hard stones, put her dear arms about the mutilated form and soothed her with the sweet eloquence of love. Then she sank down like an infant at rest, not even groaning until she had to be separated from Lin to be placed on the litter. I never in all of my experience witnessed such a scene, and I do not believe there was a dry eye in the crowd. I saw strong, rough men turn aside to wipe away their tears.”

“And poor Charleton?” I said.

“He never knew any suffering, poor noble fellow. He died without a struggle, and the heroism which animated his last moments seems strangely stamped upon his lifeless clay.”

“‘Greater love hath no man than this that a man lay down his life for his friend,’” I said.

“Yes, but it seems a strange providence, does it not,” said Harry, “that his life should be laid down for one who of all the world he most dreaded and abhorred?”

I was silent while I thought of what would be poor Eva’s feelings when she heard the whole story. How would she read this strange page in God’s mysterious workings?

And then we all three went to Lin. They had taken Mrs. Dalrymple into my room, and Lin knelt

beside her as she lay almost motionless upon the bed.

At the first glance at our recovered treasure I was amazed at the change which had been wrought in her. Could it be possible that this self-controlled woman, the workings of whose pale face alone revealed the intense feeling which was swaying her, could be our impulsive, passionate Lin, whose every feeling leapt out as soon as conceived? She clasped the unmaimed hand of the sufferer, whose other arm lay upon the coverlid in a mass of blood-stained bandages. I knelt down beside our darling and threw my arms around her. She turned, and for a moment the strong face lost its strength and the big tears flowed freely over her cheeks.

“This is my mother, Maxy—my poor, poor mother!” she said, in a whisper.

“I know it,” I said. “Does she suffer, dear?”

“Not while I am here. Poor mother! she has only me, you know, in the world. Other people have their hearts full of love for many friends; hers overflows with love for me alone.”

“There is no love like mother-love,” said I, just by way of response, as I did not know how exactly to connect this new element with what I had always imagined Mrs. Dalrymple to be.

“Yes, but her love is something different from that of most mothers, Maxy; it came late to her, and then sprang up at once fully developed. But

from the fact of my being a woman grown when she came back, and perhaps because she depended on me, she combined the feeling I suppose one has for a mother—that tender, looking-up love—with the yearning love of the mother for a child. And then, too, she always seemed to feel that she had to make up to me for the faults of her youth, and for what I gave up in giving myself to her. She is so meek and humble, Maxy—so like a little child in her love for the Saviour. My poor little sorrowful mother! only think of her life ending thus!”

I looked at Lin in perfect amazement, and from her to the sleeping face upon the bed, now in the calm and stillness of approaching death, all so different from what we thought and had a right to expect. What had wrought the wonderful change? In some way that which had seemed a dire misfortune, an unmitigated mistake, had turned out to be the wonderful leadings of Providence to develop these two natures. Yes, I even then dimly guessed what afterward was so beautifully traced out in Linda's simple story—how mother and daughter, thus isolated from the world, had been the best tonic the one for the other, and through these devious wanderings it was well with the mother and well with the child.

Suddenly the figure on the bed moved, and Lin leaned forward as the fading eyes opened:

“*Mon enfant!*” The voice was very weak and faint.

“Here is your child, close by you, mother. Don’t you see me? Look here—here, mother ;” and Lin leaned above the prostrate form.

The wandering eyes fixed themselves at last, and a smile of ineffable love irradiated the dying face as she said,

“Ah, *mon enfant, je vous ame. Mon Dieu est si bon!* I deserve it not.”

“You don’t suffer, mother, do you?”

“*Non! non! Mon enfant, vous etes ici.*” Then a little expression of alarm agitated the quiet face, and she said, “You will leave me not?”

“Never, mother, so long as God spares us to each other. But, mother, you will leave me.”

“*Non, non, mon enfant!* I go not any more. Togeder we go, togeder we stay.”

A little sob broke from Lin; the ears growing deaf to all other sounds heard it, and the dying woman looked anxiously up into the face above her:

“*Que’st-ce que c’est, mon enfant?* Why weep you? I have noting done; I offend not.”

“No, no, mother but God is going to take you away from me.”

An expression of wonder and awe crept over the face:

“I no understand. I haf no sick, I haf no pain.”

“Don’t you remember, mother, you were hurt to-day?”

The face plainly showed the effort to think, to

bring out the incident. Slowly it came—the recollection :

“*Oui* ; I remember. What was it? We go away. De horses—so—run. You leaf me ; I fall. All is dark ; I know not anyting.”

“Yes, mother, and now God is going to take you home where my father is.”

“Go you too, *mon enfant* ?”

“After a little while, mother, when God is ready.”

“Oh, *mon enfant*, I can leave you not !”

“Only think of Jesus, mother—how good he was. Don’t you want to go to him ?”

“*Oui, oui* ! And I see *mon George* ; I tell him all.”

“Yes, mother dear, and you must wait for me and watch for me,” poor Lin sobbed.

“*Oui ! oui !*”

Another form pressed to Lin’s side and leaned above the dying woman. It was Harry’s :

“Leave Linda with me, madame ; I will take care of her until she goes to you.”

She looked at him earnestly, and then turned to Lin and said,

“Who, *mon enfant* ?”

Lin hesitated a moment, and then said in calm, clear tones, taking Harry’s hand and laying it with hers on her mother’s,

“It is Harry Wallace, mother. I want you to love him as you do me.”

She shook her head, as if that were impossible, but asked,

“Luf you him?”

“Yes, mother; I promised long ago to be his wife.”

She understood, and for the first time addressed Harry, as if she almost envied him.

“Ah! you will be happy,” she said. “*Elle est très bonne—si douce. Mon enfant!*” It was the outcry of nature at the parting.

Harry leaned close to her and said in low, distinct tones,

“You must let me call you ‘mother’ now our darling has told you.”

She looked pleased and nodded her head, and he continued:

“Mother, I want you to know how I value this precious treasure you give to me—how I am going to watch over it and take care of it until I return it to you.”

“*Oui! oui!*”

“And,” he continued, “if it had pleased God to spare you to us—your children, mother—it would have been a great privilege to have helped Linda in the care of you, to have tried to be as good a son as she has been a daughter.”

Again the head nodded, and the eyes smiled her understanding of what he said.

I think nothing Harry could have done could so

have touched Lin as that calling her poor humble parent "mother." She just turned aside her head and laid it on his shoulder, as if it made his claim over her complete, and he put his arm around her with such a tender, protecting clasp that I felt they were all to each other, and left the bedside to seat myself by Judge Wallace, a little distance off.

There was quiet for a few moments, and then the dying woman's voice sounded clear and strong and with an accent of joy which brought tears to my eyes :

"Jesus! *Le bon Jesus! Tenez a moi!* The sheep in de mountain— Say it, *mon enfant.*"

Lin bent closer :

"'The shepherd—'"

"*Le bon shepherd!*"

"Yes, the good shepherd left the flock of ninety and nine sheep in the fold to go into the wilderness to hunt for the lost one, and brought it home on his shoulder rejoicing."

"*C'est moi, mon enfant!*"

"Yes, dear mother. He found you—lost to him and to me—in the streets of Paris, and brought you through so much trouble right to your own child to be taken care of; and now, mother, he will not rest until he has placed you safe in his heavenly fold. He is bearing you on; you are almost out of the wilderness. The pearly gates are in sight; he will bear you through them."

“ Ah ! George ! ”

“ Yes, my father is waiting for you—yes, and he loves you, mother. You remember when I was ill I saw him, and he said I must bring you with me.”

“ *Oui, oui !* I go ! Adieu, *mon enfant ;* ” and as she said it her voice sank away like a dying strain of music.

Judge Wallace and myself went to the bedside. Lin leaned closer and called,

“ Mother ! ”

She was far into the Valley, but for one instant that voice she so loved, giving her the name she loved, called her back to earth. The blue eyes unclosed, a smile faintly illuminated the face, and Lin caught the faint whisper,

“ I go, *mon enfant.* ”

Linda's name was the last on her mother's lips ; with it the life went out. The wanderer was borne out of the wilderness into the fold of the Good Shepherd.

One kiss the faithful child left on the calm brow, and then she let Harry and grandpa lead her away, while I remained with the dead.

CHAPTER XXVII.

CONCLUSION.

IT but remains for me in this chapter to finish my story, feeling sadly how far short I have fallen of what might have been accomplished by other hands with such materials.

The days which followed the terrible catastrophe narrated in my last chapter were full of anxiety for the living and of sorrow for the dead. Lin seemed utterly prostrated in mind and body, feeling, as she expressed it, as if her work had been taken from her hands and she forced to sit with them idly folded. Charleton's death was a great affliction to her also, it was so terrible for him to be cut off so suddenly. And then her thoughts turned to poor Eva, whose ravings could be heard even where we were. This roused her to action. Eva! she must go to her. Judge Wallace and Harry represented to her that she herself required rest and repose of mind, which she could not find at the bedside of her sister, but with a decision which was a constant surprise to us all, being so different from the submis-

sive child she had always been, she said there was no repose for her anywhere else—she certainly was the person to nurse her sister; so she went—she and I.

It was sad indeed to see the frail, beautiful Eva tossing herself from side to side, pursued by the vagaries of delirium. She did not seem to notice us at all—her life was quite outside of the real world of individuals—though she gave voluble voice to the thoughts and feelings which of late had possessed her. Her cries for her husband were piteous, entreating him not to hate her—not to leave her. Sometimes she would tell him long stories about my treatment of her, occasionally tinged with fact, but carried far away beyond the bounds of reason by the power of her distorted brain. Then she would entreat Linda not to tell, but to preserve a merciful silence, and Lin would lean over her, saying, her firm, clear tones catching even the ear of her sister sometimes and holding her still by their familiarity,

“Eva, listen to me. I never will tell anything which could harm you with any human being. Begin life anew, my sister.”

And it was almost like beginning life anew when, after weeks of raving, Eva waked to consciousness, having only the strength of new life with which to meet life and the sorrow with which she must now become acquainted. She was strangely quiet and humble with her two nurses—Lin and myself—sub-

mitting without a word to our will and for weeks never asking the question we so dreaded.

It became a matter of wonder with us all why she did not gain strength, why she was so quiet, never speaking a word except in answer to our questions, and, above all, why she never asked for her husband. At last we dimly guessed the truth from seeing her face flush at the sound of a step in the hall, her anxious look whenever the door was opened, and the weary sadness of her disappointed face when the one she looked for came not. We guessed that she thought he had learned all and stayed away in anger. We decided that the truth in all its bitterness would be better for her than this state of suspense. But how to tell that truth, when she avoided the least approach to the subject? We watched and waited, Lin and I, and the opportunity came at last when one night we heard her weeping, thinking herself alone, and she murmured,

“Oh, my dear Charleton, have you left me for ever? Will you cast me off for one fault?”

Then Lin, leaving my side with all that new decision of character which sat so strangely on her and swiftly crossing the room, knelt beside Eva, and, putting her arms round her, said,

“Charleton never left you of his own will, Eva; to the end he never knew, nor even suspected, anything of you but what was an honor to you.”

“‘To the end’? Oh, what do you mean?”

Then we told her tenderly, leaving out all the harrowing portion of the story, for the present saying only that he died nobly trying to save a poor woman from death.

There was grief, but not what we expected. We thought she was stunned, but read it aright when one day she sobbed in Lin's sympathizing ear,

"Oh, Lin, I am altogether wicked! I do not even feel as I ought to do about Charleton's death; I am consoled by the thought that if he had come home he would never have loved me again."

We all wondered why she expressed no anxiety to hear about Lin's coming back, about her mother; but it was all to be gradual—her knowledge of the whole story.

The day came at last when she said to Lin, who lay on the bed beside her,

"Lin, forgive me! I am so weak! There is one duty I would like to perform; I will feel better when it is over. I suppose it hangs over me like a nightmare. The woman!"

"Our mother," suggested Lin, very quietly.

"Well, yes, it must be so, I suppose. I take it for granted she is in the house; I will see her. Lin, can I?"

Lin was silent.

"Lin, I want to ask her to forgive me. Can I?"

"No, Eva."

"And why not?" Eva asked, a little indignant

that her overtures were not accepted. "Does she resent my conduct? What are you crying for, Lin?"

Then the whole sad story was finished, and Eva knew that her husband had died in the effort to rescue the mother she had so despised.

I think this last fact made a greater impression upon Eva than anything which had happened, and we silently prayed that she might lay to heart the striking lesson taught—that God will not allow his laws to be violated, and often, even in this life, visits the law-breaker with the strokes of his retributive justice.

Six weeks had passed since Judge Wallace, Harry and myself had come to Baltimore to search for Lin. This brought us to the hot July suns, which we felt with aggravated force in the city; so it was determined that I should go with Eva and her maid to Woodlawn, while Lin, with the judge and Harry, proceeded to Richmond to pay the last honors to the body of the unfortunate Mrs. Dalrymple. She had been laid in the family-vault of the Harrisons until Eva was well enough to be left, for Lin would not be satisfied until her mother was placed beside her husband. The child seemed anxious that nothing should be left undone which could honor the dead.

"My poor mother!" she said. "Her misfortunes were the inevitable result of her early education. If only she had had half the advantages enjoyed by

her children, I feel sure, Maxy, she would have developed a rare character."

I am afraid I was not so enthusiastic as Lin wished me to be, because I was too near to these remarkable changes of opinion to be fairly settled in them.

Our plans were carried out by the last week in July. Lin, with the two gentlemen, found us at Woodlawn. In spite of the scenes through which we had passed, the summer was very pleasant. It was delightful to see Lin recovering her wonted elasticity of temper amid the dear old scenes. Harry and herself resumed their rides and walks; they even undertook the *Woodlawn News* by way of renewing old times.

It was agreed by Harry, Lin and myself that Eva's part in Lin's exile should never be known beyond ourselves. Mercy to Eva was a part of the reason for this decision, but I think it was more to spare the dear old judge the knowledge which would crush him more than any other type of affliction could do.

There was great rejoicing in the neighborhood at Lin's return, as she was a favorite with all. Frank Macon and his wife were at the Oaks for the summer, and the minute he saw Lin he recollected their collision on the streets of Baltimore.

"I told Jane," he said, "when I got home, I could not get it out of my head that I had seen you."

Mrs. Campbell came over to rejoice and condole,

and, as usual, took a matrimonial view of everything.

“Well, Linda,” she said, “I suppose Harry and yourself will very soon bring matters between you to a conclusion?”

Lin blushed and said in her subdued way,

“Yes, ma’am, I suppose so.”

“Ah, my dear! you are at your happiest now, take my word for it. When you have been through all I have, you will realize the truth of what I say.” Then, turning to Eva, who in her widow’s weeds looked touchingly beautiful, she said, “And you, my dear—you must know how I sympathize with you. I have been through it four times, and really Mr. Campbell is so delicate I sometimes fear I may be called upon again.”

Well, Harry and Lin were married very quietly at Woodlawn shortly before the annual autumn flitting, waiting until after the marriage of Tom Hastings and Katie, Tom having satisfactorily established his reputation as a sober-minded man who could be depended upon. As all Katie’s brothers had left home for their life-work, Tom was persuaded to drop the law-book and take up farming. Mrs. Macon lived with them, but gladly laid down the reins of office, only acting as general supervisor and counselor.

Eva was much altered and improved; but as the Ethiopian cannot change his skin nor the leopard

his spots, so in her passion for admiration she was Eva still. Her old self-complacency was greatly lessened, and her devotion to and confidence in Lin had in them something almost reverential. To us who knew all the circumstances of her life there was something pathetic in her strivings to overcome the want of truthfulness in her character, and I think she did in the end.

Eva was one whose life was incomplete without some one to minister to her love of applause, so none of us were surprised when she accepted Lyle Wallace's hand after two years of widowhood. And they suited each other admirably: he had never seen any one who could vie with continental beauties except Eva, whose singular beauty, in Lyle's eyes, might be accounted for by the French blood in her veins.

Forty years have passed, with their lights and shadows, since the events which make up this story, but I forbear to speak of the wrinkles and cares which have come in the course of nature. I will not tell of the gradual laying up of our treasures in heaven; I imagine my readers would rather think of my *dramatis personæ* as they have known them. I will say only that our Lin's dark hour passed in the days I have told you about; I have never known a happier, more peaceful and prosperous life than she and Harry have had. Woodlawn is their home, and they love it for the past and for the present;

and when with the summer breezes the clan comes clustering about the sacred hearth, the old familiar names are household words, for Harry calls the echo for the children of this generation, and Lin is a worthy successor to "grandma."

THE END.

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