"For Father's Sake,"

OR

A Tale of New Zealand Life.

BY

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MDCCCLXXVII.
PREFACE.

From the mysterious depth of my beloved New Zealand island there ascends an insuppressible voice that bids me arise and speak. Appalled I stand and listen, but my faltering lips refuse to obey, and the agitations of the awkward surge through my veins. “Who am I that I should converse with this mighty people? Untrained, uncouth, passionate. Would the utterances of such an one be tolerated? Would the reasonings and remonstrances be harkened unto?” But my endeavour to alienate the orders of my austere commander is fruitless; I hear in the vibrating air the deep thunder-sounding words, “Thou art a New Zealander.” Like the rising of that ancient god of love from the waters of a hitherto impenetrated ocean, so rises the love of my country from the sea of emotion, and is wafted nearer and dearer by the zephyr of beneficence; and that which was once but a murmur is now become a roaring, mighty sound. The insuppressible voice has increased in strength and volume during its transmigration. Flowers, recognizing a kindred spirit, have sprinkled it with their everlasting perfume; ferns have beckoned, and, as it passed, have spread their soft green leaves before it that it might not receive the contagions of the way; even gigantic trees, which for a time held up their haughty heads, were finally compelled to stoop and press a kiss upon the fair, persistent pleader; while the huge white rocks, from whose riven, rugged faces the hurricane fled with fear, echoed and loved to echo the truthful words.
Can mortal stand in silence while all nature heaves and cries? No! no! Mortal is not pulseless. Cession is not its forte. New Zealand is not a prison. "I obey thee, thou mighty commander. Though my speech is manacled by unculture, though it savours of earthly failings, yet earnestness shall give it eloquence. In its truthfulness there shall be power."

Upon the platform of the fulfilment of God's unaltering purposes I take my stand; and, while Jesus resumes his seat in the chairman's officiation, I turn to face the audience.

O, New Zealand! New Zealand! my beloved home! How I long to pour out my heart's devotion at thy feet. How I yearn to see thee take thy stand among the greatest and the best. The eminence is thine if thou would'st only be guided by thy noble impulses. Along with the rest of thy people, nourish my love, I beseech thee, with the beauty and freedom of thine own pure soul. Let the breath from thy lips invigorate my failing strength. Make me as thou art in thy untampered state—noble, unselfish, proud, rendering honour unto whom honour is due, receiving honour from whom honour is required. Like the steamer that rides at anchor in our bay, that scorns the wrath of the storm, and that from outward appearance seems to be asleep, so thou ridest in the bosom of the Pacific, scorning the fury of contending nations, apparently asleep, so grand, proud and calm is thy isolated mien. Would that thy internal workings were as fair as thine outward appearances. Would that the sweet song of the lark was heard, and the soft breath of the harvest field was felt, in thy chambers of state; then thy inhabitants would rest in the serenity of faith in thy rulers' judgment, and they would not rise up so often to see if those rulers were
fulfilling their parts. Men of state, thou realizeth not the magnitude of thy power, neither hast thou applied unto thyself the truth that thou hast to render an account for the lamentations as well as for the praises of thy co-citizens. Happy are ye if, with satisfaction to your questioner, ye can answer the charges of your Heavenly Captain. But woe to the minister that knoweth, yet rebelleth: that neglecteth the truthful administrations. And thou, O my beloved! thrice blessed isle! my love leads me to seek nard for thy sores, lint for thy bruises. Resist not my services, because I needs must probe the flesh to find the embryo. Remember the proverb, "They cut to cure." And know that, though the voice may be keen and sharp at times, the heart is thrilling with deep, earnest love and quiet hope for the welfare of thy people and for the advancement of thy power. Thus I introduce myself to the audience, and in the "Story of a New Zealand Life," which is to follow, I carry out the command of that Spiritual Guide.
"Is you there?" lisped a small voice, and two little hands began knocking at the closed door.

"Yes! but go away dear, I am busy." And a close observer would have noticed an impatient ring in the naturally calm tone. How often trifles effect mighty changes. Hundreds of lives depend upon the accuracy of the compass that rests upon the tiny point of its needle. Life and death may often depend on one word. Relenting her impatience the girl opened the door with the intention of speaking more kindly to the little one.

"Why, Essie," she said, stooping down and taking the child up in her arms, "What does my little Essie want?"

"I's want to come in. I's run away from mamma. I's be dood." The child looked pleadingly at the girl, then yearningly at the tabooed ground.

"Very well, Essie, you may come in, but you must not touch anything." For a moment she had forgotten everything but that the sweet face was before her, and that the soft voice spoke. She took the child in and closed the door; then remembered where she was. Pushing the un-
conscious offender away, she gazed around. Perhaps you wonder at her resentment, but if you understood the feeling of possessing a private room, where none but the sacred dead are admitted, there, their spirits breathing forth in the living record of their lives, they become fit companions even for the angels; a room within whose four walls all thoughts and hopes and despairs are uttered. If you understood such a feeling you would not wonder at the flame of anger that was kindled in the young recluse’s heart. Oh it is hard to reconcile the material with the immaterial. To join the hands of the spirit and the flesh. To make body and soul minister unto the wants and sufferings of each other.

Her eyes fell upon the little upturned face, so pure, so innocent. A face betraying no signs of jealousy or selfishness; no scornful curves lurked about the sweet mouth, and through the large dark eyes, “the windows of the soul,” could be seen a soul as pure as snow; a soul untainted by contact with the earth or earthy. Throwing her arms around the child, and leaning her tired head upon its bright curls, the girl burst into tears. For a few minutes the proud frame was convulsed with sobs, but only for a few minutes. The self-reliant independent will soon asserted itself, and, raising her head proudly, she began pacing the room. The child, attracted by its strange surroundings, moved off, and, after having carefully surveyed the wonders of her new elements, settled herself in a corner, puzzling her little brains over the mysteries of pencil and paper.

With hasty unsteady steps the girl paced up and down. But true reasoning has always a soothing effect; and five minutes silent meditation wove its spell, leaving the heart serene and peaceful, changing the unsteady steps into their wonted firmness. Little cricket, chirrup on! We need
your help; for your cheerful song lures our thoughts from that which is harsh and crude, and we wish to remember this troubled, child introduced, scene. Beside the opaque sorrow we shall see the rare transparent joy.

There is a magnetic influence in nature which has the power of drawing to the surface all that is pure in a soul, and by the same power, of soothing to rest all that is in discord.

The girl paused before the window and gazed out upon the scene. It was perfect. All that was noble in her nature responded to the voice she felt was calling to her. Trees, hills, sea in unity spoke her name. "Come with us," they seemed to say. "Leave the dark dreary valley wherein thou hast been walking. Come with us. We will shew thee the bright light beyond. We will teach thee truth and purity. We will point thee to love." Her whole soul responded. With a passionate cry she stretched her arms out, as to a lover, "Take me, oh, take me with you."

"I've finished my lessons." A piece of paper, all marked and torn, was held up for the dreamer's inspection, while a tiny, innocent face sought the critic's commendation. With a start the girl awoke from her reverie. She raised her head from the arm upon which it had sunk, and looked at the baby face. If it be hard to connect the material with the immaterial, the soul with the body, one thing is certain; the first step towards that union is the interruption of reverie by a baby face. Sweet child! the odours of the land thou had'st quitted but three years ago hang about thee still. Well might'st we look to thee for traces of what is to be. Folding the child in her arms, the girl rained passionate kisses upon the little face. In wonderment the child endured the caresses, but the mother's voice was heard, and the little one slipped off the girl's knee and
ran into the open arms of her mother. Little did that baby comforter dream as she, in her childish prattle, poured into the ears of her mother a description of what she had seen in that wonder-land, what a fearful strain she had shattered, and what a mighty torrent she had agitated in the breast of that sorrow-stricken girl.

When we return to the room she is seated before an easel, and upon the canvas she is painting a picture of her childhood home. With her permission we will take a peep at that picture, and follow the movements of the artist’s brush.

Far away in the misty distance could be seen the faint outline of hills; they seemed like one long purple line standing out as sentry guard over the middle distance and oreground, while their irregular tops appeared to sink into the blue sky as if they were its granite pillars of support; distance has indeed enhanced their charms, for their bold and rugged features are hidden by a misty veil, and a soft reflected light is cast over all. From the left hand side to almost the middle of the picture, and reaching from the base of those hills to a little past the middle distance, there lay a wide stretch of blue water; this, too, was bounded by the sloping sky, where the line of hills made an abrupt termination. The right hand side and part of the foreground was filled up with beautiful green pasture land; here and there arranged in clusters and groves were painted massive green trees; their deeper shades contrasted with the lighter green grass, thus throwing the picture in perfect relief; while through even paddocks and among trees, a tiny stream quietly threaded its way; so gentle, so peaceful did it look, that one almost paused to listen for its ripple as it flowed over the rocky slabs and nestled into the arms of the sea. At the western corner the small town of Bonsby was situated. Small indeed is the town of Bonsby,
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but larger than it seems; for the thick green foliage of its poplar trees hides, from the gaze of the inquisitive, the meaner habitations. Only a few white tops could be seen peeping up here and there among the green fleecy shroud.

Dear Bonsby! Love has given life to the picture, and I am afraid it has intentionally wiped out all imperfections. But is that all that constitutes a picture? Me-thinks 'twould be a poor picture indeed if it were so. Far beyond, far more important and far more effective is the light, and when that light is the light of the setting sun, who can describe its glory? Other lands can boast of splendour, other nations revel in luxury, man may glory in the marvels his hands produce, but the light of the rising and setting of the sun upon the land and waters of New Zealand, in its naked brilliant grandeur, towers far above all such wonders. Throughout the day the sun appears to be hoarding up light for its brilliant exit, and as if to reconcile us to its departure, it throws all the pathos and power into its last few glances. The whole sky glories in every shade; from deepest crimson to radiant gold, then softening off into a pale mystic silver. Earth, ashamed of its dullness, borrows light from above, and becomes beautiful in its humility.

As we mark every varying shade of that unskilful, though natural painter, we are tempted to turn away, praying that our life's setting sun may be as glorious as this.
CHAPTER II.

WILL you come to the concert, Nellie? Surely you are not satisfied with this short day's enjoyment. We always wind up with an entertainment in the evening, when we play all sorts of games and have lots of fun. Do come. Besides, it is such a long time since we were together, that now I don't want to separate sooner than we need, for fear of not being able to meet again for some time." The pleading voice was full of earnestness, and it appears that this was not the first time the owner had presented his petition.

"I can't! If you knew how hard it was to persuade mother allow me come to-day, you would understand why I cannot go to-night. It was only because they were all going into the country that mother let me come. You see there is not so much to do when they are away," added Nellie, casting a mischievous glance up into the eager boyish face bent over her. Then more seriously, "I wand! when you are a man and have a home of your own, don't keep your children always at work; let them go out and enjoy themselves sometimes: but see, we are missed, we must go back or there will be trouble."

Muttering something about "Bother the trouble," the boy followed his companion, who, in her eager haste to remedy a breach of etiquette, had rushed off and joined the rest of the company, leaving him to follow or remain where he was, as he pleased. Strangely enough, he who but a few moments before felt that he could live for hours where he was, now felt he could not stay a minute, so, for-
getting his previous inclinations, he hastened to follow his present desire. I wonder if he be the only one who is subject to such changes? Nevertheless, his mind was made up, and he determined to do his best to get Nellie out that evening.

It was a lovely day. The sun shone down upon a group of true colonial picnickers. Their voices rang out clear and free, and the merry strain was an index of their hearts. In the colonies (New Zealand) age has no retarding influence. Time only lessens darkness and increases light. The children, being born in freedom, value it; they scorn the chains that would hamper their free spirits. Shaking off all fetters with a gay, mocking laugh, they step out, loving and preserving their freedom with more zeal than ever. Who could look upon such a holiday scene and not recognize this truth? Would they not feel within themselves a song of praise to God for the liberty He has thought fit to bestow upon these, their children. Then, as they look beyond the earth of the present into the sky of the future, would not their hearts be stirred to ask God that some of this company, at least, might be spared for His service and used for His glory? Hush! They are singing. Come nearer that you might see and hear. An old man stands bareheaded. The children (his flock) are gathered around. The boys' caps are raised in reverence; the girls' heads are bowed; while the air is full and ringing with that glorious doxology, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." As the song dies away, and the silence of unemployed air floats around, the old minister lifts his hands and blesses the children. There is no need to go to Longfellow for a description of Arcadian innocence and purity. The innocence and happiness of New Zealand picnickers, if not superior to it in purity, is equal; and if the priest were reverenced in Arcadia, those youths and
maids of New Zealand were not behind in respect, for they dearly loved their kind old minister. I see him now as I saw him then; the sun shining on his long grey beard and silvery hair; his poor thin hands uplifted; how often those hands were held out in silent pleading to his people. That quiet form, so soon to be stilled for ever, standing proudly humbly among his people, and before his God, distinctly. A brighter, truer sun, nay the sun of suns, lit up his kindly heart. And that voice—shall I ever forget it?—so deep, so true, so earnest. Ah! childhood may be more susceptible to impressions, but I know I have never, before or since, heard a more genuine hearty voice. In my dreams I hear it continually; in fancy often; and in the bright hereafter I know I shall listen to it for ever. May it be among the friendly ones which come to welcome me at Heaven's gate.

In that crowd one girl never forgot that scene; and when, in after years, childhood's amusements were laid aside; when, with bitter tears, the drawer containing those baby toys was closed and locked, the remembrance of that old man's blessing brought soothing balm.

"So you will not come, Nellie. I am so sorry. I shall not enjoy myself a bit. There, I won't go." This last in a very spiteful tone.

"O! Iwand, please don't say that. I shall be so miserable if I thought you stayed away on my account."

"So you should be. What has changed you, Lyly?" The annoyed tone was gone, and with the return of the old pet name came the return of the affectionate schoolmate. "You used never to refuse me anything. Have you forgotten the games, and the lessons, and the fun we used to have together? O, Lyly dear, I am so jolly glad to see you again. I wish we could go back to school."
Nellie looked up and smiled. There was in the girl’s dark eyes the remembrance of happy, careless days. Young as she was, she was beginning to sigh over the past; and lurking among the folds of those brown velvety curtains were shadows of future pain. Perhaps Iwand saw those unwelcome phantoms, for his voice grew tender and grave, and his quiet caress was full of meaning.

“Please me this once, Lyly,” continued he, pushing the stray dark locks from the girl’s brow that he might look into the truthful eyes. “If your mother and the others are away, who is to know about your coming?”

“I will not come, Iwand,” said Nellie, quietly but firmly. “And, dear, we are getting too big for disobedience. Forgive me, but I dare not come.”

Then, giving him one of her merry glances, she exclaimed, “Wouldn’t I like to run away just as we used to do. How we used to hide in the long grass and pretend we did not hear mother calling. What a pity we can’t be children always. Why doesn’t God make children stay as children, and grown-up people as grown-up people?”

“But we are not grown-up people, Nellie. What a funny way to talk.”

Nellie’s eyes grew wistful, and there was a little tearful sob in her throat as she answered,

“We are not grown-up people, I know, Iwand. But sometimes I wonder if grown-up people were ever children. Will I be like other grown-up people, Iwand?” The dark eyes were raised half fearfully to the boy’s face.

“Of course you won’t,” answered Iwand impatiently. “You will be a jolly sight better. You won’t eat a fellow’s head off if he doesn’t happen to do just what you want.”

“I know one thing. I won’t scold my children for nothing,” answered Nellie innocently.
Iwand burst out laughing.

"Well, Nellie, you are a brick, ‘pon my word you are. I say, old girl," added he after a pause, "do you know what I heard Mother Mumps say? That you would be a fine-looking woman by-and-bye. I suppose you won't look at a fellow then."

"What rubbish, Iwand. If I grow into a fine-looking woman, you will grow into a fine-looking man. One can't do anything without the other doing the same, you know."

At that moment several of the company came up, and the chatter became general. But the evening was drawing to a close, and the holiday makers began to pair off in companies of two and two. Nellie stood chatting to one or two of her nearest friends, and waiting for Iwand, who had gone to speak to a companion. She waited, but no Iwand appeared. "If it were not that I promised Iwand I would wait for him, I would go with you," she said to a dark young man who had pressed her repeatedly to accept his escort. And it was well she turned to look for the laggard, or she would have seen an evil gleam in two deep blue eyes.

Presently Iwand came dashing up, and without waiting to give an apology, pulled Nellie's arm through his and marched off.

Nellie chatted on just as girls do chatter, and taking little notice of things around, and less notice of what she said. But at last receiving no answer to one of her questions, she looked up and saw Iwand regarding her very earnestly.

"What is it, Iwand? Why are you looking at me like that?" Her hand slipped down his coat sleeve, and became clasped in the hand that had been her guide and help during her faltering childhood.
"I was thinking," said he, "how different you are to most girls."

"Different! why; what do you mean? I don't think I am different."

"Oh, yes! you are. I have not heard you say anything unkind about anyone at the picnic to-day, and I am sure you have had good cause."

A faint breath of something like "That Main Girl! Who is she?" came back to her mind; but she was too much a child at heart to understand the pangs and promptings of jealousy, and with her old merry careless laugh she exclaimed,

"Unkind! Why, Iwand, I love everybody; how could I possibly say anything unkind about them; and I am sure everybody loves me, so neither would they say unkind things about me! Love begets love, you know."

They reached Nellie's gate, and Iwand bade her good-night. "You will not come, Nellie?"

"No, Iwand."

He put his arms around her; he parted the stray dark locks from the broad low brow, and he kissed the parted lips.

"Good-night, Lyly! God keep you always as you are now: sweet and innocent, and free from woman's passions."

The strange words sent a thrill through the girl's frame, and Iwand's unusually grave voice rang in her ears like the sound of the evening church bell. Yet that power which is peculiar to purity alone enabled her to respond to Iwand's earnest good-night; and with the lingering pressure of those childish lips upon his own less childish, Iwand turned away. That night the merry party at the ball missed a familiar face; and every evening of that week his place was vacant in the homes of the kind friends.
who had so thoughtfully arranged entertainments for his enjoyment. The last day of the week arrived and the two friends were together again.

"Nellie," a hand was laid upon the girl's arm, "I am so glad you came out. I was afraid I would have to go without seeing you."

"You go to-morrow?"

"Yes." A pause.

"I hope you will have a very pleasant trip and be successful, Iwand."

"Thanks." Another pause. Nellie wondered at her companion's short answers; but then she was always wondering.

"When do you think you will be back?"

"Not until next year. Perhaps longer. Will you forget me, Nellie?" The boyish face looked troubled.

"O! no," very decidedly.

"Not even if I do not come back for years, say six or seven? You will be a woman then Nellie, and your thoughts will have changed."

"Iwand, I never forget." Iwand had heard that peculiar ring in the voice several times before, and had learnt to understand it.

"Here is something to help you remember." A small parcel was slipped into Nellie's hand.

"It is very good of you, Iwand; you always think of me. But, dear, do you think I need such to keep you in my memory? I shall remember you because I love you."

Were it not for the very simplicity of the words, anyone listening would have thought, by the grave, sad tone, that a much older person spoke.

Yes! Iwand. Nellie's love did not need so base a thing as substance to stimulate it. True love is rooted beyond
the surface layer of sight. The power of its endurance lies in its faith. And in the heart of this child-girl, those germs, which for a time had lain dormant, waiting for the joint growth-producing influence of sun and shower, now sprung into life and made the earth quiver and part at the bursting of their testa. Long after he had forgotten, long after the world had forgotten, Nellie will remember, and the memory of that first and only love will keep her chaste. Parents! do not ridicule such sentiment. Do not turn away with the scornful words, "Such children!" or as I have more often heard say, "Such brats! They ought to be ashamed of themselves." Childhood’s love is pure and noble. It is founded upon instinct, and is the nearest approach to that love which Christ bears toward His church, His bride.

"Nellie!" A shrill voice was heard calling, and ere she hastened to obey, Iwand drew her very close to him, and kissed her many times, "Good-bye, my Nellie! a long, long good-bye," something in his throat preventing him from saying more.

"Good-bye, dear, dear Iwand." Two loving arms stole round his neck; two soft cheeks were pressed against his; two tender lips returned his passionate kisses. The summoning voice was heard again, and Nellie was gone to answer the call.

Iwand stood for a few minutes where Nellie had left him. A sharp pain, the first he had ever felt, shot through his heart, and that pain being new was none the less severe. The soft cool evening air fanned his heated brow; overhead the stars kept watch and seemed to read his every thought. We do not know for certain, but we would like to believe that his guardian angel stood beside him during those few quiet moments. Did it plead? or did it warn?
Whatever the influence, Iwand's steps lost their usual buoyancy as he wended his homeward way; and the refrain of those last sweet words, "Good-bye, dear, dear Iwand," rang in his ears for many days. Even when time had changed them into things of the past, they would start up, at all times, in all places, under every circumstance: start up as if their living spirit mocked the tomb beneath which these changes attempted to bury them.

We will leave Iwand for a time. Leave him as he stands on the wharf saying a few parting words to his companions. Hope and pleasure and success are thrilling in his young heart, and the blue vein across the white temple is swollen at the thought of "What might be"

Is there no one to lay a hand upon his shoulder and murmur "God bless you"? Will no one offer up a prayer that his young life might be kept from the snares that too truly surround it. Alas! there are so many to preach, so few to pray.
CHAPTER III.

Why are you so late, Nellie?"

"I met Iwand at the gate, and stayed a few minutes saying good-bye."

"Met Iwand at the gate! Stayed saying good-bye! What next? You, a child of your age, to go sweethearting! The world is certainly coming to an end. Look here, my girl, don't let me catch you at that trick again. And as for that——; I am sure I don't know what to call him; if he comes sneaking about my gate he will get more than he bargains for."

Nellie stood still and listened to this volume of scathing words. At first she was surprised; then she felt afraid; finally indignation obtained the mastery. Turning away with a bursting heart, she exclaimed, "Do not fear, mother. Iwand will never be at your gate again. He has gone away for years, perhaps for good."

"Well for you and for himself that he has. Do not give me any more of your impertinence." And before Nellie could realize her mother's intentions, she had received a smart box on the ears.

With her head thrown back, her little hands clenched, her heart one living flame of rebellion, Nellie sought her room, and, flinging herself upon the floor, uttered a low agonizing moan. For several minutes she lay as still as death, her one thought to get away from this injustice. Presently steps were heard coming along the passage. "I
will not let them see me thus," she cried, and, springing up, she began to busy herself about the room.

"Are you going to be there all night? You sulky little thing! Go and see the children to bed."

The mother passed on, and the daughter obeyed. She put the children to bed. She tucked the clothes around them. She kissed each little face, and was returning to her room when she heard her own name called. "Tay wis me, tister. I's so frightenened of the dark." The girl turned back, and, sinking down beside the cot, began humming a sweet hymn tune.

"A little child shall lead them." Yes, though often unperceived, little children are leading the whole world. The father looks upon his child and learns to form his plans or his sermons. The mother turns to her babe to teach her love and patience. The brother takes his sister in his arms and learns to be gentle. The book containing the essay on simplicity is taken, by the sister, to her little baby brother to be revised and taught. Little children lead on. We love your guidance. You heal the wounds in our feet as we pass over thorns and stones. You encourage us in our faith, for you remind us of our own happy simple childhood. Well fitted are ye to become the instruments by which many of God's mighty works are done.

Baby fell asleep, but Nellie sat on. "I am not wicked. I don't care. I am not wicked. I shall run away. I shall drown myself, and then they will be sorry they ever said such things to me." These and similar thoughts kept chasing one another through her brain. "I'll go to father." She rose to go, but again her footsteps faltered. The room in which she stood was in darkness, but a light from the inner room threw its reflection on the opposite wall
of the passage. A strange fascination seemed to be in that light. The eyes of the girl were fixed upon it. Gradually the reflection grew into shape: gradually the darkness vanished; and lo! there appeared the form of something surpassingly beautiful. Her eyes followed the whole outline of that radiant figure. From beauty it changed into glory. A sensitive child, Nellie had grown into a sensitive girl. Loving the beautiful, unconsciously she had created in her imagination an image which she worshipped, paying it tribute by surrounding it with all that was beautiful and pure. Was it to be wondered, then, that that apparition corresponded to, and surpassed, the nature of her soul. Her entranced gaze rested upon the face. She recognized it. It was the face of her self-made idol. Tenderness, Love, Pity: all that her soul yearned for was personified there. For a minute, which seemed an age, she stood enervated by that radiant vision. No fear entered her young heart—nothing but a deep, reverent, hungering love shone there. As gradually and as silently as it came, so gradually so silently did that vision pass away. The halo of light which environed it lingered awhile, then followed. The artificial reflection returned and resumed its position on the opposite wall. The room was again in darkness, and that which was from Heaven had returned to the place from whence it came. But the environments were not as if that vision had never appeared. In the heart and in the future works of the beholder was interwoven the effect of that tender, wistful smile. The full meaning of that revelation Nellie did not realize just then; but there came a time when she would understand its purpose, and when she would lean upon its power. That revelation enabled her to declare the reality of the Godhead, and, in the face of the enemy darkness, to prove she has seen the divine yet human, the majestic yet compassionate face of her Saviour.
Ah, unconscious Nellie, thou needest that preparation to strengthen thee for thy coming trials.

As yet, a strange peace filled her soul; a new life surged through her being; and a transformed creature stepped from a darkened room into a dimly lighted hall; from which hall she would be led into that bright court of conversion, there to remain until the door of her heavenly mansion opened for her admittance.

In what close proximity is conversion's court to Heaven's mansion. The illumination of the latter is almost sufficient to light up, by its reflection alone, the darkness of the former. Perhaps with the throwing open of that partition door that secret will be divulged—the secret of the everlastingness of the conversion of the faithful. Thus, although the joyous light of conversion had not broken upon that half-awakened soul, and although the heart had not tasted the flavour of the waters of Heaven, yet the way was being prepared for those enjoyments; and the priority of this apparition was necessary in order that its individuality might not be thought the fruits of imagination. We close this chapter. The workings of a free spirit, undefined and unlimited, have entered a heart, leaving no room for bitterness or rebellion; preparing the balm for the soothing of heartache. Many may scoff, few will understand these workings. To those who understand, we add, Pray God to add like blessings to you and yours. Then the unstable life will be established, and all that which is false will fade in the light of that glorious, sorrowful smile. But to those who scoff, scoff on. Yet, if you be parents, and have children, think of them. They, too, will have longings and cravings you cannot satisfy. Will you heap upon them wealth and pleasure, telling them that is all they need? Fathers, a daughter pleads. If you do not
believe in things that are higher than earthly pleasures, let your children do so. Know that that which satisfies you at one time does not satisfy you always. The end of life is an action too evident to be slighted. On such an occasion the knowledge that your children have enjoyed some peace will give you comfort—let that peace be, as you deem it, a ghost of fancy.

Rejoice! These words are not for us, a young man cries. We have no daughters, no children. Our excuses are great, for unless a man be shewn he cannot understand. Young man, unless a man be willing to learn he will never know. And, in the absence of daughter teachers, there are sisters, mothers. What do you say to them? That these lessons are for women and mollycoddles alone? As for you, wonderfully wise you! You are going to see and enjoy life! Poor imbecile! Modern Solomom! Was Paul a mollycoddle? Did effeminacy excite the noble actions of Luther? And the great men of past and present, to what is their celebrity due? "These Lessons." Honoured women, blessed mollycoddles, since these are the results of thy effeminate teaching, thy "goody-goody" privileges. A question. Enjoying life, seeing life, are you sure you are expressing yourself correctly? Child of Socrates, thou wrongest thyself. In the midst of the brawl and the turmoil, where is that elfish answerer? Who utters that taunting word? Past the mind, through the heart, into the very depth of the soul, the only receptacle of truth, that dark elf dwells and utters its incessant "No." Believe me, I do not seek to wean you from your amusements; neither do I wish to make you believe we have no trials. But, O! I long to see you happy. You charge us with hypocrisy. You quote our wrong-doings. Think a little. Would you have us angels? beings without the prerogative of doing wrong? Then, by your own seeking, you would so
distinctly mark our separation as to make communication impossible. How could we enter into your hopes? how could we sympathise with your ambitions? Do not mistake the Christian's life (I mean the life of the ordinary Christian). Sins and failings are dark and dire indeed when committed by the converted; but, then, repentance wipes out the stains, and the sinner rejoices in his pardon. Would you remain inexorable under such circumstances, unforgiving, unmerciful? I trust that no man has such attributes. Then, think you, our God does less than does his creatures? Is the created more merciful than the Creator? My brothers, these are not unreasonable words; they do not proceed from a selfish desire. They are the expressions of a faith that has been tried and that has failed; that has risen and fought and failed again; that has continued the strife, often in despair, seldom in hope, until, in response to its passionate cry, "Who have I to go to but Thee? I tell thee, O Lord! I will not let Thee go except Thou bless me;" the answer to that petition has been the establishment of that faith, once so weak, now so strong; once vanquished, now victorious. Come, O doubter, even if curiosity prompt thee, come and prove its truth. Come, for Truth is attractive at all times, and it holds out an open book to all timid children.
CHAPTER IV.

TWO years have passed. Two years of patient labour, of joys and sorrows, of calm and strife, of hopes and disappointments. The child-girl has grown into a girl-woman. There are no very striking changes either in the person or the surroundings of our little heroine. The same round, happy face; the same merry brown eyes; the same joyful laughter; the same childish expression. Those eyes are milder perhaps, yet there are suspicions of angry flashes lurking in their velvety depths; the voice is fuller, but there is a shrillness which needs ejecting; and the little dark head, just now so meekly bent, could often be tossed in contempt as its owner suffered from imaginary grievances. On the whole Nellie is the Nellie of old, only grown with less rapidity than was warranted by the growth of those two past years.

She is standing beside a beautiful brown mare (her father's gift), and, while she impatiently awaits her sister's return, she gently strokes the sleek arched neck. "We will go and see father, Beauty, you and I. We will stay with him to-night and return to-morrow. How surprised he will be; and what a glorious time together we are going to have."

Nellie's gay laugh echoed through the garden, and it was with difficulty she could restrain her dancing feet even to the time of a moderate jig. As if responding to the girl's high spirits the well-bred courser began caprioling about, pawing the ground, and uttering her low pleased neigh; while her dainty head, her pointed ears, her smooth flanks and long wiry legs, formed a satisfactory picture even for the severest horse critic. Mr. Main was noted for his stud. Even his enemies
were compelled to own that "Main's breeding was good," (which verdict is about as complimentary as competitors will ever give); therefore, when the recipient was Mr. Main's daughter, you may be sure Beauty was no ordinary horse. A little girl appeared with the whip. One spring: Nellie is in her seat in the saddle, scorning the help of chairs, not acquainted with the help of gentlemen. Even the latter, I am almost afraid, would come under the shadow of her disdain. Free and independent as the nature of her beloved country. May she always be so, let the cost be what it may.

At the pressure of her light flexible burden Beauty bounded off; and with a clear ringing laugh, a bright parting word, a wave of the small gloved hand, Nellie is speeding over the distance which lay between her and her absent father. "Away, petty strife," she cried, "I'll none of thee. To Gretna Green I fly." Foolish thoughts! Natural heart! What mortal has ever been able to fly from the harassing cares of petty strife? How many seek to do so by rushing after every novelty.

Go with her! thou, her guardian angel. Go and be her protector and her tutor. Go! go! she has need of thee. It is at such times as these, when alone with thee, and when surrounded by thy lesson books, that thy pupils learn and understand thy divine teachings. The profit gained by the gathering up of these crumbs of time can hardly be realized. In the simple story of David's first reception into the Palace of Saul there is a striking example of such gain. Who knows how many hours of patient practice must have been spent by that young harpist on those lonely hills, while tending his father's sheep, before he was competent to fill the honoured post of the king's chief musician.

Silently and stealthily the evening shadows crept round every corner and into every crevice. Solemnly the daylight
lifted its tired wings and prepared to place its sleepy head among those downy feathers. The hour of darkness drew apace. There are still two miles of broken, uneven road to be traversed before the solitary traveller will have reached her destination. The fiery spirits of her impetuous steed have had time to cool, and Beauty proceeds more steadily. They are crossing a bridge; the milky waters flow around and among the piles; the weeping willows stoop and kiss those murmuring lips; and in the shadowy dimples of that tender carcass the white-robed swans repose.

In the middle of the stream Nellie paused to look down at the rushing tide. How smooth, how even, how deceitful was that glassy surface. Only a few quivering planks lay between her and its treacherous clasp.

"I wonder what death is," she mused. "For ever and ever! Strange words! I think if I were given my choice I would prefer to meet death beneath those calm bright waters. My spirit would rejoice, and my soul would be at peace, if this poor little body lay quietly beneath that gentle, refreshing stream." Death has no terrors, the grave no ghosts, for this child of nature. The favourite song of her childhood has not been dethroned by any brilliant operatic airs, and on her innocent fearless lips lingers the old loved strain, "I love everybody, and everybody loves me. Love begets love, you know."

Suddenly the clatter of horses' feet is heard behind. Instinctively the docile animal recognized the presence of danger, and pricking up her ears, Beauty bounded forward, throwing her rider off her balance. Quickly regaining her seat Nellie gathered the loose reins up in her firm hands and sat perfectly still. There was no time to act, hardly time to think, she must leave all to Beauty's discretion. On, on they flew. Nearer and nearer drew their pursuers. O to
be able to round that corner. O to reach the homestead beyond. O to be safe under the protection of Farmer Fergusson; and in the motherly arms of his good-natured wife. Tantalizing, inhospitable corner, it seemed to recede as Nellie advanced. The horses behind came galloping on; she felt their heated breath; and in the waning light she imagined she saw their panting sides. For the first time in her life she experienced the sensation of fear. "Oh, Beauty, save me!" she cried, and bending forward patted the out-stretched neck. Poor Beauty answered with a plaintive neigh; her ears lay flat, her sinewy legs trembled with exhaustion, but she responded to her mistress's voice and threw all her energy into those last few efforts. In vain. Shouts rent the air. Lost ground was gained. Two dark forms shot past, and, wheeling round, brought their horses right across Nellie's path. Two likewise dark forms took places one on each side. And four foolish men, on mischief bent, surrounded the hapless captive. The exhausted horse whined piteously, and the trembling flanks betrayed its terror. The men in front dismounted, and seizing the bridle, bade Nellie release her hold. She looked around for aid, but none was seen. A stifled cry arose to heaven, and Heaven heard it. Ah! help is always near to those who ask for it. If "the Devil takes care of his own bairns," which I very much doubt, God certainly takes care of His children. Turning to the man nearest her, Nellie asked, in their own mellow language what they would take to let her go. But they would not listen. "We know you," they cried. "You Wattie Main's daughter. We no want you, we want you horse. Him no pay me break in his horse. We tako this one. We ride him, we beat him, we give him back to you." Poor men, this was their darkest intention. And, in the Maori race, their spirit of revenge seldom leads them beyond such deeds,
"Please let me go," pleaded the white trembling lips. "Why do you wish to harm me? I have never done anything to displease you!"

With an oath the man raised his thick stick. A moment, and it would have descended upon Nellie's unprotected head; but one of the men, who had stood by in silence, now interfered. Seizing the uplifted arm he exclaimed, "Tai hoa" (wait a minute).

"A b— Pakeha," muttered the would-be delinquent, as he lowered his weapon. Nellie looked up to thank her timely saviour, and was struck by the expression of the dark restless face. The eyes seemed to avoid her; but she felt that although darkened and tanned with exposure to the sun, that face was not hideous with the traces of evil indulgences. A wave of remorse swept over her, and she remembered reading the words, "Their deeds are laid at your door." By this time all the men had dismounted. They seemed to be uncertain what to do, for they began talking and gesticulating in true Maori fashion. In their excitement they had almost forgotten their captive, and had drawn together, leaving Nellie comparatively alone. Now was her chance: a smile actually flitted across the girl's face. Beauty had regained her breath during this brief respite, and was equal to the occasion. Quick as thought Nellie laid the reins on the mare's neck; she understood. Lifting her whip as she was passing, Nellie dealt the man who had attempted to strike her, a severe blow across the face. "From Wattie Main's daughter," she said, and was gone. Taken unawares, the men stood dumbfounded; by the time they had collected their senses it was too late; Nellie had reached a safe distance, and they, instead of being the pursuers, had now to take the place of the pursued. Suddenly the comic side of the whole incident seemed to strike one of their number, for
he burst out laughing. His companions looked at him in indignation; but they too were compelled to join in the laughter, as the jocose, flinging himself across his horse, exclaimed,

"Py korry! Too kood te white man. No kood te Maori, Koorrow man te Queen Wickeyoria."

The rest of the party followed in his wake, and soon they were several miles from the scene of the recent encounter, and were steering their course direct for the King Country.

Nellie galloped on, nor did she draw rein until her father's station was in sight. Who can tell of anything more welcome than the glimpse she caught of those lights among the trees? What more pleasant sound than the barking of her father's sheep dogs? I am afraid, although my lady delighted to lose herself in soft dreamy music, and to skim over the floor keeping time with the merry dance tune, she felt more relieved at and more pleasure in the sound of that more practical music, the barking of sheep dogs.

Her fears had vanished long ere this, and she laughed heartily as she recalled the look of blank astonishment that rested on the face she had treated so roughly. "Poor old fellow," she thought, "he'll remember me as long as he lives. What fools to think they had me so nicely. One thing, they would have had to tear me to pieces before they could get you, my Beauty. I pity you, Mr. Maoris, if father knew, and I think you understand your danger. No, I won't tell on you. There's no harm done, and who knows where it may end if I were to tell. No, for once a 'Pakeha' will be merciful." Her thoughts wandered on. She remembered kind dark faces looking out from beneath their low thatched huts. She saw them place their best at her disposal. She heard their homely voices as they bade her "Hairi mei" (come). Eager to serve, seeking to win the goodwill of their fellow-
men, ever showing by their actions their wish to be at peace. "Poor Maoris! we rob you of your land; we use your strength to cultivate your hereditary possessions, now ours by no other right than that of barter, often a dishonest barter; we abuse your hospitality; we work upon your ignorance; yet, in the face of all this, you forgive us, and are ever ready to help us on toward prosperity. Shame on the man who would cheat a Maori. A thousand times more shame on him than if he cheated a child, for he stands upon a soil which God had bequeathed to that Maori, but which, on account of his inability to put it out to usury, that land has been suffered to pass to you, the whiteman. Instead of cheating, you should succour. Instead of imposing, you should teach. In the troubles they have caused, they were not the only ones at fault; and even their worst deeds would blush if brought into contact with some of England's own."

Nellie reached the gate, jumped off her horse, threw the reins over the post, sprang over the fence (don't be shocked), and walked quietly up the avenue.

"Now for a glorious surprise," she thought, clasping her hands together and almost wild with delight. "Bother those dogs, I wish they would stop; they are sure to warn father. If you do, Mr. Dogs, I'll hide; I will not be done out of my joke, after riding so far, too. I just wonder where he is."

Creeping round the house and peeping through every window, Nellie at last stood on the kitchen threshold. What was it? Something in that simple scene sent a chill shiver through her, and dispelled for ever the spirit of mischief in connection with her bearing toward her father. Not that there was anything dreadful in the sight, on the contrary, peace and quietness reigned throughout the house. Perhaps it was the utter stillness that caused the birth of sadness in the gay young heart. The room itself was bare and almost furnitureless, but it was scrupulously clean. The white-
washed ceiling and walls, the well scrubbed floor and table, the wide open fireplace, all sparkled in the bright lamp-light. On the table a place was laid for a single tea: clean white cloth, cup and saucer, two empty plates, knife and fork, sugar, milk, etc. Several wooden chairs were scattered about the room. These, with the exception of a large cupboard, constituted the furniture of that up-country kitchen. Much that was necessary for the comfort of inland settlers was lacking here, but this was due to the improper roads, and to the dislike of hazarding an unnecessary journey.

One solitary figure occupied that room. An elderly gentleman was standing beside the mantelpiece, and gazing into the glowing embers of a heaped-up log fire. His back was toward her, but Nellie knew by the pose of that quiet figure, that the face was full of thought. Ah! it was the pose that had sent the chill through her warm heart, and almost froze the blood in her veins. Afraid of giving too great a surprise, Nellie began shuffling her feet. The gentleman turned.

"Father."

"Nellie," and father clasped the hand of daughter. A moment's pause: dark eyes were looking up into anxious grey ones.

"Is there anything wrong at home, child?" Mr. Main's grave fatherly voice broke the stillness.

"No, father; I wanted to ride Beauty, and mamma said I could come and see you."

With a sigh of relief Mr. Main turned back to the fireplace.

"You cooking? How is that father? Let me do it for you."

"No, no, child! sit down," and motioning her to a chair he continued, half sadly, "My house-keeper left me to-day. I
shall have to do my own cooking now, I suppose. But where is your horse, Nellie?"

"Tied up on the road, father; I could not open the gate."

Mr. Main smiled. Like the Main stud, the Main gates were noted for their sterling qualities. Nellie was not the only one who could not make that lock yield to her touch; and what was still more peculiar, that lock did not require a key, or at least it did not require a steel key, for it would open to no other than the key of knowledge, and that key Mr. Main was very careful to whom he gave it.

Presently the man-of-all-works came in. "John!" said his master, "go and unsaddle Miss Nellie's horse, it is tied up at the front gate. Put her in the house paddock, and don't forget to hobble her. She is a devil to catch."

When John had gone, the father placed a cup and saucer beside his own, and drew down a plate from the rack. Then remembering the long ride his daughter had undergone, he turned to her and spoke more gently than was his wont.

"Go to the room, lass, and take off your habit. You know where everything is kept. Then come and have some supper."

The girl rose and crossed the room. There was nothing unusual in the meeting. Others had been the same. Nay; some had even been more affectionate. For, often when the father came to town, he had been tempted into pressing a kiss upon his daughter's cheek. But that scene, with its melancholy figure by the fireplace, made a lasting impression upon the thoughtless girl; and in the words, "My housekeeper left me to-day," Nellie unconsciously traced the commencement of coming troubles. When she returned to the kitchen her father was seated at the table. She took her place beside him, and together they ate their quiet supper.
Mr. Main was not a talkative man. Indeed, it was often hard to get him to say more than monosyllables; but when once he spoke you were obliged to listen. Not that he was loud and arrogant, he never was that; nor that he was eloquent, but that he was grave, quiet, and had the dignity of conviction. He might never be able to convince you, but you could not help seeing he was convinced himself, and that, either from want of fluency or from reserve, he refrained from arguing. His was no dashing character formed to shine forth and captivate the world; his was a nature more after the sea than the air: too deep for sudden gushes, too stable for eminence, too plodding for utter failure. The world had not been extra kind to him, and perhaps that had something to do with that melancholy inclination of seeking to hide himself in silence. In person he was not tall—rather inclined to be short, with prominent features. Eyes of deepest grey, but eyes that would be all pupils under certain lights. Short well-kept beard, once fair, now slightly threaded with grey. Brow, high, broad and remarkably white; and the fair wavy hair, so soft, so silky, stood proudly back, and defied all persuasion to bend over the noble brow. Thus although the lower part of the face was brown and tanned with the sun, yet the deeply-wrinkled forehead retained its natural whiteness, and although circumstances had given the man a melancholy air, yet there were often flashes from a dormant nature beyond even the touch of far-reaching secularism.

The night drifted into day and Nellie returned to her home and her work; and into the daily routine of ordinary life she carried her self-taught, nay, Christ-taught, lessons.

Babies had to be nursed; stockings darned; meals prepared. Four little girls had to be got ready for school every morning; and six times four little pinafores had to be washed and ironed every week. Nellie's hands were full. But every being has its double, and although the apparent life was
confined to every-day work, the real life was being trained and fitted to fill other than an every-day sphere. Life to Nellie was one long disturbed dream, of which washing, scrubbing and ironing, played but an inferior part.
CHAPTER V.

That was the first of a whole series of weekly visits. Saturday after Saturday regularly found Nellie at her father's station. She would go up on Saturday and return on Sunday. Sometimes if there were anything very tempting being done she would not return until Monday. During those brief periods more was learned than was studied through all the other days of the week. Bit by bit she understood the whys and the wherefores of everything; until at last she had drilled herself into the whole system of station life. Of each machine she knew exactly what they should do, and whether they were doing their work aright. Often her ingenuity was called into question regarding the repairing of a sudden breakage. When her father went to the cow-sheds she followed, and few of his commands slipped past her unnoticed. In the stable she revelled, and many were the scoops-full of oats and chaff emptied by those dainty white hands into the mangers. At first she was filled with fear, and did not care to enter the stable door, but when she saw her father pass in and out among those restless horses; when she perceived their perfect obedience to his slightest command, she knew that her fears were groundless, and she became ashamed of herself. Clasping her hands together she would feel her heart bursting with pride as she realised she was the daughter of this brave wise man. No wonder the seeds of a noble enterprising nature were planted and nourished in that daughter's heart. "Father," she breathed, "that which thou doest, doest also thy child." From that day she feared
nothing, and soon those well-groomed horses learned to obey her voice as faithfully as they did that of her father. But when Mr. Main, preparing for a day's muster, would loosen the noisy nimble dogs from their chains, and when those dogs leaped up and threatened to smother their master by their boisterous embraces, and when they would bound off at his word or motion; ah! then she felt foiled, and dreamed of impossibilities. But even that did not make her give up hope, for, as soon as her father's back was turned, and he was safely out of sight, she would sally forth, armed with a most formidable weapon (a willow twig), and accompanied by the household pet, an old blind-eyed dog without a tail, or at least with the stump of a tail, sally forth to round up the few sheep that had been put, for the purpose of killing, in a handy paddock near the house. What those sleepy fat sheep thought, as they beheld this strange apparition advancing upon them with all the dignity of a commanding general and his allies, would be hard to say. Certainly they did not consider it worth their while to "move on," until forced, and even then, they would often turn round and stamp their feet contemptuously at the bob-tailed ally. Ah! I am afraid there was something wrong here; perhaps the woolly subjects had not been properly trained, or perhaps they did not understand the reason of all that "Get away back there, boy," "Come here, Jip, you bad dog," "Come behind now," "Lie down," "Go ahead there;" "Ah! you villain, what are you up to!" No wonder they refused to budge an inch when they arrived within about two yards of the sheep pens. They were not going to be made fools of. Still in spite of drawbacks, Nellie thoroughly enjoyed her wonderful work of mustering, and poor blind Jip became useful in his old age.

Then came the shearing. The father's nature was in his child; for many were the cups of water held out to the thirsty shearers. Hour after hour she would stand, marking
the workmanship, counting the sheep; and when evening came, she and her father would converse about that day's labour as freely as if they two were partners in the whole transaction; indeed the elder had often to apply to the younger for the correct number of wool bales dumped, or the right quantity of fleeces in each. The neighbours found fault, and lectured the father on the folly of allowing a girl of Nellie's age to wander about among the workmen. To all such remonstrances he would give the smiling reply, "She is with me only once a week. It will do her no harm to learn farming. There is less danger among the workmen than there is among the gentlemen." And so Nellie was let alone. Her interest did not lessen when the harvesting time drew near, and, although her father forbade her leave the homestead, she could see the men at work, she could count the sacks of potatoes as they were brought in and stowed away in the barn. When the oats and barley were being thrashed, and when the straw was cut into chaff, she would wonder how many hungry mouths could be filled by the produce of those few acres of land. And the grass-seed cutting: how she loved to see the proud waving stalks fall beneath the sharp knives of the reaping machine; and where that machine could not enter, half a dozen or more natives appeared sickle in hand, mowing and gleaning; mimicking the harvesters of the ancient biblical times. The wonderful tying into bundles of the mower, and the casting away of those bundles when the tying was completed, puzzled Nellie not a little, and she actually found herself drawing pictures of the meeting between herself and the inventor of that machine. "What a jolly shake of the hand I will give him," she exclaimed; "even if Heaven is our trysting place."

Leaning over the garden gate, watching that peaceful industrious scene, Nellie was as near to Heaven as would cause the envy of many more aged and more advanced christians.
And when the air, laden with the sweet scent of hay, was wafted to where she stood, she would look up to the blue sky above and praise God for the sweet lessons taught, and the sweeter manner of the teaching.

The infant school of her life will have to be passed, and like many others she will eventually accept the office of pupil teacher. I think her best lessons will be those taught in the allegorical language of the simple workings of a back country station.

"Father," she said one day; "when all this work is finished, what will the men do?"

"The work will never be finished," quietly answered the farmer. And his words were true: no sooner was one thing finished when another began. Is it not well for man that his work is never finished? Yet I hear men complain about having too much work, while his sympathizer, who stands before the plough with folded hands, answers the complaint by declaring he has not enough. Strange human nature. It is hard to understand what it wants.

One Saturday as Nellie dismounted, Mr. Main met her at the gate. After enquiring about the welfare of those at home, he continued:

"I am going out, Nellie. There has been an accident, and I must go and ascertain the amount of damage done. Do not expect me back for several hours, as the place of the accident is at the far end of the station."

"I wonder what has happened," thought Nellie, as she leisurely made her way into the house. "Papa looks very grave. I suppose those bothering cattle have gone and got tooted. Just as if they hadn't gumption enough to know toot is poison. Perhaps a horse has got the strangles. Oh, bother!" This last remark was to her glove, which had preferred to give a button rather than come off without a struggle.
A very tempting smell issued from the kitchen. The little nose went into the air, sniff, sniff. "My word, I'm in for a feed," and hardly waiting to button up her dress, Miss Nellie marched into the kitchen.

"Oh, cook! I smell something nice. What is it?" and a very wicked glance was cast in the direction of the fireplace.

"Lor' bless yer, lass! and it's right glad I are to see you." The round cheeks swelled, and the round eyes swelled, and the round body swelled, until Nellie was afraid the whole woman would swell into one helpless mass.

"Of course you are, cook, and I am glad to see you, but haven't you anything nice in the cupboard!"

Cook opened the cupboard. "In course I have. I knowed you'd be hungry! I made you this." From the dark depth there appeared the chestnut crust of no ordinary sized pie. "There lassie, eat," and the savoury meat was placed directly under Nellie's nose.

Nellie burst out laughing. "Upon my word, Jane, that's too bad of you. I know I eat a great deal, but—but that is a little more than I can manage."

"Never mind, eat what you can," said cook, good naturally, proceeding to spread a cloth.

"Don't bother about that thing," exclaimed Nellie looking, at the pie as if she meant to devour dish and all. "I am too hungry to wait for cloths. Give me a knife or a fork—that cleaver will do—anything at all, or I shall use my fingers." She was just on the point of "playing the deuce with the pie," as the boys would say, when on looking up she saw some one enter the gate.

"Good gracious! cook, here's someone coming through the back gate. Whatever shall I do," and the distracted girl glanced around to find a means of hiding her pie. Too late! the gentleman was at the door, and Nellie had to make the best of a bad situation.
"I beg your pardon, but is"—then noticing the girl's embarrassment he paused. "I hope I am not intruding," said he, withdrawing a little. Nellie's face was crimson, but she was a Main, and equal to the occasion. Quickly rising and advancing to meet the gentleman, she said, "Pray don't apologize, I am only trying to empty cook's cupboard. Perhaps you will help me? Won't you come in?"

"Thanks. Is Mr. Main at home?"

"No! He has gone to the other end of the station, and will not be back for some time. Will you wait?" The brown eyes were twinkling mischievously, and the little figure was shaking with suppressed laughter. The gentleman had his suspicions.

"I believe we have met before, have we not? I think I recollect having seen the face."

The laughter bubbled over and flooded the room with its silvery sound. "Yes, Mr. Noble," answered Nellie, when she had recovered herself sufficiently to speak. "Under very painful circumstances, if I recollect rightly. It is well we do not always judge people by our first impressions."

Mr. Noble laughed. "I remember: you are the young lady who gave me so much trouble when I was extracting her tooth."

"The same. But I shall return good for evil by inviting you to partake of my pie." And Nellie motioned her visitor to a chair.

"I heartily accept the invitation, for I have had nothing to eat since I left town." Mr. Noble drew his chair up to the table and sat down.

"But tell me," added he, beginning to help himself to the cream Jane had placed at their disposal. "Tell me what you mean by returning good for evil."
"Well," began Nellie holding up her fingers and touching them lightly as she numbered each of her good deeds; "I give you pleasure, whereas you gave me pain. Is it not a pleasure to satisfy one's appetite? For men, I mean, their greatest—you know the rest"—this last with another of her wicked glances. "Good number one. I allow you the use of my chair, while you forced me out of yours, and caused me to perambulate up and down the floor, calling down all sorts of woes upon your devoted head. Good number two. I added to the weight of your purse by being a partaker of your pleasure, for I court another toothache, and another visit to the celebrated Mr. Noble; whereas you considerably alleviated mine by demanding half a crown. Good number three. Four! Five!" tipping lightly the remaining fingers. "I wish I could think of two more goods, then I would defy the—you—the toothache."

The gentleman laughed heartily. "I am too well employed to argue the point with you," he exclaimed, helping himself to a second plateful. "This is delicious. No wonder you look so well when this is your diet."

"Forbear, and eat no more," quoth Nellie, brandishing her spoon. "Necessity must be served. Know you not I almost die for food."

"And so do I, but eat and welcome," answered Mr. Noble, carrying out the mimic play, and throwing himself into a tragic attitude.

"Speak you so gently? Pardon me, I pray. Methought thou wert a savage, and therefore put I on this air. But continue with thy repast; thy gentleness moves me to force. May the gods defend you by-and-by my friend and countryman." Thus the gay repartee was kept up between the two, until with a relieved sigh they awoke to the fact that they had demolished the whole pie.
"I declare," exclaimed Mr. Noble, leaning back in his chair, and looking at the empty dish. "I declare I would have stopped long ago, but for you. It is not etiquette to leave a lady alone."

"Man all over! His nature has not changed since the creation. Adam laid the blame on Eve, but I'll warrant he enjoyed the apple, and would have eaten another if he had had the chance."

"Ah! Miss Main, if ancient Eves were as bewitching as modern ones, I do not wonder at Adam's fall." Another very tragic attitude.

"When does man ever blame man where women are concerned? If ancient Adams were as fond of fruit (pies) as modern Adams appear to be, my wonder regarding Adam's fall is reversed. But we are wasting time," Mr. Noble, answered Nellie, rising. "Would you care to see around the place? Father forbids me leave home when he is away, but I can show you the garden."

"Thank you, I should like to see the garden very much. I am a bit of a botanist, you know."

"Are you? Preserve me from bits of botanists." The mischievous girl tried to look horrified. "Please don't start a lecture on stamens, parallel leaves, underground stems and—and—molecules. Molecules are atoms, are they not?" Such a very innocent face had the questioner.

"Well, yes! Molecules are atoms, but they are not bits, if that is what you are hinting at. Still, I fail to see where molecules come in with botany."

"Do you. Oh, I am so sorry; I forgot. Of course nobility deals with bulk in general, not with atoms in botany. Is that not so, Mr. Noble. You ought to know?" The meek questioner hung her head in conscious ignorance and suppressed laughter.
"Not always, especially if they happen to be entangled in Mane."

"Tit for tat," answered the gay laughing girl, leading the way into the garden, where in spite of Nellie's previous warning, Mr. Noble launched out into the mysteries of the development of several parts of a plant.

"It's the effect of pie," inwardly commented Nellie. "It will wear off in time." Presently she opened the gate leading to the orchard.

"I am sorry, Mr. Noble, that I have no apples to tempt you with, but perhaps grapes will serve the purpose, since it is the Eves and not the apples who do the damage."

After they had helped themselves to whatever they could find in the orchard, and Nellie had selected the best bunch of grapes for her father, they returned to the house.

"I am afraid I cannot wait longer, Miss Main. I am sorry to go without having seen your father."

"Could you not leave a message?"

"Well—I came to see a horse he has advertised for sale, I don't suppose you know anything about it." Looking at the young face doubtingly.

"No! Of course not!" A decided toss of the little head. "Eves are not supposed to know aught else than the lore of temptation. However, if you follow this Eve, you will behold the object." Nellie led the way to the stable. Mr. Noble walked round and round, held his head on one side, changed the position of his feet, hm-ed and ha-ed, looked very important, stepped back and putting his hand behind him, thus he spoke: "Fine upstanding colt; rather dark of colour for my taste, yet none the worse for that. Sound in the legs, though weak in the hind quarters. Intelligent head. Grand eyes. He is a fine horse, Miss Main; well worth the money." This is his opinion; but then Miss Main was there.
Perhaps he would have another opinion when Miss Main was gone, and another Miss or Mr. had taken her place.

"I shall see Mr. Main when he comes to town," he said as he turned to say good-bye to his young hostess. "And I must thank you very much for an extremely enjoyable afternoon. It is worth a great deal to come in contact with originality, and I hope I shall be able to return your kindness."

"Indeed you are mistaken Mr. Noble," answered Nellie, a little gravely, "The pleasure lies in your being able to lay aside artificiality, and if, in so doing you find pleasure, why not dispense with art altogether? Nature affords a larger scope for indulgences,"

"One can hardly speak of prosaic business in the language of Poetic Nature."

"Why."

"Well!—It is hardly the thing."

"Why, I ask!"

Mr. Noble looked puzzled—in fact, he did not know what to make of his questioner—she looked so innocent. At last he ventured on a reply.

"If you were in business you would understand. One has to do and say things they hardly mean, or they would not be patronized."

"Have they? Do you ever try to say things you do mean Mr. Noble? I think if you were to try, you would not find time for saying things you did not. Sheep are not the only creatures that say bah because their leader says it. Yet there is some excuse for sheep, bah is their natural cry. Next time a man comes to pay you a large account, when he utters his customary bah, do you inform him that you are a cow, and therefore cannot comply with his cry."

Mr. Noble laughed, "I understand what you are driving at, never fear Miss Main, I am a total abstainer."
"Hardly, since you cannot abstain from the habit of saying what you do not mean," retorted Nellie. "However, I accept your invitation. Shall I label myself with "Beware of the dog," before I enter your mansion!"

"By all means. My wife will need warning," and politely raising his hat, Mr. Noble rode away, musing on the truth of Nellie's suggestive Bah.

The afternoon waned and yet there was no sign of Mr. Main's return. Nellie tried all sorts of amusements to while away the time. She teased cook until cook chased her out of the kitchen. She criticised John's digging until John threatened to make her do the work. She lectured Jip upon the folly of shewing his affection too plainly to the outer world, when by burying what he had, it would become internal, and no one would have the option of despising him; until Jip stood dumbfounded, inwardly wondering where Nellie had learned this item of philosophy. Even the horses were "Taken down a peg," for they were told not to be so affected. There was no one there to see them, and if they wanted to keep up with the fashion, they must reserve their kisses and smiles for the court, and their curses and frowns for the kitchen. At last growing too restless and anxious for anything, Nellie threw a shawl over her head and walked down to the gate to watch for the absentee. It was bright moonlight now, and she could see far up the road. "I wonder what can be keeping father. He has never been away after dark before," she mused.

After what seemed to her hours of waiting, she saw him coming. He did not notice the quiet figure standing in the shadow of the high somber painted gate; and for a few minutes Nellie did not make herself known. Again that nameless feeling crept into her heart as she watched the bent head and abstracted gaze. "How old father looks; even in this cold untruthful light I can see the wrinkles on his face."
"You have been a long time away father," she said, stepping forward to unfasten the gate. I was beginning to grow anxious."

The absent look left the face, and, jumping off his horse, Mr. Main threw the reins to one of his men; and together father and daughter walked up the long wide avenue. "How is it that you are down here Nellie? Are you not afraid of catching cold?" The father's voice was full of grave concern.

"Oh no father, I seldom catch cold, and I am sure I run after it enough." (Colds are like young men, seldom caught by the pursuer). "But what was the accident?"

"Some wild dogs got among my sheep and killed about two hundred. Several they cruelly mutilated, and the remainder they drove headlong into the creek. But that is not all," added Mr. Main half to himself. "It is quite true, trouble never comes singly." Then into the listening ears of the girl was poured a tale of many serious losses sustained during those past few months. "And my favourite colt." The hitherto firm voice of the reciter quivered a little at this saddest loss of all. "My favorite colt that I had set my hopes of winning the spring two year-old with, I had to shoot yesterday. That, I think, is the hardest of all."

It was a very sad little voice that bade father good night, and it was a much sadder heart that turned away to hide the disappointment in the darkness of a bedroom.

"Good night daughter," said Mr. Main, kindly, "I am afraid this must be your last visit here for a while. The roads are not safe, and I do not care to see you run such risks."

Nellie knew better than offer any remonstrance—father's word was law. And from that time, until the beginning of the next summer, the old homestead never once echoed
the girl's happy careless laugh. How much Nellie felt the
dissappointment, only those know who have had to relinquish
the source of their greatest enjoyment.

One day, after an absence of about two months, Mr Main
came to town. The girl's joy at seeing her parent, was so
great, that she almost forgot the awe with which she and
all the children regarded him; and it was with difficulty
she could refrain from throwing her arms around his neck as
she stooped to kiss her.

"Well, Nell, lass; did you think your old dad had left
you?" said he, gently patting the dark head.

"Why don't you let me live with you always?" asked
Nellie half reproachfully.

"It is no place for you child," and without waiting to hear
Nellie's pleadings, Mr. Main turned away to remove the
muddy travel stains. When he returned Nellie had prepared
him a tempting luncheon, of which he partook freely. He
had hardly been seated five minutes when the door bell rang.

"That is for me. Show the gentlemen in please, Nellie." And Nellie, mistaking her father's meaning, shewed them
into the room where Mr. Main sat.

"You are prompt," and Mr. Main's lip curled sarcastically.

"Prompt's my name, Sir," the shortest, and the reddest,
and the fattest of the two men answered. "Twould be
better for some people if they had the same name."

"I am sorry I cannot oblige you in that respect." Mr.
Main deliberately poured himself out a second cup of tea. He
quite understood the double meaning of those insinuating
words. "Pray be seated, Mr. Luce. Or, perhaps, as I will
not be ready for a few minutes, you would like to amuse
yoursevles. Nellie, shew these gentlemen into the drawing
room."
A very wrathful look was thrown upon the smiling host as the man addressed as Mr. Luce, followed by his silent companion, slouched out of the room. "I'll make him sweat for this, you see if I don't. The cursed upstart. I have him by the nose and I shall keep him. Airing his good breeding! If the truth were known he is no better than the rest of his kind. Picked up from the gutter and educated in Dr. Bernardo's Home I dare say."

They had not long to wait, however, for Mr. Main was as anxious to get the business over as they were to begin it. All that afternoon the three gentlemen were closeted together. What passed those who understand the entanglements of mortgages well know. It will be sufficient for us to hear the restless pacing, the angry word, the significant cough.

When the two visitors had gone, Mr. Main remained locked in his room, and long into the early hours of the next morning Nellie heard those irregular steps pacing the floor. How worn and weary he looked as he made the few necessary preparations for his return to the country. The daughter's heart was very heavy as she noticed how much deeper the lines of care had grown on that beloved face.
CHAPTER VI.

NELLIE," said Mrs. Main, one day soon after the incident related in our last chapter, "Your father wants you to go up to the station to-morrow."

Mrs. Main was standing in the garden, whither her daughter had wandered for a few minutes quiet musing. She was a little woman, with dark hair and blue eyes; and always neatly dressed. She was not beautiful, not even pretty, but she was not plain: that you would discover in less than five minutes of your conversation with her. The peculiar drooping of the eyelids would first attract your notice; then you would make the discovery that more lay beneath the surface than was ever allowed to appear above; and that that pretended outspoken tone covered much quiet sarcasm.

At the sound of that slightly peevish voice, down went the garden rake, up sprang the gardener, away flew the garden soliloquy.

"Mother, mother, are you in earnest? Does he really? Can I go? When?" The dark eyes were dancing, and the little face was the picture of excitement.

"How often have I told you not to be so boisterous, child," rebuked Mrs. Main. "You are quite old enough now to have done with that nonsense. To-morrow you are to go, John will wait for you." The mother returned to the house to make preparations for an early start in the morning; and Nellie, too excited to notice her mother's troubled brow, flew about settling things she said (but in
reality unsettling things), and positively declaring that, in order to be up in time in the morning, she would not go to bed all night. She so faithfully carried out her intentions that Mrs. Main had to remind her several times of her declaration before she awoke to the fact that it was daylight.

"Right, mother! I'm coming. The spirit was willing but the flesh was weak," cried Nellie as she sprang out of bed, and into her habit. "I shall not enjoy this ride very much," thought she, as she was preparing to mount her flighty steed. "John is so slow. Oh, it is so nice to be on Beauty again, and" a merry twinkle came into the bright dark eyes, "I'll stir some life into the old fellow; see if I don't."

Sad to say, this time Nellie kept her promise, and although she did not exactly keep up with the wind, she was not far behind; and John, poor old fellow, had to keep up with her.

"Ah, John! that is just what you want. Some one to put spirit into you," said the mischievous girl as they reached her father's gate, and, pretending to be unconscious of John's chagrin, she patted Beauty's neck.

John's voice assumed a tone of solemn warning. "Miss Nellie," said he, "I have learned wisdom with the increase of years. When you reach my age, you, too, will learn this truth: Take your time over doing everything, and see that you do it well."

"I shall benefit by your timely advise," answered in the same solemn tone. "Already I know 'tis wise to ride slowly if not sure of your seat; and to declare the horse's feet at fault by way of excuse. Dear old Beauty," she added, jumping down, and throwing an arm around Beauty's neck, "Dear old Beauty, your cruel mistress has ridden you badly to-day, but she will not offend again."
"Yes! and indeed, Miss, you have taken all the life out of him." John looked pityingly at the foam-streaked flanks.

"And put it into you, John; how ungrateful you are. Scolding me like that." Nellie ran off, leaving John to follow with the horses.

Poor old John scratched his iron-grey head and thought. "Miss is always saying foolish things," he mused. "When she does speak sense she never uses plain English, so that a fellow can understand;"

Thou child of the ancient Touchstone; well dost thou honour thy father's teachings, for thou dost indeed "speak wisely what wise men do foolishly." *Abstruse* is a very convenient word in the English language. It becomes especially useful in connection with the speaker's meaning, when the fault lies in the understanding capacity of the hearer; and *Foolish* becomes almost more useful when the same hearer is smarting under coverted home thrusts.

Imagine Nellie's surprise when on reaching the homestead she found everything in confusion. The house itself looked deserted. No living creature appeared in sight. Nothing but a heap of motionless disorder met the gaze of the wondering girl. "I declare," said she half aloud, "the place looks as if everything on the farm has been deposited about its doors, and the depositors have gone off to bring the chattels from the surrounding neighbourhood. It is very strange that father did not come to meet me. I wonder where he is." She was not kept long in suspense. Soon she perceived her father coming toward her.

"You are early, child."

"Yes, papa; we started early."

"And rode fast," chimed in John's voice.
"What is the meaning of all this, father? Such a confusion." Nellie's eyes wandered over the piles upon piles of farming implements.

"I am leaving the station," answered Mr. Main, in a hard bitter tone.

"Leaving the station! O father! What for!" Nellie's eyes filled with tears.

"The work is too hard, and my losses have been great. There are but two alternatives: either I must leave it, or it will leave me. Of the two evils I accept the former." Then turning away he added, more to himself than to his listener, "All my hard labour, all my hopes, all my plans, everything, even life itself, I have sacrificed to an unselfish end. It was not for myself I courted prosperity; it was for my family. I wanted them to be independent when I was gone. I wanted to leave enough to keep them from want. I brought them into the world, it was my duty to provide for them. Yet what is the result? Failure. Ingratitude. Loss. Oh! it is a bitter cup indeed." Strong man as he was, his voice quivered, and his eyes grew misty, as he gazed over the wide stretch of grassy level which had caused him so much toil and expense to make it even as it was—moderately useful.

O strange deep love of parent. Beside which all else becomes as naught. Self-sacrificing, protecting, unselfish love. Where is thy superior? Ah! too often we sacrifice on thine altar when it is too late. Discuss not "Paternal love." Its meaning is beyond the power of language. Let it ascend to heaven, as it descended from thence; ascend, silently, grandly, mysteriously.

Long into that night Nellie sat thinking. The happy past, the uncertain present, and the changeful future. She thought of her father's strange words, she thought of her
own dark forebodings, she thought with a shudder of the
dark vacuum beyond. She put two and two together, and
drew her own conclusions.

Ere daybreak the next morning Nellie was up. Her
father had been up for some time; she had heard him creep
past her door stealthily, that he might not disturb her.
Hastily dressing herself, she went in search of him. He
was in the barn; but, O, the barn was a barn no longer;
it was a restaurant. Reaching from one end of the barn
(or restaurant) to the other, and standing in the middle of
the floor, was a white draped table, laden with glasses,
bottles, plates, sandwiches, cheese, in fact with everything
required to form a good luncheon. In one corner stood
two kegs, and from each keg projected a tap, and on each
tap was tied a label. Suspicious-looking kegs, wonderful
kegs, mysterious kegs; what charm had they that they
were always surrounded by—by—never mind what by.

"I shall want you to stay near all day, Nellie," said Mr.
Main, "and see that every one is served. In the case of
any one requiring tea you will have to get it. I don't
suppose, however, that they will think of tea while that
stuff is there," pointing to the modest looking kegs. "You
will not have much trouble, Sarah will do all the running
about."

Nellie surveyed the arrangements with evident satis-
faction, she even added to them by decorating the walls
and table with fern and green leaves.

Two hours afterwards a large brake, filled and covered
and almost concealed with men, arrived from town.
Vehicle after vehicle followed: spring-carts, waggons,
buggies, gigs, drays, and even wheel-barrows, constituted
the vehicle procession. Horsemen, footmen, dogs, followed
in the wake of the procession. Men (masters and servants)
poured in from all the neighbouring stations, flooding house and barn and stable and yards, with their dusty forms and stockman’s slang. The air became filled with their stentorian voices, and it was hard so tell which was the sycophant, which the sincere. Like bees those men swarmed into the barn to eat and be merry, to crack their jokes over the wine glass, and to comment upon the enigmas of life. To describe the scene accurately is almost beyond the power of pen. Those who have been at a country sale will understand without descriptive proficiency.

In the centre and on a slight elevation stood the tall gaunt form of the auctioneer; the hammer in his uplifted hand; at his feet the goods and chattels for sale. Around him, on every side, like the undulating waves around the buoy, were gathered the eager pulsating purchasers. Squatter Gould was there, with his half a dozen men and twice that number of dogs; with his big red face, and his bigger fist; with his pompous “I’s” and his still more pompous “Me’s.”

So also Farmer Dunn, with his imposing stock whip, the lash of which was curled round and round in his hand, and the handle resting alternately on his hips or his hob-nailed boot. Cadet Grey, with his polished spurs and his insinuating smile. Deaf Sonton (nick-named Lord Herbert) heard by all, though himself vainly trying to hear. Joseph Smith (poor man; his coat grown too small for his frame, or his frame grown too big for his coat): up and down he stalks, brandishing his inch thick stick, and puffing and blowing like a pair of blacksmith’s bellows, greats beads of perspiration standing out on his sunburnt face.

There were men there, keen and sharp, and with whom it was hard to make a deal. Men of fewer years
perhaps, but men of greater wit. That man moves about among the sheep, but mark you, indifferent as he seems, he well knows what he is doing: he may be able to tell you more about the sale when it is over than can anyone else. This man is doing a great deal of talk. Are you well trained in the idioms of expression? If so, you cannot fail to notice the unnatural strain. His words are forced in order to serve a purpose. On the face of another man there rests a significant smile. Was that a genuine salutation which he gave to a new arrival? And what was the meaning of that wink? Perhaps he was shy and did not like to hear his own voice, or possibly he had a sore throat. But everyone there has a peculiarity, and it is interesting to note each, and to comment upon the different meanings. One pen of sheep is put up, sold, and sent away; presently the new owner will follow to see his brand and ear-mark put upon each sheep, but in the meantime he must have his glass. It may be he will see something else no one but himself has a right to have. Under the hammer, down the alley, on to the road, pen of sheep follow pen; each separate flock driven by its allotted men who are helped by their allotted dogs. Now the sheep farmers stand back and the brawny muscular stockmen step to the front. How strong and manly those sons of Esau look as they stand beneath the auctioneer's gaze; their well built supple frames cased in white woollen shirts and corduroy trousers; a bright coloured silk pocket handkerchief tied loosely around their necks, and on their wavy tumbled hair a wide-awake hat, such men make us ashamed of our puny town bred inhabitants.

Click, click, goes the auctioneer's hammer; every knock telling of some fresh change. The cattle are sold. The machinery and general implements are sold. Then come the horses: one by one they are led out and paraded up
and down in front of the rows of buyers, one by one they are passed over to whom they now belong, and, one by one they go to help swell the revenues of another. The sale is postponed until the next day, when a repetition of the same scene, with slight variations, takes place. The whole of the Main stud has to be disposed off without reserve that day.

There is an entirely different class in the foreground when that variation is being played. Cunning, sharp and avaricious, those men are as entirely different from the vociferating sheep farmer or the brawny stockman as is possible for men to be. The bidding is high and keen. There is no cool calculating, no laying down of the law among these men. All that has been done the night before. To take their attention from the auctioneer, and to walk up and down expostulating and explaining would not do for them. Such proceedings might suit the easy going farmers; but wily fish require the bait to be carefully laid if the fisher wish to catch the fish. See, the wine is taking effect, and the excitement is increasing (Is that not what is wanted?) Seventy, eighty, ninety; and into the hundreds, on, on until one bidder out bids the other. Down goes the hammer, and down goes the price. Poor dupe, which will you regret the most, the descent of the hammer or the descent of the pounds. After the excitement is over, when the judgement returns, many a finger is bitten, and many a man raves; but it is too late for retraction, and everyone must take his chance. One thing, I must solemnly warn you, never go visiting your country friends on the day after a large sale. You will be driven crazy by the continual repetition of the wonderful things to be done with, and the wonderful profits to be made from, those new possessions.
So much for the buyer; but what of the seller? He too is counting the cost, and making up the balance. Think you there was no pain in his heart as he saw one after another of his produce; stock he had handled and caressed; had learned to regard in the light and in the office of children; saw them pass into the possession of another, to be fondled or abused according to the varying humour? Ah! To know the plain truth, you must put yourself into that seller's place.

A sage of the ancient times once imagined he was very clever. He could see a defect in the formation of man if no one else could. He was the personification of “Had I been the maker there would have been a difference.” So to give his wisdom vent, he inserted into the mythological worship the deity of Sarcasm. And, as the story goes, Jupiter, bursting with pride at the excellence of his handiwork, brought for that deity’s inspection, the first man. “Capital,” exclaimed the Satire, viewing the perfect contour. “Capital, it has one defect, however; it needs a window in the breast that we might see the workings of the heart.” Wise sage, he had forgotten to tell his deity to look for the door. In the breast of every man there is a door whereby man may not only view from without, but he may also enter within. The name of that door is “Fellow feeling.” And if the right steps which lead to that door be ascended, man need never be anxious concerning their admittance into the workings of the heart of their fellow men.

To the world Mr. Main holds up a proud head and a smiling face. The auctioneer’s jests amuse him, and as a reward, he offers the jester a glass of sparkling wine. The buyers he encourages by the same free gift. For purchaser and for purchased words of commendation flow from his pseudo-proud lips; and his bearing indicates rather than
declares his perfect satisfaction. Vanity! Vanity! All is vanity and vexation of spirit. Look at him now. His jests are turned into sighs, his praises into regrets. He wanders about his deserted place, feeling a stranger in his own home, knowing that soon other hands will reap that which he has sown.

Farmer Main leaves the station. A novice has leased it, and, with his wonderful home experience, he is going to cause a revolution. He is going to shew "Those fools of Colonials what Englanders can do." Take care young man. Pride comes before a fall. Better men than you have displayed the same marvellous wisdom and have failed; sadly, hopelessly failed. You have a great deal to learn, and the lessons are rudely taught.
CHAPTER VII.

CLANG, clang, clang. Clearly on the crisp midnight air rang out the alarm of fire. Heaven help the poor people whose property is being destroyed.

A young man raises his head and listens. "It is at the other end of the town," he mutters. "I'll not bother," and he sinks back into his former position. But clang, clang, it goes again. At last shaking off the lethargy into which he had fallen, he stepped out into the open air. The night air cooled his heated brow, and gave vigour to his steps. He was walking quickly along the pavement when he was accosted by a familiar voice, and he paused.

"Ah! Ensway! So you came out after all. I knew you could not stay indoors a whole evening. Young fellows are not rats."

"I am going to see the fire," said the young man shortly.

"So am I; but we are rather late in the day, or at least in the night. However, if we don't see one fire, we will see another."

"Look here, Maurice," Ensway shook off the hand his friend had placed on his arm. "Look here, Maurice, you have played with me long enough. I have been your dupe for the last time. Go and ravish your charms on some one else; this child has had enough."

The two friends walked on in silence. It was dark or you would have seen a peculiar smile lurking about the corners of Albert Maurice's mouth. They reached the
scene of the fire, and stood for a few minutes gazing at it. The fire was almost extinguished, but the sooty firemen were still at their noble employment. The long black hose lay across the white street. The water rained thick and fast upon the smouldering mass; and in the hands of those diligent men those thread-like showers played, with sure force and subsequent victory, against the powers of flame. How much gratitude a town owes to its firemen, no one ever takes the trouble to think.

"Well, we have come a long way for nothing. I am going to get something to repay my trouble. Of course you will return home since ‘you have had enough.’" Albert Maurice turned away and walked leisurely down the road; the same peculiar smile hovering around his lips. Weak and easily led, Ensway followed. Not a word passed between them until they stood before the Masonic Hotel. How bright the lights within; how dull the darkness without. Why stand ye here a-gazing when ye might enter in? Life is short and fleeting, its depressions are not for man. Seek happy oblivion in the wine-cup and the brawl. The temptation was too strong. Iwane Ensway entered, and there was a repetition of what had so often occurred before. The early hours of morning saw him reeling home, supported by the too friendly arms of Maurice.

"We won’t go home till morning, we won’t go home till morning. Jove! Maurice, what will your girl say about this. I dreamt I lived in marble halls." These and similar expressions were uttered in thick guttural tones.

"Shut up, Ensway. You will waken the whole neighbourhood with your confounded row. Come home quietly like a respectable citizen."

They reached Ensway’s lodgings. Albert Maurice opened the door and pushed his friend in. Before closing it, however, he paused to utter a parting word.
"Have an hour's sleep old boy. Dream of your Bonsby girl. It will clear your brains. Ta-ta." And with a scornful laugh Maurice turned away. "What a simpleton Ensaw is," be muttered. "Rub him up with a little butter, and he can be turned into any shape. Fool! Well, well. The world is the world you know. Every man for himself. The weak must give way to the strong. Besides, there's the contract." The scornful smile died away at these last words, and the face was full of thought.

The weak must give way to the strong. Yes, Albert Maurice, the weak does give way to the strong; but not the weakness of man's discernment. Take care that you do not confound the two. Before long you too will learn that lesson of cedence, to your sorrow. You pride yourself on your strength now. You scorn your fellow man's weakness. You are exalted because you do not feel the fire of intoxication; because, among so many of your companions, you alone are cool and can keep your wits about you. Fool! thine is a pseudo strength waiting for the divulgence of time. The day is not far distant when the spirits of those whom you have helped to ruin will rise up and demand reparation. Think you they will be satisfied with the excuse, "Every man for himself?" They need a better reason; for on that principal you would not be enjoying the blessings you so ruthlessly abuse. I have heard men say, "Let us sow our wild oats now, we will settle down by and by." Who has ever been able to do that wonderful piece of work? I have never known, and neither have you, of a man sowing tares and reaping barley. Pointing to the public house and to your lodgings, you contrast the dulness of the one, with the life, the excitement, the companionship, of the other. There would be an excuse in that, but for the easy access into more congenial enjoyments. Or, again, you try to hush the voice of your con-
science by laying the blame on us. "If you put such temptation in our way, who is to blame for our fall?" If you entered into that temptation alone, and without warning; then we would be to blame for your fall. But as you do not, as you are warned night and day by the fall of others, and as you never enter but with your arm linked in that of a weaker brother; therefore, you yourself are to blame. More! you are to answer not only for yourself, but also for your brother; and the excuse you have given, you have stolen from him. His weak character could hardly stand against two such powerful allies as your influence and that of the drink. As for you, who would deliberately destroy your companion, nay, rather your fellow man, for companion means friend, and you are his enemy; as for you, we leave your case with a higher Judge.

We do indeed grieve to know that such places are permitted to remain and flourish in our free country; tarnishing its proud name, and building their foundations on the lives and souls of our children. But what can we do? Wait and hope, that is all. While every day our hearts are filled with sorrow at the sound of the mother's pleadings and the sight of the wife's tears. O, men of power, men, that by your position proclaim to the world your desire to love and serve your country, do you not hear our lamentations and weeping over those who are not? You must, you are not deaf. With intellects capable of inventing schemes for the physical improvement of our islands; we cannot but believe that the moral improvement of our people occupies its place in those intellectual capacities.

The revenues of this drink traffic appear to be enormous, but then do you think good can possibly come by winking at evil? You love your country; you value its freedom; you are proud to know that the air you breathe is un-
polluted by ages of crime and oppression. But think of your children's children; remember your great grandfathers; then turn and look at yourselves. You stand between the ages as it were, and the honour of laying the foundation of a free race is in your hands. How are you laying that foundation? Are you profiting by the failure of your ancestors? The privileges you enjoy in this new land, your forefathers also enjoyed and abused in the old land. You fled from the weight of accumulated neglect. Is the same fate to follow the steps of your great grandchildren? Must they, because of their parents' blindness and selfishness, flee from their homes and seek freedom elsewhere? In another New Zealand may be? No! No! We are parents, and it is our duty to provide for the future welfare of our children. Let the gold go. With the loss of gold, there will be the loss of vice, and "Virtue will bring its own reward." Men, your weaker sex, kneel to you. By your manhood protect them. Cast out this evil from among you, and do not break their hearts by your dissipations. Day after day they try to love you, but when respect begins to totter, what is the use of love? Understand, it is by relinquishing the wine cup that you protect them, for you prevent their hearts from being broken by the keeping of their respect for you. I know there are many women who themselves try to banish this drink; who seek by their own arbitrary power to wrestle from your hands the keys of the wine cellar, and to hurl the wine bottles into the moat of destruction. But there are still some few remaining who are true to their womanhood, and who keep faith in your manhood. There are still some who would put, and who do put their hands into that of their husbands, and looking up into his face, ask that for their sakes, that loved one would destroy those wine bottles himself. By the very power of that mutual love we know the request will be granted.
Rousing himself from the stupor into which he had fallen Enswav hurriedly dressed himself. His head was in a whirl, and his whole body racked with pain. "I shall have to go; but I am not fit for much work to day," thought he, as he turned to look at his face in the glass. "I'm in for another sermon; the boss will know by that face where I was last night." He was late at the office. The foreman asked his reason; there was none to give, save that he overslept himself. He was ordered to his place with this solemn warning. "Young man, you had better not let this occur to often. I tell you for your own sake. Break with your companions, or we will have to break with you."

Iwand Enswav resumed his work. For hours his pen flew over the paper. The foreman passed several times, but unheeding his presence, the pen flew on. Sheet after sheet of paper passed through those flying fingers. The head was never raised, except to collect fresh paper, or to sort the written ones. Twelve o'clock struck. One o'clock struck. A hand was laid on the young man's shoulder. With a start he looked up.

"It is long past your lunch hour Enswav. Why man you are all of a tremble. You are doing too much. Go to my office. You will find something there that will warm you up." The voice of the master was kind, and his intentions were good, but Iwand declined the offer.

"Thank you," was all he said, as he reached down his hat and stepped out into the dusty street. The air did little towards soothing his aching brow. O, how he longed for an hour's quiet country purity. He even looked across at the brown fern clad hills, a thing he had not done for many months past.

Entering the nearest restaurant he ordered a cup of tea. When the steaming cup was brought to him, a quiet smile curled his lips.
"The first cup of tea I have had for luncheon for goodness knows when. I wonder why home memories crowd into a fellow's brain all at one time. A week ago I would have knocked any one down if they dared to say I was home sick." Musing thus he swallowed down his tea, and returning to the office, recommenced his work with the same lightning speed.

"What a pity that young man is not more steady. He has the makings of a smart business man if he would only keep away from the drink," said Mr. Graham to his foreman, as he stood for a few minutes contemplating the quiet figure bent over his desk.

"Yes! He does twice as much as any of the others, and then his work is always so neatly done."

"All that I own. I am only afraid his dissipating habits might lead him beyond himself. I don't want to part with him, but if he does not draw in his horns soon, something will have to be done. I shall speak to him to-night."

The master passed into his private office, poured out a glass of "something that would warm him up," drank it off, and replaced his empty glass. "Grand stuff that. Get some more when it is done. May keeps the best whisky after all," then the would-be servant saviour sat down to examine his books.

Oh! you hypocrite. The evil resulting from intemperance is to be recited by such as you. You are going to reform a fellow-man. How dare you mock your manhood, and turn truth to shame. Half-an-hour ago you tried to lure a young man into your den to partake in company with yourself, of that accursed cup; and while you held out the sparkling wine, you intended to read him a moral lecture upon the folly of accepting your gift. Strange kind of reformer; pity all were not like you. Reformation would then be confounded with revolution.
But what were the thoughts that were passing through that young man’s mind during the whole of that day? Why was he so strangely active mechanically and mentally; so strangely inactive concerning outward influences?

Sweet and sad and far away sounded the words of a once forgotten refrain: “Good-bye, dear, dear Iwander.” Over the years of his misspent life those sweet words floated, until at last they stood at the portals of his heart; there they knocked and knocked, and when he refused them admittance, they knocked again. “Why come ye here to mock me in this my hour of need? Away! and let me bear this degradation alone.” But the gentle knocking continued, and the gentle voice replied, “It is not sufficient that we stand outside and speak. You must open and let us in.”

Then the young penitent threw open his conscience portals, and the sweet words floated in to the inner chambers of his heart. Onward and upward they passed, filling every room with their pure, simple melody, entering into every dusty corner, stirring up every sleepy inhabitant. The bats and the owls that had taken up their lodgings beneath the eaves of that neglected ruin, were startled at the unfamiliar sound, and flew away; while at the same time their hasty flight shook from the crumbling walls, their lichen abodes. The sun of a new formed resolution shone on those walls, now cleared of their mouldering parasites; and already steps were being taken for the re-building of that ruined temple.

The hour of closing arrived. In the same mechanical way the young clerk rose, wiped his pen, crushed the few remaining papers in his desk, locked down the lid, and turned his steps to his dull quiet lodgings.

“What’s up with Ensway to-night? He looks jolly seedy,” exclaimed one of his fellow-lodgers to another, as
with a short nod Iwand passed the two friends standing on the door step, and entered his room.

"Got the blue devils. He was going the pace last night. Some men are soft;" and with a contemptuous nod, they dismissed their companion from their thoughts.

Iwand Ensaway stood for a few minutes gazing into vacancy, unconsciously his fingers began trifling with his watch chain. The chain got entangled with a button. He looked down to disentangle it. His eyes fell upon the pendant. What was in that little locket to cause such an outburst of emotion? Only a tiny curl of soft dark hair, tied with a bit of silk. Like the billowy waves of an angry sea, thought after thought surged through his awakening brain. The sudden furious out burst almost over whelmed him, and flinging himself into a seat, he buried his face in his hands. "My God! What a terrible gulf lies between us. Spare me a little longer to redeem myself. Keep the knowledge of mis-spent life from her. Let her believe me faithful still." Then the picture of a sweet face, with innocent love lit eyes; of clinging trustful arms around his neck, of quiet firm words. "I shall remember you because I love you;" floated before his mind. For hours he sat there dead to all around; life betrayed only by the heaving of his breast. At length he arose, and stretched his cramped limbs. In his eyes shone a clear bright light, on his close set lips rested an expression of settled determination. "Yes. I will take master's advice and settle down. A wife will keep me straight. Dear little Lyly;" he smiled in a patronizing way. Poor little thing, how she loves me. "I must be careful though; she is a strange girl."

Writing paper appeared. Ink appeared. Pen appeared. A wonderful letter was to be written. Great things were to be done. A mighty start was made. Flourish—dash—
pause—then a blot. Away goes that sheet of paper. Out comes another. Flourish—dash—pause—then a smear. That sheet of paper follows its predecessor. And so on, until every piece is spoiled, and the ink splashed all over the desk. Oh, it is one thing to fill quire after quire of paper with commercial writing; but it is another to fill half a line with emotional writing. This Iwand learned that night. "Confound it. There, I have wasted all my paper. Who would have thought my pen would fail me just at this crisis."

But the next night was set aside for the important task, and the next night it was completed. The stationer got rid of two shillings worth of writing paper through that first failure, and I dare say, if he knew the ins and outs of the circumstances, he would advise everybody to write their proposals. It is a capital thing for trade.

"There," muttered Iwand, to himself, as he inscribed the address, and stamped the corner of the envelope. "There, if that isn't the most unselfish piece of business I'll eat my hat. I ought to get an answer this day week; but I'll allow a fortnight. I'll not go out one evening during that time. I am sure dear old Lyl would believe my word against the whole world. How easily women are won. Let them see you care for them, and they are yours through life and death."

Iwand went to bed that night thinking himself the most unselfish of mortals, and congratulating himself upon having won the love of a sweet country girl. Ah! Iwand Enswav. You are not the only one who has such thoughts. Women are not so easily won as you imagine. Neither are they so easily deceived. Not that wrong-doings rise or fall in their estimation. It is the deception that adds to the weight. Do not think love is blind. It's eyes are always open and shining, like those of Juno. The ancients must
have recognized this truth else, why should they ascribe to Juno, as indicating her watchfulness, the stars as eyes. Rest in your self-confidence, Iwand. "Tis well to rest. And to such as thee, to whom it has been a stranger so long, rest becomes doubly beneficial. But know that character varies in woman-kind. Tenderness is not weakness. Prior preference is not easy preference. Intemperance, dark as it is, and direful enough to sever two links, is not the only evil to be feared; has not the prerogative of annihilation.

Simple little Lyly may be able to read between the lines: possibly over the hedge of outward dissipation, into the field of inner character. She might, discover that that hedge, so thick and inaccessible on the outside, has holes on the inside; and that, by reason of the dead twigs lying about, and the yellow leaves clinging to the branches, the longevity of that growth is but a few years. While in the inner field of character she might discover deep sloughs which would never, as far as she was concerned, be crossed. Weeks passed, and no letter came. Iwand grew impatient.

"I shall let Mur into the secret. She will work the oracle. Trust a sisters discretion." And into the secret Mur was let, for Iwand posted a letter to his sister, to which he received an immediate answer. But it was a very unsatisfactory answer. It was a tantalizing answer—an answer he could make nothing of.

"Nellie is still at home," wrote his sister. "But I see very little of her. She never comes to see us now. Her father sold his station some time ago, and at present he is living in town. I believe the family is going to move, for Mr. Main told father that he, being used to the country air, felt choked with the town dust. If they do I shall see less of Nellie than ever. People say Mr. Main is very strict with his daughters, and will not let them enter into
society. It is the old Scotch teaching I believe. I know we have grown tired of asking Nellie to join in our amusements, for our invitations are always declined with thanks. However, I shall make it my business to call upon Nellie, as soon as possible, and shall do what I can for you, my poor love sick brother."

Poor harmless inoffensive letter. It went flying across the room, it landed in a corner, and there stood with its face to the wall. I wonder if it repented of its misdeeds.

One good came of this little episode, however; Iwau Ensway was not seen so often at the mouth of the demon’s den, or at the billiard precipice. Those few weeks self-restraint showed him he could do without that “something that would warm him up.”
CHAPTER VIII.

A RAW, cold evening in the middle of winter. The street lamp had been lit since half-past four; some of the shops had had their lamps lit even before that early hour. During the whole of the day, and for about two weeks before, it had continued in one steady drizzling rain. Every second person you met in the street would utter the solemn prediction, "Flood." The rivers were swollen and milky, and warning was given to town and country travellers not to pass hither and thither. The evening hours washed as far up the banks of day as those boundary banks would allow them; widening their own beach, narrowing the day's coast. The air was thick and damp, and the heavy folds of its mist drapery would not allow the clear penetration of the gaslight. Only a few feet around those lamps became bright and transparent, which, like the shining halo around the moon, shrouded in their silken folds the forms of their artificial gods. Down the sides of every house, and every shop, and every wall, and every window, flowed Nature's tears. Drip, drip, drip, as those tears fell upon the hard stone pavement; then uniting themselves into thread-like streams, they trickled over their slippery banks and into the open arms of the gutters, to be carried past doors, past windows, past corners, under verandahs, and finally placed on the lap of their nurse, where they remained until their journey was completed, and then they were received into the bosom of their parent. The naked trees which lined the streets on either side wept in silent sympathy, and uniting their tears with
those of their sawn lacerated brothers and sisters, helped to
swell the fast-flowing streams. The streets were bleak and
desolate, and the main street—But, ah! here was a wonder.
The main street of Bonsby was, during the winter months,
the predominating curio of the place. It incited comment
from people for miles around, and visitors arriving from
distant towns were shown with all the dignity of, "That's all
mine," this wonderful phenomenon. Perhaps it would give the
reader a better idea of the nature of Bonsby's curio if we
were to repeat a remark made by one of those complimentary
visitors. After looking at it for several minutes in mute
astonishment he quietly said, "You can certainly plant
potatoes on it. It will not need ploughing. I am not sure
but that you could plant plough and ploughman; the soil is
softened deep enough for both to take root." Of course
this gentleman was rather inclined to be imaginative;
consequently something must be allowed for exaggeration.
Imaginative people are said to be able to find beauty even in
the filthy water of a mire, or in the thriving of a pig on
slime. However, potatoes or no potatoes, the streets on the
evening in question were very muddy indeed; and they were
not only very muddy and very dark, but they were very
desolate. With the exception of a lounter or two in front
of the hotels (These may always be seen. I believe if the
world were coming to an end, some two or three loungers
would find there way to the hotel doors to watch the con-
summation). With the exception of these loungers, of a
policeman, a straggler wanting a newspaper, a shopman with
arms folded behind, in the doorway of the separate shops;
no other tokens of life were visible on that deserted street.
Even the dogs, that will, at every other step you take during
the daytime, persist in there endeavours to trip you up, had
slunk away to their kennels and their comforts. Suddenly,
from the side-door of one of the largest drapery and clothing
establishments, issues the muffled form of a young girl. She hurries along the slippery foot-path until she reaches the suggested potato plantation; then comes to a full stop. The corner lamp light shines full upon the solitary figure, and reveals a little pale face, with dark shining eyes. Only a moment does she hesitate. The street must be crossed, and the sooner attempted the sooner finished. "I wish I had a pair of Tom's stilts," she exclaimed, as she gathered her skirts around her, and proceeded to wade through the mud.

"There! that's the first misfortune, I wonder what will be the next, myself I suppose." As the handle of her umbrella slipped out of her grasp, and almost found its way into a soft muddy bed.

"I'll walk on my heels, they are higher than my toes." Forward—Quick march,—And heels and toes and ankles are struggling in the midst of the treacherous foe. They storm the fort and gain the other side in safety. Another pause while the girl kicks her feet against the edge of the pavement in an attempt to get rid of some of the mud, and then the dark robed figure resumes her quick pace, and disappears down the dreary-looking cross-road. The policeman standing at the corner, turns and looks after her, then follows at a distance. For several evenings he had done the same thing. He had learned to look for the little solitary figure; and he now considered it his sacred duty to see it safe inside the gate. Not that the girl ever knew. Such little kindnesses are not worth mentioning. Well, if she never knew, some one else did. And whither the man expects it or not, that Some One Else will not pass by these little kindnesses unnoticed.

"It is only a small deed of kindness, and there is no reward offered. Besides, it is his duty." I wonder if we all are faithfully doing our duty. I fear not. Our days are spent, for the most part, in comparative idleness; and when
an opportunity for doing good arises, we, being unprepared, 
allow it to slip past. Kindness does not consist in the 
magnitude of the deed. Its essential parts are those cups 
of cold water; and its throne is beneath the sheaves that 
were used by Rahab to cover the spies.

Passing quickly down the street, the girl enters a gate, 
and walks up the narrow path leading to the main entrance 
of a large boarding-house. She pauses a few minutes 
beneath the verandah to shake the drops from her umbrella, 
and to take off her wet 'ulster.

"This weather destroys one's clothes," she muttered as 
she carefully wiped her shoes on the door mat. A stout 
elderly woman appeared from one of the side rooms.

"A lady to see you, miss," said she, her round greeny 
grey eyes rounder than ever, and her curiosity almost escap-
ing their natural bounds. "I shewed her into your room. 
Was that right?"

"Thanks. Yes." The tantalizing girl knew that the 
woman was bursting to know who the visitor could be, but 
she pretended to be very busy with her draggled skirts.

The breast of Eve's daughter heaved. The hands became 
convulsed, the breath came in short broken gasps; at last 
the words found vent, "Do you know who she be, Miss? It's 
queer she comes on such a night as this," said the old woman, 
in a very mysterious whisper.

"I shall be able to tell you when I have seen her," quietly 
answered the girl, as she passed the quivering mass of 
curiosity, and opened a door at the further end of the 
passage.

"Is it you, Annie? I have been racking my brains to try 
and find out who would be so silly as come out on such an 
evening. I left Mrs. Sebof in the last agonizing struggles of 
that chronic disease which we women inherited from Eve."
"I am in difficulty about suitable lodgings," said the visitor, when the usual 'How do you do's were over. "Do you know where I could get a room?"

"Let me see. Now I come to think of it, I believe Mrs. Sebof has one vacant. Would you care to come here?"

"Indeed I would, much better than anywhere else."

"Don't be too sure, Annie. There are drawbacks here as well as elsewhere. I like the place, but then that is not to say everyone else would do the same. Situated as I am, almost any place would suit me. Beyond 'Good morning' and 'Good evening,' I scarcely ever pass a word with the other boarders. You would be different."

"I wonder you live like this when you might be enjoying the comfort of having everything done for you." Annie Bowers looked round the neat little room, and took in every detail. Turning to her friend, she was surprised to see a peculiar smile on the quiet face.

"Is it a comfort to have everything done for you, Annie? You forget; I have always been used to do for myself. It is nothing new to me. Besides, there is the end." The eyes of the speaker were soft and dreamy, and the little mouth set and determined. "However, that has nothing to do with your trouble, Annie. If I like being singular, it is because I dislike the common, and because I am not competent for the Particular. There! I am reading you a lecture, and forgetting we are living beings with stomachs. Have you had your tea?"

"No. I thought you might be going out, so came immediately after business."

"You were wise. I am going back to work."

"Going back to work. Why? What for?" exclaimed the girl in astonishment.
"To work of course. We have a wedding order to finish by to-morrow. I was afraid it would not be ready in time, so offered my services to-night, and they have been accepted."

"Well you were a goose. Of course they would be accepted. You could work yourself to death, and that would not satisfy them."

The girl smiled. "We are not worked to death in this bright country, Annie. Indeed, I think we have a great deal to be thankful for. Work girls may be badly treated in other towns, but they are not here. I hope Bonsby will never have factories."

"And you can say that. You, who have never known until now what it is to serve another?" asked Nellie in surprise.

The girls head was turned away, and the questioner did not see the white even teeth suddenly descend on the tender lip.

A brief pause, then the quiet voice replied, "We must learn to serve, before we can govern Annie." The old cheerful smile returned, and the face was again turned toward her friend. "Take off your things dear, while I get tea. Afterwards we will have a talk about your perplexities."

Annie remonstrated, but there was no use. She had to do as she was told. "Indeed you ought to feel highly honoured, and I believe you are, only you want to be like the rest of your sex, must be pressed before produced. It is not everybody who gets an invitation to my teas, I can assure you." The deft fingers were busy: lighting lamp, putting on kettle, spreading cloth, setting cups and saucers, cutting bread, and pretending to get into mischief. In less than ten minutes all was ready, and the two girls sat down to enjoy their simple meal, and to puzzle over the lodging problem. As they are thus engaged, let us glance around the room of this singular eccentric girl, who, rather than
give up her independence, refused to accept the gifts the
gods gave. Small, neat and spotlessly clean: it serves the
double purpose of bedroom and sitting room. This is to
save the expense of engaging two when one could be made
to do almost as well. The interior is the sleeping apart-
ment, the exterior the sitting apartment, and between
the two by way of a partition, hangs soft art muslin
curtains. These curtains reach from ceiling to floor, are
parted in the centre, and caught up in loose sweeping folds
towards the sides. A tiny wasli stand and dressing table
with their necessary adornments, a curtained wardrobe, a
neat little bed, and the snuggest and the lowest and the
prettiest of chairs, are all that sleeping apartment contained.
Yet not all, at the head of the small white bed, and bending
over the pillows, as if to prepare them for the reception
of the occupier, and if to guard that occupier whether
sleeping or waking; are the silver printed, angel prompted
words "Thou God seest me." It would be hard to say how
often two troubled eyes were turned up to those shining
words, still harder to know how often, by the light of those
shining words, God's eyes were seen turned upon the "Me."
The sitting apartment is slightly different. In the corner
stands a mysterious looking piece of furniture, artistically
draped with muslin, and ornamented with bows of ribbon.
What a pity you saw the bread and butter and sugar and
milk issue from this mysterious piece of furniture, for then
you would take it to be what it looked, a very pretty fern
stand; being crowned as it was with a large pot of maiden
hair fern. The little table at which the two girls are seated
is small, but quite large enough for one. A piano fills up
one side and two shelves appear above. But that which
attracts your attention is the number of books lying about.
In every place where they could, with safety be deposited,
you will see them. Red, blue, green, brown, black,
in almost every coloured binding you could think of. One shelf contains the works of Walter Scott, another that of Charles Dickens. The piano is crowned with Macaulay, Carlyle, Milton, Lamb. In the corner, in one heap of confusion lay, Smiles, Hemans, Browning and many other miscellaneous authors. A large volume of Shakespear is open at the play of Julius Cæsar, as if the reader had been suddenly interrupted in her perusal. Where you to look inside the covers of almost every book, you would find marks indicating special interest awakened by special thought.

"I must go now Annie," said the girl rising, "you will excuse me wont you. Dear me, I did not think it was so late" exclaimed she, glancing at her watch. "I will see Mrs. Sebof and let you know by tomorrow."

"Thank you, I am so much obliged." In a few moments the two girls were on their way, one to her lodgings, the other to the work room.

Ten o'clock. A man's step is heard ascending the long flight of stairs, the work room door opens and a gentleman enters.

"Are you nearly finished?" The quiet voice of the master speaks.

"No, Mr. Riadan."

"How long will it take to finish?"

"I do not know. 'We are doing our best." Said Miss Hitch wearily.

"Are you the only two here?"

"Yes, the others had made previous engagements. They are coming early in the morning instead."

"Well, you must leave off now, it is ten o'clock." The master turns away, his steps sounding hollow and distant as he descends the creaking stairs. Silently the two dressmakers fold their work. They place the chairs on the
table. They don their walking wraps. They turn off the gas. They follow their master. The key grates in the lock of the door, and they are in the cold dark street. Once again that evening the girl entered her room. Without troubling to light a candle; hardly troubling to undo her wraps, she flung herself across the bed, too tired and exhausted to sleep. Toss, turn, twist, it was of no use; the weary eyes would not close, the parched soul would not rest. "Oh! for morning. Oh! for light. Rest, what is thy meaning? Man, thou art a robber. Thou hast stolen that word from the language of a being higher than thee." The soft pillows were frozen, and became hard and unyielding to the uneasy head. The white sheets became tinged with autumn's red, and were as useless to the thirsting frame. Morning dawned, but winter's morning, and the lifeless work was resumed. The girl arose from her troubled bed as one who rises from a bed of pain. Dressing herself, she slipped a few biscuits into her pocket, glided out of the semi-darkened room, and along the bare passage. There was no one about. It was too early for the other boarders, even for the servants. This was something to be thankful for. There would be no inquisitive eyes peeping at her from behind the curtains. The hall door yielded to her touch, not without a creak however, and the girl stood out in the cold keen air. A chill breeze swept past, sending a shiver through the slender frame, but the door was closed, and the resolute wanderer went forth, alone. The ground was wet and slippery, but the air was clear, and all clouds had banished from the sky. Nature, as if responding to the sympathetic caresses of her children, dried her tears, lifted her misty veil, and promised to weep no more for a while; yet many of her crystal drops hung upon her eyelashes, and as the girl passed beneath the trees, the vibrations of her steps sent a quiver through the eyelids, shaking the tears in showers down upon her head.
"They are baptizing me anew," she murmured. "Blessed are they who are baptized in nature's tears." On, on, her footsteps strayed; further and further from the town they led her, until at last she paused in the middle of a little hand bridge that span a stream on the outside limits of the town. The waters flowed beneath her feet, the moss and lichen clung to the piles, seaweed struggled against the tide, but she had no thoughts for these. Her eyes were fixed on the heavens, her soul was waiting for the breaking of that day's light.

"Rise emblem of the Human Sun," she cried, standing erect in the dawning light, her arms outstretched and raised in the direction of the eastern sky, her dark hair streaming in the morning breeze, and her eyes glowing with a supernatural brilliancy. "Rise, emblem of the Human Sun, symbol of His dealings. Let the nations behold thy face. Through their tears let them see that thou art forgiving. Rise, and let thy subjects worship thee." As if obeying her command, the solemn warning of the sun's approach was sent across the deep, heavy-coloured sky. Pale, creamy, golden, those messengers appeared at first, but as they spread themselves throughout the length and breadth of their blue dwelling place, they disclosed the true rich texture of their golden garments. Slowly and majestically the red fiery ball appeared in the wake of its fore-runners; slowly and majestically it freed itself from the distant hills; and proudly and grandly it stood out in the heavens; omnipotent in the hands of The Omnipotent. The arms of the gazer fell to her side, the eyes grew misty with unshed tears, the proud form bent as one doing obeisance to a superior, and the sweet voice murmured, "Unto thee, O sun, who at the command of thy ruler, paused in thy diurnal course to allow the chosen victory over the rejected; unto thee I tender my morning greeting."
The low soft peal of the Angelus awoke the dreamer, reminding her of the hour, not of prayer, but of business, and with slow firm steps she returned to the town, and to the drudgery. Half-an-hour afterwards she is seated at her work, in the same seat she occupied the night before, and had occupied for many months past. The table at which she sits is strewn with dress material and half-finished work, with boxes containing cotton, pins, scissors, and scores of other dressmaking items. Just above her head is a line covered with half-finished bodices, and sleeves, and neck bands. Although the only occupier of her table, she is not the only occupier of the room. At the other end are some ten or twelve girls, all engaged in cutting and sewing and tacking and placing. Throughout all, a noise, like the incessant buzzing of bees, pervades, while above all is the deafening rattle of the sewing machines.

Outwardly calm, inwardly raging, the girl bends over her work, and tries to close her ears against the harsh grating sound. "I ought to be used to the noise by now," she thinks. "Yet it is impossible. Even the coarse rough mountain fern will not thrive in the hot-house clime. Am I proud? Am I rebellious? I do not think so. Look at those girls; they are happy, or they seem to be. What is wrong with me that I cannot be the same? Nature, thou art to blame. Circumstances, thou art nature's accomplice. From my deified parent I inherit the nature of freedom and power, but circumstances have fettered my being with terrestrial limbs." The head bent lower and lower, the fingers almost ceased their sewing, the thoughts were, where they always were, far away.

"Are you waiting for anything?" The voice made the dilatory girl start, and the sarcasm in the question made her resume the neglected task. For fifteen minutes the fingers
flew over her work; for fifteen minutes a resolute determination to think of the actual was kept up, and at the end of fifteen minutes the thoughts were as far away as ever.

"Is there no release? Am I to live this life for ever? Father in Heaven, have pity and take me away." She did not hear the soft low answer, for its voice was stifled by the hot passionate rebellion that burned so fiercely in her heart. "Soon." That one word floated down, but ere it reached the listening ear, a cloud of steam from the heated heart, forced back the sound, and it was lost in the disturbed air above.

The bride's dress is finished and sent away. She is putting it on at this moment. "This button is not right. That hook is too far over. Bother those dressmakers. You cannot rely on them. They never do anything properly." Oh! bride, you are on the threshold of a bright and happy future. Can you not spare us that twinge of pain?
CHAPTER IX.

WHO is that girl, Riadan?"

"The tall girl standing beside the counter?"

"No; the one passing through the shop. She looks remarkably like someone I know."

"I dare say. She is a Miss Main."

"Main; Main. Get away, man! You don't mean Farmer Main's daughter, surely?"

"Yes. There is only one Main in Bonsby. One can hardly mistake the name." Mr. Riadan spoke coldly. He did not half like the tone of his questioner. Squatter Gould laughed, and his harsh laugh was not pleasant. He had always been a little jealous of Farmer Main's influence and prosperity. He felt humiliated in his neighbour's presence; for although the Gould station contained twice the acreage, and twice the stock, and twice the number of workmen that was contained in the Main station, yet that quiet dignity which betokens power and commands respect was denied its proprietor. It was not flattering to his vanity to be addressed as "Gould" by his servants, and to hear his rival addressed as "sir." There was some satisfaction in knowing that the proud girl who declined his wife's invitation to her garden party was earning her own living. Joanna, the haughty Miss Gould, would be pleased with the news. Mr. Riadan got an order for a new dress, to be made in the latest fashion, and no expense to be spared. Jealousy, like love, is a good thing for trade.
"Sensible man. Farmer Main is noted for his common sense." A mocking laugh. "Women now-a-days get too little work to do, and too much time to do it in. Of course my girls are different. I intend to get them well married. They shall never require to work, thank goodness. I am taking good care of that." And the waistcoat swelled to twice its ordinary size as it felt the importance of enclosing the breast of this modern Caesar.

"Yes," said the merchant, gravely; "this world is full of ups and downs; and if girls have to work, the sooner they begin the better. For my part I do not care to look forward to what might come to pass concerning our children. Miss Main's coming here has set me thinking."

And so it was. He who had for years been engrossed in his pounds, shillings and pence, now felt the quivering of that structure. The quiet face and large dark eyes, the firm set lips, and the resolute determination not to give in, had shown this city Croesus that wealth and prosperity were not the strongest foundations upon which man might build. The master never crossed the barrier between servant and serving, but the shopmen knew that it was as much as their situation was worth to displease Miss Main.

Squatter Gould returned home, like the evening paper, crammed full of news. His wife and children read the pleasing information, then passed it on to their friends. At the next afternoon tea it became the principal theme of conversation. It was barely commented on at the end of the week; and before the month was out it was almost forgotten. Madam Society shrugged her shoulders, and drew her pen through the name of Main, saying, "We cannot afford to waste time upon broken-down swells." And Madam's favourite daughter murmured, "Dressmakers," as she passed the quiet figure in the street. A cloud of that filthy dust, wrongly named pride, arose between them, and Madam's
daughter could not see her former friend. *Nellie saw it all.* Instinct is a safe teacher. No cloud is too thick for its penetration. Almost every day the proud girl experienced some fresh slight, some fresh cut from society's lash. As the days grew into months she became hard and cold. She deemed all the world alike; and, with curling lips and crimson cheek, she would pass in and out among those empty walking charter houses, scorning the ivy-clad walls.

"Slight on, proud Society. I mock your power, for I see your vulnerable point. You will yet lie at my feet praying for admittance; but my doors shall be closed against you for ever."

The days were spent in sewing, in working; but the nights were spent in learning, in praying. Two hours were set aside for practice, and two for reading, yet it was always the early hours of morning before the books were laid down and the piano closed. Often the young student would spring to her feet, would pace the floor, would feel her heart bursting within her, and like a stricken exile would cry for release from the fetters that bound her intellect to the few feet of earth along which she journeyed; then, feeling cramped and oppressed by the walls, she would go forth to seek freedom and freshness under the open sky; there to find satisfaction in the Infinite, the Eternal, and the Unchangeable. What wonder that she learned to love man less and nature more. The girls in the workroom thought her "strange." The shopmen called her "Goody goody." Her sisters despised the spirit that would not be roused to retaliation; and her parents declared she had no energy. Yet all were mystified, and all decided that she was proud. But pride did not debar her from the confidence of her fellow-workers. Into the open vase were poured all troubles and joys: the vase was shaken; and when the offerers saw their gifts again, a word of encouragement or a smile of approval was affixed to each
gift. They were simple girls; a little giddy, perhaps; but that is not the worst fault girls can have. Giddy girls are seldom deceitful. It is too much trouble for them to act a deeply-laid plot, so they content themselves with the comedies. For my part, I prefer the giddy girl to her quiet sister, for the simple reason that, being of a quiet disposition myself, I know what deceit often lurks behind my apparently unselfish intentions. Of course the quiet girl has the prerogative of becoming deeper by wrestling with those feelings; then she passes beyond the limits of choice. However, the girls in question were not brilliant heroines and beautiful romance characters. They were the ordinary kind, varying a little in natures, but, on the whole, good. In their worst humours they were better than the ordinary kind of men.

Miss Main may not know much, and she may say less than she knows, but she listens, and Sezeria be praised, she is not a gossip." So they told her all about their lives; about their love affairs, their love quarrels and makes up, where they went the evening before and where they were going the evening after. What he said, and what she said, and what the world said in general. They told her what they were going to wear at the dance, and, when the dance was over, what they said during the fan flirtations. One thing was certain, if a mistake was made in their work, and if they dared not let their mistress know, they were sure to find their way over to Miss Main's table.

Was Nellie unconscious of all this? Was she really the weak, good-natured girl without any "Go" in her? You do not know the inner character. You have not seen the hidden conflicts. Those simple tributes were the rudiments of that power she longed to obtain, and was soon to wield. The smallest words were gathered up and used. "I accept all," she would cry as she marked the growing influence she was gaining over those whom she came in contact. "I accept
all. These are tokens of the approach of a larger sway. They are the only things that reconcile me to my lot. Oh! for power over the lives of man. For intellectual strength. Up, up the ladder I creep. The way is toilsome, but the aim is worthy. I shall not despise the ladder when I reach the top. I know not if this be ambition; if so, blessed desire, for it prompts me to rise, that I may draw all mankind with me." And so the taunting word was passed by with a shrug of contempt, and the wise critic received a sweet smile. Proudly conscious was she that society's fortress was gradually being undermined. Tasting, in imagination, the sweet flavour of the cup of revenge held toward her by the future. But of those conflicts, carried on during the quiet hours of night, when the books were laid aside, and the lamps extinguished. Creep gently. Let not your steps be heard, veil your presence, else the drooping form will be frozen into the cold proud girl of the street. Upon her knees, with bare outstretched arms, and streaming eyes, a white-robed figure kneels. The figure sways with the intensity of the emotion within; and the loose folds of the white garment across the breast rise and fall at every breath, while the white coverlet is wet with tears. To you these tears are strangers; being turned, during the day, into that vapour caused by the heat of criticism or pity. They flow freely enough in the darkness of the night. Listen:

"My beautiful castle, whose domes and minarets reached into Heaven, whose foundation was believed to be on 'Purity's rock,' whose inhabitants were my parents, and whose superintendent myself: my beautiful castle, where are you? Oh! you need not have fallen upon me! If fall you must, why attempt to destroy me in your fall? Was I not prepared to resign every selfish desire that I might fill no higher office than that of superintendent? Shall I give up? Is the aim worth the design? Give up! Never! Not while Scotch
blood flows through my veins. Not while life lasts. Are a few tears now to be compared with the smiles by and by? No! Another shall be built: grander, brighter, more extensive; but God shall draw out the plans, and Jesus shall lay the foundation.”

Thus the nights would pass; thus day after day would find her weaker or stronger, according to the results of the midnight conflicts; and thus at length, with a feeling of dread, she would await the approach of darkness.

Reader, you may think and say, “This is far stretched. Such characters do not exist in this nineteenth century.”

I tell you it is no exaggeration to say that every word of the conflicts of this story is true; nay more, “The half was never told,” and that girl lives and thanks God for the agony of those dark and dreaded hours.

It is not given to all to endure such sufferings. Neither are all subjected to the same discipline. A wise and loving Father rules the world; and who should understand children’s natures better than does their parent? For some the rod is needed, for others the darkened room. But whosoever wisheath to be of service, both in this world and in the next, must submit themselves unto the discipline of their Heavenly Father. Believe me, though for a while hardiness and injustice may be the impressions of the nature of that discipline, yet for eternity there will be, and there is even now—praise and power. One word to my sister or brother journeying through the same dark valley of blighted hopes. Be careful you do not miss the lessons taught by your Heavenly teacher. Pause now and then to look up into the clear sky of God’s understanding; your eyes will then be removed from earth’s dull clods, and you will be led over many places which otherwise you would have to walk alone. Remember God is the judge, and you are the judged; in all things he has a righteous object in view. Keep this truth as your watchword, and you
need fear nothing. Your steps may falter, but they will not cease; and you will have no regrets when you pass through the dark valley of trial, and step out into the light of understanding. I have fallen by not doing so. Let not my fate be the fate of others. God, in his mercy, has helped me regain my faith and trust. He has poured oil on my wounds; He has turned failures into blessings; He has again given me the kiss of forgiveness and peace. But there remains deep in my heart, a feeling of regret which neither time nor change can take away; and even now, when in the full realization of the truth, "All things work together for good to those that love Thee," I can look back and wish I had been more faithful. If through my words another may be spared like pain, gladly will I bear my regret to the grave.

One evening Nellie was seated at the piano. She felt more at peace than she had been for many many nights. The strains in her heart were in harmony with those her fingers had stirred into life; for, putting aside all discordant sounds, she had indulged herself to an evening of pure and simple melody. At first the walls of her room had reverberated again and again with the deep thunder-rolling notes of a military composition; then the sharp quick march air succeeded, to give place to the roaring of the sea; from that to glide into the soft murmuring ripple, and finally to be lost in the low mysterious echo. Yet the fingers wandered on as if in search of one task still incompletely. The sad, sweet words of Beethoven's Adieu were put into that melodious throat, and as the last farewell was said, a sound like a choking sob hushed the sadness of the strain. Unsatisfied—Unsatisfied—Nature's imitation had unfastened the door of discernment, and the soul longed to see into Nature's essence. Then from the mists of a confused purl the almost despised "Jesus loves me" arose, and, floating upward, pierced through the air that had only been disturbed by the grander strains.
Jesus loves me! Jesus loves me! O, the balm of those three simple words. The strains die away. The hands fall upon the lap. The fingers are still. Satisfied at last. The hard cold lines which had crept into the once bright open face are gone, and in their place a sweet dreamy tenderness. "Dear aunt, I remember. Forgive me for not recognizing you before." Closing the piano, she put out the lamp, crossed the room, and, drawing up the blind, looked out on the clear moonlight. "How long you have had to wait for an answer to your prayers. Can you see me? You are happy; do you pity your lonely earth-tired niece?" Then the air became strangely disturbed. The room was filled with a muffled mysterious rushing. The inherent instinct which recognises the presence of another was stirred.—The rushing and the presence passed away; and Nellie knew she had been in contact with a spirit. "And men and women have tried by every device to evoke the spirit of their departed, and to make it speak the words and do the works of man; yet have they failed; succeeding only in so far as to make fools of themselves, and to call down the rebuke of their God. Fear a spirit? I would as soon fear God. If, through the merits of Christ my Saviour, I can stand and speak in God's presence, how dare I fear contact with spirits inferior to Him? No. I lay my hand in that of Christ's. I pledge my life to His service. I look up into His face and receive my commands. And though the angels and the spirits hover around me, they have no power to direct or lead. What wonder that God confounds the ear with complications when men seek to furnish spirits with human faculties, and to ascribe unto them attributes possessed by the Trinity alone?"

A gentle, hesitating knock was heard at the door, and in answer to Nellie's "Come in," a small slight girl entered. She was surprised at the absence of light, and drew back.
saying, “I beg your pardon, Nellie; I did not know you were in bed.”

“I am not in bed, Annie; only in the dark. Come and see what a beautiful night it is.” The voice of the speaker was soft and dreamy and that sarcastic ring had vanished. The girl advanced, and side by side the two friends gazed out on the pale pure moonlight.—Serenely and calm and glorious.—The sun may change in his moods during the winter months, but the moon is always the same. Winter or summer, autumn or spring; all are alike to that proud Queen of Night. Indeed, her dark sombre winter garments serve to enhance the transparency of her beauty. Scorning the films around the earth, and taking no notice of the external agitations, unconscious of the internal upheavings, this mighty monarch rides around the world, resplendent in her borrowed light. Wonder why the heathens worshipped moon and sun and stars! I almost wonder why Christians do not. Certainly had the “Unknown God,” of Paul’s teaching not been revealed to me I should worship the moon by night and the sun by day. They are a trifle different to wood and stone.

The change in the expression of that illegible face gave Annie Bowers courage, and she said gently,

“I heard you playing an old, old tune, Nellie. It reminded me of mother. I know this is forbidden ground,” she added, half apologetically; “but I could not resist the temptation.”

“Reminded you of your mother?” said Nellie, taking no notice of the insinuated excuse. “How strange! Do you know who came to see me to-night, Annie? My aunt. You will think I am dreaming, but I am not. Aunt died when I was a child. I had almost forgotten her. The only recollection I have of her is in connection with the Lord’s prayer,
She it was who taught it me. To-night, by some strange instinct, the remembrance of a gentle lady returned to my sleeping thoughts. The face I cannot see; it is hidden in her hands. But far away, in that hazy distance, kneels a silent form. A thick mist is between us; yet I recognise the outline, and I know she is praying for me." The voice died away in a soft low whisper. The room was silent and still. Outside, the moonlight waned; the gentle breeze stirred the leafy veil; the stars peered down upon the half-sleeping world; and the wise men of the east and the west, of the north and the south, took up and passed along the old old theme. Why had that privileged one neglected to enquire after the meaning of that sign? Did those wise forefathers content themselves with remaining where they were, declaring, "All will come right in the end?" No. Over hills, through valleys, across rivers they journeyed—the star their sign, their Saviour the object. Nellie, why did you not follow their example?

Nellie's voice broke the stillness, and the old hard ring had returned: "I beg your pardon, Annie. I had almost forgotten myself. Pray think no more of what I have been saying." The ethereal was the terrestrial once again.

"Do you think you are kind, Nellie?" said her friend, half sadly. "There are times when I would almost kneel to you—worship you—if only you would give me a share of that 'Something' you possess; and yet you repulse my every advance with cold matter-of-fact answers. To-night something whispered 'Go,' and I came. O Nellie," the voice faltered and the eyes grew misty; "O Nellie, if you knew how I long to know of something brighter than paint and canvas, of something more lasting than worldly friendship, you would not grudge me a few simple words."

A shade of remorse flitted across the face, and the proud head bent under the just rebuke. "I have been unfaithful,
My own trouble has made me selfish. That which you crave is True Unchanging love. Come with me to-morrow evening, and we will get, from our Father, the thing you desire. Annie." An arm stole around the girl's waist; two dark eyes looked down beseechingly into two upturned blue ones.

"Annie, in my present mood I am not fit to speak of that Holy One; but this week the Church holds special meetings. These meetings are plain and simple, and no one can fail to understand their meaning. There you will learn what my failures prevent me from explaining."

That was all. A gentle "goodnight," an earnest kiss, and the petitioner was dismissed. Not so the petition. In the simple prayer of a humble suppliant that petition found a place. The angels bear record of a scene, the result of that earnest prayer. On the Church step, half hidden in the shadow of the high fir hedge, and enshrined in the melody of heavenly music, two girls stand and weep.

"Dear, there is joy in the presence of God to-night." A low whisper, retreating footsteps, and one girl stands alone. 'Twere better so, for in the heart's deepest agitations the nearest and the dearest of earthly friends can have no share; and those who have already passed through, know by experience the feelings of those who follow.

They are parted. Each has gone her own way, never again to meet on earth; but Nellie will never forget her friend; and often, when ministering to the wants of others, she is startled by a pleading voice, "O Nellie, I long to know of something brighter than paint and canvas." The voice she takes as a warning, and the words she uses as her guide. In their heart of hearts everyone is longing to know of something brighter than paint and canvas.
CHAPTER X.

An Auckland paper Miss. Would you care to look at it?” And plump Mrs. Sebof put her head inside the door of her lodger's room.

“Thank you.” Nellie took the proffered paper. “I don’t suppose there is anything of interest in it to me,” she mused, “but it pleased the old lady. I believe she only wanted to know what I was having for my tea.” A laugh. “These old dames are up to all sorts of dodges, at anyrate she will see I do not live on luxuries.” Another laugh, while the owner proceeded to spread the bread very sparingly with butter. “This butter will have to last me through to-morrow. I wonder who is married and who is dead, and who is born in that wonderful city, Auckland.” She was glancing indifferently up and down the columns, when her eyes were arrested by a short paragraph, and she paused. “A prize given for the best original essay. Any subject, provided it is self chosen. All competitions to be sent in before the fourth of July.” Nellie pushed away the paper and tried to finish her tea. It was in vain. The uplifted knife forgot to descend, and the bread remained untouched. Then it remembered its neglected duty, and began so vigoursly that it spent itself in the first stroke, finally it fell on the plate, and finally the tea was given up.

“Any subject, provided it is self chosen. Fourth of July.” Nellie rose and consulted the calendar. “To late. To be in time it must be posted by Saturday, and this is Wednesday.”
"Any subject, provided it is self chosen. Fourth of July," again spoke the voice.

"Don't make a fool of yourself. How can you write an essay? You don't know how to spell words correctly, let alone put them together. Go and be satisfied with your sewing machine." another voice said, and for a few moments the first voice was silenced; but back it came with renewed persistency, and harder it strove for mastery.

"Bother, I shall get no peace here. I'll go for a walk. I wish to goodness Mrs. Sebof had kept her old paper." Nellie put on her hat and jacket and sallied forth to get her usual antidote for agitation, a walk in the cool evening air; but for once the antidote failed and the fever increased.

"Oh well it is useless. It will have to run its course. When it has taken all the strength out of me I suppose it will leave." Back to the room she went; even the door seemed conspired against her, for in its creaking she fancied she heard those words. Down in front of her writing desk she sat. Her fingers closed over the pen and for a few minutes there was the sound of scratch, scratch.

"What next. Those hateful words are not satisfied with taking possession, of my thoughts, but they must engage the services of my hands." The paper was torn into pieces, the pen flung aside, and the girl arose; only to sink back into her chair, and her soliloquy. "I'll try for my own pleasure." And try she did. Twelve o'clock, Nellie sprang up. "There! that's enough for to-night, but I must do more to-morrow." When to-morrow night came, although she sat up until one o'clock, only three blotted and smudged sheets of writing appeared. "One night more, I must finish to-morrow." As soon as work was over on Friday night, she began. Writing tearing up, re-writing. Five o'clock Saturday morning the essay was finished. Nellie looked at her
watch. "I shall have two hours sleep. That leaves half an hour to dress, have my breakfast, and get to business." She threw herself on her bed and slept soundly, so soundly that had Mrs. Sebof not knocked at her door, she would have been late for work. Poor Mrs. Sebof afterwards declared she was afraid to enter the room for fear something dreadful had happened. "For sure an Miss Main is usually such and early riser, she is."

Nellie posted her precious papers, and tried to persuade herself that she did not care whether any notice was taken of them or not. But, when at the end of the week no answer came, she found she would care very much indeed. How little they, who carelessly skim over page after page of print, think of the pain and labour of almost every word. While critics tear and twist each sentence until the whole is a distorted and shapeless mass. Regardless of beauty in its uncouth grandeur, they seek to clothe the "voice of one crying in the wilderness." in the flowing garments of the "Sweet Saviour." To my mind the critic knows infinitely less than the criticised. Returning from work one afternoon Nellie found a small parcel on her table. "Just as I expected," she said to herself. "Good luck never falls to my lot." A letter lay beside the parcel. With trembling fingers she took it up and opened it. It was brief; only a few words of apology. The papers had not arrived in time, and Nellie was advised to revise her work and keep it for the present. If the one who penned those words knew what disappointment they conveyed to the reader, he would have appended a line of encouragement.

"So much for my literary work. The first and the last. There!" like another missive we already know of, this inoffensive parcel was hurled across the room, to do penance in solitude, until a kinder hand would rescue it from its dungeon of disdain.
Meanwhile how fared it with the Main household? After the excitement of moving from the centre of town to its outskirts was over, home life settled down in the ordinary home groove, with few variations. The residue of their fallen fortunes had been sufficient to secure the family a moderately comfortable home; and with Mr. Main's sterling qualities, and the independence of his elder children, a fair livelihood was gained. Indeed, things might have been decidedly worse, for had they not put their hands to the plough, there still remained enough to keep the family in bare necessities. But a living on bare necessities without an aim is not tolerable to the free born; and sons and daughters decided to work. Thus we find Nellie imprisoned in the four walls of a work room, eating of the husks of their former life, and rebelling, not against the work, but against work's claims and environments. The home was too far from town to allow her to attend business, so with her father's nature of independence, she hired a room, and lived and thrived therein. Every Saturday afternoon was given to the girls as a half-holiday; and these with Sunday, Nellie would spend at home, returning on Monday morning. For a whole year she continued to tread this oft trodden path. So regularly did the monotony of each day come and go, that she almost ceased to look forward to a brighter future.

The return of the Spring brought a break in the home circle. Miss Amelia Main, Nellie's eldest sister, was going to be married. October was a busy month for that quiet family, for everything had to be in readiness by the third of November. Between sewing, and teasing, and arranging and disarranging, there was little time for idleness. There was no hurry, no bustle however. "Willing hands made light work." And when the day of all days arrived not
one duty had been neglected. Mr. Main did not approve of display; indeed, he had a special aversion for weddings, and when one of the contracting parties was his daughter, he openly expressed his disapproval. Still he resigned himself to the inevitable, and suffered his charge to reach no greater height than by commanding that everything be done as quietly as possible. The ceremony took place in the drawing room, which had been decorated for the great all-important occasion. The bride wore a dress of pale blue silk. No wreath rested on the open brow, no veil enshrined the slender form. Calmly she stood before the throne of her heritage; proudly she received her regalia; wearing on her queenly head no other ornament than that of her raven hair; adorned by nothing but her stately dignity. The white hands were smooth and bare, and the finger waited for the seal. One moment she stands beside her father, leaning upon his arm, the next beside her husband, leaning on his integrity. Is there not something surpassingly grave in a marriage, something infinitely mysterious. Why make a jest of such serious consequences. Think of the years of life before bride and bridegroom, and turn your jests into earnest wishes for their happiness.

The relatives of bride and bridegroom are the only guests at that simple wedding ceremony. The breakfast is partaken of with all the solemnity due to a prince. The bride's voice is full and rich with its ring of pride and happiness, and the bridegroom's courteous thanks and smiles are for one and all. In the evening two pipers arrive from town to play the old familiar airs of Mr. Main's boyhood; and all that night is spent in song and dance. Forethought united with wisdom to devise a scheme for the home-going of the happy couple; and for once the small boys—aye, and the big boys too—are cheated out
of their "tin-canning." What is it that makes Nellie so quiet? Her face is bright. Her words are witty. She darts in and out, among the people and through the rooms, like a bright-winged butterfly. Turning up lights that everything might sparkle. Playing polkas that everybody might stir. Gliding into waltzes that no one but herself might muse. Yet throughout it all you have never heard that hearty ringing laugh which is her chief charm. And if you had caught a glimpse of her face as she passed from the well-lighted hall into the dark passage beyond, you would have been struck by the expression of wistful sadness in the dark velvety eyes. Who knows but that the shadow of the next great event which was to take place in that home, and which was to change the whole course of her life and thoughts, who knows but that that shadow fell across her heart, crushing back the laugh ere it reached maturity.

I have sketched the rough outline of a wedding picture. The details and the colouring I leave to your discretion. Do not imagine all weddings are alike. None are. This one is the one I saw, and the one which took place. Had I time or inclination I would give several hints regarding the different shades of colouring; but the day waneth, and the evening draweth in space, and there is still a journey to go. Besides, the imagination needs food, and weddings are the easiest digested.

The bride is a mother now, the bridegroom a father. One soul owes its being to this union. The world looks on and sees a fair-haired, rosy-cheeked child throw her arms around her mother's neck, lisping, "I's oo's dirl, isn't I, mamma?" It sees the mother release her child from her close embrace and place it in its father's arms, while the lisping voice continues, "And daddy's too." It sees the little one clasped, with all a father's solicitude, to
a father's breast. Happy child! Happy parents! Live on in your love and faith. Shall a shadow be cast over their joy and peace by our forebodings? God forbid. Wish that the father and mother may unite in the desire, the welfare of their child? Insufficient. A voice from my own childhood arises and tells me that wish is not enough. "Pray," it says, "that wisdom may be given to those parents to discern the difference between the things which are and the things which seem to be."

Nellie returned to her work and her fears. The remembrance of that simple service, and the serious changes it had wrought in two lives, became food for thought during many of her solitary evening hours; and many a sad thrill disturbed the wandering mind as she felt that the sister of her younger days was now the wife of another.
CHAPTER XI.

RATHER, do you know what Max told me yesterday?"
"No."
"He told me that Nellie had gone home."
The old gentleman put down his paper and looked over his spectacles at his wife.
"Gone home! When?"
"I don't know. That was all I could get out of Max. Either he knows no more, or will not tell what he does know."
"Umph!" Mr. Alen resumed his reading.
"That upsets my plans, old girl," said he, after a pause; and, putting down his paper a second time, he kicked his slipper across the hearth as if it had been the offender.
"Upsets your plans! What were your plans, pray?"
"I intended to ask Nellie to come and stay with us this summer. We are getting too old to be left alone now, mother. Amelia cannot leave her husband and come to his father and mother. And knowing how fond you are of Nellie, I had set my heart on having her here. She did not look at all well the last time I saw her in town, and a change would do her good."

Mrs. Alen chuckled in that peculiar little way of hers, and a roguish glance was thrown toward her husband.
"It was very kind of you to consider me in the subject, Mr. Alen. You generally do, I notice, when your own wishes coincide. Fond as I am of Nellie, I would not ask her to come and live among these hills. You forget she is young, and has no right to feel lonely."
"Ah, well! I wished to do her kindness, poor child."

Mrs. Allen rose. "I am a wee tired the night, father; and my old bones need rest. Do you put out the lamp before you come to bed." She went, and left him to his musings.

"Poor old Poll! Poor old wife! We do need young hands to help us; young hearts to cheer us up. That bright young face, and that happy laugh would take ten years from my age. God bless her and everyone she knows." Thus the kind old gentleman mused, until his wife's voice reminded him that it was getting late.

"Aye, aye," he murmured as he put away his spectacles and turned down the light. "It is getting late—very late; and the poor old bones are tired. The bright sunshine is gone, and the pale moonlight is left. The day of our lives is nearly past, and we live in the reflection of what has been. We shall pass away with the evening shadows. Will it be day beyond? Years and years of life, yet does it seem but yesterday I was born; this morning I married; perhaps to-morrow I die. Strange! Strange! And I think myself of importance in the world. I put forth my puny thoughts, my dogmatical opinions, as if God depended upon me and my existence. Is the world any better for my being in it?" Mr. Allen sighed. "I have given unto thee, O world, my sons. Deal gently with them, as thou hast dealt with their father. But unto Thee, O God, what have I given unto Thee? Only the husks. Yet dost Thou accept them. Marvellous love of God! Thy mystery no man knows. Would that, as thy betrothed, as objects for Thine adoration, thou hadst created a more worthy being than in thy creation of mankind." Musing thus, and muttering the low sod requiem, "It is getting late—very late," the old gentleman of this world, and the babe of the next, followed in his wife's footsteps.
At dinner the next day the subject of the previous evening's conversation was again resumed, and, as before, Mrs. Alen was the first to allude to it.

"Nellie might be able to spend a week with us, now that she is not tied to regular hours," said she, interrupting Mr. Alen in the middle of a lungworm discourse, and revealing to her indignant lord how deeply interested she was in his schemes for prevention and cure. Still, his wife's subject was as interesting to him as was his own, and he answered quietly,

"I shall get sick, mother. That is the only guarantee. If Miss Nellie intends to keep the promise she made some time ago, it is high time she started."

Mrs. Alen was sitting directly opposite the window, from which position she could see a short distance down the road. Mr. Alen occupied the head of the table, and, being a man, could find no time to look at anything while his dinner was in front of him. Outside, two draught horses, with noses buried in canvas bags, were following their owner's example; apparently enjoying their meal with greater relish than their master enjoyed his, for they did not pause once in their occupation to speak to one another. Suddenly, Mrs. Alen laid down her knife and fork, exclaiming, "Why, there she is."

"Get along. She isn't, is she?" By George! So it is. So it is. Well, well! well, well!" The old gentleman had risen from his seat, and, spreading his arms and breast over the table as if to shield the dinner from a ravenous foe, was craning his neck to see out of the window.

"Come, father," said his wife, drawing back; "you need not try to swallow me. There's plenty of dinner. Have you forgotten the courtesy due to a visitor? The
open air will cool your system." Covering up the steaming dishes, Mrs. Alen, followed by her husband, went out to bid welcome to their young friend.

Nellie sprang off her horse, and almost ran into the old lady's open arms, while Mr. Alen looked on, not a little jealous of the warm childish greeting given to his wife.

"O Grannie dear, how glad I am to see you. How very very glad." In her old impulsive fashion, Nellie threw her arms around the elderly lady's neck and kissed the faded cheeks. "Has grandpa been good to you?" turning to greet the old gentlemen in a less enthusiastic manner. "You are the same dear old people. Nothing changes you."

"Go in, my dear," said Mr. Alen, putting his hand on Nellie's shoulder. "I shall see after your horse. It is time you left that murderous town. All the bloom has gone from those cheeks; but we shall soon paint more in."

Nellie followed her kind hostess indoors, and while Mrs. Allen helped her take off her things she gave a brief sketch of her leaving town, and going home. "But, grannie," she said, putting her hand on the arm stretched out to smooth her glossy hair, and looking down into the soft grey eyes; "but grannie, you are not looking well. Have you been ill, and did not let me know?" The tone was full of tender reproach.

"O no, child. I own I have not felt as well as usual lately; but then I am getting old, and must expect to be ill sometimes."

"Because you are old? Hardly a satisfactory answer, grannie. The young as well as the old feel ill."

"To a certain extent. But pain is one of the essential qualities of the aged. Young people like you, Nellie, do not know what it is to have aching bones. Youth is the time of health and strength."
Nellie winced under this remark. "How strange a world this would be if that were one of its laws. I know the poets and philosophers rave and rust on the health and strength of youth, and on the pains and weaknesses of old age. But nature and instinct are truer poets and philosophers than is man. They show us that youth is susceptible to greater agonies, mentally and physically than is their aged parents. 'Tis well that it is so, else how could we learn the tenderness and reverence due to you; and due to ourselves when our turn comes to take your place, and to take our place, another."

But Mr. Alen's voice was heard clamouring, and the two—the bud and the ripened fruit—returned to the dining room and resumed their interrupted meal.

"Whom do you think you are serving, Mr. Alen?" exclaimed Nellie, looking at the heaped-up plate in front of her, and pretending to feel thoroughly disgusted. "One would think I had just risen from a sick bed, and been ordered to eat little more than a pinch every other hour."

"There is plenty. When you have finished that you may have more." The old gentleman's eyes danced mischievously. "But really," he added, gravely, "there must be no half measures here. You are to stay a week. I wish I could say a month, but I suppose that is out of the question. However, you are to stay a weak, and go back a strong."

Nellie laughed, and did her best to relieve the burden of her plate. "A week's holiday! A week in the dear old country! O, it is so nice to be free. I can hardly believe that it is true."

"You will be tired of our dulness by that time, dear," chimed in Mrs. Alen's voice. "Father wanted to ask you to come and stay with us this summer, but I ridiculed the idea. Because we are satisfied with a hum drum life, that is not to say a young girl like you would be the same."
"My age is a source of great trouble to you, grannie. Of course, to come would be impossible, especially now. But if you knew how I hate the town, how I despise the hurry and bustle of business life, how thankful I am to be free from the turmoil and strife of those money-worshippers, you would not feel anxious about my being dull. Dull! with such a sky above, such sunlight and air around, such costly carpets beneath. Dull! O grannie; how could you wrong Nature and me? Look at those hills, clothed in their brown waving grey fringed tunics; at those valleys, nestling in the arms and at the feet of their sombre-coated protectors; those trees, shrouded in their green mantles; the fern, the flowers, earth's jewellery; the stars, heaven's; angels and birds the great musicians.

In the town the music is that of the blacksmith's hammer or the wheels monotonous click. Pounds, shillings and pence are the statues of worship, and wood and stone the regal robes. Do you wonder nature tires of speaking to deaf ears, and of beckoning to blind eyes. Do you wonder she flies to the country to pour her gifts down upon those who will accept them. Dull with such companions, Oh Grannie!" Nellie had risen from her seat; and standing erect, her hands clasped, her eyes on the landscape, her whole soul in her words, her cheeks flushed with the enthusiasm of her speech, she looked like nature's vindicating goddess.

"Dull with such companions; shame on all who would be. True genuine nature I accept thy gifts and I thank thee by using them. In return for thy love I give thee mine. Weak and full of faults my gift, but thou wilt not refuse; thou wilt strengthen and purify. Where is a more faithful companion? There is no kiss for one cheek and smile for the other. All thy actions are pure and noble."
"You are a true worshipper of nature Nellie," said Mr. Alen, rising. "And you have learned the service better. Stay as long as you like. You will be able to pay your vows without the interruption of the carnal town."

Nellie sank back in her seat and buried her face in her hands. It was not often she gave vent to her feelings, but her escape from her hateful cage, her flight into the green fields and open air, and her visit to those two dear old people who understood "the dreamer" better than anyone else; all combined to make her partially hysterical. Mrs. Alen looked at her young friend for a few minutes in silence. She was a sensible woman and knew how to manage the weakness of a strong minded girl. "Come Nellie," she said, feigning disapproval and contempt, "This is something new. You surely are not trying to copy your town associates' acting."

The ruse worked. Nellie sprang up electrified. If there were anything she disliked it was sham. She looked up to make a stinging retort; but the grey eyes gave the lie to the contemptuous expressions; so smiling, so full of that loving light. Nellie's retort was an answering smile.

"I am afraid you are released not a day too soon," said Mrs. Alen, as she took Nellie out into the open air and introduced her to all the improvements they had made since her previous visit, and to those to be made before her next.

"O! I am quite well grannie, only I am getting old," and there was the return of that mischievous gleam in the dark eyes.

When evening came, when the aged farmer returned from his work, when the simple tea was over and when the bright lamp was lit, there was unveiled in that inland cottage, a picture, the type of homeliness and peace: the old gentleman seated in a big arm chair on one side of the
hearth; the old lady seated in a bigger arm chair on the other side of the hearth, and the young girl either on the hearth rug or on a low stool at Mrs. Alen's feet, her head resting against the old lady's knee, and her hands idly clasped together. Thus night after night they would sit. The aged telling tales of their early years, the young listening to and learning wisdom from those simple stories. One anecdote would lead on to another, one hour would drift into another, one present existence would be forgotten in the past life of two others, and in the enjoyment of those others one heart's weary aching was lost.

"And you remember Dan. Kelly, grannie?" asked Nellie one night.

"Remember him, child." Mrs. Alen's grey ringlets shook, and the soft eyes resumed the light of their youth, while Mr. Alen with grave voice ejaculated his "aye aye! well well!"

"I remember, and have often seen both him and his brother. They used to ride on beautiful bay horses. Of course this was before they were outlawed, and soon after we landed from Glasgow. I remember how frightened the Australians were when the scare arose. As for me I was too young and ignorant to understand. Father here, was a big contractor, and my neighbours used to try and frighten me when he was late in coming home. Still he always turned up like a bad penny." And Mrs. Alen nodded across at her husband.

"But do you remember when I fell into the creek? You were frightened then Mistress Polly."

"I should think so. It was enough to frighten anybody."

"Tell about it grannie, do! I like to hear of Mr. Alen being taken down, even if it be into a creek."
Mrs. Alen settled herself more comfortably in her chair, and folded her hands complacently in her lap.

"Well," she began, "Father went to town with a load of hay; and, as was the custom in Australia in those days, was returning with his waggon half filled with provisions. The main road ran past our door. It was level and fairly good; but at the distance of about a mile from our home, in order to escape going over a hill, it took a sharp turn to the right. I always watched for the turn of father's waggon round that corner. Well, on this night he was later than usual. I was beginning to grow uneasy, and every few moments I would run to the door to see if he were coming. We women are queer creatures. At last I saw the lights of his waggon, and I stood for a few minutes watching them draw near. Suddenly they disappeared, and all was dark. 'What ever can be the matter,' I wondered. Faint visions of bushrangers flitted across my mind. I hastened indoors and wakened my boy. 'Willie,' I whispered, 'something has happened to father. Go and see. Creep round by the creek. If you see any bushrangers, run for the police. Don't make a noise, and be as quick as you can.' Willie obeyed, and I waited in an agony of suspense. I dared not leave the house, for I was afraid some of the dreaded gang would pillage it in my absence. How I lived through that time I do not know. The minutes seemed ages, the ages seemed eternities. I pictured—saw—father lying dead on the road, his side pierced by a cruel knife, and his clothes soaked with his own blood. I saw three or four masked men rifling father's pockets, ransacking the waggon, and cutting adrift and carrying away the horses. The suspense became unbearable. Fastening all doors and windows, and barricading all entrances with chairs and tables, or any article of furniture I could lay hands on, I wrapped a shawl
around my head and went outside to watch and wait. Crouching down with my face almost on a level with the ground, I peered into the darkness. Presently I saw a single horseman emerge from the mysterious gloom. A dreaded bushranger. I tried to rise, but my legs refused to oblige me, and my heart encouraged them in their disobedience. Nearer and nearer approached that bushranger. He stopped at the gate; he dismounted; he advanced toward the house; he tried the handle of the door. I saw a revolver in his other hand. That was enough. I needed no stronger proof to convince me that was the form of a would-be robber, and, for aught I knew to the contrary, the already murderer. I staggered to my feet, slipped into the house by a side door, and seizing an enormous stick that father had hung in the passage, I crept upstairs and quietly opened the window."

"Where is that stick, mother? I saw it the other day," interrupted Mr. Alen, from the depth of his easy chair.

"O, it's somewhere about. I'll show it to you by-and-by, Nellie. Father insisted on my bringing it to New Zealand. It is a splendid weapon, and having a long handle and an enormous knob at one end, you are not called upon to approach too near the foe."

"Did grandpa think New Zealand was like Australia—flooded with bushrangers. You forgot, Mr. Alen, that our fathers are not England's convicts."

"Poor Australia!" drily remarked the arm-chair recluse.

"Lucky New Zealand! But go on grannie. You left yourself at the window."

"Let me see. Yes, I remember. Well, as I was saying, I got into this window. I have never seen a window like it in New Zealand. It was a sort of projecting box, a few feet above the front door. In the summer evenings I
often took my sewing there, for I loved to watch father at work in the garden. On this particular evening, however, I had a different watch to keep. Leaning as far out of the window as I could with safety, I raised my stick in the air to deal a deadly blow upon the man's head, which, as I thought, would settle him for life. Instinct must have been called to our aid, for just at that moment the man raised his head and turned his face toward the window. Lo! it was my brother."

Nellie burst out laughing. "Not bad by any means, grannie."

"You did not know that meek and quiet old lady had attempted fratricide, did you, Nellie?" said Mr. Allen, nodding at his wife.

"After that," continued Mrs. Allen, "I do not know what happened. I remember thinking I was falling, falling. Yet the farther I fell the farther away seemed the bottom. When I came to myself I found I was in bed, and father and Neil, my brother, were bending over me. And now, father, you may tell your own part of the story," concluded Mrs. Allen. "It sounds better from father than from me."

"That's Poll all over. She always leaves me to finish. I suppose I must comply, since I am the half of a whole. Well," and the old gentleman cleared his throat. "Well, I had turned the corner and was coming along at a smart pace, when, all at once, the leaders came to a dead stand. This checked the shafters and brought the waggon right upon their haunches; at the same time throwing me off my balance. I righted myself, and lifting the lantern above my head, peered into the darkness to see what was the cause of this sudden halt. A man's voice spoke. Good God! The bushrangers! Now for a fight. D—d if they get me without a struggle. I waited, one second, two seconds, but no fight commenced. Suddenly the horses
started forward of their own accord; and on my own accord I started too, but in the opposite direction. What with the sudden jerk and the inertia of my body over I went; down the side of the waggon, over the bank and into the creek I rolled; while Jill, my precious lamp, came tumbling after. You may guess what a holy show I was when Polly’s brother fished me out of my cold bath. Neil ‘baed awa hame for a wee drap o’ brandy,’ and you have heard what a warm reception my better half gave him. Talk about charity. Umph! Charity begins at home.”

“And so it did,” laughed Nellie. “What more charitable than a ‘warm reception.’ You ought to write a book, grannie, and name it, ‘Reminiscence of Colonial Life.’ I am sure it would be worth reading.”

“Burning,” interrupted Mr. Alen, with his usual “Umph!”

“But what put it into your head to come to New Zea-
land?” asked Nellie.

“I will tell you that some other time, dear,” said Mrs. Alen, after a moment’s thought. “It is a long story, and I see father warring with Somnolence. We must take pity on the weak. Charity begins at home, you know.”

“So it does, I repeat,” laughed Nellie. “Especially when mother preacher is the weak one.” Nellie rose and lit a candle, a smile of unconscious sweetness lingering about her lips. But when she turned to bid Mr. Alen “Goodnight;” when she stooped to press a kiss upon Mrs. Alen’s cheek; the old sad weary light played in the dark expressive eyes; the old cankerling dread gnawed at her heart-strings.

“Would it be wise, think you,” said Mr. Alen, as soon as the door closed behind Nellie, “to tell that story? I do not care to let the child know of my disreputable days.
She is young, and knows nothing of the strength of temptation."

"Trust me to spare your feelings, father. I will touch but lightly on that part. It will do her good to hear the story. She is not a good actress, for I hear sighs at the end of every laugh. And in nature she is another Eva Evans."

"I shall make it my business to go to Price's to-morrow," exclaimed Mr. Alen. "You may take the opportunity to tell the story then. I am not at all anxious to be present at its rehearsal."

So when the next day came, and when all was quiet and still, and when none were present but the reciter and the listener, Nellie learned the circumstances which led to Mr. and Mrs. Alen making New Zealand their home; while the result of that step we already know, for Nellie became connected to these old people through her sister Amelia's marriage to their son. Thus the world travels round, and with less speed the inhabitants follow. With rivers, the distance from source to mouth, the verdure through which they pass, the branches which lead off from each, vary; but they are all rivers, and all flow toward the sea.
AND now for my story," said Nellie, when they returned from seeing Mr. Allen start out on his journey.

"I will begin by telling you the romance of my life," said Mrs. Allen, as she gently stroked the dark head that had been placed on her knee, the usual position while listening to a life's story. "Every girl has a romance in her lifetime. I suppose you have, too, Nellie; or if you have not one already, it will appear shortly. I was a girl of seventeen when I first met father. We were both nice-looking then. You would hardly believe that these grey hairs had once been as black as your own; that this old wrinkled face was as round and as smooth; that these dull grey eyes were once bright and full of maidenly pride. Father had the nicest eyes I had ever seen in man. They were what first attracted my attention. Even now one cannot help admiring them. They have grown lighter, but in his prime they were the deepest blue, almost violet. We used often to be known as 'the handsome couple.' At the age of seventeen I hardly knew what love and marriage meant. My father did, however; and when he saw that acquaintance was fast ripening into friendship, he surmised the result, and interfered. Too late. Although in my heart the seed had not begun to germinate, in father's it had both taken root and sprung into bud, and all the power of parents could not prevent its growth. Father was ten years older than I, so you see he was no child. Finding they could not separate us, my parents sent me to the convent, and for three years I lived within its walls. That happy peaceful time I
shall never forget. The nuns treated me with great kindness, never allowing the difference of our belief to interfere with their treatment. I did not know what it was to hear a cross word. There was such an air of perfect tranquillity about the whole place, I often think I would like to die within the walls of a Roman Catholic Convent. Do you wonder why I close my ears when I hear those of my own religion condemning the religion of the Catholics? I grant there is much in their worship that does not coincide with my views, but why should that cause bitterness? A perfect creed would practice charity by looking at the good in creeds of others. You see, sin still remains with us. If more time were spent in loving there would be less time for hating; and there would be less to hate and more to love. But that is apart from the subject. When my three years of happy imprisonment had expired, a stranger knocked at the convent gate and requested to see Miss Murger. He was admitted. Mr. Allen stood before me. Separation, instead of hardening the ground of my heart, had prepared it for the seed's growth; and, in the sunshine of father's presence, life burst forth. From that moment I knew I loved and was beloved. As soon as my father heard of our meeting he hastened to me. Before entering the convent he and Mr. Allen met. Between them they arranged matters, and I was taken home. Another year of servitude was meted out to us. We were to have no communication with one another, Engagement was out of the question. If at the end of that time we were still of the same opinion, father would consider the subject, but not before. For the present all thought of marriage was to be scouted. It was hard on me. During that year my parents did their best to turn us against each other. They pleaded; they threatened; they prophesied; they drew pictures of a heart-broken and deserted wife, waiting with anxious dread the return of a drunken husband. They pointed to
others as warnings and as examples of my fate. Once, before I returned home, I dared to accept a beautiful gold cross from Mr. Allen. It was such a dear little thing; pure gold, with a single ruby in the centre. I think rubies the queen of precious stones. They are so warm and bright and full of hidden fire. I used to wear it tied round my neck with a bit of ribbon, but under my dress, so that nobody could see. I don't know how it happened, but one day that wayward ribbon took a peep at the world outside. Mother noticed it. Tearing the cross from my neck, she smashed it into pieces and trampled upon it. Never, before or since, have I seen mother in such a temper. But all their efforts were of no avail. The new year came. Father gave in, and we were married. Not long after our marriage my father and my husband quarrelled, and we shipped for Australia. You will understand that ours was no 'married in haste and repent at leisure' affair. And now began my troubles. Strange though it may seem to you, Nellie, my marriage for many long weary years was a failure. You would think that having waited so long for one another we had learned each other's natures perfectly. We had not. Loving in a blind, heedless way, we did not pause to study one another's characters. We built glass houses around our idols, instead of strengthening the pedestals. When the storm of outside conflict raged around, the glass houses protected those statues; but frames are of no use against the earthquakes of home intercourse. Soon our idols tottered and fell, leaving the broken pedestals to mock our former worship. Further and further we drifted apart. Deeper and deeper grew the gulf between us. I was cold and proud and haughty; father warm-hearted, but weak and obstinate. One waited for the other to make the first advances, and neither of us did. But that was not all. The demon drink broke out in our home. Those four years of waiting had ruined father for home life. Having no home
ties of his own, and his dull lodgings jarring on his lively spirits, he entered heart and soul into every kind of excitement. It mattered not whether it be the wine cup or the ballet dancer, all were equally enjoyable to that gay, thoughtless pleasure seeker. Too late for home attractions. An engagement spent in riotous living seldom heralds in the peaceful marriage supper. Mr. Alen became a slave to the drink, and all his promises and resolutions were as sandhills before the terrific force of those mighty waves. At first I tried to win my husband from his companions, but meeting with no success I grew tired; and when he came home more a beast than a man, I passed him by with contempt—almost loathing.

'Your prophecies are fulfilled,' I cried in the bitterness of my heart. 'Why did I not heed them? Father, you are avenged.'

Children were born to us, but my heart was frozen, and I refused them a mother's love. Gradually we sank into poverty. Gradually the bitterness of degradation closed over our heads. Then I, the petted child of my father's home, had to take in sewing for the support of myself and children. We never told my people of our reduced circumstances. My husband was ashamed; his wife proud. I may tell you I never saw my father but once after he and my husband quarrelled. It was in the street, a few days before we decided to come to Australia. He stopped and spoke in his kindly manner, but I noticed his hair had grown much whiter since I saw him last, and his dear loving eyes were filled with a new sadness. He died soon after we left Scotland: died praying for the happiness of his disobedient child. If ever you know what it is to have heartache, Nellie, you will understand my feelings." A tear fell on Nellie's hand as it lay on Mrs. Alen's lap.
"When the last child was born," continued Mrs. Allen, "I was very ill. I recovered a little, but was not fit for work. Still, hungry mouths had to be fed; a broken heart had to be eased of its pain. I resumed my work. O that dreadful time! I often wonder how I bore up so long. The hot weather came in, towing the busy season after it. Many a time it was one or two o'clock in the morning before I laid aside my sewing. Then I had my house-work to do, and the children to get ready for school. This state of affairs could not last long, however. The overtaxed tension of the machine snapped, and the wheel stopped. Before the month was out I collapsed. I remember waking one Sunday morning with a splitting headache. I tried to crawl out of bed, but found that impossible. My Willie brought me a cup of tea and a piece of toast, but I could not touch them. All that day I suffered such agony as I never wish to suffer again. Toward evening I became delirious. Father had just recovered from a fit of drinking, and was not in the best of humours. I could not bear him near my bed. His harsh voice and rough manner grated upon my nerves and set my blood boiling. When I felt my senses leaving me I sent Willie for the doctor. 'Go,' cried I; 'I am going mad.' Poor little fellow! I fancy I see him running down that dark and lonely street, without either shoes or stockings on his little feet, the night air lifting his long curly hair from his brow; the one voice in his heart, 'Mother is dying.' For two weeks I lay between life and death. Kind friends came in during the day to do what they could for me, but they were all of the working class, and had their own duties to attend to. During the night I was alone. We tried everywhere for a nurse, but no one would come. Father was the objection. His garrulous temper was too universally known. At the end of the two weeks a second doctor was called in. They stayed with me a few minutes, then went
away, but I knew by their grave faces that there was little hope. "If your wife does not get proper attention, twenty-four hours is all we can guarantee," was the sum and substance of their verdict given to father. For once father was aroused out of the sleepy selfishness into which he had fallen. He came and entreated me to try and get better. 'For the children's sake,' he pleaded. These were the first kind words he had used toward me for many months; but I felt it was too late for a display of affection. I turned my face to the wall and refused to hearken. At last he grew tired of his fruitless efforts, and left me, 'to my sulks,' as he termed it. All that morning I lay there thinking. Neighbours with muffled footsteps passed in and out; anxious faces approached my bed; hushed voices spoke, but these were nothing to me; I was in the land of dreams. O how I longed to hear the rain. What would I not give to be sitting outside, and feeling the showers pour down upon my head. I almost held up my arms to catch those refreshing drops. Then I fancied I was a child again, happy and free; roaming over my father's plantation; losing myself in the African bush; hearing the 'Luf-luf' of the Hottentots; standing beside the tall upright forms of the Kaffir women, and looking into their dark proud faces; talking to the Dutch in their own peculiar language; sitting beneath the leafy trees listening to the chatter of the monkeys and the singing of the birds, and wondering in a vague childish way if heaven is so much more beautiful than earth, how beautiful it must be, since, in itself, earth contains such beauty. Then I felt the heaving of a ship. I saw the blue waters beneath and the blue sky above. A sea of faces flashed across my vision; my feet trod strange streets; I was in Scotland, in my mother's native land. Once again I entered the convent and enjoyed its sweet serenity; enjoyed the tender caress of the Mother Superior. I saw myself a careless thoughtless bride,
proud and happy, dressed in my bridal garments, wearing my bridal wreath. A dark cloud passed over the sun and threw a shadow upon me as I stood before the altar. I shuddered, and drew nearer to my betrothed. The shadow deepened; the blackness of night surrounded me. There lay my husband as I saw him the day before I was taken ill; lay stretched across the verandah; lay where his companions had left him after robbing him of his manhood.

'I don't want to live,' I cried in the bitterness of my soul. 'Let me die. O let me die.' A gentle tap was heard at my window, a sweet low voice asked admittance, and a bright, fresh-looking young girl walked in. When I look at you, Nellie, I always think of her. You have her dark hair and dreamy eyes, her cheerful smile and soft voice. She came to my bedside and asked me how I felt. I could not say I was dying in such a presence. I stretched out my hand, and she took it between her soft warm palms. 'I am Eva Evans,' she explained. 'I heard you were ill, so came to see if I could do anything for you.'

'Thanks,' I said, faintly. 'I think not.' I confess I felt half ashamed of my cowardice. Eva sat down on the edge of the bed and looked long and earnestly into my face. 'Mrs. Alen,' she said, after studying my condition to her own satisfaction and to my discomfiture. 'Mrs. Alen, I believe you have not been able to get a nurse.'

'There is hardly need of a nurse now,' I answered wearily.

'I am glad there is a "hardly" in your answer,' said she, with a bright smile. 'Will you have me, Mrs. Alen? I am a stranger here, and do not know much about nursing, but I can learn.' I looked into the bright face, into the truthful eyes. Surely I was not in another dream. Just at that moment father came in. He stopped at the door when he saw the stranger.
'This is Miss Evans,' I said, shortly. 'She is going to stay with me awhile; so you need not bother about a nurse.'

The courtesy with which he accepted the introduction showed me he also felt the same respect as I did toward this gentle girl.

Eva stayed with us all the time I was ill. I cannot tell you what a comfort she was. From the first moment of her entering my room I began to revive; health and spirits grew strong in that pure presence. Whenever I tried to thank her for her kindness, she would whisper in my ear, 'It is not for you alone, dear Mrs. Allen. I am in the Master's service. He pays me.'

Eva stayed with me until I was able to do my own work; until my jealousy drove her away. Yes, Nellie, I grew jealous of Eva's influence in my home. I forgot the weary anxious hours she spent by my bedside; forgot the gentle hand that cooled my heated brow; forgot the cheerful word that soothed the pain in my aching heart; forgot the doctor's words as he turned to her when the crisis was past, saying, 'I congratulate you, Miss Evans. You have saved a life.' Forgot my own answer, 'And a soul.' I forgot all these, and made the last few days of her stay with us a burden to her. Ah! jealousy is not only as cruel as the grave, but it is as deceitful as riches. It robs us of all our gratitude. It blinds us by hiding the purity of intentions. It works upon our imaginations until it succeeds in creating therein objects horrid to behold. Then it sets those objects at war with one another, and when the tumult is at its highest it vanishes, leaving us to fight our own way out of the mire, and to discover its deceitful practices at our leisure. I followed Eva about wherever she went. I listened to every word she spoke to my husband; and when the children kissed her goodnight (a thing they never did to me) I hated her. I think my own coldness was beginning to retaliate,
and I felt the rebuke. One evening we were having tea. Father had had his in town. Presently I heard him call Eva. It was one of Eva's characteristics to grant an immediate hearing. She rose and went to answer the call. My blood was boiling. Creeping along the passage, I followed. I saw a large picture album lying open upon the drawing-room table. I saw Eva approach, and I saw father bend over to explain something. To my excited imagination I thought there was more than mere friendliness in their attitudes. Gliding into the bedroom I waited. A minute afterwards Eva returned to the dining-room, and I heard her ask if I had finished my tea. I went into the parlour and confronted my husband. My face must have betrayed my intentions, for, stepping behind me, father closed the door.

'Mr. Alen,' I said, 'have I not suffered enough at your hands, that you seek to inflict more?'

'What do you mean, Polly?' asked my husband, quietly.

'You know quite well what I mean. Do you think I am blind? I see the little flirtations carried on beneath my very eyes.'

'I am heartily ashamed of your conduct, Polly. Flirtations! What next?'

For a moment I had forgotten all about listeners. My imaginary wrongs were all I could think of.

'ASHAMED! Who is it should be ashamed? And she's crawling into my house under the guise of charity nurse. My firm belief is that it is all a planned affair.' Not that I meant what I said, but I wanted to say something spiteful. You should have seen father's face. It was a picture in itself.

'Flirt with Miss Evans!' he laughed, scornfully. 'Do you think it is possible to flirt with Miss Evans? A minister would not dare to do so, let alone a disreputable wretch like me. No, Polly; I could not flirt with her. Her very sim-
plicity is her shield. And when you have regained your senses you will agree with me.'

My anger fled before his indignation; but I was too proud to own myself vanquished. I turned my back upon my husband and marched out of the room. When I reached the dining-room everything had been cleared away, and the children were in bed. I began to feel some qualms of remorse, and for the first time thought of the possibility of my words having been heard. I glanced round the dining-room. Eva had drawn the couch near the fire. She herself was kneeling on the hearthrug with one elbow leaning against the foot of the couch, and her chin resting on her open palm. The other hand hung loosely by her side. There was no lamp in the room, but I could plainly see her by the firelight. That picture, Nellie, I shall never forget. Were I an artist, and had the prerogative of painting a picture for the Academy, I would choose that scene and denominate it, 'Maligned.' The eyes were gazing into the fire as if to read there the words of the soul's vindication. Only half of the face was seen; but that half was enough. Perhaps it was the firelight, perhaps it was my guilty conscience, but to me that pale face, with its set lips and shadowy eye, its pointed chin, the creamy whiteness of the neck, the shining dark hair, drawn back from the white brow and fastened in massive coils at the back of the neck, and that drooping posture, with the flickering firelight playing at hide-and-seek over all, formed the embodiment of firm proud innocence and sensitive pain. She turned at my approach, and rising to her feet, bade me be seated. I sank on the couch, cowed by that calm dignity. She pointed to a chair beside me, and father took it. We were like guilty children before a disobeyed parent.

'Mrs. Allen,' she said, in a stern sad voice;—Nellie, that voice is not unlike Christ's, when He turns to reprove His erring but penitent disciples. 'Mrs. Allen, your fears are as
groundless as your accusation is false. Do not think I have been eavesdropping. One can hardly be blamed for hearing words spoken in the tones you used. Although that fault would be but a trifle compared with the opinion you have already formed of my character." Crossing over to father, she laid a hand on his shoulder. "Mr. Alen," she continued, in a softened tone, "I have tried by my example to let you feel that there is only one way to obtain true happiness: the way of right acting. You have promised to keep away from drink and drink’s partners, and to spend more time with your wife and children. I charge you, keep your promise. Last evening you wished to know in what manner you could repay me all that I have done for you. I give you the bill:—Cast away for ever the poison that is ruining your life; the poison that is turning one of the finest characters into one of the most degraded. I will not exact a second promise, but trust to your honour to pay your debt; and of my own free will, here in the presence of your wife, I seal the receipt with a kiss." She bent down and pressed a kiss lightly on father’s forehead; then turned to me.

"I do not rebuke you for your unkindness, Mrs. Alen," she said, in the same quiet tone. 'Nay, rather, I pity you the regret you will feel when I am gone. I leave you tonight, for I could not stay under the roof of one who did not trust me. I have noticed the change in your manner within these last few days, but, trying to persuade myself it was imagination, I have unsuccessfully attempted to stifle the warning whisper as to its cause. We may never meet again Mrs. Alen. Will you listen while I explain the reason of my coming here? Perhaps then you will be convinced that my coming to you was no planned affair.

Twelve months ago my father, whom I loved best on earth, died. On his death-bed he laid the command upon me—the command of doing all the good I could while I had the
opportunity. His own life had been almost wasted. I have, therefore, two lives to live; his and my own. Consequently, mine is a double duty. In endeavouring to carry out his last command, I, when I heard of your troubles, came. For the same reason I will not accept payment. Besides, I receive remuneration from heaven; remuneration of much more value than worldly lucre. It did not require more than a day's sojourn under your roof to understand the full state of affairs. I pitied your husband's failings, and sympathised with your shame. If such feelings have led me to be gentle in my bearing toward your husband, do not attribute unto it more than is meant. As for your children; let your obligation to me be my excuse for speaking thus:—Do you not think it would be more profitable to spend a little of the time you use caring for their bodies, to spend a little of that time studying their natures and modelling their minds? If you would enter into their joys and troubles more, instead of sending them away with the rebuff, "I have enough troubles of my own, without bothering about yours," it would teach them to love you, and you would learn to love them. Oh, Mrs. Allen!" Era's voice had a ring of pain in it which has haunted me ever since. "My own childhood was cold and stern. I feel now the want of that "one thing needful." That want will never be supplied. Time cannot fill the vacancy its neglect has left in my life; and by my own need I speak for the benefit of your children.'

She left us, but returned in a few minutes for a last parting word. I remember thinking how like the picture of angels she was; there was such an air of sweet purity about her. During her brief absence she had dressed herself for the street; a silvery grey jacket, trimmed with rich fur, a small grey cap; on her face a tender wistful smile. Those little hands that had become roughened through tending on us, were clasped together, and I could see the blue veins beneath
the transparent skin. Perhaps, I am inclined to harp too much on Eva's goodness, Nellie; but, Oh! it is so nice to see a little of Heaven in the midst of this cold sham humanity; and I do not think goodness can be commended too much, especially when it appears in the form of a sweet unselfish girl. Such characters are not so common as to become worthless; and it is only the common who do not discern beauty where beauty exists.

Taking one of father's hands, and one of mine, she put them within one another, saying, "Begin your girl and boyhood years again, and learn to love one another. It will take all the remainder of your lives to make up for loss time. Good bye; God bless you." I heard the door close. I heard retreating steps on the gravel path outside; and I looked, and continue to look into a great darkness, which never parts to allow me a glimpse of that sweet, sweet face. When I got better I made enquiries about her movements, and found she had set sail for China. Mine was not the first house she had entered as a messenger of peace, but I was the first to repay her with ingratitude. I have learned too well the meaning of those words, 'I pity you the regret you will feel when I am gone.'

I further learned that she was a native of New Zealand in every respect but that of birth. That her father, who was one of New Zealand's earliest settlers, died, leaving her, his only child, alone in the world; and that as affairs were settled, she had emigrated as a missionary, calling at Sydney on her way thence.

She told me herself," added Mrs. Alcu, "that she never saw her mother; that she did not remember anything about Home, as she was only a child when her father brought her to the Colonies. Her father educated her; and by the pupil, the teacher must have been a learned man. In his own way he was kind and good to her, but being always wrapped in
thought, he was no companion for his wild, wayward daughter. 'I used to have such fun,' she said one day in answer to my question regarding her greatest enjoyment, 'I used to have such fun chasing after the half-wild cattle. Yes, I think those were the happiest moments of my life. To see the cows scamper over the hills and into the valleys, with their tails in the air and their tongues hanging out, and with us—myself and two or three Maoris—mounted on equally wild horses, full tare after. It was really grand fun; I am sure I could not enjoy anything better. There were times when I would go to the meeting and watch the Natives at their work. That was good too. To see this meek and mild Miss Evans, you would not believe she had been carried for miles, and for many more times, on a Maori's back.'

Well," continued Mrs. Allen, "about three months after Eva left, we went to spend an evening at the house of one of our neighbours. On our return, I noticed father seemed quiet and preoccupied. I also noticed that several times during the evening he had been engaged in earnest conversation with a stranger. My curiosity was aroused, soon to be set at rest by father saying abruptly, 'Do you know, Polly, I have half a mind to go to New Zealand. What think you?'

"Go to New Zealand!" I exclaimed joyfully. "Oh, father, there is nothing I would like better, provided you get work."

"That is easily settled. Mr. Watson—you might have seen me speaking to him several times this evening. Well, Mr. Watson has promised me a permanent situation as manager on his run. He happened to know Mr. Evans, Eva's father, and to my mind, admired Eva more than was good for him; which I do not wonder at. However, knowing Eva was sufficient recommendation, and he offered me the post on the spot. I think New Zealand must be a grand
country, Polly," added my husband solemnly, "there is something so frank and genuine about its people."

I agreed with father. Indeed we found ourselves agreeing to one another's plans very often, and had almost ceased to be surprised at the novelty.

"We will go, father," I said, and so we went, and here we have been ever since. I often think there is no better recommendation for a place than that of sending out a few of the best characters that place can produce. Had it not been for Eva we would never have been here. Of course, all New Zealanders are not Eva's, still in all, one can trace her lineaments.

Father kept his promise, and never from that day has he touched drink. Once he was sorely tried. The glass was raised to his lips; but ere he tasted, the pressure of a holy kiss reminded him of his promise. He dashed the glass to the floor, saying, "I dare not; 'twould be a mockery." The glass was smashed to atoms, but the promise remained whole, and I for once foolishly rejoiced over a spoiled carpet.

When that curse was taken from our home, we found we were gradually learning to love one another. With a little practice, you would not believe how easy it became to tell to one another all our thoughts and hopes. And even now, after all these years, we have not learned the last lesson in the science of 'love making.' Eva was quite right when she said 'it would take us all our lives to make up for lost time.'"

Mrs. Allen laid her hand tenderly on Nellie's bowed head when she had finished speaking: "Do you know why I have told you this story, Nellie?"

"Why?"

"Because I feel sure your life's mission is not unlike Eva's."
Nellie rose, and threw her arms around the old lady. "Thank you, dear Grannie," she said in a low tone. "Poor Eva! How I love her, and how I shall try to profit by her example. But, Grannie, I think you were a little hard on yourself. I know too well how easy it is to smile in other people's homes, and how hard to be even cheerful in one's own; not that I wish to say anything to Eva's discredit—she was a noble unselfish girl—but I wish to make an excuse for you. Instead of a jealous woman I see a brave, true, forgiving woman. A woman, though beaten back with every wave, still facing the ocean, still battling on, still finding at last the rest she richly deserved. Had I been in your place, Grannie, I shudder to think of the difference. One thing: never again could I have loved and trusted my husband, and if I thought he was adding infidelity to dissipation, I would turn from him forever, and leave him to his wallowing. It is because wives do not take enough notice of such things that so much of it is done. Men, when they found their wives were queens and not cowards, would learn to respect themselves."

"That is just the point Nellie," said Mrs. Alen sadly, "I knew what I said was false. But I wanted to hurt father's feelings, and I wanted to make out a flaw in Eva's armour of purity."

"Poor Eva!" Nellie's eyes were heavy with unshed tears. "Will I ever see her? I wonder if the Chinese appreciated their precious gift."

The week flew past on the wings of the wind, and when the day arrived for her return home, Nellie could hardly believe her visit was over.

"You will come and see us again," said Mrs. Alen as she kissed her young friend good-bye.

"Yes, dear Grannie. Keep a warm corner beside Eva's in your heart for me," and smiling her bright, cheerful smile, she waved a last farewell.
It was years before Nellie fulfilled that promise. In the meantime the old couple live on, happy and at peace. Sometimes they quarrel over their spectacles or slippers, but it always ends with "Of course, mother, you are always right!" or, "There, father, I told you so!" They are an old Scotch couple, and their accent has almost become colonized, but you have only to mention bagpipes, and they start off at once into a Highland Fling, their hob-nailed boots making the whole house shake as they stampede round the room in their endeavour to remember the dances of their early days. Mrs. Allen is not Nellie's grandmother, but she calls her so, and Mrs. Allen likes it. Their race on earth is nearly run. Eighty years sojourn in this world has left their traces on those kind old faces, and bent the once upright forms, while the old gentleman has entered into the last stage of the Sphinx's riddle, for he is compelled to use a stick. They seek not for worldly advancement; "We leave that to our sons and grandsons," they say. Priding themselves in their humility, they forget their days of ambition are past; that they, like their children's children, were left the privilege of seeking worldly advancement. Thus, from day to day, in that unruffled sphere, they live and wait for the final call. Happy couple! Would that your contentment could enter the hearts of some of your more ambitious children. In the midst of the turmoil of mental advancement, the simplicity of your lives comes like a refreshing breeze. We must leave you now, but we will return to say a final farewell. Ere we go, we thank you for your hospitality, and for the lessons you have taught. It is by listening to tales of such lives as yours that we learn to battle with our own trials, and also to take warning that we do not court those trials of our own accord. In Eva's spirit of kindly feeling we whisper, "God bless you!" May you be spared for many days to be of comfort and help to one another.
CHAPTER XIII.

VOID Blank. What meaneth thy presence in our simple annals? Why interrupt our even course? Know ye not that, according to the opinion of many, life's chain is wrought with too fine a metal to allow the interposition of thy dull dross?

In the narratives of human passions, of spiritual strife, the modern novelist assigns thee no place: for, like the perfection of the character of the hero, like the faultless beauty of the heroine, so they consider should be the distinct and regular tracing of the footsteps of both. The path of hero and heroine, they argue, being always traversed in the broad daylight of an unoffended conscience, should boast of no hidden recess, no empty void. Not so are the opinions of the faithful narrator of human life, of human actions, the result of human thought and spiritual obedience. With regard to this world's consummation, such phrases as, "It all came right in the end," or, "They married and lived happily ever afterwards," are becoming old-fashioned and antiquated. Men and women are realizing more plainly that "It is not in this life Heaven's purposes end," that the two spheres of action are not distinct and separate from one another; and that the magnificence of the mansion depends upon the homeliness of the cottage. Then, if the two spheres be so closely connected; if the ruler of the one be the ruler of the other, wherefore question the existence of voids in this life, since in the next, there are mysteries known to the
Trinity alone: wherefore pretend to explain impossibilities. Truth, the watch-word of Heaven and earth touches the spring in the wall of romantic decorum; the slide flies upwards; and in the path of the earthly traveller there is revealed the secret presence of void. How many times these spaces appear in the pathway, depend upon the route chosen by the traveller, and sanctioned by the guide; nevertheless, the physical aspect is alike in all; and to all these voids convey the same impressions. Ever dark and direful, ever haunted by ghostly forms and sepulchral voices, these "howling wildernesses," appear. Were it not for the gloom surrounding the entrances, elfish faces, with flaming eyes of shame, and protruding tongues of slander, might be discerned crouching in, and peeping from the niches of these stone-walls. But the friendly god Erebus guards the entrances of these haunted chambers; and the voices alone betray the phantom inhabitants. But, reasons the sage, voids have no such characteristics; no impish faces, no ghostly forms, no guardian deities frequent vacuum. No! but this is the vacuum of a life; the void-blank, whose very emptiness is swallowed up in void-blank; the empty but inhabited space of a haunted chamber. Pass on, pass on, why pause on the threshold of such a gloomy habitation? Let the slide drop; let it conceal the darkness. The purpose for which it was raised is accomplished; we understand the existence of that void. Thus, at the cost of a breach of romantic decorum, but at the just charge of truth, a few steps with their accompanying environments, of our heroine, will be allowed to become effaced. Blame me not for this concealment. Look at your own skeleton hidden away in your closet. Would you care to have it disclosed to the rude gaze of the passing world? Would you care to hear it commented on by those equal, perhaps, inferior to yourself in commendable
qualities? Charity is not so universally worshipped as to warrant our risking the venture; therefore, we all shall agree to allow the interruption of a little darkness. When next we perceive the distinct footprints along the bank of the river of Nellie's life, the shadow of that gloomy encounter still lingers about their impress, but the room has been passed, and for her historian its site is marked by a blank; for herself by a haunted gallery.

In a room, from which all ornaments and drapery have been removed, and which looks bare and cold in spite of the glowing fire which burns in the tiled grate, a young girl sits by the bedside and watches the movements of a sick man. The room is indifferently lighted by a feeble lamp, which has been placed in the farthest corner from the bed, and which has been turned low and partly screened, that its light might not distress the patient. On the table at the head of the bed, and on the mantelpiece, and huddled together in a seeming confusion, were a number of bottles—some empty, some half full, some full, some containing light-coloured mixtures, some dark-coloured, some between the two colours. Judging quality by quantity, there was sufficient medicine in those bottles to cure half-a-dozen patients, to kill half-a-dozen more, and still to have enough left to prolong the recovery of half as much again. Yet, concerning those bottles, such were not the thoughts of the youthful nurse, for as she rose to measure out the prescribed drops, her fingers touched tenderly, even reverently, the small phial. "Oh, magic elixir," she murmured, "whose breast quivers with the consciousness of thy power, at whose shrine the noblest and the meanest pay their vows, tell me wherein lies the secret of thy witchcraft! Not in wealth do I find an answer; wealth is confined to the few. Not in rarity; rarity signifies toil. It is in the object and in the result of thy application that thy priceless value is found—Thou Easest Pain."
Bending forward she forced the drops between the lips of the half-conscious sufferer. The eyes opened, but closed instantly. To readjust the hot fermentations, to straighten the bedclothes, to settle the pillows, were the works of a few minutes, in the next few minutes the patient had sunk into a quiet, restful slumber, and the anxious watcher was released for an hour. She extinguished the lamp, and crossing over to the wide French window, drew up the blind. Oh what a dreary sight met the gaze of that solitary beholder! The grey morning dawn was just beginning to break, but its approach was the herald of a bleak and stormy day. A shudder ran through the slender frame. "Another miserable day. I wonder if it will ever cease raining, and if the sunshine will forgive our ungrateful carelessness." The white hand was upraised to replace the blind. It paused. It fell to her side. "Is not that dreariness an actual? Then why seek to hide it by this paltry screen? It is cowardly to do so. Yet is there merit in standing here and facing that disconsolate sight? Hardly, since my boasted courage consists in so far as my unconsciousness of danger. Poor kind of bravery. Still a few minutes ago I sought to flee, to hide. There must have been some sort of warfare carried on among my members. However, 'tis gone, and I am my own callous self again. Such emotions remind me of the coward who flies from painful thought—who by mirth seeks to hide from himself the dreary reality. Neither are they who stand and face, entitled to the honour "Courageous." Although many may raise their proud voices and cry, "We are not cowards," in a strict sense of the meaning, they are not brave." They have, by reason of the encounters, become insensible of the danger. A true definition of courage: Sufferer, not soldier; failure, not victory.
Then the molecules of the dingy atmosphere beyond that window became strangely agitated. They heaved, they trembled, they rolled and tumbled, they tossed and trampled, they leapt and crept, they separated and collided—in fact, they made such a ferocious attack and such a spirited defence, that their war would compete with the Tetanomachia or the Gegantomachia. Suddenly the combatants ceased; their ranks burst asunder; they fled to the nearest ambush, and in the vacated arena there arose the reflected interior of that sick room. But the scene that was being acted was the second act of the same play—the act that was performed two nights before.

"If I am to die, I shall die in harness," said a hollow voice. "At any rate, there is satisfaction in the knowledge that in death, as in life, I am no coward."

"But father," pleaded a young girl, as she helped the speaker into his coat and put on his slippers, "Will not this motion irritate the pain?"

"Let it. It irritates me enough, I shall retaliate." But the last reckless words were lost in a low moan of agony, and the poor sufferer clutched at the iron railings at the foot of the bed. Whiter and whiter grew the lips. A livid hue overspread the pain-distorted features, the tortured frame writhed, but not another sound escaped the clenched teeth, not even a groan broke the stillness of that midnight air.

"O father, father!" at last broke from the agonized lips of the watcher, "why do you not let me send for the doctor?" Like many another who beholds the painful struggles of others, all hopes, all confidence were thrown down at the feet of the physician—"if he were only here, all would be well." But no answer was vouchsafed, and the heartfelt cry was lost in the howling, raging wind without. The doors creaked, the windows rattled, every niche and every corner groaned, the iron on the roof threatened to
loap from its place, the very demon of disturbance seemed to be let loose among the elements; and why not, since in the internal agitations of that suffering flesh the same spirit hovered. Is sympathy confined to mortal alone? The spasm passed, and for a few minutes there was respite, and reinvigoration for the next encounter.

"And now, father, surely you will let me send," again pleaded the girl as she noticed the mouth relax, and the fingers unloosen their rigid grasp.

"No child of mine, no servant, no one shall go out on such a night as this," sternly commanded the sufferer. But ere the sentence was completed, a second spasm was upon him, and a second heroic battle had to be fought. Oh God, unto what agony is this quivering flesh heir to. The silent, motionless endurance became intolerable. Up and down, backwards and forwards those footsteps paced. First before the clock they would pause, but the cruel time would not hasten on; then before the window, but the darkness would not depart. Oh, that the daylight were here.

Was there ever such consideration—a father suffering excruciating pain, sacrificing his life, rather than expose his child to the passion of the storm. And throughout the whole of that terrible conflict, not one moment of agony, not one into of peril, was lost. Marvel! which, in its likeness, bears a relation to that higher, that grander consideration.

But the girl is taxed beyond endurance. "Heartless that I am!" she mutters, "yet it is not too late," and opening the door she glides out of the room. "Go, my brother!" she commands, her dark eyes flashing with a strange new light. "The morning delays its coming that it might steal a march on its unwary victim. But there is still time for defeat." The same howling, raging wind
without drowned the galloping hoof-sounds beneath the flying messenger. When the girl returns to the scene of that wild conflict, one combatant rests from sheer exhaustion. No wonder the fingers touch reverently the relievers of such pain. No wonder the heart cries, "Bring the physician! bring the physician! let the cost be what it may." No wonder the sufferer claims the title "Courageous"—the defeated, brave. The reflected performance vanished, the hostile molecules returned and continued their interrupted conflict, and the dreamer turned to dream on. Thus while the hands are busy with the wants of the sick, while the heart is anxious and troubled about the uncertain result, while the mind is devising ways and means for the fulfilment of that day's duty, there is still enough space left in each for spiritual reflection.

Toward noon the patient grew decidedly worse. A trained nurse was engaged; the treatment was altered; fresh medicine prescribed; all near relatives were sent for; doctors consulted with one another; the business of the home was suspended; and over the whole hung the lowering gloomy cloud of expectancy.

"Go and rest awhile, Miss Main," said the nurse kindly, as she took the bottle from the young girl's hand and bent over the invalid; "I shall be able to manage without your help just now, and you will need all your strength for tonight." The girl turned away, but not in obedience. She went to her room and stood for a few minutes looking at her own reflection in the glass. "Only a mortal after all," was her strange soliloquy, "a reflection of another reflection; and as one reflection fades at the withdrawal of the other, the shadow across the floor lengthens and leads the way to the beyond." She threw a cloak over her head and shoulders, she opened the glass door. A gust of wind almost threw her backward. The door slammed. Nellie
was out on the balcony, out in the storm—out of her prison.

It has been said that a "sweet spirit" had entered Elmy Main's life. That for months, for years, she had been a pupil to the spirit; that daily she had been found at the gate of its court, listening to the instructions and learning wisdom, that although often she had suffered from the slights of the rude passers-by, she had persevered with her lessons, and had gained no mean place at the several severe examinations. But all the subjects were of a mild and humble character, and were taught in a mild and humble manner. She had learned to regard her teacher as the "meek and lowly Jesus," and she was no discredit to his teachings of meekness and lowliness. There was one subject she had not taken up, but which would have to be mastered before she could compete for the matriculation. That subject was "The Power of Christ—Christ as He Appeared Scourge in Hand Cleansing the Temple." For several weeks she had been trying to decipher out the A-B-C; she had even learned to spell the G-O—. Now she appeared before her Master to repeat her lesson, and to have the true meaning expounded to her.

From the gentle stream and peaceful valley she had turned away unsatisfied. To her untutored heart such serenity manifested no sense of power. But, as she stood out in that threatening storm, she thought she had mastered the alphabet." And why not think so, for, if the heavens ever menaced, she did that afternoon. Her flood gates were flung wide open, and through them there issued forth such a torrent of water as to make the earth tremble in accepting, fearful of a second deluge. Vivid flashes of lightning appeared from time to time. Its lurid light over earth and sky, announced the approach of Heaven's army.
Then, through a second’s gloom, burst the roar of the artillery, and the booming of the shell, accompanied by the quick steady march of advancing footsteps. The earth beneath shook to its very foundation, and a shudder ran through the breast of the whole universe. The battle was no ordinary battle of one day’s duration; neither of two. For several days Heaven and earth had waged war with one another, and it seemed as if the contending parties were now throwing all their forces into the final. The amount of loss Heaven had sustained would be hard to ascertain; but one had only to look around to see earth’s carnage. Trees were uprooted. Branches broken. Haystacks blown to pieces. All removable articles removed; some out of existence. The rivers were swollen until their milky waters were on a level with the banks. Down every hill, and over every valley rolled volumes of thick muddy water, which, uniting themselves to the rivers, swept onward, bearing in their arms proof of their destructive power. Woe to the object that dares to impede their progress.

"O Elements! ye reveal the thought and sense of power," breathed the girl as her eyes travelled from earth to the sky.

Suddenly the noise ceased. A few minutes silence as if the Heavens were meditating. Then she lifted the dark frown for a moment, and beneath was caught a glimpse of her deep blue eyes. Only a glimpse, the brow contracted, and the scowl deepened. But the lesson had been corrected.

"I am mistaken. Even the elements are under control."

Then earth! thou holdest the secret. Man! its custody is entrusted unto thee. Human powers. Many hearing me would term me atheist. But what of that. "Tis better to do, through not understanding, than to understand and not do. Christians say, "God is Omnipotent,"
while they themselves turn the wheel of their own lives. I, too, am a Christian, yet I do not agree with my brethren. If I turn my own wheel, I am not going to mock God by singing the song, "Thy will be done." simply because it is customary. And I have had too many bitter experiences lately, both in my own life, and in watching the lives of others, to believe that man does not turn his own wheel; or, perhaps, more strictly speaking, that man has not the power of turning his own wheel."

"You have learned the wrong page," whispered a voice at her elbow. "Your thoughts are filled with the sights you have witnessed lately. And you have forgotten that I am your teacher. I know what was passing through your mind when you were listening to that wife's tale of woe; when you were administering to that old woman's wants, when you stood and watched your poor father's agony; but these afflictions are the serpent's bruises upon mankind's heel. In the next world, sometimes in this, you will see the crushed head of that serpent. Pain and affliction, instead of being as you try to imagine, the proof of man's power over man, are humanity's claim upon the Saviour. But enough, I am only a subordinate teacher, and have been sent to instruct you in the science of measurement. Take this line in your hand, and throw it out as far as your strength, coupled with my help, can reach. Throw it away, away. Let it go beyond the earth, beyond the stars. Let it coil itself around the pillar of God's throne. Now, from that standard turn and measure 'power.' My task is completed. Lo the master comes." A fierce gust of wind carried the instructor away, and in the silence that followed, the Great Teacher appeared. Softly, distinctly, spoke that silvery voice, but in its tone there was a new expression. "It—is—I." Only three small words, to only one weak mortal, but Jesus
descended from his exalted seat to utter them. Not by outward circumstances, not by internal agitation, not with earthly instruments, not with heavenly music; but by the distinct voice of the Father is the child convinced. Then once convinced for ever convinced. Let men never think that God does not superintend his own school, or that he does not personally instruct his scholars. Every pupil has the privilege of taking their incomprehensible lessons to the Master to have them interpreted. Why students persist, in applying to fellow students for truth, I cannot understand. No wonder there are so many badly learned lessons, such a number of dunces, among God's scholars. Thus though Nellie had many more pages in that book to learn, yet she had mastered the postulates. She lived the Omnipotence of God.

The sun grew tired of trying to peep through the heavy sky, and, turning away, he sought, a more sociable clime, leaving the night to triumph over its victory. But the triumph was not elegant or boisterous. Perhaps, having had its desire gratified, night found little enjoyment in the gratification. Be that as it may, the night which followed that stormy day was calm and peaceful, and gave hopeful surmises of the nature of the next day. One thing was evident: the wrath of the elements had been spent, and the earth had fallen back into its former amicable attitude: the effect of its recent encounter betrayed only by fitful starts. And the wrath and the effect were similar with the internal conflict of that poor suffering soul. What the next day would be like was in keeping with the night's calm but fitful peace. Two watches now took their places beside the sick-bed; two watchers watched. Two? Three; one unseen. The hands of the clock pointed to the hour of twelve, then past; the night slunk away ashamed and humiliated; and the August morning arose
and gazed after the retreating form, marvelling the while at the presumption and vanity of its foe. There was a movement of the figure on the bed, a strange gulping sound in the throat. The nurse started and turned to the girl beside her.

"I think you had better call the others, Miss Main. Do not be frightened. There is a change. Whither for the better or the worse, I do not know."

Hastily quitting the room, Nellie entered her mother's sleeping apartments, and gently aroused her. "It is the crisis," was all she said as she turned to complete her mission. She ran upstairs and awakened the rest of the family in the same quiet manner. Then returned and resumed her watch. Softly and silently those anxious faces gathered around the bed. Softly and silently the brave truthful eyes of the weary traveller rested upon each loved face, and smiled into the troubled sorrowful eyes; and softly and silently the Angel of Death hovered over all. There was no discord, no strife, nothing to disturb the serenity of those last moments. No contending angel vied with that shadowy form for supremacy. All battles had been fought. All differences were laid aside. The misty robed messenger stretched out a hand to receive its hard won prize; and with upturned eyes, quietly awaited the final signal. Look up unconsciouls watchers, look up and behold that spiritual form. But no. All eyes are upon the traveller. All hearts whispered "hope." Death had never visited that home before, and its strange misty but shining form, it dark but bright face, its shadowy but brilliant crown, were unrecognized, unperceived.

The dying man's eyes fell upon his wife, a smile lit up his pale, wasted features, and he motioned her to him. In that brief moment, when hand was clasped in the hand of each, who knows what sweet visions of youthful days, of
innocent enjoyments, of simplicity's happiness returned to husband and wife's remembrances. Oh, that they had not waited until the night-time to remember. Men, women, husbands, wives, turn ye to one another while the sky above your heads is free of death's shadowy angel. Of those sweet cups of love drink deeper and deeper, that they may always remain filled. Unlike the cup of earth's clayey mould, unlike the cup of Heaven and earth's composition, this cup of love, which comes from Heaven alone, and which becomes dim and shallow only when in contact with earthly matter, deepens and is replenished with usage, brightens with continual handling, and with every step of time a new, rare, and sparkling jewel, is added to its lustre. Oh why do husbands and wives allow the cup to crack, and the precious wine to leak out, until nothing is left but the scent. Foolish! We are all foolish! The whole of humanity is foolish, and the wisest are the biggest fools. We wish for what we cannot get; we strive for what belongs to others; we neglect what is ours; and we expect impossibilities. Man is indeed an enigma of which philosophy and science and logic have vainly tried to understand, and of which religion alone has solved and succoured.

Again those smiling, wistful eyes wandered round the room as if in search of something. As if unable to rest until all was completed, the head uplifted, and the hand groped about for an opening through the mist. A sudden ray of light lit up for a moment the gathering gloom. Eyes met eyes, soul understood soul. Emotion's speech was swallowed up in spiritual communion. The father stretched out his arms, the daughter sprang forward. The pale lips heaved a gentle sigh; the tired head sank back among the pillows; death's shadow fell across the face. The last signal had been given, and the silent messenger flew
away with its priceless blood-bought charge. Whither? To the feet of the Merciful—to the Throne of Grace. No more shall that low moan of agony be wrung from its secret depths. The strife of passions, and the crucifying of flesh shall no longer tear at its entrails. Remorse and repentance shall never again feed upon its brain. See! the Saviour puts upon the kneeling supplicant the crown of His own nature. See! the supplicant rises and knows for why he lived and died, and lived again. One mortal has solved the mysteries of immortality.

Sharp and clear rang out the cock's shrill crow, piercing the awful stillness of that transient moment: heaven's Angelus of a new birth. Amid the wails of wife and children, one alone stood mute and tearless. Like a statue, white to the lips, rigid as in death, frozen, but for the eyes another corpse, Nellie stood above that lifeless clay—a petrified goddess in the midst of the heaving waves, gazing down upon the Gorgon's head. The nurse led away the weeping wife. The children, unable to endure the sight, silently withdrew. The hands of the clock pointed to the third hour of morning. Eternity mocked Time. Not in life—not in the flesh—but in death—in spirit, in reality—were father and daughter united, and in death, in spirit, in reality is an everlasting, everloving union.

Only when the nurse returned to straighten the limbs did the frozen veins thaw, did the statue breathe. Stepping forward, Nellie said quietly, "Pardon me! this is my duty." With firm, steady hands she wrapped the sheet around that silent form. She folded the hands as if in prayer; she closed the eyes; she stooped and kissed the marble brow, and she turned and left him "to his undisturbed repose."
Where has she gone? To her room, think you, to weep? To her neighbours, think you, for sympathy? No. Upon the hill-top, surrounded by her thoughts, in company with her "Friend," a solitary figure kneels and watches the angels lead into heaven the form of her loved one. Watches them as they pause for a moment at the gate; watches the loved one turn and smile; watches the vanishing robes; watches the closing gate.

"Lord, although I prayed that my father's life might be spared, although I struggle with incredulity, yet will I not doubt Thy power. 'Tis hard—very hard—on my new-born knowledge; but above the wreck, above the failure, above the apparent, I hear Thy everlasting words. Speak them, sing them, act them, until Thou hast drilled them into my very soul: "It is I! It is I! It is I!"

She rose from her knees. Her dress was soaking with the long wet grass. Her dark hair hung loosely about her shoulders; her hands were numb—numb as her frozen heart. She rose and returned to the house of mourning. No one but the angels saw her go; none but the spirits saw her return. And still she lived and moved and had her being, and the sweet charitable world admired her fortitude. Wise world!

All that day kind friends came to offer their tribute to the dead, and their sympathy to the living. Wreaths and crosses were showered upon the body. Wreaths and crosses were woven around the hearts. The news of the death spread like wildfire throughout the length and breadth of New Zealand, and when the evening papers were issued there appeared the whole history of Mr. Main's life and death; of his worth to Bonsby as an industrious farmer; of his power to New Zealand as one of the honoured relics of her earliest settlements. Of his value to his family it said "dearly beloved." How meaningless
those two words have grown. Surely in the English language some fresh undistorted expression can be found.

Rest thou priceless clay, mould from thy Heavenly Maker! For a season thy task is finished—for a season thou seemeth of naught. But the thread of thy life is not severed; thy ashes are not lost. "And in the urn Thy children resteth Thy golden dust."
CHAPTER XIV.

EVE of the Funeral. Does it sound like a dirge? To-night it does. To-night, when the soul has had time to think; time to study and understand. A dirge, sad, solemn, mournful: but a dirge grand and perfect in its harmony, God like in its melody. Eve of the funeral; eve like this. So calm, so peaceful, so full of kindly thought. It had approached with such deep humility, such heartfelt sorrow for succumbing to its hasty temper. It had stood before us with drooping wings and down-cast eyes. It had looked so beautiful with those diamond dew drops sparkling on its misty lashes. O, that eve was so penitent, and so eager to make amends, that we could not help forgiving it, and loving it, and caressing it, and kissing it, and forgetting all about its passionate exhibition two nights before. Spoilt eve, spoilt child, let your conduct be ever so bad, ever so hurtful to your lovers, when you sue for pardon with such queenly grace, we cannot help embracing you, and straining you to our hearts. Eve of the funeral: Sweet, mournful, far away dirge. But the Eve of the funeral, on the eve of the funeral, was void of all sweetness, void of all dirge like harmony. Shroud, gloom, vague, something missed, something lost. Something, something, something. Ah! those who have had a funeral eve in their homes, know what that something sensation is. Darkness gathered round the house, and crept into the room where the dead man lay; crept in and clothed the silent form; crept in and kissed the pale, pale lips.
Darkness for once was charitable. For once it had compassion on its victims, and interfered with the light's rude glare. The bereaved, aye, bereaved indeed, bereft of prop and stay, bereft of head and heart, bereft of father; the bereaved clung together, dreading they knew not what. Bed time came, but no one rose to go. Bed time passed, and still they clung together. The mother in the midst of her orphaned family. Pray for them, ye, who have hearts, pray. But no! ye have need of your own prayers. Pray for yourselves. God is listening to his Son's prayer for them. "Be now their prop and stay; their head and heart, my father." But the early hours of morning dawned, the morn without the light, and the weary mourners slept; slept where they were, the little ones in their mother's arms, the mother in her chair. Did Nellie sleep? No. How could she when "Father was lying alone in that cold, cold room." Gliding past the unconscious sleepers she quietly entered the chamber of death. A dim light burned in the room, and its pale blue rays lit up the covered motionless form. Nellie approached the bed, but did not attempt to uncover the face. Why should she? When above the white sheet she saw the living, the moving, the breathing. Of course, it was only fancy: but it was a real fancy of the past. She saw her father beckon her to his bedside, as he did the night after that terrible conflict, and heard him tell of his happy careless boyhood—his early years which had hitherto been surrounded by stolid silence. Heard him relate anecdotes of his life in that dear Scottish home on the banks of the Clyde; of his school fellows, and of the pranks they used to play on the grey-haired old master. He told of his father and mother, and his voice grew husky, and two silent tears stole down his rugged cheeks as he said, "They died." Tears of the aged. Hoard them. They are pearls of the soul. "I
was not always a dutiful son, and I gave my good old dad many a sore heart," he murmured. Who are dutiful, children? And who has never given a parent a sore heart? Then he told of the breaking up of their home—their beautiful home on the banks of the Clyde." Told how hard stern men entered, and seizing with ruthless hands the sacred heirlooms of past generations, sold them for paltry gold. Seized and sold, while he, the last of a long proud line, stood by powerless. Under the restraint, which his hitherto unchecked spirits had been placed, the young blood of his fiery-tempered race, surged, and lashed, and rose to a white heat. Redress! redress! Money! money! Drawing out, with the promptings of another, the plan of his future life, he embarked for the colonies with the fixed determination of returning to Scotland and redeeming his lost inheritance; taking with him nothing but his dearly loved and zealously guarded name. Full, full of mistakes are the life plans of us all. Even when Christ lays the foundation, and supplies the material for building, there are holes in the walls which admit damp negligence draught. But, when the whole plan is drawn out, without even consulting the "Great Architect," who can doubt what a number of rents and fissures are found in those self-erected, seldom completed temples. Yet God does not reject every self-planned life. Many he allows to be completed; he even helps to build by inserting a word of advise, or by sending new masons. Favouritism! say you to accept one, and reject another. Oh, no. The plans that are accepted are those which have been drawn by amateurs, who, at the time of their drawing, were not acquainted with, had never been introduced to, the "Great Architect."

As Walter Main stood on that outward-bound ship, and watched the fast-receding shores of his beloved homeland,
he did not know his "farewell" was in reality "good-bye." His cousin, the only one among his relatives who cared for the homeless, orphan boy, stood on the pier and returned his farewell wave. "Cousin May was always good to me," he had said; "if I get over this illness I would like to go home and hunt up the clan. Perhaps I could do something to show my gratitude." At this point Nellie, seeing her father's agitation, and fearing the result, had begged him to be quiet—"He could tell her more to-morrow." Inwardly she had resolved to carry out her father's wish regarding these distant relatives. "It seems almost impossible," she mused, as she stood there in that dim, shadowy light; "thirty years. They may all be dead. There might never have been a 'they.'" Ah, Nellie, you have forgotten that clause in one of God's statutes: "Who knows what a day may bring forth." Be not too rash in your promises. Remember Jephthah and his daughter. The end of that story was never told. Ere he entered the state of semi-delirium, from which he awoke only in time to give that last wistful look, Mr. Main, taking her hand in his, had enjoined her, by her own young life, to think of his, and to pardon all he had done amiss. "Yet always bear in mind, lass, the whole object of my life was the welfare of my children." Then as he tossed his feverish head on the pillows, and his poor, tired mind stood for a few minutes on the brink of the sea of unconsciousness, he murmured, "Ah, well! God judges the object, and not the manner of the working."

All this Nellie saw as she gazed down at that still, white sheet. It was no dead form she beheld, no voiceless mould. It was the living, talking, life-planning being. She turned away without a sigh, and taking a rug, a rug having the form of a mighty tiger, with gaping jaws and curling tail, she spread it over the couch and lay down to rest, as
she had done so often during that anxious time of watch-
ing. No sleep came to the weary eyes. None was wanted. Sleep! What is sleep to the stricken? A numbness, the
awakening from which is more painful than is the weary
awake. But the day was before them—day so full of stir,
so empty of hope and consolation. "Good-bye, father!"
whispered Nellie as she softly opened the door and stepped
out into the crisp morning air; "I shall go and do what
you would have asked me had you been able to speak;
Then I shall return." So she went, and so she did,
and nothing within or without was left undone. "One
last look—only one—before they hide you for ever from
me." And as each one passed out, and each one went
their way, either to moralize or to weep, and as the room
was once more still and empty, Nellie quietly slipped in and
locked the door behind her. The long, narrow black coffin
lay across a table in the centre of the room. Written on
the lid in raised gold letters were the two lines—

Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to the Cross I cling.

Flowers, white flowers, beautiful flowers formed a fit carpet
for the feet of Jesus' bride. Far fitter cortega than the
sombre black wooden shroud and the plumed hearse. And
could any one accuse the flowers of irreverence? They were
grave, silent, beautiful. Then why not make art more like
nature? Why not have white garments, bridal cortega for
Christ's betrothed? It is the living of the dead who
mourn, who should wear the widows weeds; not the dead
itself.

Nellie drew aside the lid, and gazed down upon the dear,
dead face. It lay so calm and peaceful among its soft
white purity, its foster land's jewels. The deep lines of
care had almost disappeared. The mouth, though firm
and set, had lost that stern expression. There was no
bitterness, no haughty repulsion, no hungering pain. All was gentle, and noble, and boyish; for as he lay there he looked like the wild, wilful "white-haired boy" of forty years before—"Grannie's white-haired boy." The hot New Zealand sun had not dulled the golden sheen of those fair wavy locks. Among the gold no streaks of silver could be seen—no tracings of the pitiless hand of care. A small piece, so small that father would never miss it, found its way into Nellie's brooch (Iwaud's parting gift), to be treasured as the dearest earthly jewel; and eventually casket and contents became the tombstones of two buried loves. Oh angels, weep! Weep for that weary one! Weep and wring your hands for the living, motionless form beside the dead! Angels tears are the soul's medicine, which the Great Physician prescribes for soothing sorrow's agony. Angels tears are needed, for human tears there are none—none to relieve the overwrought heart. The white hand of the girl—white and cold as the face it touched—stroked the marble brow, stroked the marble cheek, lingered on the pallid lips; then back it wandered to the golden crown, and down to the loose white shroud and scented flowers, to the folded, restful hands. "Dear hands," she murmured, "hands of the undaunted, are your toils over? Are you never more to rest in your kindly way upon your children's head, while your own whispers 'Daddy's girl'? And I, who valued not thy caress, am I to be for ever haunted by thy dreary shadow—shadow of what thou wert?" A great wave of loneliness swept over her heart. She felt as if the oak of her life had been cut down, and she the miserable parasite, was left clinging to a few withered branches. "Oh father, father," she moaned, clasping her hands together in the dull agony of her loss. "Oh father, father! you were always so kind, so unselfish, so good to me when I did not deserve so to be treated. I cannot, I
will not believe that now, when I am beginning to feel a little nearer Heaven, a little like your grateful daughter. I will not believe you have gone and left me—left me to stand and face this cruel, hypocritical world alone.” She caressed those hands, she murmured loving words to them, she whispered thoughts and expressions of endearment; she told them she would always remember what they had done for her, what they were doing for her in the world to come, and what they would do for her if they were still on the earth. Told them she would never, never forget—never cease to love.

One last long look. One fervent kiss; kiss that would linger about that father, even in Heaven, kiss that would be returned while that daughter slept; kiss that would be pressed upon the weary earthing during the dark unconscious hours of night. “Good bye, my own own father, my beloved and lost, my loved and united by and by. Something tells me it will not be long before we meet again. Open the golden gate, my father. I shall not enter, if you are not among the first to welcome me into Heaven. The first to lead me to our Master.” She closed the lid, but opened it for another yearning look, another passionate kiss. “How can I tear myself away, knowing this is the last—the last.” “O father, father,” she wailed, “Farewell, farewell. The last, the last.”

What was that? Did the dead move? No. But the watching angel brushed between the gazer and the gazed, and for an instant that lifeless face was lit up with a look of tender pathetic reproof. “Rebuke from my father? Nay, from God. Rebuke. But I cannot feel it, I am dead, dead.” She covered the face. She re-arranged the flowers. She put John’s wreath of native ferns and clematis; John’s wreath which he had brought that afternoon; faithful old John, who had ridden many
miles, and gone to a great deal of trouble, that he might be in time to be of service at his old master's funeral; she put John's wreath at the head of all. She turned and left. Left without a tear.

The minister arrived. The clock struck the hour; and in that same room where, not many months before the sealing of a happy union took place, was read the burial service, and prayed the dead man's prayer. O, vain are the prayers for the dead, they say. They hear not the words that are spoken. But Christ looks down from his seat on high, and hears the soughing of the heart broken. If they hear not the mournful wail. And the prayers for the dead are vain. Am I dead that I cannot lay. My hand on the sorrowing one. Are any of my readers wondering how I could have the hard heartedness to describe so sad and sacred a scene as a father's deathbed? I too am wondering at my own callousness, but for "Father's sake," I must crush down the pain these thoughts arouse. There are many who thought my father cold and sceptic. They have seen him, in the height of passion, strike down the first obstacle in his way, and they have passed the verdict "cruel." He has seldom been seen in church among his righteous brethren; consequently he was little better than a heathen. Wise world. O, I envy the world's wisdom, especially the "Christian World's." The charitable christian's wisdom I mean. Sit upon your judgment seats my brethren. There are lives around. Judge ye one another. What care we for your verdict. Our judge is the judge of the heart. Our judge is God. Take care you are not surprised when you reach Heaven to see those hedges and highway inhabitants occupying your reserved seats at the marriage supper. Even at Heaven's gate there is a way which leads to Hell. Father! who but your own have seen the penitent
treat for the hasty word, the earnest resolve to refrain from the hasty blow. Christ knew how impossible it was for man, in his own weakness, to conquer failings. Think you it was but a fancy which brought the Saviour to mankind? And ye who judge, do ye repent for your misdeeds? Your charitableness belie your affirmative. Polish up your natures. Drape their rugged parts in the beautiful folds of self-control and hypocritical sweetness. Crown yourselves with the words "We are saved." Rule and judge to your hearts content. We, the Gentile of the chosen, the publican of the Pharisee; laugh at you. We scorn you; and while we smite our breast before our master, we spurn you from us. And, as for death, is death so terrible? So awful that the wicked approach it with dread, and the righteous embrace it? Again, I could laugh. Laugh loud and scornfully. O death, sweet death, no wonder thou, like love, like marriage, no wonder thou hast become a by word for every gabbling tongue, when thy sacred meaning is given into the keeping of such dolts. Death! Pshaw! It is life, this weary selfish, struggling life that is so dreadful. (If, indeed, there is anything beside sin dreadful to mortal.)

Think not that I am guiltless of judgment's charge. I too have fallen. But I have paid dearly for my fall. How dearly, none but God and myself know. So dearly that I pray night and day to be kept off that false self-exalted seat. O daughters, children, love your parents. O parents love your children. Love them, love them, love them, until your love becomes the ruling passion of your lives: exceeded only by your love for God. Many friends you may have, many relatives, many humbugging flatterers; but home and home ties are the most sacred things on earth, the most blessed things above.

It went, that solemn funeral train. Went, bearing its peaceful burden. Did the spirit of that dead witness the
funeral procession? Was it exalted over the pompous burial? Disgusted at the useless ceremony? Indifferent? Ah, no! we venture to say. In its kindly way it smiled; it felt grateful, truly grateful, of the affectionate remembrance of those companions of its earthly sojourn, for the respect paid to its memory. It would feel as its loved ones felt, that it would like to wring the hand of each one of that long dark line, in gratitude, for not forgetting the times spent together, the lessons taught, and the life lived. Nellie stood at the garden gate, and watched the solemn, sad procession, watched it as it wended its way down the long dusty road, watched it turn the corner; watched the last figure disappear.

"Gone." Lifting her hands above her head, as if to ward off a falling weight, Nellie closed her eyes, and tried to hide her thoughts from the fierce glaring light. She turned, and would have fled to her room, but the dark figure and face of a Maori stood in her path. Her hands fell to her side. Here was another ordeal to be gone through. She was too weary to think where she had seen the face before, too utterly hopeless to speak.

The stranger addressed her, and his mellow voice, his broken English, and old-fashioned gallantry for a time won away her heart's dull grief.

"Missie Main," he began, "You know me? Me save you long time my mates. You know I him take you hoss. Him battu you him stick." A ray of light shot across the deaden brain. This was the man who had saved her from that cruel blow on that memorable evening long ago. She tried to thank him, but the words stuck in her throat. She could only stand and gaze into the dark homely face. How kind it seemed, how full of sympathy. Even squatter Gould would have looked mean and insignificant beside that earnest uncultured Maori. In his simple way he told
his story. Told of the Dead's treatment to the Living. Told of a long ago, when country roads and country traffic were as dangerous as dangerous could be; when doctors were scarce, and medicine and medical treatment scarcer; when homesteads were few and far between; told of an accident which nearly cost him his life; told of her father's kind treatment to the neglected sufferer; and how he owed his life to Mr. Main. Nellie's heart had joy, actual joy, when she heard this; and she felt that it was the result of such deeds which had given her father strength to bear his own great sufferings. Little else was told, save that the man was sorry, very very sorry; that he knew her when she was a little child; that he was going to her father's funeral. Then he went; and Nellie was once more alone. Once more that awful weight seemed to hang suspended over her head. Once more she threw up her hands to keep it off. Once more the fire, that fearful red fire, scorched her brain. She even felt the crackling of the fuel. But she did not wish to fly to her room now. That wish was gone. She wished to open her forehead, and see what was the matter. As slowly as the funeral procession, so slowly Nellie made her way indoors, and took up the broken fragments of their former life, battling against that terrible weight the while. Took them up; yet still without a tear. And beside that open grave beyond the town, the followers paused, and laid down their silent burden. They clustered around; many weeping, few speaking; all hushed and reverent; they clustered around and looked their last upon the lowered coffin with its crown of flowers. The requiem died away. The mourners left. The cemetery was quiet. Two figures stood and watched the fast filling grave. Two figures, one dark, the other tanned, both beautiful by reason of their love. "Faithful John" and "Nellie and Beauty's friend."
CHAPTER XV.

LIFE and Death. Life is to be able to move, to act, to breathe. Death is the absence of all these attributes. To a certain extent such definitions are right; but there are exceptions to every rule; there are exercises for every exception. In this case the exception we wish to dwell on is the dead life and the live death. The general rule is, of course, the live life and the dead death: the apparent to all. No explanation is needed to the general rule. It is the axiom of our creation. The fundamental law, which neither requires, nor is capable of proof, and which serves as a foundation upon which to build further facts. From this general, we deduct the particular, and repeat it is apparent to a few; it is the exception; and it requires careful search. The diagram referred to is the wavy line of life which terminates both ends, one end by natural birth, the other by natural death. Mark the stipulation natural birth and natural death. Man may follow up that diagram, until he reaches his prime, before he lives. He may traverse the whole line awaking on the brink of the grave. He may journey on right to the end—sleep himself into eternity. In all these, until the time of the awaking birth, the person is dead. Quite as dead as the body from which the spirit has departed. How do we know this? Well, because we have passed through that dead life. We, in the flesh, and in connection with you, are experiencing what the dead is experiencing in the spirit, and in connection with us. We know you are asleep, because we have slept.
We know you shall awake, because we have awakened. They know we are alive, because they have lived. They know we shall be free, because they are free. In a nutshell, the proof is as a flight of stairs; the higher you mount, the more landscape you see. But the live death! Think you, because the soul has left the body, the person is dead? He is alive and among you. When you cast aside a worn and useless garment, do you look upon it as containing yourself now dead, which was once alive? And do you imagine that your breath, being freed from you dead self, hovers around the garment? No. It has done its appointed work; the purpose for which you bought it has been accomplished, and it is of no further use. Do you understand the metaphor? Is it not the case with this world's traveller? The body you saw and touched was the garment during its time of service, ere it became worn and useless. And the death, you imagined death, was in reality life. Life which is not interrupted by the casting off of a garment; but which is continued elsewhere, clothed in another garment of richer and rarer texture, a garment more closely resembling the pattern of the "Perfect one." Is it not reasonable enough to believe that the transition from one garment to another, of those who live a life of earnest thought, may be so slight as scarcely to be perceptible? The old garment is not cast upon a dung-hill, respect places it in a grave, and erects a stone to its memorial. And because we love the spirit that it once clothed, we like to plant flowers on the grave. One thing, it is a pity people would not leave off that habit of frightening children with threats of boogy-men. No wonder, when those children grow up, that they are afraid of passing through the cemetery; although the senses should be sufficient criterion for a safe passport. It is because the spirit is not there that we experience that lonely sensation. If it be felt anywhere, it is not in the cemetery, not by the grave, but where it is most loved and most useful.
It will be found beside the praying child, or toiling wife. We have said that there are exercises to every exception. One exercise is, that even when the human being has undergone the second birth (that is the birth of the soul, and the true birth), it may die; indeed the awakened intellect may die several times during the earthly course. It may die, become buried, and on the third morning rise again. Rise to resume the same life, clothed in a fresh garment of purpose. To this latter death and resurrection we allude, when we take up our story two weeks after Mr. Main's death.

"I will be very quiet Mrs. Rettos. I will not speak a word. O, do let me see her?"

Kind Mrs. Rettos' heart softened, and her stern resolution gave away, still she hesitated. The face before her looked so pleading, but then the face above was of far more importance.

"It is against the doctor's orders. And if anything happened I would never forgive myself."

"But she is past the crisis. Just a peep Mrs. Rettos. I promise not to go in."

"I dinna think it mon hurt the lassie," chimed in the voice of a third. This upset everyone. To think that anyone should interfere with her wishes. Such impertinence. Mrs. Rettos drew up her little figure, and looked at the speaker with a bright angry flash in her blue eyes. "Will you take the responsibility, Mrs. Lubb? Remember I am the nurse for the present."

"Nae, nae, I dinna mean to offend thee. Ye mon do as ye please in course." And poor Mrs. Lubb sank back in her chair and shook her fist at the dignified retreating form; for Mrs. Rettos deigned not to listen to her apology. Bidding the girl follow, the indignant lady led the way up a broad-winding flight of stairs, and pausing before a half opened door, pointed to a tiny white bed occupied by a motionless figure. The girl peered into the cool shady room; her heart
thrilled with a mixture of love and compassion as she marked
every detail. Among the soft pillows, with their lazy borders,
lay a pale pinched face. Such a pathetic face it was, with its
dark sad eyes gazing out of the open window, with its
closely cropped hair, with its drooping mouth. One hand
was hidden beneath the sunken cheek, the other lay across
the white counterpane. Her old companions, her books and
flowers were there as usual. They followed her about where
ever she went, and were always so anxious to be of service.

"They will not leave me," she had said on one occasion
when someone had made a slighting remark on her fellowship
with "such dry rubbish." "They do not count me unworthy
of notice, because I work. Nay, they commend me for my
courage, and they instil into my weak nature those drops of
truth which enable me to rise and conquer. When I fail,
and come short of doing right, they do not turn away with
scornful looks, pointing to their own virtues the while: they
come bursting with encouragement and consolation, and even
before I yield to their embrace, I feel the purity and strength
of their influence. Dry rubbish! That is to be guilty of
defamation. Love, Friendship, Advice, Warning, Guidance,
Sympathy, everything the heart desires; are these the
characteristics of "Dry Rubbish!" I will show you where
to find dry rubbish if you like: In the empty stagnant minds
of men and women you see around you every day."

At present she did not care to speak, nor hear them speak.
Sufficient to know they were there, and waiting to do her
bidding. And the flowers smiled and nodded so pleasantly
that it was hard not to smile and nod back. The movements
at the door caught the quick ear; the face turned.

"Marion."

"Nellie."

Away went discretion; away went promises. Marion
Ensaw flew to the bed-side, and clasping "Iwand's Lyly"
in her arms, laid her cheek upon the dark head, and burst into tears. Poor Mrs. Rettos almost fainted with fright. "She'll kill herself. She'll kill herself," she cried, throwing up her hands and rushing forward. "Why ever did I let that girl in. What shall I do. O, what shall I do?" She entreated Marion to go away. She commanded Nellie to lie quiet and not excite herself. And finally she succeeded in dragging the visitor out of the room.

"I shall come back on Monday," said Marion, as she stooped to kiss her friend farewell. "You will be more able to see me then." She went away, and Mrs. Rettos returned to the sick girl, and stood, bottle in hand, anxiously waiting for the relapse that never came.

"Well, and is she dead?" asked Mrs. Lubb as she met Marion at the foot of the stairs, "My firm belief is that it mon do her good. Brain fever is gone, but strikes me, if they don't take care, low fever will come; not but that we do not all suffer from low fever at times. There she lies alooking out of that window, and not speaking a word. Were it not to please Mrs. Rettos, who is so kind, I dinna think she mon eat." "Poor Nellie," said Marion, the tears streaming down her cheeks. "Poor, dear Nellie. I do feel sorry for her."

"Indeed, and you may," continued Mrs. Lubb in her strange mixture of mispronounced Scotch dialect and Colonial slang. "Indeed, and you may, Miss Enswav. Although, as I say, she is a queer lassie, and ye dinna ken how to take her." Then the old lady launched into the story she had repeated dozens of times before, to dozens of different people. Many enquirers, seeing the ample form of Mrs. Lubb would, fearing the rehearsal of that oft repeated story, conceal themselves until the reciter was gone. But Marion was no regular enquirer. This was the first time she had been able to get away from town; consequently she encouraged Mrs. Lubb on with her story.
"The night Miss Nellie was taken ill, I came doon to see her mother. My home is right at the back. Ye canna see it from here. Well, I came doon, and while Mrs. Main and me were stalking in the kitchen—for I dearly love the kitchen—well, while we were stalking in the kitchen, Miss Nellie came in from a walk around the paddocks. Ye would na hae believed how well she looked under the circumstances. And such good spirits as she were in. Laughing and joking and making us laugh at her queer antics. Now that I come to think of it, it did seem overdone. I said something about their trouble. Zounds! you should have heard what she made answer. "Trouble, Mrs. Lubb! Grieve, fie to the lot. We have no right with such extravagant indulgences. Sing, laugh, dance, do anything but feel, anything but cry. Tears are pity's tools, and sorrow does not want them, does not get them. True sorrow lies too deep in the heart to rise to the surface in tear ripples. It scorches the shallowness that weeps for the sake of gaining pity." Then she laughed at the petticoat lecture, and ran off to get the tea. I remarked to her mother what a surprise it was to me to see the lassie take things so lightly. "Oh, nothing ever troubles Nellie," said her mother. "She is one of the don't care sort." Gramercy! there's na one of us that kens muckle about t'other. The lassie was sa like a child, sa full of fun, ye non nae ha ken the heart was sace and broken." And so it happened that that very night Nellie succumbed to the blow. The weight she had tried so long to ward off, fell. The scorched brain took fire, and the whole thing was in a blaze. What was it that cut the string, and let down the weight? Who applied the match to the parched heap? By-and-by you will know. It is not meet that those questions be answered now. We are dealing with sentiment and morality. The last weight which broke the camel's back was a straw, not a diamond,

"I mon a feel satisfied noo," concluded Mrs. Lubb, looking suspiciously at the young girl. "She has na cried yet, and
that's na right. I ge ye a secret Miss Ensway, and, as yer her friend, maybe ye'll ken," and bending forward the old lady whispered into her listener's ear: "Mark my word, noo, there's something on that lassie's mind. She's na one to be broken over a death."

Marion started, and the colour rushed to her face. She thought of a letter lying in her desk. She thought of her fruitless endeavours to see Nellie alone, and to plead her brother's suit.

"I am sorry, but I don't know of anything that could be on Miss Main's mind," she answered stiffly. But as she drove home she was very quiet. "I wonder if Nellie ever got Iwand's letter," she mused. "Perhaps she has heard those horrid tales, and is fretting. I would just like to get hold of the one who circulated them. Someone jealous of Iwand, I'll be bound. The cur." And a little foot stamped on the floor of the carriage, and a little hand shook at the imaginary figure of the slanderer.

Nellie did not die from the shook. On the contrary, she felt a great deal better. She began to take a little interest in things around. Saw more sunshine, and less clouds. Her spirits began to revive, and she was not so often soated before the picture of death. Still it was a very wan and helpless Nellie that met her friend on the following Monday, and it was by no means a progressive recovery that followed that illness.

"Dear Mur, it is so good of you to come. You are the only one I care to see, and seeing you has made me think of the old happy days when we were at school together."

"It is so good of you to let me come. I thought you had forgotten me altogether."

"Forgotten a friend." The dark eyes were raised wistfully to the blue ones, so like somebody else's. "There are things we would like to forget, but friends are not one of them. O
Mur! to be able to tear these last few leaves out of our lives, and to go back to those baby exercises of long ago."

Marion Ensawv drew her friend toward her, and kissed the pale sad face; and for a few minutes the dark head was content to rest upon the sympathetic bosom. But, even in the weakness of ill-health, there was a proud rejection of sympathy, which robbed the rest of its sweetness. Nellie drew herself away with a sigh, and suffered only her hands to remain locked in that of her friend. They did not speak much, those two dear ones. Why should they? Friends are like books; they have no need of speech to express their thoughts. Their language is the language of the soul; a gentle pressure, a grateful look. These are all that are needed.

Presently Mrs. Rettos bustled in. "It's time you were back to bed, my child," she said in her bright cheery way. "You have done enough talking for to-day. I am sorry to interfere Miss Ensawv, but we must be careful of our patient."

Marion rose. "I am going Mrs. Rettos, so you are not interfering," she said, holding out her hand to the gentle little lady. "Nellie tells me, but for you, she would be with her father. I don't know whether she is grateful, but I am, and I know of someone else who will be." Then turning, she took Nellie once more in her arms, and kissed her many times. "You will not forget to ask the doctor, will you, dear? If he consents, I shall come for you myself."

"I will not forget." And Nellie put two hands upon the girl's shoulder, and looked into the truthful eyes. "I am so glad you are a girl, Mur," she said with a strange pathetic little smile. "You have not changed. There, dear, I will not keep you longer. Good bye."

Again that uneasy suspicion disturbed Marion's thoughts as she was returning home. "I believe I am right. She has heard about Iwand. How can men be so cruel?"
Mrs. Rettos scolded, and petted and lectured all the time she was helping Nellie to undress. "Didn't I tell you not to talk, you wilful puss. I have a good mind to keep you in bed all day to-morrow as punishment. You will have to steep your feet in a basin of gruel, and diet on mustard and water, until this feverishness has left you. Such a naughty, pretty little pet, as it is." And she tucked the bed-clothes round the tired form. O, how glad Nellie was to get back to bed to rest. Rest, if only she could rest thus for ever. It was too deliciously sweet to leave room for a retort, and a thing must be very sweet indeed to arrest a retort on Nellie's lips, for she was one who never failed to retaliate, even in fun. When Mrs. Rettos was bidding her young patient good night, Nellie put her soft white arms around her neck, and for the first time returned the kiss. "I am grateful," she whispered. "And someone else is also. I do not mean Marion's someone else." And, as the limp arms fell back, the dark eyes sought once more the shadowy faces beyond that window. The next day the doctor was met with a very important question. "Would Miss Nellie be strong enough next week to go on a visit?" The doctor scratched his head, and looked very grave; but that tantalizing smile would pucker the corners of his mouth, and that mischievous light would dance about in the kind grey eyes. "Would Miss Nellie be strong enough next week to go on a visit? And where is the visit to be made, pray?"

"Mrs. Emsway kindly asked the invalid to spend a week at her pretty little house in town."

"Any young men there?" was the next question.

The pale cheeks flushed, and the eyes turned away from the questioner. Mrs. Rettos answered this time: "None."

"Ah!" with a sigh of pretended relief, "I am glad of that. I am not at all anxious that my place should be
usurped by a "Handsome man." Any girls?" Just as if he
didn't know, the veritable hypocrite.

"Yes. Very nice girls too."

"Favourable! Pretty?"

"Yes! especially Marion."

"Then you will be quite strong enough to go Miss Main?
But hurry up and coax a little colour into those cheeks 'gainst
the day I see you under Mrs. Emswar's roof." And laughing
his bright cheerful laugh, Dr. Douglas took his departure.
He was a tall middle aged man, upright as a dart. His face
was pale, too pale for good health; but the bright eyes and
gentle expression made up for the lack of colour. A drooping
moustache hid the corners of a sensitive, almost effeminate
mouth; and a mass of nut-brown hair fell back from the
broad open brow. Too reserved to become a public favourite,
he had, nevertheless, that, in his manner, which made him
almost worshipped by those who understood him. His
vocation had been of his own free choice, and he loved it
dearly, so dearly that for thirty odd years he had thought of
little else. Even maids and marriages were neglected. As
Nellie watched him walking down the avenue with those
great swinging strides of his, twirling his cane, and whistling
a few bars of "Maritana," she could not help admiring
him, and wondering why he was not married. She could
hardly be blamed for such thoughts, for by some strange
instinct they two had drawn together during that time of
trial. Dr. Douglas had never been reserved with Nellie, and
Nellie had never been reserved with Dr. Douglas. And yet
by nature they were both reserved with strangers. One
reason of this intimacy was that Dr. Douglas had known
Nellie by repute, long before he became acquainted with her
personally. Another was that being an observer of character
he could see what many others passed by unnoticed. Perhaps
he saw those phantom faces in the dark shadowy eyes. And
Nellie being too much occupied with her own sad musings had not had time to pull the Doctor to pieces, as she would, at another time, have done. Consequently they drifted into one another's ways; Nellie forgetting to be sarcastic, and Dr. Douglas laying aside his dignity.

The next Monday, true to her promise, Marion came and ran off with her friend; and among new scenes and different people, Nellie passed the two weeks of her convalescence. Kind and loving words were poured into the sad heart, and kind and loving thoughts soothed the troubled brow. O kindness teach us to be kind.

"It was too bad of Nellie to go and add to that family's trouble, instead of helping to bear that which it already suffered," so whispers a friend.

My dear reader! Do you know why troubles never come singly? Listen, and I will explain. Inspired by love, the Great and Wise Ordainer sends a second trial to counterbalance the over tilted heart. By taking from the first, and adding the part taken to the second, he divides the weight equally. The intellect, which at first seemed almost swamped, rises to the practical necessity of supplying the wants of the second; and during that time of service much of the sharpness of that first and heaviest blow wears off, or becomes smooth. A third trial is often sent to confirm the other two, and to keep the mind more steady in its course through the narrow groove of future events.

If you take the trouble to think over this explanation you will find its truth beneficial to you when your turn comes to undergo trials. Instead of a thing to be dreaded, the second and the third, or "the troubles that never come singly," are things to be thankful for. Never doubt the wisdom and love of the Creator who orders all things, whether of joy or sorrow, for the benefit of his creatures.
The excitement of moving, and the motion of the carriage, had been a little too much for Nellie's weak nerves, and for several days after her arrival in town she was troubled with violent headaches. One afternoon, as the sun was beginning to feel tired, and was casting wistful glances on its couch behind those distant hills, Nellie lay on a soft invalid chair in the deep bay window of Mrs. Ensway's picturesque drawing-room. It was the first time since she left home that she had been free of pain; and for a few minutes she closed her eyes to enjoy the rest of ease. How white and ill she looked. How pinched those babyish features. Beneath the closed eyes, what deep purple rims; around the pathetic mouth, what sad sad lines. The very drooping of the figure had a long story of utter weariness to tell. Marion Ensway stood and looked at the unconscious face. For fully half-an-hour she had been bathing the blue-veined temples; and at last the sufferer had found relief. She had gone away for a few minutes, and when she returned this was the sight that met her gaze. But the dark lashes raised as if tired of rest, and the dark eyes looked back and smiled.

"It is so kind, so good of you, dear, to take so much trouble about me." And Nellie took and caressed the slender fingers. "Why, Mur, what is the meaning of this?" she asked abruptly, pointing to a beautiful gold ring studded with precious stones.

Marion laughed, and drew away her hand. "You will know to-night, Miss Inquisitive," said she, the tell-tale colour dying her cheeks and throat, and a happy light dancing in her eyes.

"You did not tell me," said Nellie, half reproachfully.

"Dearest, you do not know how ill you have been." Marion turned to busy herself with some trifle on the carved side-board; and Nellie's eyes wandered once more up to the sunset sky. Presently the gate clicked. A quick step was
heard on the gravel path. The tall form of a man was seen coming up the stone steps.

Nellie did not know how it happened, for some how there was a strange dizziness in her forehead, and a strange mist before her eyes; but when she next betook herself to the land of the visible, she saw the haughty Marion Ensaw in the arms of the Doctor, and as she looked at the usually proud face, lo, it was changed. It was almost divine in its sweetness and tenderness. And the doctor usually so prim and proper was—well, never mind what he was doing. His silky moustache was certainly very near two rosy laughing lips. Then they suddenly remembered they were not the only people in the world, and that this was a queer way to perform a professional visit. The golden head lifted from the tall shoulder, and one delinquent laughingly told the other that it was "Dreadful, really shameful, conduct."

"So it is," answered Dr. Douglas, as he bent over the astonished girl in the shadow of the window. "But I did not know I had an auditor. You will forgive the breach of etiquette, will you not Miss Main?" He looked so handsome, and so absurdly penitent, that Nellie could not help laughing. And Marion, who had never heard her laugh since her illness, declared they should offend again, "If it be only for the pleasure of making Nellie look bright."

Nellie would not let Dr. Douglas examine the state of her health, for, as she said, "It was only humbug. And she was not going to lend herself to a fraud. The idea of pretending to be a doctor to one, when all the while he was a lover to another." In reality Nellie did not require his attention, for she was slowly recovering. Besides she wanted to lie and think of her friend's great happiness. There was no mistaking the affection of those two dear ones, for already Nellie thought of the kind Doctor as her friend. There was no ostentation. No false mirth. Indeed, after that one
exhibition they seemed to be strangely grave; but you had only to see the look in the eyes as they met, or the reverence with which they waited on one another, to know that theirs was true undying love. Their very silence was eloquence. A tender little smile rippled about Nellie's mouth during the whole of that evening. Sometimes a wistfulness would creep into her eyes, but she would chase it away. "No wonder love is the crown of life," she mused, "When that is the effect. Oh, Marion, I never thought that proud face of yours would ever be expressive of such tenderness." Then she glanced at her own pinched face with its starry eyes, and a hard bitter look settled for a moment on the drooping mouth.

"As for me. I am set aside. Am an Ishmael. But Ishmael was blessed," and with that comforting thought would turn back to watch the happiness of others. Thus the night passed calm and peaceful and full of comfort, and thus many nights passed. Nellie growing more and more cheerful in the company of those she loved.
CHAPTER XVI.

"You are really going Nellie?"

"Yes, Mrs. Ensway, I have imposed long enough upon your good nature, besides there is so much to do, and so little time to do it in." Nellie stood beside Mrs. Ensway's chair drawing on her gloves. She was dressed in mourning, and wore a small black hat, trimmed with crape and ribbon. Her face had lost a little, a very little, of its lifeless look; and there was an expression of interest, almost hope, in the weird dark eyes. Yet the light seemed momentary, and, beneath the scumble, gleamed the dark shades of a remorseful hungering pain. "Well, my dear," said Mrs. Ensway, drawing the slight delicate form to her, and kissing the white cheeks affectionately. "Remember; if ever you are in need of a home, come to me. So long as I have shelter, you are welcome to share it."

Nellie's eyes filled with grateful tears. Tears were never far from her eyes, when listening to words of love. The only times they dried in their sockets were during pain and sorrow. Then they evaporated, and the dark beds were left dry and parched, and blazing with an unnatural light.

"Thank you," she said in her low, quiet voice. "You have made a better girl of me. I shall never forget. By your own feelings, you will understand what I cannot express."

"I am disappointed," said Marion, coming up for her share in the parting. "I fully expected you to stay a month. And had planned such a surprise. It's really too
bad of that old lady sending just when she shouldn't." The girl tried to appear annoyed, but, when she looked at her friend's face, and saw the tiny suspicions of interest there, she smiled, and inwardly prophesied that the change would do her good.

"Tell me the surprise, before I go home, Marion."

"No. At least, not just yet."

"The carriage is at the door," announced a voice, and Nellie had to basten away.

"Good bye, my friend," said Nellie, as she yielded once more to Marion's close embrace.

"Good bye, Iwand's Lyly." Ah, Marion did not guess what a cruel stab she gave to that bleeding heart. Twice she had used the wrong medicine for a misunderstood disease.

The mouth twitched with pain, and the face was hidden upon the breast that its change should not be seen.

"I may not see you again, dearest," continued Mur, in her gentle whisper. "But I shall always remember you in my prayers. Have you any message, anything you would like me to do?"

"No, nothing, except to love me, and never change."

Marion had to bend very low to catch the strange words. But her mother's entrance prevented her from answering, and Nellie lifted her head, and whispered: "Great happiness is in store for you, my Mur. Live and enjoy it. He whom you have chosen is worthy. Ye are worthy of one another." Then the pale face turned away, and refused to be scrutinized by those earnest eyes.

Mother and daughter went to see their visitor off. They helped her into her seat. They shook hands, and kissed her for the last time. They stepped back. The door shut. The driver mounted into his seat. She was gone. As the
carriage rolled away a pale face appeared at the window. A thin white hand waved farewell.

"What a strange expression haunts that child's face at times," remarked Mrs. Ensway to her daughter as they returned to the house.

"Yes," answered Marion, her eyes glancing wistfully at the unoccupied seat in the window. "I am not so sure of my suspicions. Yet there is certainly something more than the pain of death in those dark eyes. I begin to think I do not understand her. Do you know what she said the first day she arrived, mother? I felt sorry, and thought she had more than her share of trouble," continued Marion, without waiting to hear her mother's answer. "Naturally enough I told her so, and finished up by relating Mrs. Lubb's story of her tearless sorrow. You should have seen the fire in her eyes as she turned to me. 'Marion,' she said in that cold hard tone she sometimes uses. 'I have a favour, a command. Never by word or deed allude to myself, or anything concerning me. Let me try to forget the remembrance of the past in thinking of the present, and planning for the future. I shall not succeed, I know; but you may be able to help me a little by not probing this cankered wound.' I have never dared to mention it to her again."

"Well, Marion, I am surprised. I thought you would have had better sense than touch upon such a painful subject."

"But, mother, you forget. Nellie and I are friends, not acquaintances. We always used to tell our thoughts to one another. Why should she change now?"

Mrs. Ensway laid a small white hand on her daughter's shoulder, and for a few minutes looked into the proud fair face, as if she meant to read what was beyond those bright blue eyes.
"My child," she said in her soft gentle way, "I must ask you to look into your own heart. Do you not see there a tiny corner where even your greatest earthly friend cannot gain admittance. A corner which is opened only on rare occasions. Close to this, so close as to be often confounded with that inner recess, is another apartment where you admit your greatest friends. On the outside limit is acquaintance hall. Thus! the heart, you will understand, contains three main divisions. Of friendship's apartment and acquaintance hall, there is little that is noticeable. The walls of the former are thicker, and more substantially built than that of the latter; and their structure varies according to the nature of the possessor. In many cases friendship's apartment is so carefully guarded that, with men, their wives, and perhaps one other friend, with women, their husbands, and perhaps another Nellie, are the only ones who gain admittance. And the door of acquaintance hall is protected by what is often termed reserve, but what in reality is a love for truth. Of course there are many whose dividing walls are so carelessly constructed, and so wilfully neglected, as to allow the inhabitants of one room, pass into the other without any difficulty; they can even pass through both apartments, pass out, and be forgotten. So much for the upper chambers of the heart. Now for that deep and secret recess, Marion." Mrs. Ensway's hand fell from the tall shoulder of her daughter, and her eyes turned to the deep bay window, as if she read there the words she uttered: read, as if the absent form were in its usual place, and the heart were open to her gaze.

"Marion. In that secret chamber no other mortal can find an entrance; none but the one to whom it belongs. The veil of instinct, studded with its rare and costly jewels of reverence, separates from man what is within his
fellow man. In this inner chamber, or secret recess, the Father and the Son are found seated on golden thrones of love. They sit, waiting to commune with the soul. Like the high priest of old, the soul requires preparation for its entrance into that sacred place, and its appearance before those sacred forms. Washing itself in tears of remorse, and clothing itself in the robe of humility, the soul lifts the heavy shining veil, and enters the secret apartment, bearing in its hands faith and obedience; the latter is sprinkled before the throne, the former ascends and fills the room with a pale misty light. The Father accepts the offering, blesses the offerer, and passing his servant over to his Son, charges that Son, by his own life of humanity, to counsel and succour this witness of his. The Son complies with the command; and the soul goes forth, laden with precious gifts from that Saviour's throne of love. Do you understand, now, why you are not admitted into this secret chamber of Nellie's heart? You must not be jealous; only three can occupy that place: the Father, the Son, and the soul itself. My child, you too have this recess, this strange recess of the heart of hearts. But as yet you have never been called upon to examine it. May your examination be fraught with less pain than is that of your noble-hearted friend."

"Thank you, mother dear," answered Marion, in a low soft voice. In spite of her endeavours to be cheerful for "Iwand's Lyly's sake," she had failed sadly. The pathetic look of those dark proud eyes haunted her even in her happiest moments by Norman Douglas' side. As her mother said, Marion Ensway had never been called upon to examine the truth in depth. Her love for Norman had been the deepest she had fathomed, but then it was so alluring, so strangely sweet, that she did not consider it an examination. Besides, even that had not been tested.
But Nellie, the wild wilful Nellie, who was always getting into scrapes, always getting out of them, always laughing and teasing, always bright, and full of careless fun. Nellie, of all persons in the world to have that undefinable expression, Marion could not understand it. Her mother’s solemn words, together with the change she was contemplating in her own life, stirred up deeper thoughts than anything had ever done before.

"Why have you never spoken like this to me before, mother?" she asked, her face averted that her mother might not see the tears in her eyes.

"Because, for one thing, I do not care to lecture my children unnecessarily, and for another, because the right time had not come. You would not have understood."

Marion crossed over to her mother, and throwing her arms around the elderly lady’s neck, kiss the plump cheeks. "I wish all mothers were like mine," she said tenderly.

"The world would not be so full of broken hearts and blighted homes. I shall be to my husband, what you are to yours, and I am assured of the result. Yet, had you not taught, how should I understand my duty. Mother, at this solemn moment, Nellie’s face arises to my mind. Nellie’s face with its purple rimmed starry eyes. O, why do parents behave like children, and children like parents? Because one refuse to learn, and consequently, is not able to teach; and because, when the time came for the other to learn, the lessons, being unfamiliar, came like a sudden blow to the unprepared intellect."

"Well done, my Socrates," laughed Mrs. Ensway. "I thought you incapable of so much insight. See that you do not abuse my teaching, when your turn comes to teach."

"Do not fear, mother mine, my turn will never come," said Marion with a merry twinkle in her eyes.
"Not according to appearances," answered her mother.

Marion laughed, and blushed, as she turned to greet Dr. Douglas, who was entering by the open window. He was surprised to see the couch unoccupied; more so, when he heard his patient had gone home, and more so still when he learned the reason of her sudden flight. Yet he concluded that it was the very best thing that could happen; this conclusion, however, he kept to himself, for, as we are aware that Marion had a surprise in store for her friend, and as Dr. Douglas knew of the nature of the surprise, he did not care to hurt "His Marion's" feelings. He too was not quite sure of the ground on which his beloved stood.

He was very quiet all that evening, and Marion rallied him unmercifully about his absence of mind. "I really believe you are thinking of Nellie," she had declared once, her blue eyes veiled with her long lashes that he might not see their expression. "Don't make me jealous, Norman."

Norman Douglas looked at the fair, sweet face for several minutes, before answering. "I see no traces of jealousy in that tender face," he said quietly. "Perhaps, I am not a good judge of character. Marion; I see pride, firmness, love; but I see no jealousy."

Marion rose from her low seat beside him, and stepped forward into the full light of the gas. They two were the only ones in the room during those few moments. The bright light fell upon Marion's proud face and golden hair. The shadows fell about her eyes, and round her dimpled mouth. Her robe of the softest grey, clung about her slender figure, and fell in graceful folds, until they touched the dainty little feet. A faint bloom rested on the somewhat pale cheeks giving the face that accidental touch which so greatly improves a picture.
"Norman," she said in a clear steady voice, her blue eyes looking full at him. "Norman! look at me. See I stand in the full glare of this light: a position few of my sex care to take. Hitherto you have seen me in the shadows by your side. Now you see me as I am. See me with all my blemishes brought out into startling effect. I want you to study me well, for next month I become your wife, and it will be too late then. You are surprised at my conduct, Norman, I see it in your face; but Elmy Main's visit, and my mother's counsel this afternoon, have set me thinking. I will help you in your study of my character Norman, by telling you what I know, what I feel. You say there is pride in my composition. You are right. There is a pride that would have ruined my life, had you not come to turn it into a sweet and sacred blessing. Norman, before I knew you, I dispised you sex. One after another the men of my acquaintance passed before me and paused; and from all, I turned away with a bitter scornful smile. "These are the creatures of our affections; the beings of unity with our spotless maidenhood," I cried. "O God, create a more worthy object for our love." Thus day after day I stood beneath the drops of lime-water, and became petrified in my pride. 'They are all alike, there is no honour among them. To man, that perfidy of purity, my soul would never bend.' You have taught me my mistake, and although I bend not to that perfidy of purity, I despise not your sex for your sake." The proud face softened a little, and the golden head bent forward. "Love, you see in my nature? Yes, but you have put it there. From your own great storehouse you have replenished my empty neglected granary. Ah, Norman, I dare not look within, I fear the effect of that sight upon my miserly soul. And firm." Again the proud head was thrown back. Again the suspicions of unnatural womanish sternness
played about the mouth. "And firm, I am too firm, to allow jealousy an entrance into my heart, into my home, and into my husband's and his wife's lives. Think well of this Norman Douglas, before you take me to your heart and home. I have passed in and out among my friends, I have entered homes; conversed with wives and husbands; read what was beneath the surface of many a jest, many an intended insinuation; dined with them; and had them dine with me; and I swear before Heaven that my married life will be different. I will not take up politics, I will not rail against the form; but I will take up my crown, I will rule the inner man. It is the actions of the married men which added the over-balancing weight to my disdain. Do not mistake my meaning, however. Although the power of my outraged indignation would paralyze your arm upraised to embrace another woman. Still, I would entreat you to stoop and kiss Elmy Main. The contact of your lips, with her spotless soul, would purify them for your wife. I speak as one inspired. Taught by a higher power. Taught by love. And now Norman you understand what to expect from my hands. Do you hesitate?" The firm mouth never flinched, the proud eyes looked straight into his.

"No." Low and deep and distinct as a bell, rang through the room that manly voice.

"Norman." All pride, all coldness, all sarcastic hauteur had left the face. All sweetness, all love, all wistful tenderness shone there.

He gathered the drooping form to his strong manly heart; he caressed the shining golden head, he kissed the soft shy lips: he loved, and was loved: he was a king among his kind.

O, ye who say that love is selfish; that love is seasoned with passion: look upon this scene, look into these hearts,
and learn to be wise. Love is not love, until it is cleansed of all impurity. That night, when Marion went to her mother’s room to kiss her good night, she put a telegram, which Mr. Ensway had given her on his return from business, into her mother’s hand, saying, “Just in time. Although, as I said before, I am not so sure of my ground.”

“The uncertainty will be cleared away, and that will be something for your pains,” whispered the mother, as she kissed the flushed face of her daughter, and thought how beautiful it had grown. And yet that face was not perfect in its classic beauty. The nose was not patrician. The mouth rather stern than mobile. The eyebrows heavier than the critic cares to see. Wherein lay the magic charm? The Light. The light of rare and exquisite love. Marion Ensway had won the love of a man, and being a woman, knew how to value that love.

As she passed through the dining-room on her way to her bed chamber, she glanced at the empty couch.

“Good-night, Iwandi’s little Lyly,” she murmured, her eyes filling with tears. “Good-night, my dearest earthly friend. I wonder who tends you to-night. No one, I suppose. No one who loves you as Marion does.”

The cool night air wafted the words to Nellie, and the kind spirit they contained, softened the pillow for the weary head. “God bless and prosper those dear friends,” she prayed. “And make me worthy of their love.” A heart-felt sob ended the prayer, and the tired tearless eyes closed in a restless sleep.
BONSBY can boast of a beach as good as any in New Zealand, and the inhabitants of Bonsby know this, for any summer, if you are passing, and have occasion to enter the Bay, you will see half-a-dozen or more tents erected on the beach, or dotted here and there among the trees that grow so luxuriantly on the sides of the hills. These hills line the north-east coast, shutting in the entrance of the town, and preventing the traveller from getting a proper view. It is not until the steamer enters the Bay that its passengers get a glimpse of the town. Even then they are often disappointed by seeing what appears like a forest of green trees, with an occasional house peeping out here and there, with three or four columns of blue curling smoke, and with a bold rugged white cliff protecting the southern border. If you wish to see Bonsby to its advantage, you must climb one of those eastern hills, and turn your face south-west. You will be surprised at the remarkable difference of the two pictures of the one place. Is either at fault? No. But the secret lies in your position. Like the life and actions of another, if viewed from so low a standard as the sea of your own short-comings, a part only becomes visible; that part which is most exposed, or is in direct contact with your lowly position.

Ascend into the hill of spiritual discernment. From thy elevation mark every varying shade, every veiled feature. See the massive buildings of Unselfishness; the deep winding rivers of Love; the curved shore of the beach of Strength;
the dark green, golden tinted foliage of the trees of Sympathy. And from the hills of the east, those bold, rugged hills of Bonsby, you see Bonsby as it is. Calm, peaceful; snug little Bonsby: girt on all sides by that elevated chain, with its small clasp of deep blue sea. Among her grey-roofed houses, and bordering every street are tall poplar trees, blue gum, oak, buxom fir, and wattle. On the golden pasture land of its outlying valleys, cattle with well-filled flanks, and horses with sleek coats and erect ears, browse; while, on the hilly slopes, like the star spangled sky, twinkles the white woolly sheep. The two rivers, so quiet and peaceful in their pleasant humours, so fierce and rushing in their rage, so widely separated at their source, united at their terminations, the rivers, blue and shining in the shimmer and sheen of their rippling glassy surface, wind in and out, and around and about, those peaceful homes and stone-built walls; winding and threading, and teaching us the path-way to the sea. No birds hover in the air; few nestle among the trees. Only the lark, the bright, joyful, almost immortal lark, disturbs the silent ether; floats unperceived beneath the illumined sky. In the grass beneath your feet, among the flowers at your side, around the trees above your head, no snakes or reptiles curl; no hateful hiss disturbs your quiet musings. New Zealand, the land of liberty and love, nurtures not the adder of the soil, the serpent of the people. Venom may lie within her bosom, but man alone has placed it there; man alone need fear.

The distance from the town to the place of encampment is about a mile, and a good carriage roads leads from one place to the other. A breakwater and two bridges break the monotony of the road, the former being a rugged and picturesque white elephant, with rusty iron eyes gaping at you wherever you turn. Bakers, butchers and fruit
sellers take turn about visiting this seaside resort, and at any hour of the day refreshment may be obtained. Appetite is a hard task master at all times, but in the bracing sea breeze its demands are heeded with unusual rigour.

We will visit this pleasant scene in the quiet hours of evening; evening of day, evening so full of white-winged, golden crowned spirits; beautiful peerless evening; time of receiving Heaven’s shining robed messengers.

A carriage rolls quickly along the rainbow tinted sand, and draws up in front of one of the largest of those tents, scattering a crowd of children who have gathered on the beach. The single occupant alights, pauses to say a word to the driver, watches the safe turn of the carriage as it drives back the road it came, enters the wide flapping entrance, and is warmly greeted by the hostess, who is none other than our friend Mrs. Rettos.

"I am not quite settled, my dear; but you will not mind that. It is picnic time, you know."

"I think it just splendid." The eyes wandered around, and lingered on the strip of blue sea peeping through the arched entrance. "It is a fit place for our farewell."

"To the place, or to me?" queried Mrs. Rettos with a mischievous gloam in her kind blue eyes.

"Both," the dreamy voice answered. "In this weary life the offices of both are so much alike, so similar in effect, that in meeting and in parting, the same thoughts arise and find vent in the same words."

"Little flatterer. Is that meant as a compliment to me, or are you disparaging my sea-side residence? Beware how you answer, for I am a jealous woman."

"I hardly know what I mean, nor do I think I addressed you. My words were spoken to myself. The receiver might not always be grateful for your gifts, may often wish you had not been so kind, but that does not lessen your
worth, it makes them greater, adding lustre by their unselfish intentions—despised recompense. You see I class you and nature together. It is the highest tribute I can pay to both."

"Run away, my child, you make me vain. What is the little I do for others, compared with the much others do for me?" Mrs. Rettos gently wrapped a soft white shawl round the girl's shoulders, and playfully pushed her toward the door. "Run out and have a peep at my children. You did not know I had such a large family, did you?"

The children clustered together again as soon as the carriage had driven off. They were too excited, and too much taken up with their own enjoyments to notice the visitor, or to be inquisitive about anything but their supper. "Let's have a game of hide and seek," exclaimed a merry voice. The rest of the party took up the strain, and sent their answering cries across the water, and up the solemn darkening hills. Then there came a bable, such a happy joyful bable, such a bable of harmonious sounds, that the air, the sea, the rocks, the very sky quivered with the strain.

Out in the Bay, leaning on their oars, and gazing at the tranquil waters and misty landscape, were two young men. They seemed to be idle, very idle, for the boat rocked and drifted wherever it pleased, and seemed, by its constant dipping and flapping, to be making wry faces, and contemptuous ejaculations, at the troubled musings of one of its occupants: the other was lazily puffing at a handsome meerschaum pipe, and watching the bluish white smoke curl up into the air. They had evidently been talking about something serious, for an expression of gravity rested upon their careless faces. Suddenly over the water were borne those joyful sounds. The air became full and ringing, and the melancholy of the listeners trickled down into the murmur ing sea, and vanished.
"Let us row in a little," said one of the young men, bending forward, and looking toward the rocky shore. "There must be some fun on." His companion silently complied with his wish, and turned his strokes in that direction. The moon calmly rose from behind the hills, and its silvery light fell on the molten waters, on the shining glistening oars, and on their dropping tears. Only the faces and the hearts of those silent rowers were still and shadowy. For a second time they rested on their oars, and feasted their eyes on the scene. A scene, not of silence and cessation, as was the former, but one full of joyful light, of quivering rampant sounds. And should they be the only two to enjoy this feast of rejoicing nature? Come, borrow my glasses, they are faultless to the sight, and through them take a peep at the costly delicacies of the soul.

The beach, the sandy shiningly beach, with its variegated stones and sand, with its playful curling waves, its boisterous children. And on the beach a party, a half out and half indoor party, held in honour of one of the merry maker's birth day. What fun (Ah! there was "some fun on") those children are having. How they laugh and shout. How they roll and tumble about on the soft shining sand. How their hair streams in the breeze, and their hands ache with pelting one another. And then the screams from the seeker, when he or she catches sight of the hider, and the laughs of the hider, when he or she is caught. Feet, bodies, minds have dispensed with their hereditary manacles, and are exuberant in their freedom. Oh, it is fun, true, genuine fun, to play about on the beach, to dance to the music of the waves, to be dressed in the full costume of ease, which is the best kind of elegance, and to let your spirit rise as high as the blue sky above, conscious that there is neither woof nor warp to hinder
their upward flight: feeling that the enjoyment lies in itself, and not in its environments; in the inner, and not the outer.

The boat with its two occupants gave a sudden lurch, and the young man in the bow almost dropped his oars. His companion looked at him, but the eyes were strained toward the shore, and the face was expressive of an intense excitement.

"Steer closer, Frank," was all he said, but his voice quivered with agitation. They went in so close as to run aground.

"Why! What is the matter, old boy. Do you see a ghost?" asked Frank Leaty, wondering what could be the cause of his friend's sudden pallor. But he might have spared himself the trouble of speaking, for something had mesmerised those scorching eyes. Only the slim dark-robed figure of a girl advancing toward the cluster of children from one of those white canvas tents. A girl! and such a tirade. I wonder if she were conscious of it. She seemed to be, for she glanced about in a hesitating restless way, as if she felt the spirit of disturbance in the air.

She paused and lifted a white hand to sever an imaginary cord that seemed to be dragging her into a space immeasurable; but her hand was struck down, and another hand severed the cord. Her whole body winced at the sharp incision, and a quiver of pain shot through her heart, but the soul was free (the soul which lived in the body, and yet could be free), and the severed cord shrivelled and shrunk, until it became a tiny spot of glowing light, leading through a deep dark mist into a glorious vestibule beyond. Then, as a spirit advanced to meet her from that brilliant hall, with its floor of golden water, the same intervening hand severed the connection, but pointed to the marble statue of "Union by and by."
And the children, the bright happy children, unconscious of all this, stood and beckoned to the motionless moon-lit figure.

"I beg pardon. Did you speak?" And the young man shook himself as if he had just awakened from a sleep.

"Yes! I asked if you had seen a ghost."


"Go back," exclaimed the other in astonishment. "What the devil do you mean? We have scarcely had a breath of the sea air yet, and you want to go back."

"I am sorry, but I had forgotten I have an appointment this evening."

"Dr—n the appointment. So have I, but I chucked it up. Appointments are of use only when they are convenient. I suppose that is why you have one to-night."

"Perhaps," answered his companion dryly.

Frank was angry, very angry, and for a time would not speak to his friend. To think that he had been fooled into going for a moonlight row, and then to be fooled into going back. It was quite enough to rouse the devil himself. And then that ass sat there and looked so indifferent, and so composed, as if the whole thing was a matter of course. Darn it! and he might have been enjoying himself with Grace. That comes from considering someone else before one's self. Really, the more he thought of it, the blacker grew the insult. 'Pon his word he would like to duck him in that confounded water he seemed to be anatomizing. And the offender, poor unconscious offender, plied his ears, and pulled, as if for dear life, pulled until the perspiration stood out in great drops upon his forehead, and rolled down his cheeks, until the veins on his white shapely hand looked like the livid purple strips of a heavy whip lash, and until the muscles of his arms became hard compact knots.
Away like the wind tore that little boat, cutting through the trembling water, and leaving behind a pale narrow line, which appeared like the trailing footprints of a warning spirit on the love ocean in our region of thought. And away like the wind of the wind tore some one’s thoughts, cutting through the narrow veil of time, until it hung before the mind in shivers and shreds, revealing beyond a misty vault of uncertainty that enticed and allured, by its flickering light, the victim to its—what? Frank, be not exacting, be merciful, even in thought. In the scales of consideration, what, O what, is the weight of your petty chagrin?

"Diabolus embrace the fellow. Are you having a race?" exclaimed Frank, breaking in upon the silence with his voice, and upon his friend’s corns with his foot.

"Of the mind," answered the dreamer, rubbing his injured toe, and resuming his chrysalis by the sudden twitch of pain, and forgetting in his mortal retrogression that he had been assigned to the care of the Dark deity.

"I am afraid, my friend, you are out of sorts, out of wits may be. Has the sea god—Neptune is his name, isn’t it?—has he examined your case, and ordered the antidote Europe?"

"He did, but finding his medicine increased my distress, I have taken Bonsby from Terra instead."

"Sensible fool. Stick to the lady’s drug, and you will never be troubled with wandering indigestion again. I take it, and can give you a guarantee."

"Thanks. I am very much obliged." There was a cynical smile about the corners of the young man’s mouth. "By that I conclude that you are one of Terra’s walking advertisements. A word of advice. Have a care, you do not court what you seek to repulse by your foppish indulgences in nature’s folly. There I have given you a mouthful of chaff, ruminating on it."
But the pier was reached. Swiftly the boat glided up to the stand, and the young men sprang out. Neither of them sorry that this terminating had put an end to their not too pleasant conversation.

"I say Frank, do you mind seeing to the tackle? I must be off."

"Not in the least. Go by all means, and a father's blessing go with you. My Certie! If I don't pay you out for this dastardly trick, I'll chew my socks. The mean skunk."

But the blessing, and its accompanying threat, was heard only by the stars, for the poor delinquent was beyond the range of their vindictive power. The tackle got rather rough handling from Mr. Frank Leaty's hands that night.

And the girl on the beach, the girl with the starry eyes, nay, the planetary eyes, for though large and bright, and shining like the stars, yet twinkled not nor dazzled the beholder, being of that rare and limpid light, which burned beneath, and threw its steady brightness on the brown velvety opals; light which became brighter with a deeper purer brightness the closer it was observed, the nearer the observer approached. That girl stood on the beach and conued over the first pages of her romantic book of life. But she was not left long to her silent study, for soon the small white cloud of moving figures came flying toward her, their voices, like the ark of God to the children of Israel, preceding, and proclaiming their intentions: "Oh do come for a race. It is such fun. We will give you a head start. You must. We will make you. This is our day." There was a scramble to obtain possession of the hands, a forward charge, and the struggling, laughing captive was dragged over a city of sand-built forts, through and across an ocean of trenches, and down to the water's edge. The bait, bait that flashed out in the glowing light
of innocent enjoyment, was too tempting, and the poor weak hungry fish was caught. If boys will be boys, so girls will be girls, even though they have passed their teens, and have seen trouble uncover his fangs and growl. That reminds me. I heard a whisper the other day that Colonial girls have no girlhood. They step out of their cradles into long dresses, or worse, into long trousers. If by that they mean New Zealand girls, they are little-minded fools, and their observations have reached no wider limits than their own narrow natures. Girls in New Zealand have their girlhood, and a happy and blessed and unending girlhood it is. It continues from maid, through matron, and into eternal maturity. Those girls, or figures of girls, which have come within the range of the slanderer's observation, are not genuine New Zealanders. They are imitators; offsprings of a race crossed between the Old world and the New. Their parents, if they had any, are dead, consequently they have no one to guide them. Seeing the spirit of liberty in our land, and stamped in the hearts of our people, and mistaking the moulded wrappings for the true form of the wrapped, they succeed in making themselves a corruption of the reality. Thus, through not being properly nurtured, they step out of their cradles before their limbs have been sufficiently strengthened; their half-formed minds glint on the shining Medusa head; they are turned into the nineteen century centaur of half man and half woman; and they strut about aping the man, and shamming the woman. O women, we do not grudge you a home in our Island, but we do object to your ways. We invite you to our feasts, but you must put on our robes. If you reject our beneficence, and infringe upon our laws, you must take the consequence of our indignation, as well as that of your own violated modesty and power. You are handling knives that will
pierce through your own hearts, and enter those of your children; for what think you, will they be like who are offsprings of two masculine parents? And we, who are true children of the soil, will not spare your feelings, we will cast arrow after arrow upon you, until we have destroyed the whole brood of scavengers. I warn womankind, that womankind will not be dragged down from their exalted seat above the chasm of their true nature's afflatus.

But eschew with your bickering, and return to the children; the children who are getting bored by a language they do not understand. A long line, uneven, irregular, variegated, a line composed of dots. "Ready, steady. Off." The starter claps her hands, and joins in the chase. The line pauses a moment, sways, and then sweeps onward in a wild headlong gallop. On on, laughing and shouting, and making the air ring again and again. On on, advancing and receding, on on, crossing and recrossing. At last legs are tired, voices hoarse. Right about wheel, back speeds the line, less boisterous, less rapid.

But young ladies (New Zealand girls in their girlhood) are not such swift runners as children; they do not get the same amount of practice, therefore, although they may be first at the start, they are almost sure to be last at the finish. So it happened that the young lady with the phantom power fell short of the physical honour.

"Run on children. Don't wait for me. I am "knocked out of time," came in short broken gasps from the once boastful competitor, and the children ran on, laughing as usual; ever happy, whether in going or coming, whether in running or falling. A new theme filled their little beings, supper, a real bontering supper, with oranges and cakes, and sugar and jam, and tarts (ah, those tarts, I can almost taste them in the very name), but tarts and cream, and more laughing, and more shouting, and more fun than ever."
Fling up your hats, and dance with joy, in comes the supper, the bonsering supper. Slower and slower grew the steps of the laggard, lower and lower sank the head. The little cold hands were clasped; all laughter, all sunshine had gone; all sadness, all sorrow remained. The spirit of disturbance again troubled the air, and again the golden water played on the floor of the vestibule beyond. But the glowing light was brighter now, and she could see a tiny silvan thread she had not noticed before. The ends of that thread she could not see, but the middle, or the line between the points, was plainly visible, and stretched from the glowing light through the dark mist, becoming lost in the bright distance. Suddenly a shadow falls, whether across her path, or across her thoughts, would be hard to say, but the planetary eyes are raised, and the bent form stops short. What? Why? When?

“Nellie.”

“Iwand.”

Draw down the veil awhile. A few moments that is all we ask. A few moments of immortality, then back; back to the mortal facts: the facts which are the fruits of the use or abuse of such immortal moments.

Quietly and firmly Nellie withdrew herself from the close embrace to which she had been surprised into yielding; from the hot passionate kisses she had received, but not returned.

She stood with her white hand clasped in that old peculiar style, which Iwand understood so well. The peculiar style that betrayed the agitation, the deep and earnest thought. She stood, and her drooping form looked shrunk and withered in the grey moonlight.

“You go to-morrow, Nellie?” asked Iwand, after a silence into which all the elfs of remembrance seemed to be huddled and haggling.
"Yes!" The very question and answer they two had counter-used the night of Iwand's farewell so long ago.

Iwand shaded his eyes with his hand. He could not bear to look upon that pale wasted face, those hollow cheeks, and purple rimmed eyes.

"You have been very ill, Nellie?"

"Yes! but I am better now, and the doctor says a change is all I need to set me up."

"Will you be long away Elmy?"

"I cannot say. The lady I am going to wants me to stay with her altogether. When did you come?"

"To-day I came by the steamer you are going away in. Marion wrote and told me of your trouble and illness. I asked, and obtained leave of absence, and here I am, just in time."

"This, then, is Mur's surprise. I might have guessed."

"I nearly missed seeing you to-night, Nellie. I went up to your home, but could gain no information regarding your whereabouts. I had fully given up hopes of a conversation alone with you, until I twigged you from the boat."

Another painful pause, in which the hearts of both beat against their bars with all the force of a terrific gale. Each felt as if a crisis in their lives had come. As if the uncertainty and doubt of many years was to be cleared away. As if they would stand in one another's light as they were, and as they would ever remain. The strain upon them was easily seen by their white agitated faces, their heaving bosoms. Was all the past to be swept away? Was the beginning to be measured by the centre, the beginning with its sunny smiles of innocence and love, the centre with its bitter tears of folly and love still? What would the scales declare? Hope for the future? Aye, hope, there is hope to the very grave, to the shore of the sea,
beyond, but what kind of hope? Answer.—And in that glorious moonlight night, in the solemn silence of the assemblage of angels, beneath the tabernacle of the blue star-spangled sky, with the great foam fringed ocean at their feet, those two united, and parted, and united again, held the scales of the united, or parted again, which?

Iwand drew very close, so close that his brown wavy hair mingled with the loose locks of that dark bowed head, so close that he felt the warm breath upon his cheek, the glamour of the magic presence in his chaotic soul. But he did not touch her, did not attempt to draw her to him. She was as one who had not as yet ascended to the Father, a creature in immortality yet unsealed. The light of that golden water shone in her face, and in the sweeping folds of her loose dark robes. He dared to feel, but not to touch, the flesh made spirit by its immortal flight, its divine communications.

"Nellie," and the strong manly voice broke and became a hushed whisper. "Nellie. Did you receive a letter from me sometime ago?"

"Yes, Iwand."

"You did not answer! Poor child, I do not blame you. I have come for my answer now. Believe me, dearest, I would not bother you, only you are going away, and I may not see you again for some time.

Foolish Iwand, foolish short-sighted wooer. Even then, at the eleventh hour, if you had come with the sack cloth and ashes of your soul, you would have been received with open arms, and words of welcome and comfort. But to come with the scent of that condescending patronizing letter sprinkled upon you; to come with the words of a pleader, but with the bearing of a commander, to come labelled with, "I ask, and, therefore, must receive, I show you that I love you, and, therefore, you are won. You ought to feel highly
honoured by my condescension. I—I—I all is I." Not a muscle of that motionless listener moved. The face grew grey, grey and cold as the rocks around. The hands were clasped as in a vice. The soft white shawl fell back from the creamy neck, and floated over the bent shoulders like a shield of protecting purity. And the great blue sea monster, with its never ending roar; the white froth flying from its lolling tongue, a tongue which seemed to be an accumulation of tongues, one on top of the other, one swallowing up the other, and the other spitting out the one: courtesied with grand and humble grace, and licked the young girl’s feet. One moment, two moments, she stood thus: One moment—two moments—of time which was as a thousand years, and the cord of selfish desire, of mortal willfulness was severed; severed by an unseen hand, just as the visible one was upheld in the very act of divine obedience: severed, and the poor weak flesh was saved the sharp pang of pain. For, seeing the willingness of his child, God in his compassion turned the heartrending sacrifice into a lamb of outraged pride and holy indignation: himself providing the where-with-all. Then the step, which would have effected eternity, was arrested, and eternity’s planned step was taken.

Nellie raised her head, and in the simple gesture was her old proud self again. Her face was deathly in its whiteness, but it was firm as marble, and under the large bright planetary eyes were painted dark purple shadows. Her voice was low, but clear and penetrating, and the ring of reproach in it chilled and humiliated the self-conscious listener.

"Iwand, listen. When you left me, I was a child. A lonely child, with relatives, innumerable with friends, none. Lonely in the midst of a vast crowd of soothing living beings, who knew not my language, nor did I theirs. There were times when I thought that even you misunderstood my
idioms. But our lives, yours and mine Iwand, had been strangely linked together from infancy. We had grown up together, been schooled together, had had our childish joys and sorrows together, prayed together, and, although we were not born together, our constant intercourse had woven cords which twined themselves around our hearts, and drawn us nearer and dearer to one another than any ties of blood could have done. What I was to you—Ah, Iwand, why had you told me so often. What you were to me, I dare not try to fathom. You were my —. All. Do you wonder then, that with me, trifles, vices, which are trifle, being contrary to your temperament, had no power to wrench those cords asunder. So when a breeze from the distance was wafted to me, bearing on its pinions stories of a dissipated and wasted life, I smiled, and was happy. Happier than before, I verily believe, for I realized my vocation, my importance in your life. At last I had found an object to achieve. Something to accomplish. I was not simply your guiding star, but also your helping star. "Iwand will return," I cried in the exaltation of my inner thoughts. "Iwand will return to his Lyly. And, as in infancy, so in maturity we, you and I, would work out our sums of life together. One alone is too weak to stand against the world." My beloved, my Iwand, I loved you better in your blight than in your untainted untried innocence. Too well, by many a bitter failure, I had learned the lesson of mercy, recognised the unanswered cry for pity. Yes Iwand, my pity brightened the glowing light of my love. But, O! one day, one fatal day, into my hands was placed a beautiful letter. A letter pure and unblemished in its contour, perfect in its ciphering, but a letter that would be marble in its expression, were it not for the unlimited amount of self-satisfied veining between every lineament. O, that awful letter which showed me it was a beautiful idol I worshipped, but an idol of lifeless marble, an
idol that could not return a tithe of my affection. Why did you not throw open you heart, as you used to do, and tell me all, and trust my love? My love that could have wiped out everything. But to deceive me, to pretend you were the same, but grown powerful in your purity, your integrity, to wish to show me you were doing a noble charitable action in asking me to be your wife. You might have spared my feelings a little, Iwand; the feeling of “Your simple country Lyly.” Nellie spoke the last words with a tone of great bitterness. In her thoughts she was living again those keen sharp moments of wounded pride and shattered love, when with streaming eyes and bleeding heart, she read the doom of all her maiden hopes.

“Your simple country Lyly! Iwand, those words burned their way into the very centre of my heart, for in them I felt your patronizing, condescending smile upon me. I am childish, and unschooled in this world’s lore, but I have a heart that beats with all the strength and depth of my worldly sister, even though her’s be seasoned with experience’s salt, and polished with Society’s polish. The sin of intemperance is not the only worm that eats its way into our vital parts, and destroys the happiness of our homes.” Nellie half turned away from her companion, and gazed out across the molten water, her great dark eyes rivalling it in their dreamy brightness.

“Iwand,” she whispered in a soft far away voice, and stretching her loving arms out to the misty space. “Iwand, I love you still, love you so much, and as the days run into years, my love for you grows deeper. But you are not the Iwand of that letter; the Iwand here beside me.” The arms fell. The over-taxed strength gave way, the trembling form sank down on one of the great rough boulders, and Nellie buried her pale pinched face in her wasted hands.

“O Nellie, I did not expect this from you,” burst from Iwand’s lips. And in his remorse and sorrow he flung
himself down on the shining sand at her feet, and tried to withdraw her hands. "Speak Nellie. Tell me I am dreaming. Tell me you will be my wife." And in his sunny eyes there glistened two great tears. Nellio let her hand fall upon his shoulder, and for the first time, since that one look of recognition, suffered her gaze to rest upon that dear lost face.

"I must tell you the truth, my Iwand, mine for the last time—I dare not link my life with your's. I love you too well to sadden and cripple you in your earthly journey. Nor would I be happy, I cannot supper, where I should feast. Seek out another dearest, there are plenty of good true girls, who by nature, are better than I, for I have had to be cleansed with fire, and to the end of my days that cleansing process must continue. Others need no such discipline, having less tendency to evil. Seek one of these, they will be satisfied with less than I, and they will give less in return. O, dearest, believe me, I understand your nature better than you yourself do. Some day, when you are happy with that other, you too will understand, and will thank "Your little Lyly." She bent her proud head, and her sweet lips touched his broad white brow.

But the gentle caress electrified the kneeling figure. Whether it was that Iwand felt in that womanly kiss the holy spirit of her womanly presence, and therefore measured the gulf between them by the depth of the slime of mental carelessness into which he had sunk; or whether it was that the quick of his pride had been touched; Iwand sprang to his feet, his face flushed, and his voice grew stern and bitter.

Involuntarily Nellie arose; the white shawl lay at her feet, and her face, with its great sad eyes, upturned to the angry passionate gaze of him whom she, in her blind selfish love, had worshipped. Ah! Nellie, how much more blessed are you who suffer, yet are free, than they who suffer but find no
release, being chained to the broken pedestal of their fallen idol.

"Is that all you have to say, Nellie?" and Iwand held out his hand. Nellie placed her two firm palms into his. Oh how small and thin they felt, and how they seemed to lose themselves in Iwand's grasp.

"All, and not all. All, because I can give no other answer; not all, because there is one reason I have not given, fearing lest you would not understand. Iwand;" Nellie's voice changed, and once more the light of that golden water on the floor of the vestibule shone in her eyes and upon her brow. "Iwand, above all my reasoning, above all my facts, sounds the thrilling voice of my theory, 'This is not to be.' Were it not for those distinct utterances of God, my selfish desires would make me weak and yielding in your presence. Dearest, we dare not defy our God's commands, knowing, as we know, that all are forged out of his great love for us. Even now a great peace has filled my heart, and I no longer desire the thing I am denied. I fear if God offered me your love again I would beg that another might accept it. Beyond the spot of glowing light there is the golden water, and the advancing figures."

He did not understand, but he folded her very close, and kissed her several times. All anger and resentment had fled, and on his grave face rested a look of quiet resignation. And Nellie lay on his breast quite still, feeling it was the last time she would ever rest there.

Presently two loving arms, not one whit less loving and childish than those of that first sweet parting, stole round his neck, and a low murmuring voice sounded in his ear. "Good-bye, lover of my childhood; idol of my girlhood. For your sake and for mine I give you up. May He who loves us both grant you a happy future life." The sea
heaved a sigh, and the spot of glowing light which pointed to the vestibule, went out.

They parted; those two who loved one another as dearly as is possible for mortals to love. And there by the great blue ocean they buried their love. And the angels, the angels who sympathize, yet know not how to console, floated down in their shining garments and wept over the lonely grave. "Why should this be?" they say, as they bend forward to read the headstone of Memories. "Should the holy cords, which took so many years to make, be severed by a seeming trifle, while sin so dark as intemperance glance off unnoticed and unfelt?" Then a low sweet voice from heaven answered, and the angels veiled their faces and listened, for they knew the voice of their Lord.

["Have ye not heard? Do ye not understand? The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner, while the substance they sought to accept was no stone at all. In the erection of my own individual temples I choose my own material."

The reins that guide my children's lives I hold in my hand. My face they dare not see, for the winkers of mortality cover their eyes, and hide my immortal brilliancy; and only through a pale mist can I be beheld by those on earth. But I have other recourses beside sight to make myself known. The recourses of touch and sound; the recourse of transfiguration, whereby even man may become a reflection of the divine, whereby man may gaze upon the sacred face that is reflected in him, the glass. Sight, though dim, is not wholly denied. Continual intercourse forms familiarity, and draws God and man closer together. Thus a gentle pressure of the rein in my hand is all that is needed to direct past the unnoticed danger; to lead the way along the intricate path of life. On the road of time there are ups and downs, there are mountains and molehills. But think not because the feet are tired there
needs must have been climbed a mountain. 'Tis the summit of a molehill. Again, think not because there is the feeling of nought else but chagrin there needs must have been overcome a molehill. 'Tis the base of a mighty mountain. As the summit is the end of the molehill, there must be nothing beyond. As the base is the beginning of a mountain, look up and mark its continuation. Ah! that mighty mountain, it reaches beyond the sky of this world into the universe of Eternity. The universe of the universes. So alluring and so gradual is the pathway up this mountain that nothing but my gentle pressure would have warned the traveller of the awful danger of a wasted life to which it leads. Look up and see the victor's

In the hollow caves and rugged crevices were peeping forth the despairing hopeless faces of a self-governed people. To return to the path they had forsaken was impossible: they were chained to the rock of their passions. Yet all the while the remorse eagle daily gnawed away a portion of their liver, their conscience, which portion grew again during the night.

Again the low sweet voice from Heaven spoke, and again the angels drew their veils more closely round their faces.

"Learn, O foolish ones, the lesson of your being, the lesson of the being of mortal. The object of the living All is the glory of God. Yet in the rendering of that glory there is the reflect on man." The voice ceased. The angels unveiled their faces, and stretched out their white wings. A soft breeze from a Alcyone's world, bore their fairy forms up into the Heaven of Heavens. And, as they rose a gentle tear from each, dropped on the marble slab, and wiped out all but the name of the dead. Then as higher and higher they gyrated upward, the air became filled with the strains of their glorious song, and in the swish swish of their plumes was heard the rippling treble. "Render honour and glory unto God. Lo he condescends to explain his ways unto man,"
CHAPTER XVIII.

ELLIE left the home of her childhood. Left it without a regret. There were no tears in her eyes as she stood on the heaving deck, and surveyed the receding shore. How thankful she was that it was morning, and that she could see and feel all that was to be seen and felt. "For," murmured she, "I could not bear to think that in unconsciousness I had passed these moments, and, therefore, did not know the effect this scene would have upon my heart. Shall I ride over the bosom of that crystal sea of glass before God's throne, with the same happy composure as I experience while standing here? And when my barque glides out of the Bay, the Bay of Christianity, which is an inlet of that Great ocean, shall I leave the shore of all my earthly hopes and conflicts rejoicing as I do now? The motion of the ship lulls me to sleep, and over my senses steal the sounds of seraphim music. Can it be the voices of the Mermaids, or the songs of the Sirens? Did Ulysses grow numb in every faculty, save in the sense of hearing? I have grown so, yet I see no sprites, no beautiful singing women. Ah, ye ancients, ye men of that Mythus period, ye were as we are. Thy feelings, thy emotions, thy intellectual flights, thy great and noble capacity for Heavenly soliloquies, all are our's, as our's were yours. And Ulysses, who in his superstitious imagination, mistook those Heavenly strains for living woman's voices, must have, ere he left the port, been stirred to the very depth of his great heart, by hearing Heaven's language sung in some woman's rich, melodious
notes. Ah, Ulysses, the songs, which thou hearest, were
the songs of angels directing thee to the Island of God,
Earth's destruction, Eternity's delight. Out, out, the barque
glides. I hardly feel the motion of its swift and steady
flight. My soul rises, and unites itself with that angelic
choir. My senses, earth's senses, I leave behind upon that
fast fading coast. The washing, the unceasing swash swash,
of those waves upon the beach, I hear no more. I am alone
and on the deep. The great deep, which bears me to my
home. Am I afraid? Do I fear the parting of the unstaid
planks beneath? Is there terror in my eyes as I turn to look
upon the helmman? Or do I shudder as I gaze at thee to
me, unreadable chart and compass? There is but one answer
to all these. No, no, no. Yonder I know sits the Captain.
The Captain of our lives."

Then she turned, and her senses returned with her turning:
but the light of that mirrored sea shone in her great dark
eyes.

Nellie had never been on the ocean before. Her life, as
we already know, was one of a strange combination, or
intermingling of sameness and change, of society and solitude.

Sameness, regarding outward appearances; change, regarding
internal evidences. Society, regarding external intercourse;
solitude, regarding inward communion. But the solitude of
her life of thought, had made her turn and seek society and
citizenship elsewhere; and after all, her's was no solitary life.
It was a life rich in its Heavenly friends. Powerful in
its knowledge of divine law. To stand, as she did then, in
the actual enjoyment of what she had longed for, yet dared
not to expect. It was too intoxicating, too glorious to be
understood. Nor was her feelings, unaccustomed as they
were to the influence of the Sea Fiend, rent, or torn by his
amorous embrace. Perhaps that Prince of the deep had
compassion on her, knowing she had but recently risen from
his Cousin's death-bed. However, Nellie obtained full control over all circumstances, and wandered about, truly enjoying the novelty of her situation. "I see the dark clouds before and behind, but I shall not think of them. I shall live in this bit of sunshine while it lasts." So from deck to cabin, from bow to stern she threaded her quiet way; and learned her simple lessons. "Lessons on board of an ordinary steamer," I hear you say. "What lessons could she learn from that common sight, from that conglomeration of rope, and yard, and flags, and lights, and brassworks, and engines, and the thousand and one other every day sight?" Ah! it is at such times as this that the thoughtful reap a reward for all their struggles with that beautifully clothed youth, Ignorance. It is at such times as this that deep seated religion expands its delicately tinted bud, and scatters over the soul its rare perfume. Oh, is there nothing to learn from the strand of a rope, the anchor, the keel: from the maximum, the minimum: no tongue, no book in everything? No. There is nothing to the one who has learned all; but to the man who acknowledges himself a pupil in this world, there is in every fibre, every leaf, a history and a lesson to learn; and in every history, and every lesson, there is the infinite law of God. Thus through dining-room and social hall, through saloon and steerage, past engine-room and kitchen, Nellie wandered, until tired in limb, and satisfied at heart, she returned once more to the wide open deck, and sinking down on a low shady seat, passed the next few hours in dreamy laziness. "I should like to lie like this for ever," she mused, "Lie and dream myself into the arms of the Eternal Awaking. This is the first sweetness I have tasted for what seems to me like ages, and the rich flavour of its peace makes me afraid. Oh, I am strong, strong as this great ocean, but too weak to bear much joy. What is it? Am I beginning to love the taste of sorrow? And am I
afraid that I shall lose God’s presence, when there is no more sadness to be borne, and when the glorious vestibule of golden happiness is reached? But ah! there is the dark mist, with its guiding silv’ry cord, to be passed through, perhaps, while traversing that dreary road, I shall gain strength to bear happiness unmoved." Then the dark eyes, that had been closed to enable the soul decipher its own peculiar language written in the deep agitated vault of sight’s deprived light, opened and gazed upon the broad waste of undulating water. The soft cool sea breeze fanned her cheeks; the bright sunshine glinted on the polished brass-works and well-scrubbed decks, and gleamed around her motionless form like a golden shrine, as she sat upon her throne; the blue sea, blue, green, azure, stretched out like a sparkling sapphire covered plain, and met the arched sky in the far away distance; and over sky and sea floated numberless flakes of soft white clouds, which appeared like the downy wings of myriads of flying doves. In the intoxication of the soul’s first admittance into one of the innumerable halls of nature, there is little inclination to favour man with even a passing glance. How could one dream of Mortal, when the Immortal is so near, so beautiful, and so full of sparkling light. Thus, although the deck was crowded, although men and women paced up and down, laughing and chatting, although the “Prince’s slain” lay round her like a shoal of leviathans, Nellie saw none. Sometimes their voices peeped in here and there among her quiet musings, but it was only a peep, and away they ran, afraid of the majestic brightness. No one attempted to disturb the spirit-look upon that sad, sweet face. Fainter and fainter became the hum of the restless passengers, darker and darker grew the sunlight. Ship, sky, and sea, rushed together in one heap of misty confusion. The senses lost their power, and Nellie was in the land of fairies and of flowers. Suddenly she was aroused by the sound of a harsh mocking
laugh close beside her, and she sat bolt upright. Again that horrid laugh, and in its dying echo, she heard words which sent the fiery Main blood surging through her veins, and caused every nerve to tingle with indignation and shame.

"Well done! That's one to those christian curs."

An answering laugh, and an ejaculation of approval, "Yes; isn't it. Read on."

"As for the belief that Christ is the Son of God! nothing is more absurd, nothing more suitable for the glib tongue of quackery." Several words were lost, then "Hypocrite," "Imposter." There was a quick movement of the figure in the chair. A dangerous gleam in two bright eyes. What a pity those blasphemers did not see, and take warning.

Nellie knew the book by repute. Had been put to a little confusion by the quoting of certain passages selected from it. A similar book she had torn to pieces in her indignation. Itself she never before had the opportunity of becoming personally acquainted with. And between one thing and another Nellie owed that book a long standing grudge. She looked around to see if anyone would intervene, and prevent that hateful reading, those mocking laughs and jeers; but all were engaged with themselves, and none could find time to give Him, who gave them so much, a few scraps of attention. Worse, several young people, girls included, had gathered round the reader, and were drinking in the words, mingling their exclamations, and helping on the blasphemy. One man, Nellie was too angry to take much notice of his personal appearance, seemed to have a slight aversion, but no inclination to interfere. He was seated not far from her, a look of deep displeasure upon his face; but the pose of the head indicated a predominating government of cowardly disregard.
Without any impulse of her own, without even knowing what were her intentions, Nellie rose, and, sweeping across the deck, stood with quiet composure before the group. "Will you lend me that book a moment?" she said, in a dangerously sweet voice, and giving the man one of her bewitching glances that would have conquered Osiris. Here was an unexpected pleasure. He hardly thought to win the attention of that solitary dreamer. If he had been less conceited he might have noticed a very slight upward turn of the sensitive lips. However, he did not notice it. If he had he might not have understood; and unsuspectingly he put the scourge of Satan into the outstretched palm.

"Thank you." Another bewitching glance; but there was a slight dash of triumph in the low sweet voice.

A quick movement, a few steps, a white hand appeared a moment above the blue water, and Nellie coolly and deliberately dropped the book into the sea; then turned and, with the smile still lingering about her lips, resumed her lowly seat.

A stillness of astonishment fell upon the party, and each looked at the others incredulously. Presently a low murmur of displeasure stirred the air, and ere it died away the owner of the book stepped to the front. His mocking smile turned into an angry scowl.

"Had you been a man I would—"

The sudden flare which betrayed the rising temper grew deep and awful in its brightness. The slender figure arose and confronted the passionate angry man. A faint rose-leaf colour touched the pallid cheeks, and a half pitying, half mocking, wholly contemptuous smile rested upon the compressed lips. Her bearing, though majestic in its power of outraged faith, was gentle and queenly, and bore the stamp of Mercy, as well as Justice. She raised her eyes, and in
them alone the expression of her soul: for deep down in
those two sparkling lakes lay the powerful kindling wood, and
when the lighted match was applied to the heaped-up pile,
there flashed to the surface, writhing purple flames, and red
curling smoke. There was something so strange, so grandly
awful about her, that the man paused in his volley of abuse,
and stared at the apparition.

"Have you finished? Why stop?" she said in her calm
sweet way. "Had you been a man, I would — . It
certainly would be very interesting to know what you would
have done, but excuse me, I shall tell you what I would have
done. I would have dropped you into the sea, instead of your
book; the book I would have reserved for the flames. Fire
and water are excellent purgatives for cleansing this earth of
its dross." Then her voice changed, and instead of heat,
there passed over the surface the breath of icy scorn. "But
I am a woman, and have done what woman should. Which,
perhaps, is more lasting and more effectual. I have destroyed
your book, and despised you. Now, go."

The poor man slunk away, muttering inarticulate threats.
And Nellie, the fire and ice all swept away, sank back in her
seat, and trembled from head to foot. The conflict had risen
so suddenly, had been faced, fought, and conquered, and now
the re-action set in. For sometime she sat, her mind flooded
with compassion for the delinquent, and shame for what
seemed to her her unmaidenedly exhibition. The sun sank
beneath the horizon, and the soft twilight appeared. The
tea bell rang, and the passengers flocked down to the dining-
room, then back on deck, then up and down. Yet Nellie sat
still as a statue.

"Will you take some tea. I am sure you need it," said a
voice at her elbow, and before she had time to answer, a chair
was placed before her, and a tiny tray with a dainty little tea
was placed thereon.
"Thank you," said Nellie with freezing politeness, "I am sorry you should have gone to so much trouble, but I really don't think I could take any."

"I got it specially for you, miss. I saw your pretty face was not at the table, and as this gentleman knew where you was, I jest told him to bring it." Nellie looked up, and saw the kind steward, who had put a few biscuits in her hand as she was passing the kitchen door. "My biscuit friend," she said, with her bright sunny smile, which was always used when addressing the poor, or kind.

"Yes! 'un. And your tea friend too, begging the gentleman's pardon." Then turning away, he marched off to attend to the wants of others.

The gentleman, who had first addressed her, took a vacant seat, and quietly watched her help herself to the milk and sugar. Nellie sat in stolid silence, and refused to see theandumy advance made by her unknown companion to draw her into a conversation. Oh, no. She wouldn't have anything to do with a coward. She wasn't going to speak, or be spoken to. Dragged into a conversation with that thing! The bare thought of it was enough to set her hair on ends. Presently the ludicrous side of their deportment touched the funny vein of her thoughts, and she burst into a merry peal of laughter. Laughter is infectious at all times, but it becomes especially so when it is accompanied by a joyous ripple, and when it issues from two dainty pouting lips, and when it is heard by a young, handsome, idle, and generous, open-hearted man. When she had finished laughing, and had straightened her features a little, she turned to her avowed enemy. "We do look like that picture of a nigger courtship, sitting with a matrimonial mile between us, casting sheeps' eyes at one another, and wishing, but not daring to speak. Do you know I had a very good mind to leave you and your supper to console one another,"
"Why, what have I done," asked the gentleman, decreasing the distance between them considerably.

"What have you not done. Why did you stand back, and leave me to face the foe? Did you think the battle contained an insufficient amount of spoil, or were you afraid of being wounded?"

"I don't understand. Pray explain yourself more clearly. I am not well versed in figurative speech," said the gentleman in a puzzled manner.

"What an adapt you are at feigning unconsciousness—rather innocence. Perhaps you did not recognise the signal of advance."

"Do you mean regarding your recent encounter? I acknowledge my cowardice, but," bowing with mock courtesy, "you must own I gave the honour into more worthy hands."

"Gave it! I took what you refused to accept. I think you acted both cowardly and unmanly," with a decided toss of the little head.

"Because I did not stop that man from reading! I don't see it in that light at all. It would have been worse than folly to try and persuade him the book was wrong, to expostulate would have incited a further indulgence in blasphemy. He would have uttered the atheist's Shibboleth. "Sight, sight, Proof, proof." The reality and personal fellowship of Christ can be felt, but not explained. That man had not experienced the actual thrilling personality, consequently all things were foolishness to him. In all cases I would have been floored. Besides, what right had I to interpose? Would it not have been presumption on my part, I who am a stranger in a strange land, to supplant you who are a native of the soil, and a possessor of its privileges? At the same time I confess I was afraid of the consequences, wounds, as you call them; and would have hesitated even in Scotland, I admire your courage. Few would have had
the "pluck," nor the "sawee," as the little street arabs say. You quite deceived me. I have heard of colonial girls, but never had the pleasure of meeting one before."

Nellie listened to every word of his defensive apology, and had an answer ready for each excuse. But his preoration was a decided attack upon her modesty, and in the utterance of words, "Colonial girl, you quite deceived me," there was a ring of irony. Nellie quite changed her plans of attack; veering round to the defensive side, she said in her sweetest gentlest voice: "Ah! I am a virago." A tiny sigh followed.

"Oh, no. Pray don't suppose I meant such a thing. I—I——." And he laughed in a peculiar insinuating manner.

The drooping eyelids veiled a dangerous gleam in the dark brown eyes. "Tit for tat. I call you cowardly and unmanly. You insinuate that I am wanting in maidenly reticence. Strange. And for a time I, too, thought I had acted hastily, indelicately, but upon second consideration I find I have neither stamped my foot, torn at my hair, cursed and sworn, not even raised my voice above the low notes." Then throwing her head back, and leaning against the sloping canvas chair, the lights of the steamer playing on her fair pale face, she lifted her great striking eyes, and looked full at her accuser.

"I always like personal illustrations to my meaning. My character has been satisfactorily vindicated. Yours proved. What but cowardly unmanliness would induce a man—a gentle man—to retaliate on a woman, especially a woman who was forced by the failure of that man to do his duty, to take up the cause of right, and, as you have insinuated, make an exhibition of herself, which exhibition, be it known, O man, is most abhorrent to her; but men, gentle men," and Nellie looked up at the blue starry sky. "Men were the revilers of the meek and lowly Jesus. How then can women expect consideration. Women with quivering immortal suscep-
tibilities, when Jesus was immortality itself. Women with earthly utterances, when Jesus divinely communed. Women the servants, Jesus the Lord, the Ruler, the King." Then her eyes wandered back to the gentleman's face, and rested there. "You alluded to my courage. I give myself no such attribute. It is not courageous to obey the voice of impulse which inspires one into action; and while the body mechanically performs the purpose of the impulse, the intellect is numb and inactive. To my thinking it is, when the mind fully realizes the danger, and the heart trembles at the almost inevitable failure, it is then that the actor may be labelled courageous."

"You don't mean that your words and actions were apart from yourself, do you? What strange philosophy is this? Your intellect numb and inactive, and yet you could score such a victory, utter such penetrating words. I do not understand."

"When I rose and confronted that man. What do you think was the reason of his sudden silence? My words? I spoke none. My actions? Save the rising, I did nothing. What then was it? Sir; it was the same influence that caused me to drop that accursed book into youder sea. The same that put those words into my mouth. It was the Omnipotent Christ that shone in my heart, that was reflected in my eyes, which hurled the dark demon from his rocky seat in the accuser's heart. Where was I? Swallowed up and lost. O, it was not I, but the spirit within me that spoke and acted then. I the insignificant, I, was dead. But enough of I, now for you. You say, in your endeavour to extricate yourself from blame, that being a stranger, you had no right interfere. To me that seems a very absurd excuse. However, I shall answer by my pet practice—an illustration. Supposing I went Home on a short visit, and, while travelling through England by train, a disquisition concerning the
Queen arose among the other occupants of the same carriage. Some called her most disgraceful names. Some spoke slightingly of her family and upholders. Some even charged her with being an imposter. All inveighed her. Do you mean to tell me it would be presumption on my part to defend her, knowing as I did, by personal experience, that what they said was false? Or, because there was a child in the carriage, who held the same knowledge as I did, that I was supplanting him by my defence? Am I not her subject? Do I not enjoy the protection of her laws? Is she not the Queen of my country, the ruler of my people, the sovereign of Liberty, Power, and Justice? I have a perfect right to defend Queen Victoria, no matter in what part of the world I stand. It is my duty, your duty, and the duty of every subject And the one who disparages that Royal Lady is a fit subject for neither Heaven nor Earth. You perceive the simile. It matters not whether you be in the uttermost parts of the earth, if you are enlisted in Christ's army, it is your duty to defend his cause. The whole world, and all that is in it, are his. As to the mode of defence, I grant it would be utter folly to try and persuade men against their own inclinations. Men are often so wise in their own eyes that they become fools in other people's, but need you try to persuade? Are you called upon to explain?

When, with bayonet fixed, and flashing eyes, the enemy stands a few feet in front of the soldier, does that soldier attempt to describe his captain, or explain his captain's plans? I fear you would call him a fool, as well as cowardly and unmanly, if he did. Instead, he would face the foe, and lifting his sword, would cleave his enemy to the ground. My firm conviction is if, Christ's soldiers would leave off trying to persuade and explain, and in place, acted according to the direct guidance of their commander, "Thy Kingdom Come," would be much more rapid and effective than it is."
"Do I understand that you consider conversing and preaching not following Christ's direct guidance?" asked the gentleman in astonishment.

"Certainly, not. I have great faith in preaching and conversing, although perhaps you will be more surprised to hear I seldom go to church. In their own places they are most effective and most blessed; but in a case like this, where men will not, because they wish not, it is, as you say, folly to try to persuade and explain."

"Then what do you call following Christ's direct guidance?"

"Are you good at dipping into "Proverb's bowl," and ladelling out the full meaning thereof? Then listen. Feeling, What wilt thou have me to do? instead of saying, Shall I do this for thee?"

There was a short pause, while the faces of both were a study. Presently the gentleman lifted his eyes, and looked at the reclining figure of the young girl. There was something so pure, so free from earthly sentiment, and yet so human, that for the first time he experienced that sensation of Fearless Reverence which characterizes the influence upon man, of the spirit made flesh.

"You strike very near home," said he. "And I am surprised to hear such words from one so young; more so when I hear you seldom go to church. We Scotch people consider a person who does not attend the Kirk, little less than a heathen."

"I attend a greater Kirk than that of ordinary worship; and its service you would scarcely understand. Of course, I visit those ordinary churches to help me, and to bring me nearer my Adored. As for striking near home, it is a sphere in which I have laboured all my life, so I ought to know a little about it."
"If your labour be crowned with as much success at home, as it is likely to be abroad, I must compliment you on your power. I own myself quite vanquished."

"Home is not like abroad. You know the text, "A prophet is not without honour, save in his own country." The little pollen grains must be taken from their own stamens, and placed on the pistil of another flower, before they can cause fertilization. The intruders may be inferior, but they can do the work; and the poor displaced pollen grains are sent away to displace others."

"Ah! I believe you are right. But you speak of attending a larger kirk than that of the ordinary; of a different form of worship. What do you mean?"

Nellie's eyes wandered once more to the great blue shroud of sky and sea, and once more there was a little pause before she answered. Then stretching out her arms to the immeasurable space, and leaning slightly forward, she murmured,

"That is my church; this my worship. Daily, nightly, I take my place in nature's great pew, and listen to nature's preaching. Yonder stars form the glorious choir, and I am one of them. The prayers are such as I now utter as I rest in body, here, in soul, away. The ordinary church is used only when I wish to find expressions fitted to meet the comprehensions of ordinary man. Have you read Jean Paul Richter's 'Dream of the Universe?'"

"I have, but I confess I hardly understand it."

"How could any one not understand it. That, to me, is the church, and the service of the ordinary worshipper. Supposing, instead of saying, 'Angel, I will go no further, for my spirit acheth with this infinity. Let me lie down in the grave and die, or let me hide myself from the persecutions of the Infinite.' Supposing instead, that man lifted up his voice and cried: 'More, more, my spirit longs, hungering and
thirsts, after the inner court: the universe above all universes: the court and not the vestibule only: the life beyond the death.' Would it not have been infinitely more loyal to his guide? I feel that this weak flesh, trembling and hesitating in the presence of its kind, could stand on that last billowy world and hear that cry, 'Other heights, other depths are coming;' and not falter, nor weep; but would grasp Immortality and become Immortal. Jean Paul's dream is a wonderful intellectual masterpiece, and it describes a wonderful pathway for the travelling soul, but it continues to wheel round and round on its own level, as if afraid to trust to the strength of its ungravitating body. I will tell you of a dream—nay, a heaven-sent vision—which is infinitely more wonderful, and infinitely more instructive and satisfactory. Look in the twenty-first chapter of Revelation, and there you will learn the pathway through all that Chaotic Space, and Darkness, and Disturbance, into the Hall the Light, the Peace. O, why do menlinger in the Vestibules when they might be enjoying the Courts? Why does the intellect whirl round and round in a beaten track, when it might steer a clear and glorious upward course, resting only when it touches that Crystal sea!"

"You have studied the subject well?"

"Christ—Jesus—is my teacher," answered Nellie in a low voice.

"Are you not afraid? Is it possible that in this short and changeful life you have no fear? Methinks it is scarcely right. Man is ever susceptible to qualms of dread. Mysteries, death, are these not the kings of terror?"

"The Bible says: 'Through the valley of the shadow of death?'"
"The Bible's God says, 'I am the Light. He that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life. Where are the mysteries, the death, the shadow? I look at that water, do I see death in its dark depths? If this vessel were to suddenly strike upon a hidden rock, and if the length of our lives upon earth would be limited to a few moments.' Nellie rose and stood leaning against the bulwarks. The moonlight shone on the pale face and shadowy eyes; the white hands rested on the railings with quiet dignity. There was nothing majestic or tragic in the attitude, and in the face no excitement. The voice was very low, and the young man had to lean forward to catch the words. But there was a superhuman earnestness about the whole scene which sent a queer feeling rushing through every vein of her listener. Involuntary there arose to his remembrance that scene thousands of years back, where Abraham conversed with the men of God, not knowing that they were messengers, until they had supped, had been refreshed, and stood a moment on the threshold of his humble tent, to make known their errand of destruction.

"If the length of our lives on earth," continued Nellie, would be limited to a few moments, I would look through that darkness, and sink down just where that starry light shines. Down, down; always following that radiant track, until I step through the star into the place beyond, where there is no need of stars. There is no fear in my heart. None. God to me is Love, and love is light. Death to me is not death, it is Heaven. Nay, this life is death, because I am separated from God more than I care to be."

"But you have years of earthly journeying before you. Are you not afraid? Your zeal for the visionary may become dry and cold, as is often the case with Christians!"
"No, you forget Jesus is my Teacher; and it is impossible for His pupils ever to become dry and cold in the warm atmosphere of His presence. But, Sir," and Nellie turned back to the fast-thinning deck. "It is getting late, and—and—" Here she hesitated, and the crimson roseleaf colour again mantled her brow. She spoke truly when she said she was not afraid of God, but two minutes afterwards she felt afraid of a man, afraid of what her unpremeditated words might have done. "I hope I have not offended you, sir," she said with a simplicity that was very charming. "I do not wish to be unkind. I am so stupid when I come in contact with anything contrary to my sense of what is right, and my wayward tongue will lead me into scrapes. Please forget all about our contentions."

The gentleman rose, and held out his hand. "I am very pleased to have met you. If a country knew how much it owes to its commendable characters, it would endeavour to increase its staff. I have changed my opinion of New Zealand girls."

"O sir," exclaimed Nellie, putting her hand into his, and looking up to the fair face bent over her, "How could you rebuke me so unkindly. Have my words been so selfish that in your thoughts you have a place for me? I thought you were pondering over what I said."

"I have room for all, even for you. Now, will you crown your kindness and patience by letting me know to whom I am indebted for the first true light in my Christian life? Suppose we exchange confidences? You tell me your name, and I'll tell you mine."

Nellie laughed merrily. It was the first genuine laugh she had indulged in for a long time; but the consciousness of having done her duty, a faint perception of elated triumph, and something in the grey eager eyes, cleared for a moment the shadow from her heart.
"A sure proof of reconciliation—to wish to know more—but this time I refuse to instruct. We are not likely to meet again, and as you are going to browse on pastures now, and I,—well, I am going to hermetize, the knowledge of one another’s names will not avail us much. Good night, sir." And Nellie tried to withdraw her hand. But the gentleman did not seem tired of holding it, even though it had rested in his own for fully three minutes, all men are not inconstant, or, at least, this man was not, he could hold a girl’s hand for the space of three whole minutes, and still wish he could hold it for three more.

Ah, but then the girl was not his wife! No! if she were, he would have held herself maybe, and that would have been a scandalous breach of decorum.

"I shall not see you in the morning, so will say Good-bye, as well as Good night." And the tall figure bowed with all the gallantry of his country’s grace. "Good bye, my unknown friend."

Nellie started, and a strange light leapt into her dark eyes. There was something in that last "Good bye," which awoke an echo from the past. Throughout the whole intercourse she had been strangely impressed by an undefined intonation in the mellow voice. "I wonder what it is that draws me to that man," she mused, as she prepared for bed. "I feel that I have met him before. That voice is the echo of what?" That wonder was explained; but who should have guessed the truth. An affinity there was between them, but neither knew of its nature. In the meantime they two went their separate ways, and after—what after?"
CHAPTER XIX.

WHO does not remember the agitations and doubts with which the end of their first journey by sea is surrounded. How the heart is torn with fear as the wharf, with its crowd of strange faces, appear in sight. How eagerly one scans the undulating mass for a familiar form. What if it be not there? Oh, the pictures of helplessness, loss, cold, hunger, even death. Suddenly, what a bright light flashes across the fearful heart. There it is, there it is. That face upon which so much depends. What joy, where a second before all was dark fear—What relief. The novice may be pardoned for neglecting to study the scenes and faces on the wharf.

The little bird stands up in its nest to stretch its wings. Its bright eyes catch a glimpse of something beyond: something like, yet unlike anything in its nest. The object sways in the breeze, and seems to be laughing and dancing with glee. The bird looks more intently, and there appears several joyous objects, a laughing stretch of level green, numberless new beings.

"What is it?" cries the little bird, sinking back in wonderment.

"It is the world."

"But am I not in the world already?"

"Yes! In a part."

"Why did I not see that other part before?"

"You were not tall enough to see over the boundary of this."
"And now that I have caught that glimpse, may I leave here, and go there? Methinks I would like to. It is so beautiful, so grand, so new; and I have learned all about here."

The grave instructor lifts its wings to the wind, and soars away, the words of its song floating back on the breeze.

"Thou shalt be guided, my child. The time and the manner I know not. My office alone I fulfil. Behold the worm I have brought. I go another to bring."

The little bird grew. It felt its body getting too large for its nest. Its mind rose above, and again it saw that beautiful strange object. "I wonder why I am so restless," sighed she.

"'Tis the voice of the evil one within," solemnly answered its brothers and sisters.

"Ah, no, it is not," meditated the bird, for in its ears rang that song, "Thou will be guided my child, the time and the manner I know not."

Suddenly it felt its wings thrill with a strange new strength. Terrified by the shock, it fell down and tried to hide itself beneath the twigs of Doubt.

"Arise and go, thou art guided. The time and the manner I have prepared." And in obedience to that low, firm voice, the little bird rose, shook off its baby feathers of fear, and made preparations for its departure. But the grave, wise family interfered.

"This is our day at home," said one of the sisters, "we will discuss the matter over our tea cups." Accordingly they let out hints regarding their purpose, and all the neighbours flocked to afternoon tea. So here they sit, their superior wisdom inciting the laughter even of the fool. The hostess, after doing the duty of bowing and scraping
and palaver, draws the red comb of Experience over its eyes, and commences the farce.

"Wise and wealthy friends—you whose opinions are founded upon knowledge which surpasses the wisdom of ancient and modern sages—we embrace this opportunity to consider a foolish, wicked step our sister is about to take. She has seen something outside our nest which she calls the World, and she is going to visit that place. We can do nothing to stop her, but if we all join forces, we may not fail to stamp this mad freak out of her mind."

Responses of "Yes, yes," "Dear me," "How unfortunate," from the company. Do not probe too deeply into the hearts of these bird judges. It is not always pleasant to find one's self indulging in a mistaken sympathy. There may be a little jealousy as well as brotherly solicitude running through their tender feelings. The heart has many valves.

"And now," continues the speaker, "since I have introduced the subject, I will give my views. They are very weighty, as you know, being the result of a close scrutiny of my past. I have wandered throughout the whole length and breadth of the land; I am acquainted with every virtue, every vice; my eyes have beheld every scene; my ears have heard every sound. Take warning, my friend, from one who has taken an active part in the encounter. That world is cold, hard, selfish and wicked, and no place for one so weak and foolish as you."

Bowing with all the dignity of its years of experience, the solemn-voiced elderly adviser removed the wonderful comb, and glanced at the company and at the culprit.

"Ah, me," said a low, sweet voice, and a beautiful fairy-like form sank back in her chair, and half closing her eyes, looked through her long sweeping lashes of Home Comfort
and Ignorance. "It is not often I speak, less often I act, but on such an occasion as this I must lay aside a little of my dignity." There was a slight pause. The feathery fan waved to and fro, and the gentle motion brought a faint bloom to the pearly cheeks. "My friend—my dearest friend, do you know what you are doing by thus seeking to leave the comfort and happiness here? Look around!—food, rich, enough, and to spare; clothing, soft, warm, and costly. Nothing to do but to order and be obeyed. Eat, my dear, eat, drink, and be merry. To know much is to become unhappy. Happiness is the whole end of man. Why worry the mind by filling it with worrying thoughts. Behold my peace; take my cue. 'Tis comfortable to the mind to live in ignorance." The feathery fan continued to wave, the sweet voice ceased. Hush! do not disturb the soothing impression made by this bright-winged, tender-eyed, gentle bird.

"I am the last, but not the least," uttered a deep stern voice, as its portly owner raised his eyes from the leaf upon which was written an account of his own Righteous deeds, and wonderful power of Reasoning. "You have heard what these, your kind advisers, have said," and two haughty, piercing eyes were fixed upon the poor little offender. "Have their words produced no effect upon your mad intention? If so, mine will not. I stoop neither to warn nor to entice. I Condemn. What is your object in leaving your home? Avant with all your lame excuses. Some dark purpose you have in view. A design so vile, so selfish, must have a corresponding aim. Fool, you will rue the day you let your passions be the director of your actions." The Champion of Conduct turned his attention back to his leaf. And amidst the flapping of wings and the stroking of beaks, several mocking voices cried, "Defend yourself if you can!"
Lower and lower bowed the head; faster and faster fell the tears.

"Poor little bird, have ye none to defend ye? Why are ye weeping? Arise, defend yourself. You can." But the wounded bird raised its eyes beseechingly to the kind face bent compassionately over it. "I am so weak, they are so strong. They bear not the voice that bids me go. They do not understand."

"Am I not greater than thousands? I will help you. Come arise." And gently that dear friend lifted the crouching figure; and parted the feather's of sorrow from the tear stained eyes. "Child, child, this is weakness, indeed." The voice was so low and tender that no one else heard it. The form was so radiantly beautiful that no one else saw it. "But I know your frame. I remember you are dust. I will spare you the pain. Here rest upon me, I will bear you away. You shall not fall. Rest a while." Tender words soothed the pain in the aching heart. Loving hands bound up the wounds with bandages from his own bleeding side. A meek "Bearer of the iniquities of us all" lifted the bruised reed on his shoulder, and bore it away. On, on until he reached that other part of the world; and there he placed his burden in the arms of one of his own. At that magic touch the allegory was transformed, and lo ———

"Nellie, Nellie, my bright-eyed, light-hearted Nellie. What have they been doing to you?" Something misty came over the kind blue eyes, something heavy fell upon the kinder heart, and two loving arms folded around the girl's slight form, two tender lips were pressed again and again upon Nellie's pale wasted cheeks.

"Doing Auntie, nothing. And O, I am so tired of it all." A great sob finished the sentence, and at that sound
Mrs. Remay pressed the heaving breast closer, murmuring,
"My darling, you shall never go back, please God."

But the crowd was surging around. Inquisitive eyes
were turned in their direction; and Mrs. Remay, re-
membering the dignity of her position, released her fond
embrace, and led the way to an open carriage.

"Forgive an old woman's whims," she said, as she drew
the young girl down on the soft-cushioned seat beside her.
"My treasure is so new, so long denied me, so dearly
prized, that I cannot bear it out of my arms."

Nellie almost broke down. Her heart was too full to
speak. Were it not for the semi-torpor state into which
she had fallen, there certainly would have been a scene;
as it was, the faint light of her mind revealed things faintly,
itself remaining unrevealed. Oh, how beautiful to be at
rest; to feel motherly arms around you; to hear soft
murmuring words of motherly comfort and love in your
ears, in your heart; to lay your storm-tossed head upon a
motherly bosom, feeling beneath the beating of an over-
flowing heart of sympathy, of longing to give what your
own yearns to receive. Motherly love. 'Tis to thine
influence we owe the noblest qualities and highest achieve-
ments of the human race. In the height of our prosperity,
and in the blaze of earthly triumph, thy homely light burns
beneath, and supports, our upward flight. Our ambitions
are seasoned with thine essence that its pathway may be
strewn with a more lasting nutriment than that of friend-
ship's glowing garnish. And our hopes, our strength, our
fortitude, are sucked into our beings from thy inexhaustible
paps. How desolate is he who knows not the flavour of
thy milk; how dry and unprepossessing his own life.
But for the weary sufferer, the torn and lacerated soul, O
what relief, what balm, what Heaven-provided blessing.
Mother, mother, in fancy I feel the peace of thy presence
stealing over my weary heart. I sink, I sink. Waken me not, let me rest; let me live: let me close mine eyes, they ache, they are tired, they long, O how they long, for the sweet forgetfulness of sin and strife. Relief, relief. Rest, rest.

When the luggage had been seen to, and the driver mounted into his seat, Nellie raised her head a moment, and looked at the flying trees and houses, the lamp-posts and telegraph wires, then her eyes wandered to the lady's face. A smile reassured her, and she sank back with a sigh of contentment. The carriage bowled along, through the small sea port town, up a steep road, bordered on each side by cream clayey cuttings, over a slight elevation, and into the main town: then taking several sweeping turns, it entered a wide open gateway, passed swiftly through a neat carriage drive, and drew up in front of a moderately large house. An elderly gentleman, who had evidently been watching for them, appeared at the door; his kind old face the picture of benevolence, as he awaited the carriage's approach. Hardly waiting for the horses to stop, Mrs. Remay sprang out, and taking Nellie's hand, she led her young friend forward, saying, "Here Nole, I have brought our dear daughter home. Tell me, is she not all my fancy painted her?"

The old gentleman took the small hand from his wife, and, placing his disengaged one upon Nellie's shoulder, looked down into the shy dark eyes upturned to his. "Welcome home, my dear," was all he said, but the tone of his rich low voice, and the true light of his grave blue eyes were more eloquent than the best of speeches: and Nellie felt as if the last film of doubt had been swept away. Gently leading the way, Mrs. Remay proceeded her young charge through a spacious hall, decorated with exotics and curios, up a broad flight of stairs, and ushered her into a neat little bed-room.
"Remove your things, my dear," she said, opening a large wardrobe and displaying its well-filled interior; "you will find something useful here," and, touching Nellie's sombre, faded gown, "do not throw a chill over our first breakfast by wearing such as that. I do not object to mourning, but I certainly do to this. Jock will be up with your boxes presently." Another hug, another kiss, and the kindest and the dearest of ladies went down-stairs to do something dearer and kinder. Nellie had indeed fallen into good hands, if she only knew it. How strangely alike is the heart's great land to earth's physical aspect. We leave a sunny land of childhood's innocence. Over a sea of maidenhood, or youth's uncertain dreamy years we pass. On the border of that sea lies the land of a great unknown country. We step on shore—a desert of scorching sand stretches across our onward track; we journey, but our journeying is so dangerous; Lo! we sink down on the sand, and our eyes turn up to the pitiless heavens. A vision of something green floats before our minds; we lift our dying sight—a step, a stumble, forward. What? Not death, as we thought, but life. A spring of clear, pure water; an oasis in the desert; fruit in the midst of thorns. Nellie sank down on her knees and gave thanks to Him who gave so much to her; then rising, she removed her travelling dress and donned a soft loose wrapper. Very fragile and very sweet she looked as she descended the stairs and entered the breakfast room. Her hair was smoothed back from the broad low brow. A frill of rich lace curled around her throat, a bow of tantalizing ribbon kissed her tiny ear, and in her hand those indicators of every emotion, a bunch of fragrant purple violets.

"Forgive me, uncle," she said, as she placed the flowers on the table, "but these friends looked at me so
lovingly, and seemed to plead so hard to be taken, that I could not refuse."

Mr. Remay smiled, and motioning her to take her place, said, "Water will always find its own level. It has not taken you long to discover your natural element, my dear."

After a prolonged breakfast, which was taken up for the most part by questions and answers concerning Nellie's goings out and comings in, Mr. Remay rose to go. "I would like to have stayed a little longer, but duty calls me away." He put his hand on his adopted niece's head as he was passing out, "God bless you, my child, and show us how to make you happy." That loved caress, how it brought back memories of the past, when a more beloved hand was laid upon "His lassie's head," and a more beloved voice whispered "Daddy's girlie."

Mrs. Remay looked at her husband; their eyes met in a meaning glance. Mrs. Remay smiled. Mr. Remay returned the smile. Nellie sat unconscious of it all. And here it may be as well to offer a word of explanation. Mr. Remay had never seen Nellie; Mrs. Remay had. Mr. Remay had never spoken to Nellie; Mrs. Remay had. Until that meeting Mr. Remay knew Nellie only by repute; Mrs. Remay had known her personally. Consequently it may be understood that the whole responsibility of bringing Nellie into their home rested upon Mrs. Remay. It was no light matter to assume the charge of a young girl—this her husband pointed out. Her up-bringing had been left to others—this her husband also pointed out. His wife's kindness might cause herself to be deceived—this was another question to be considered. But everything had been overruled, everything was as a breath before that one great word—Love, love.
"I shall risk it," she had declared; "we will consider it my speculation. If I fail, there is an end to it. If I succeed, oh Nello think! —a dear sweet girl to love and be loved by."

"I wash my hands of the whole affair," laughed Mr. Remay, but in the kindling eyes Mrs. Remay read her husband's approval. Nevertheless, as the time drew near for its accomplishment, the kind lady's heart beat a little nervously, and she wondered how the years had dealt with the child of her former acquaintance. She was not disappointed. Her fastidious husband was satisfied. That night, after Nellie had gone to bed, Mrs. Remay took the opportunity to ask "Note his opinion."

"I never had any doubts regarding my wife's discernment," he answered. "And I own I am a little surprised at my mistake. There is a timidity in Nellie's manner I do not care to see. Timidity, my dear, is often a cloak for deceit." Mrs. Remay could not believe her senses. What did her husband mean? Was he mocking her? Her face was expressive of her thoughts. Mr. Remay smiled. Mrs. Remay collapsed.

"I do believe you are making fun of me, you wicked old man." The knitting was thrown down, and Mr. Remay received a good shaking. "How dare you amuse yourself at your wife's expense. Don't you know I am dying to hear you say you love my little friend?"

"Of course, I know. Such treatment as I am receiving at your hands bespeaks a dying person. There, my dear." And the old gentleman drew his wife of forty years on his knee, and kissed her as fondly as he did when they were sweethearts. "Pretend you want to hear me praise your works, when all the while you want me to praise yourself. Such a conceited old woman as it is: just as fond of flattery as ever."
“Do stop your nonsense Nole, for pity sake, and tell me what you think of Nellie. Really, you are more incorrigible now than ever you were.”

“Very well, little woman. How do I like my niece? A little less than my wife.”

“Och! It is a waste of time trying to reason with you to-night,” exclaimed Mrs. Remay, playfully boxing her husband’s ears, and laughing her rippling happy laugh. She looked very fresh and very pleasing that night, for the light of benevolence shone on her face, and the shades of a noble action played among her silver ringlets. But we must return to our interrupted breakfast, with its two remaining partakers, the old and the young.

“Come child, you must not stay here any longer. We will begin investigations to-morrow. Go and rest awhile. Jane will bring you a cup of tea by-and-by.”

Nellie threw her arms around her kind benefactress’ neck, murmuring. “Dear Aunt, why have you no children of your own? You who could so capably fill a mother’s office?”

Mrs. Remay let her cheek rest upon the dark head, caressingly; and for a few minutes remained silent.

“God has not thought fit to let me keep my darlings. They were so beautiful that he wanted them for his choir. I often see them in my dreams. They are so happy, so very happy. I could not have the heart to wish for the return of one of those white robed, fairy forms. I used to be puzzled over the apparent mistakes in nature. Where was the wisdom in giving to my poorer sisters so many little ones, that, in order to furnish them with bare necessities, their lives have been made perfect drudgeries? while I am denied the joy of one little child. I could heap upon it every comfort, and crown it with every affection.
But lately I have learned to be reconciled, and in God's will I see the great wisdom of the Father. A broken-hearted mother. A sorrowing father. A dissipated son. A son who would have to be cut down as a cumberer of the ground. These thoughts force me to bow my proud head to God's divine decrees. There child, run away, or I shall keep you here all day, listening to my imaginary grievances."

Nellie went to her room. Her dainty little room, with its neat white bed, its soft drapings, its books, its flowers, its nick-nacks. O, how good, how thoughtful her aunt had been. Crossing to the window, she drew aside the lacy curtains, and looked out. What a glorious sight met her vision. What a feeling of rest settled upon her heart. Knowing Nellie's love for the sea, Mrs. Remay had taken care that her young friend, niece we shall henceforth call her, should have a room, the window of which commanded a view of the Bay. There it lay, that great blue sheet, fringed with its shelly beach, its tall green and golden trees, its shaggy water-riven hills, its houses, and its gardens. The house itself stood on an elevation, and the grounds sloped down toward the busy part of the city. In the front lay a small grass plot and garden, adorned with gay flowers, and fringed with stunted shrubberies. At the north-east end of the house was a beautiful lawn, and around the whole was planted a double row of trees. In the further extremity of the lawn nestled an ivy bower with rustic seats, and leading to it was a narrow path, which winded its way between plots, through shrubbery, and around lawns. Behind the house was a steep cutting, and above the cutting, more cuttings, and more houses. Between the houses and the cutting were the kitchen gardens, the stables, and toward the south winded the wide carriage drive that led from the spacious hall door to the dusty high
road. Neither house nor grounds boasted of display; though neat and trim and well kept, Mrs. Remay's home took upon itself no pretensions of wealth and grandeur, but the most striking thing about it was its air of peace and comfort. Indeed, no one else but Mr. and Mrs. Remay could have made it look half so homely, half so fair.

Fastidious in her taste as she was, Nellie could not help being satisfied with the landscape before her, and those beautiful lines of Bryant's floated across her mind: "To him who in the love of nature holds communion with her visible form, there speaks a various language. For his gayer hours she has a smile and eloquence of beauty; and she glides into his darker musings with a mild and gentle sympathy which steals away its sharpness ere he is aware."

Every element seemed to be introduced into that view, yet there was neither too much of each to tire the sight, nor too little to leave one unsatisfied. Ah! I believe we have seen that picture before, at any rate, we have been introduced to it at the early part of our narrative. It was the same scene that called to a passion-tossed soul, charging it to leave the famine-stricken Egypt of remorse, and inviting it to follow the lead to a Canaan of promise: a Canaan filled with wine and milk, which could be bought without money and without price.

Two hours afterwards, when Jane appeared with the tea, she turned and retraced her steps, taking her tea with her.

"Go an' see yerself, ma'm," she answered to her mistress' question, which command her mistress obeyed.

Nellie had sunk down on a low chair beside the window; her hands were loosely clasped together in her lap; her dark hair, which was just beginning to grow about her temples, rested against the cushioned back—she was fast asleep.
A wave of love and pity swept over the heart of the silent
watcher as she noted the tell-tale marks of recent conflict
and failure upon the white, pinched face. Turning away
with tears in her eyes, Mrs. Remay inwardly prayed that
she might be granted the joy of relieving the sorrows of
that young heart.
CHAPTER XX.

BEFORE going into the subject of this chapter, it might be as well to become more particularly acquainted with the lives and characters of those two whom the Great Master had chosen as recipients of his precious burden.

Mrs. Remay needs no further analysis than that the reader has already formed. She was good. What higher praise can woman wish for. She was infinitely above the heroine style, for hers was an inherent goodness, that was so natural, so unassuming, so free from selfish gain.

Mr. Remay was slightly odd. His character was a queer contradiction. Consolation was his hobby. Many were the times he had been heard to commend the qualities of Barnabas: often placing him above his fellow labourer, Paul. Once he had actually asked that on his tombstone the word Barnabas might be engraved. Unlike the general character of Scotchmen, whose kindliness and compassion are hidden beneath a grotesque exterior, Mr. Remay passed the whole day in the sunshine of benevolence. From the extremity of strength to the extremity of weakness was his habitual course; never would he pause half-way between. By this it may be understood that Mr. Remay often got himself into scrapes, from which all his wife's ingenuity was required to pull her foolish husband. Yet this was done with such discretion, such womanly tact, that few were aware of the severe battles fought in Mrs. Remay's drawing-room or kitchen. In the immediate neighbourhood, and, indeed, for miles around, the Remay's were known and respected; only
the stable really understood Mr. Remay's weakness, for there the husband reigned supreme in an undivided region. "Remay's tricks," was a byword, and incited a smile from all who heard it. And many a vagabond poor Jock had to frighten away by threats of the police, "For," as he declared one day, "Master would fill the stable with all the lowest blackguards in the town, if I were not to use my fists. Law, as if one man was not enough to mind one hoss." But if Mr. Remay was easily imposed upon, he was also firmly consistent. To win his friendship was to win a friend; and with a friend, neither life nor death, nor principalities, nor power, could wrench that bond asunder. In reality he had few friends, but those few were trustworthy. The very simplicity of his own noble nature was his shield against himself. It would be a very wicked person indeed who would defraud Mr. Remay. His boyhood had been spent in Scotland, where he had studied for church; been ordained as a Presbyterian minister; married the sweetest of Scotch lassies; buried three little daughters, and one little son. Health and circumstances combined had forced the two bereaved ones to leave their home, and seek a milder climate. They emigrated for New Zealand, landed at Dunedin, and there took up their abode. At first Mr. Remay officiated as a country minister, then as a small town minister, now as a city minister. Changes had come to them, as they will come to all, and five years before we became acquainted with them, they left their old home in the South for one in the North. While journeying from one place to the other, they encountered a terrific gale; the steamer was carried past her desired haven, and into the nearest harbour of refuge. In those early days all ports did not offer shelter to the weather bound vessel. On their return they, at least Mrs. Remay, called in at Bonsby, and it was during this short visit that she made the acquaintance of our little friend. The sea beach was their trysting place,
and every afternoon of that short visit those two would be seen together. Their meeting, according to some, was accidental; according to others, a part of a divine plan. Mrs. Remay was sitting looking at the frolicsome children, and the whispering waves, when her attention was arrested by a little figure scantily clad, standing alone, and ankle deep in the water. Presently the child, for Nellie was a child then, turned; something in the round dark eyes, as they were upraised to the lady’s face, appealed to her womanly instinct. From that day they, unknown to Nellie, were friends. "There is a queer mixture of childishness and womanishness in the girl," Mrs. Remay afterwards remarked to her husband, who had not broken his journey at Bonsby, and consequently had not seen Nellie. "She has the ways of a child, but the thoughts of a woman."

In that one week Mrs. Remay, with her motherly tact, understood the little visionary waif, better than did Nellie’s own mother. It is a great loss to the young when their parents neglect to study their children’s characters. Instead of selfishly consulting their own feelings, and doing that which satisfies their present humour, let parents pause a moment and consider. "Is that to correct my child for his good, or is it to relieve my own feelings." Remember there is a difference between punishment and chastisement, as well as between sin and failing; and there is such a thing as using the wrong lesson in the wrong place. Do not impute to failings the attributes of sin, and punish where chastisement is the proper treatment. Do not use the knowledge vice versa. When Mrs. Remay left Bonsby, her interest in her little friend did not abate, and unknown to Nellie she kept herself posted up in her movements. With her previous knowledge of the girl’s character, she knew just when to step forward and declare that friendship: she was now to reap what she had sown. Hitherto, husband and wife had lived a life
almost unalloyed by sorrow, except as we have already mentioned, the loss of their children. Even the sting of that loss had been converted into meet for gratitude; and now that they had grown resigned, God opened a new door, and led them into a new room of joyful happiness. A daughter He had given them, one He had reared on his own responsibility, and one no human parent had tampered with. Nellie became a comfort and solace to the two old people, and many were the times they would wonder how they lived so long without the sunshine in their home. Not that Nellie was boisterous or gay, a strange silence had fallen upon her heart, but she was always cheerful, always near, always there to love, and to love them. The quiet harmony of their lives was never disturbed by careless words or laughter; the melody in their hearts was atuned afresh by the sacred sadness in Nellie’s. They would go forth on the day’s routine, encouraged by a loving smile from two dark brown eyes, they would return to their quiet evenings, filled with joyous anticipations of Nellie’s gentle caress.

Thus the life flowed on in one calm steady flow, and the days and weeks and months ran into years, no one counting the past, no one surmising the future. The present they enjoyed—the present they lived in. One evening, about six months after Nellie had taken up her sojourn with them, Mrs. Remay repaired to her husband’s study for a “quiet chat with the old man.” He seemed entangled in some mysterious problem, and like a sensible woman, she took her accustomed seat without saying a word. Looking up as if to see beyond the paper he was studying, Mr. Remay caught his wife’s eyes bent amusingly upon him, and he laughed.

“Read that Mary,” he said, passing some closely-written foolscap to her.

“Nellie’s writing, Nole!” A merry twinkle came into the blue eyes, and a roguish look was cast at her husband. “I
knew that she was in the habit of reviewing your sermons, but I did not know she ever wrote them."

"Neither does she, Mrs. Becky Sharp. That is not a sermon of mine, it is one of Nellie's own. She gave it to me to explain more clearly her meaning. The little witch coolly informed me I was wrong; set to, and pulled down one of my pet theories. She began at the foundation, disclosed one false stone, then another, until what with bad material and bad workmanship, the whole thing collapsed. I have a good mind not to let Miss Nellie see my next theory-castle. It is not the pleasantest of sensations to feel that you have been using insufficiently seasoned material, and unqualified workmen for so many years." Mr. Remay laughed again as he thought of his recent discomfiture and defeat.

"Dear girl," said his wife, "I wonder how she is enjoying herself to-night. You have no idea what a trouble I had to make her promise to go." She read down the first page of writing, then handed the papers back to her husband.

"I am afraid you will have to explain, Nole, I am a little dense. Besides, you have not told me what is the subject of your sermon."

"I intended to touch upon several subjects; but the one I wished to particularize was the habit of meeting trouble half way.

"An old old theme. Could you not find something new? But where is the room in that for a diversity of opinion?"

"I begin to think that the merit of one's discernment is in discovering new truths out of old themes. However, Nellie certainly points out that there is another channel of thought, besides the every-day one, of the meeting trouble half-way. She declares it wrong to wholly disregard trouble until it is upon us. That trouble being not imaginary, but real, requires its due consideration. That they who close their eyes and deliberately refuse to see the approaching monster, are
cowards. I may tell you that the circumstance which occasioned the suggestion of these thoughts was the reading of that beautiful poem, 'The shadow of the Cross.' If you have not read the poem, Mary, I advise you to do so. It is well worth the trouble. However, seeing an advertisement in the paper, which offered a prize for the best original essay, Nellie determined to put her thoughts into words. Her efforts were fruitless, and disheartened by failure, she threw the papers into her box, and there they remained until my opposition to her opinions released them from their disgrace.

Mr. Remay took off his spectacles, wiped them carefully with the corner of his pocket handkerchief, readjusted them on his nose, cleared his throat, took up the papers, began to read.

Mrs. Remay leaned back in her chair, folded her hands, put her feet on the edge of the fender, closed her eyes, and began to listen.

"She disagrees with Sir Edmund Arnold in several things, especially where he calls the shadow of Christ's cross "a Ghost and Ghoul of a glittering light." Yet excuses him with the charity of a fellow feeling, and even allows that she may not be faultless in her opinion, since he does not deny the existence of Light altogether. The subject takes three principal parts—Shadow, Ray, Light. It is to the shadow part we are indebted for an explanation regarding the necessity of becoming familiar with trouble before it actually takes place. 'A shadow,' she says, 'is the form of a body which intercepts the rays of light, and a ghost is a spectre, a breath, a something having the appearance, but not the actual form of a body. The difference between the two meanings is her criterion for saying that Sir Edmund wrongly named the shadow of Christ's cross a 'Ghost and Ghoul of a glittering light.'"
Mr. Remay turned over the first page and commenced to read: "'If a shadow be not real, it requires at least three realities to make one shadow. One reality to form the shadow itself; another that which the shadow falls upon; the third the light by which the body intercepting the shadow may be seen. By analyzing Holeman Hunt's picture, and Sir Edmund Arnold's description of it, we discover the shadow to be the real—the circumstances connected with the shadow, spectres. It is therefore advisable to know something about a shadow. When those two men depicted their thoughts—the one by the brush, for the perception of sight, the other by the pen, for the perception of hearing—the shadow had become a reality, the cross had been borne. The Virgin was not the only one who saw it, neither was it confined to the walls of a carpenter's shop. That Cross had become, and is, visible to thousands, and its light, not its shadow, falls, and continues to fall upon every part of the world. Taking these evidences as their standard, they have constructed the theorem, and left the lesson for us to reason out and learn. This is their proposition, but we have exercises to do as well. As the result is in the one, so it is in all. A shadow is cast upon the earth, we look up and see the cloud. A shadow falls across our lives, we look back and behold the cause. Had the picture been shown us before we would have declared the shadows myths, the figures realities. Now we know figures, places, occupations, are all transitory—the shadows reflections of great realities. Understand the shadows, and be careful of your dealings with them, then when they cross your path you will not so often be taken unawares; you will not look back and say, "Oh that I had taken more notice of those warnings!" Truly it may be said, "Shadows are heralds of coming realities."'"

Mr. Remay paused a moment, and Mrs. Remay exclaimed, "That explains what Nellie meant last night, when she said: 'I do think people get warnings, if they
would only understand and listen to them. Not superstitious warnings of dread, but God's warnings of preparations. Aunt, I was warned about our trouble before it came upon us, but I did not prepare myself. I let the warning go, and stood alone in my proud self-sufficiency. I look back upon it now and mourn my blindness.' Nole, when she spoke I felt as if a spirit shed a misty light around her head and into her deep, dark eyes. 'God sent one of his spirit-messengers to warn me, aunt,' she said 'Do you know what a spirit-messenger is? It is a rushing, noiseless presence in the untraceable atmosphere of our filiation. It comes to our mortal reflections from a nothingness, and dies away into a nothingness again. Not a real nothingness, but a nothingness to us, because we know not what is beyond or before. It comes to warn, but not to guide; to move, but not to speak. There is an unmistakable light about it which speaks of the infinity beyond, and which separates it from the glittering baubles of our coarser beings. Its form is as definite as it is indefinite. These are the times when we are ungrateful to our Heavenly Father, for, seizing the holy sacredness of that spirit's visitation, we hasten back to our earthly sympathies, forgetful of the purpose of Him who sent that warning spirit.'

"Were it not that I have heard Nellie ridicule every kind of superstition, and visionary fears, I would be tempted to call her a spiritualist," said Mr. Remay, eyeing his wife gravely.

"I fancy she would say she was one, if you were to mention it to her, Nole. But she would add, "Having come in contact with the true spirit, I recognise the fraud: having understood that God alone deals with spirits, I despise man's tom-foolery. But read on Nole, I am anxious to hear the rest of that remarkable essay."

"She now takes the Ray, and strange to say, separates the Ray from the Light. Her explanation is laid out after the plan of Euclid, and she begins with the general enuncia-
tion, "A ray is a line of light." She says that while searching for truths in the Shadow Theorem, she passed a subject branching off in the same direction, but producing opposite effect. She presents the ray to us in the form of a problem, and adds to the general, the particular enunciation, "A dark form produces a shadow; light reveals it." On this basis the ray problem is constructed, and the proof given."

"With the pen of thought, join truth and reason, then the figure formed is the required ray. For because the effect ray is opposite to the effect shadow, so their causes must be opposite, and because they two are in the same direction, therefore their causes must also be in the same direction." Upon closer inspection we learn to regard the ray, not merely as an effect, but also as a force. The molecules, of which it is composed, vibrate slowly and surely. Minor rays branch off from the standard, but they are only temporary. Like life in oxygen gas these minor rays burn brightly and fiercely for a short time, but soon die out, leaving the charred remains. Perhaps, lured by the brilliancy of that false ray, the intellect has been enticed into following, but the inevitable darkness descends, and the shrinking shrivelled traveller declares the ray without meaning or substance. The very force of its demolishing power should show the deluded the meaning and substance of a ray. The failure was because the intellect bent downward toward the reflection, instead of upward toward the cause of that reflection. Darkness cannot be endured for ever. Grope ye about. Find ye an exit. Look, the forsaken standard-ray appears. It gently chides, it kindly leads the way back. Are you not ashamed of the hills of pride, and the pits of false humility you had formed during your wilful straying? Start ye out afresh! Learn the lesson of permanent and temporary. Go forward in every investigation, with the fixed determination to reach the source of every truth.
For Father's sake.

Force exists not so much in displayed energy, as in shielded purpose. Success lies almost wholly within oneself. The way that leads to light is very narrow, very straight, and very unprepossessing to all, save he who seeks the solid truth. And should it be otherwise? No. To enter into the brightest places, one must pass through the deepest darkness. Yet, as has been said, "Even in the womb of darkness throbs the promise of the dawn." At every advancing footstep the soul is drawn nearer to the "Light"; while through the dark shadow may be seen the glowing ripple beyond. What do they say? We are privileged to reflect the ray, privileged to add a lustre to that line of light. The sun's rays striking upon the moon, is deflected on earth. The Saviour's rays striking upon the darkened intellects, light them up with reflections of the Saviour Sun. Thus, as we, Rays, travel on in our journey to our Sun, we become strengthened by our own reflections. We cannot say with Sir Edmund Arnold, "Our sun's shine out to show crosses and thorns on times old wall." Our faith teaches us to look beyond the wall, and to grasp the sunlight. On, on, pause not to wrestle with sponge and reed. They have been wrestled with, and conquered: our object is the conqueror, the glorious, light formed, Shadow. Light, Light, mystery mending, unchanging. The flashes from thy vast hereafter, unveil the eyes of earth's darkling, show mortal his own mortality, thine own Immortality. A question:—Expound unto us thy knowledge of light. The knowledge thou hast obtained by personal investigation. An answer:—Light I discover to be the greatest force in the universe. The Majesty of all the Majesties. It is the means whereby I am enabled to perform my allotted task, the task That Light ordains. It shows me the manner of my walking, where I must go, what I must do. All these also That Light provides. Without light, life here and hereafter, would be impossible.
In the dawn I could but faintly see my Sun, my Light; but as the day advance, I learned to know and love its power. The night approaches, the night of earthly rest, I see no darkness in the tomb, the light is with me still. I have been miserly with my noonday, and a double supply awaits me in my shadowy hours. Ah! then, earth's lost light will be transferred to Heaven, and ere I enter the darkness of death, Dawn, the dawn of a new life's day, bursts upon my immortal sight. Lo, from before birth, ages before creation, to life, ages and eternities of ages after consummation, Light, Mysterious Light, was, and is, and ever shall be."

A question. Ah! fine speech, wide imagination, but is not all a delusion? Carried away by impulse or sentiment, you create in your imagination a substance you call Light.

In contempt, the questioned turned to gaze upon the questioner, and lo, he was blind. It is ever so with many. Born in blindness they cannot see the light, although they daily draw from it their substance. The objects of our visions are foreign to them; they are imaginary. Blessed, blessed imagination, if such you be. Imagination to draw such pictures of Holiness and Truth; to relieve our weary thoughts, and give us glimpses of Perfect Purity; is it nothing that we, by imagination, rend the veil between us and our Creator; that we stand on the frontiers of mental territories, and gaze into the infinite beyond, with undazzled eyes. That we obtain mastery over every knowledge; every power; that we worship truth! O Christ, to worship Thee is imagination? And thy throne, our home, the angels gathered around, the Heav'cly music, the prophets and martyrs of ancient and modern days, that vision our beloved dead, are all these fruits of imagination?

They say it is wrong to filch from Heaven fragments of a knowledge that will some day be all our own, to pry into the secrets of the Invisible. To my thinking there can be no
filching, no prying into secrets of the Invisible, with the true
disciple of the Invisible. Is not Christ the distributor of
light, as well as light itself? Trust Him, and press on: not
in the capacity of an inquisitive observer, but of an earnest
aspiring, hungering, searcher of truth.

"Thus, link by link, we have formed a chain, from Shadow,
through Ray, into Light. We join the ends together and form
a circle, the circumference of which encloses a part of life's
area. At the end we have learned the beginning, in the
beginning we have been guided to the end—and the sum
total of all is a search and a satisfaction. O Wonderful
and Wisest, guide us we beseech thee, beyond the Higher, into
the very Highest."

Mr. Remay put down the papers, and looked at his wife—
"What do you say to that Mary?"

"That has done all the saying, there is nothing left for
me to say. What do you say?"

"That has done all the saying, there is everything left
for me to say, and I am going to say everything to-morrow.
After that it may be someone shall consider that worth pub-
lishing."

Mrs. Remay laughed, more at her husband's expression
than at his words. "I shall warn Nellie to keep her essays
out of your reach. Your charges upon literature are rather
formidable."

And so, after all, the despised essay was not lost, but
proclaimed in the pulpit. Is that not a more honourable
proclamation than is the narrow sphere of criticism, and the
selfish pleasure of a prize. They who truly win rewards
seldom receive them after the manner of their own petty
desires."
CHAPTER XXI

Eleven o'clock next day the church bells rang out merrily, calling men and women to meet together in the sacred house of God. In a quiet corner, half hidden by an angle of the church, sat our little friend. Goodness, even such frail goodness as that of righteous Lot, is not so abundant in this world that it can be passed by uncommented, and no one could fail to notice the sweetness of that little face. Nellie, vain girl, was quite conscious of the attention paid to her secluded corner. It is mock modesty to pretend not to see what is openly displayed; yet she set herself to task, and would not allow her thoughts obey the Sirene voice of Vanity. Jingle-de-ding, jingle-de-ding, sang those merry bells—those merry musical bells—those bells of holy thought. They tell us that in every land whereon the sun's bright rays fall, men, women and children are mingling together, and passing into God's quiet consecrated churches. They, those chiming bells, echo down to us, through the vast corridor of eighteen hundred years, the old old strain—"Christianity." And for, perhaps, eighteen hundred more, perhaps less, they will prolong their molten echo, growing more stupendous, more gloriously grand, in their never-ending volume as it sweeps past every node of time. The bells ceased; the organ awoke, and stirred into life the sunny, purified air. Wave upon wave of melody rolled down the aisle, and spread like a silvan flood along the well-filled pews. One moment's pause at the crimson folding doors, one moment,
then onward, upward; they, those melodious waves, curled themselves around the hearts of many an idler, and forced them, almost against their wills, into their fountain basin. The strain dies away, the white-haired minister arises, and from behind the crimson velvet and swaying tassels, announces, in his grand deep tones, the commencement of their morning service. His voice speaks to his flock; his heart to his God. There he stands, that saintly man, his tall form towering above that seething people, like a mighty Abraham wrestling with God for mercy on Sodom; his voice, more pleading, more persistent than that ancient Patriarch's, winning a more effectual destruction, the destruction of the devil of contention in the hearts of his people. To the congregation, as they gazed upon their heavy-headed priest, never before had his spiritual face seemed so dear, so full of human strength; and, as their voices arose in one burst of praise, the Glorified One bent forward in his throne to listen. The song ended, the congregation knelt, and in the inspired voice of the minister, priest, and people prayed. Too much; the yearning heart of that Glorified One broke from the bonds of reserve, and rising from his seat, and opening wide his arms of love, he descended with his train of angels, and clasped each earnest petitioner to his heart.

Ah! I hear in the whispering air, and see in the phantom faces, strange, mocking sounds, strange contemptuous smiles; and on the great Earth's wall is written the words, "Preserve us from purity and earnestness, if this, and that, and the next, be samples of Christianity."

O, mighty accusers, ye are right; sadly awfully right; and no one mourns more over Christianity's failings than the Christians do themselves. In our pews we sit and gaze at the inscriptions above our church doors and windows. "Jealousy." "Self pride." "Carnal wilfulness." And
bowing our head with the force of our anguish, we weep bitter bitter tears. "Oh! spare us, ye judges, and spare our brethren, for the sake of Him, whose blood drops wipe away our stains. God knows the Christians suffer enough from the persecuting hands of those "Samples," without the addition of your taunts. Remember there are some who prostrate themselves before their Lord, and cry continually, "God be merciful to me, a weak and erring, yet righteous thirsting, sinner." Who occupy not the front seats, nor veil their faces with mock humility, but who stand unshrouded in their simple knowledge of simplicity, and who are not conspicuous in that vast congregation.

The sermon over, the last hymn sung, the benediction pronounced, the congregation rise, and slowly make their way out. "A beautiful sermon." "A wonderful sermon." "Criky, an’ it war worth a hearing." And so they commented with one another, and pulled the parson and his preaching to pieces, little dreaming that a woman’s hand had wielded the magic wand; never knowing that those stirring truths, which inspired them on to a higher life, were wrung from the depth of a suffering heart, a heart in every way like their own.

The minister gazed after the retiring forms of his flock, and sighed. All his efforts had been fruitless, not one heart had been touched. "Ah! well, perhaps, they are tired of me, and want a change." But it was hard, very hard. "My prayers, aye, and my tears, are useless, save to incite such comments as "A beautiful sermon." He thought of the struggles he had had to find truths, and to give them vent in truthful words, he thought—and sighed again. "My very earnestness is made to recoil upon my head.” But it would never do to sit there all day, so he arose, descended the pulpit steps, re-entered the vestry,
removed his surplice, then unconscious of two bright eyes looking at him, knelt down on the bare floor, and uttered a short prayer for himself. There were tears of disappointment in his eyes, as he rose and stepped out into the open sunshine.

"Why uncle, Cupid have mercy. What is the cause of thy serious countenance?" exclaimed a sweet girlish voice, and a little neatly gloved hand was slipped through the old gentleman's arm.

"Nellie. Why, where's the gig?"

"I sent it home. It is such a lovely day that I wanted to be out of doors ever so long. Please don't walk quickly, uncle."

Mr. Remay looked down at the sweet face beside him, and thought of his wife's words, "Nole the child is not strong."

Something uneasy crept into his heart, and for his own peace of mind he dared not analyze it. He walked on in silence for a few minutes, hardly conscious of anything but the ring of those words, "The child is not strong."

"Well uncle," exclaimed Nellie, "You have not answered my question yet."

"Oh! Ah! Yes, yes! Why am I serious? I am grieved to find how hard are the hearts of men; how imperceptible to the pleadings of God." The melancholy tone so out of keeping with the circumstances around, and so different from the eager ringing ones of half an hour before, tickled Nellie's fancy, and she burst out laughing.

Mr. Remay, not seeing the joke, and having a suspicion that the mischievous girl was laughing at him, turned to chide, but, as was always the case, smiled.

"How do you know men's hearts are not touched, mon uncle?" asked Nellie, after she had recovered sufficiently to speak.
"You don't deserve to be told, my lady," laughed her uncle. Somehow or other he felt his old bright self coming back, and his despondency vanishing into the air. "By your fruits, ye shall know them, and I see none for all my labours."

"Vraiment! C'est tres 'etrange," answered Nellie in a tone of feigned astonishment. "A minister canna see nae fruit for a' his labour," and she laughed again, while a merry twinkle danced in her dark eyes. "Before I begin my lecture, uncle, I shall tell you something so funny, for I cannot talk to a man who has the blues. Last night I was standing just behind that tree by the church gate, waiting for you, when I saw two people come toward me, a lady and a gentleman. When they got nearly opposite, the lady dropped something, and the gentleman stooped to lift it. "Why dolly," said he, handing the lady her book, "What a pretty foot you have. I never knew a Kraitmar could boast of a small foot before." But just as he turned to resume his walk, and the girl turned with him, somehow they collided, and the pretty foot came in contact with his corns. "O uncle," and Nellie laughed, until she made her uncle laugh, and until the tears streamed down her cheeks. "O uncle, you should have seen that man dance, it would have competed with David's before the Ark. By the language, I concluded he was the girl's brother. The pretty foot was all the elephants, and clodhoppers, and maximums in Creation; and the girl, instead of going down on her knees and begging to be forgiven for having such big feet, burst out laughing." Two bright dark eyes shot a wicked glance at the grave elderly face. "There's the least bit of likeness between that man, and this. Because something has come in contact with your corns, uncle, you think it the horridest misfortune that ever befel you, and instead of it being a
very pretty foot, which it really is, you call it elephant, 
cholhopper,—efforts without effects,—labour without fruit." 
Nellie paused, and Mr. Renny spoke.

"Go ahead, little woman. Perhaps you will tell me 
next that you are a fruit. A jolly ripe one, by the by; my 
mouth is waiting for a' bite. Come, I've been talking all 
the morning; it's your turn."

"Well," with a toss of the little head, and a rebuke for 
is allusion to herself. "Well, I don't believe you know 
where to look fruit, nor that you would know fruit when 
you saw it," another thoughtful pause. "Uncle, I dearly 
love fairy tales, do you?"

"Yours I do."

"Ah! That's encouraging. Listen. Once upon a time 
in the nineteenth century, there lived an old gentleman. 
He was a very good old gentleman, and so kind, a real 
dear. Well, one day this good old gentleman went for a 
walk: before he set out, however, he had received a letter 
of commendation, and O! he was so proud. He did not 
expect this letter; in fact, at first he could not believe he 
deserved it. But then he remembered all his labours, and 
this, as I said before, made him very proud. As he walked 
along the road with his head bent, and his hands locked 
behind, he began to count over his collection of good 
works; presently he felt very thirsty. 'I should like some 
fruit,' mused this kind old gentleman. 'I deserve some, 
I am such a good man, you know.' From one side of 
the road to the other he crossed, up and down he looked, 
but no fruit obliged him by peeping out.

'Ha!' exclaimed he, spying a fir tree in the distance, 
'Fruit at last.' Everything else but his thirst was for-
gotten, even his precious letter of commendation. He 
peered about among the branches, he called for fruit, he 
shook the great tree, but lo, he was thirsty still. Suddenly
a drop of rain fell down the back of his neck, softening the beautifully starched collar, he glanced up the darkening sky. 'Bother! what a nuisance. I shall have to return, and 'There's no fruit for all my labour.' The poor old gentleman retraced his steps, and once more stood on his doorstep. His niece ran to meet him, and as per usual, he poured out all his trouble into her listening ears, and she, instead of weeping in sympathy, burst out laughing, and called her uncle a silly old dear.

'Did you expect to find fruit trees growing on the hard dusty road? Or could you tell fruit with those horrid green glasses over your eyes?' she cried, clapping her hands, and dancing around her uncle. 'Come in and wait until this shower is over, and then we shall go and get fruit.' They waited; the shower passed, the sunshine came out; the time to gather had come, and uncle and niece sallied forth.—Now listen—

"God bless me, I've been listening all the while. What is the girl driving at?"

"Stop swearing—listen." Mr. Remay bent forward, and held his hand to the back of his ear, a comical look in his kind grey eyes.

"Now uncle, I heard you say in church, the other Sunday, that it was unkind to pull out a watch and look at the time during the sermon." The hand dropped instantly.

"Listen—a third time—Where do you think they went? Out on the "Public declaration road?" No. Into the "Home orchard." Into the secluded life. Oh, what a surprise, what a glorious surprise. There were trees laden with ripe fruit. Golden peaches, with downy cheeks, Apples streaked, and shaded like the great red sunset. Grapes, Oh how those grapes clustered about, and hung
from their branches, as if they waited to drop into the visitors' mouths, and melt there."

"For goodness sake come to a point, and relieve my anxiety," interrupted Mr. Remay, "I shall make a bite and a melt."

"I am coming as fast as I can. (I forgot to tell you the old gentleman had left his spectacles at home this time). He put out his hand to gather, but the girl interfered. "Let us look at the labour, and then we shall understand, and appreciate the fruit. That ground, at a time unknown to mortal, had to be carefully surveyed; particular notice had to be taken of those places where the loose stones and rubbish lay. Then the surface had to be cleared; and the glaring and most conspicuous fault thorns had to be cut down. The ploughing began. Ah! that ploughing," Nellie shuddled, as if she were actually experiencing the sensation. "What pain to the flesh; how necessary to the spirit. Into every corner that sharp knife entered, laying bare to the sun the dying struggling roots of those fault thorns. In some parts the soil is rich and fertile, and requires little labour. In other parts it is rank and hard, and years of patient labour is required to make it fruitful. Now the land, which had once produced nothing but weeds and briers, becomes the fosterage of fruit bearing trees. The seeds of Love, which is 'Jesus' first love, of Joy, Peace, Long Suffering, Gentleness, Goodness, Faith, Meekness, Temperance, are sown; the ground is harrowed over, there is a short time of waiting, and then the rain comes. The precious rain of Sorrow. Life springs from the moistened ground: but life of two sorts. Among the fruit trees grow the deadly thorn shoots that are natural to the soil. Now the labour appears, being light but tedious—Plucking up the failings one by one. But the season draws near, the season of yielding, and
over every tree there is scattered an innumerable number of laughing blossoms. Ah! do not count the fruit by the blossoms, the blossoms of Visible Success: many flowers are imperfectly formed. Time is the nursling of all that is good: use time rightly. But when the petals fall, and the little ovaries are left, and the inexperienced eyes of the servants turn away, and cry, “All the bloom is gone, there will be no fruit,” the Great Husbandman smiles and watches and fertilizes the growing seed, and in his own hands and feet receives the biting frosts. At last the fruit is ripe, beautiful, perfect, strange. Here, take and eat—eat—eat. Fruit must not remain unused, else it will become objectionable. Eat, eat, of our choicest fruit. Thirst, hunger, weariness, flee at Faith’s refreshing draught, and beneath the shady boughs of Temperance the body shakes off the thralls of lust and pride, and the liberated soul soars upward, right into the presence of God.”

“There uncle, my fairy story is finished. It’s a complicated one, but I wanted to show you, you were looking for the wrong kind of fruit in the wrong place, and at the wrong time. The very tranquillity of your ministration should disclose the secret existence of fructuation; but,” and Nellie glanced archly at her single audience, “As a special favour, I shall tell you what was written in that letter of commendation. Mary Groves, after attending to your weekly service, found peace; she returned home, as you know, and was the means of guiding her own treasure to the hearts of her aged parents.”

She drew her arm out of her uncle’s, and ran lightly up the stairs, while Mr. Remay repaired to his study, and from thence to the dining-room.

“So, Nellie, you have been lecturing my husband,” exclaimed Mrs. Remay, as soon as that young lady made her appearance.
"Oh auntie, that husband of your's couldn't keep a secret to save his life. I never saw such a man."

"I am quite aware of his failings, my dear," laughed Mrs. Remay. "I have had to minister unto them these last twenty years. Were there many at church?"

"Not as many as usual, auntie. I can't understand people not coming to church in the morning. The services are just perfect. There is no artificial light inside, no darkness outside. The birds come singing around the doors, and peeping in the windows, and I am sure uncle preaches his best sermons in the morning."

Mrs. Remay's eyes danced mischievously, as she glanced across the table at her husband. "Nellie has a great deal to learn yet, hasn't she Nole? The extra number in the evening does not constitute the greater earnestness. It is often very convenient to have church to go to on Sunday evenings. I am afraid we used to find it so during our courtship, didn't we, my husband?"

"Only during our courtship, Mary? I think I remember a time when my little wife used to try and make her husband vain. She used to say how beautifully I preached in the evenings, and how proud she was of her wise husband."

"Ah!" with mock humility, "I have learned sense since. Indeed, I am beginning to think quite the opposite."

And so the gay repartee was kept up, until duty called the happy family their several ways, and then brought them together again after all was done. Why, think you, have we inserted these two chapters into our narrative? Because it is the key to our heroine's real life. The true and actual experiences of her inner being. She had lived through shadows, and understood them; she had walked along rays, and knew their power; she had seen flashes of Lights, and sought to see more; she had studied her heart-
orchard, and the heart-orchard of others, and recognised the perfect, and the sham, fruits. And above all, because we wish to let our reader know that, unfelt by herself and her friends, she had become the pivot on which the thoughts and actions of that Godly household revolved. Is that not a nobler and a higher sphere of labour and power, than is the foremost seat in political government; where, upon their faces, woman carry what is not within their hearts: where, in the study of words, the study of thoughts is neglected; where woman, instead of being a teacher, fails even to become a pupil. Perhaps these are old-fashioned arguments. "We women must rise and assert our rights." By all means, if we asserted our rights more often, we would not now be asserting men's rights; there would be no need for woman's signatures in the inferior law books—they (women) in themselves would be law enough. In our illustration, was not Nellie's vocation infinitely above that of her uncle? She could afford to sit in her pew, and smile at his success, while her uncle stood up in the pulpit, and spoke her thoughts; and then her strength being not overtaxed by exertion, she could minister to his despondency when the re-action of his earnest excitement threatened to break down the kindly spirit. Of course, there would have been a certain kind of pleasure in her occupying the pulpit, and in addressing a listening throng. Yet that is not the sweetest of cups, for it is one foreign to her womanly heritage. But perhaps after all, some women can be satisfied with less than can others. Popularity and celebrity are tempting cups, even though they may not be the richest and the greatest.
CHAPTER XXII.

READER do you remember a girl with whom you became acquainted at the commencement of our story? A girl with bowed head and bursting heart, yearning for rest, and a right knowledge of truth. We draw aside that hastily dropped curtain, and show her to you again. Do you recognise her? She is our Nellie, and the scene depicted was as she had almost gained the other side of one of the deepest and darkest valleys of remorse to be met with in this short life. You have been led past that door purposely, for we feared to frighten you at the outset with the sight of so much pain. The struggle, of which you have had but a faint glimpse, was a struggle of the soul. One power trying to gain mastery over the other. But the spirit of a beloved father, together with that of the aunt of her childhood's remembrance, kept watch, and Nellie's good angel conquered. Nor did the conflict cease, until it had wrought the much needed blessing, that of making the heart humble, and the thoughts more considerate toward its fellow travellers. Long and fierce had that battle been. What battle with the spirit is not? But it was nearly over now, and as Nellie added the last few touches to her picture of Bonsby, she felt as if she were reading the last few lines of that blood written document of Remorse. For some months past Mrs. Remay had often felt puzzled and anxious, concerning her niece's ill-health and apparent listlessness. She had suggested seeing a doctor, but Nellie had begged so hard to be left in peace, and Mr. Remay had taken her part when he saw her distress, that Mrs. Remay
had to give in. At times there would flash forth bright glowing lights, which revealed the spirit lying dormant, but then they would as suddenly vanish, and Nellie would again sink back into her old melancholy semi-torpid state.

Receiving word one day that her sister, accompanied by her little three-year-old daughter, was about to pay the Manse a visit, Mrs. Remay hailed the news as a good omen. "It will give Nellie something to amuse herself with," thought the kind old lady. "I wonder if she likes children." In due time the visitors arrived. At first Nellie seemed disposed to withdraw herself entirely from the family circle: but the winning persistency of the child, and the desire to appear amused, broke down the barrier of reserve, and let in the waters of communion.

"It is not often one gets the opportunity of becoming the audience, as well as chief actor in one's own life drama," she mused, as she brushed back her shining hair, and looked at herself in the large oval glass. "But here is an existing instance. I am acting the part of an entertained and amused character, while at the same time I am watching the effect my acting produces on the other actors. It's really interesting. I wonder if someone else is watching the whole performance, mine included, and is chuckling over our unlooked for conclusion. There is such a thing as turning "From jest to earnest." Her surmises were not altogether impracticable.

Among Nellie's many fads, there was one she held in special favour—the sacredness, almost reverence, with which she regarded her boudoir. Unless by special permission, which was never given, no one but herself entered. Even the servants were debarred. The only times they attempted to "Beard the lion in his den," was during spring and autumn cleaning, and then all relics and paraphernalia were carefully put out of sight, until the important task was finished. A little escritoire, perpetually locked, mystified the
servants, "But then young ladies always collect such a lot of rubbish," and the little article received an impatient push.

Yet strange to say, little girls do not always understand the meaning of forbidden ground; consequently, we have seen the result as it appeared in the opening chapter of this book.

Mrs. Uregn's brief holiday came to an end, and she returned home, taking little Essie with her. God bless the little one, her work has been accomplished, crowned, and she returns to take up another in her baby fingers, and in unconsciousness, to teach of "The Kingdom of God." And in the forsaken sphere—what though the material form be removed, the inspirations aroused by that intercourse are left; left not to become dull and ineffective by familiarity, which is the undoubted result of all materiality, but left to become more brilliant, more impressive, more superbly real.

Inspirations real? To be inspired, is to be animated supernaturally. How can a material form, especially the material form of a child, arouse in another material form, inspirations, infusions beyond the laws of nature? And in this matter-of-fact world, what do we want with knowledge of things beyond the laws of nature? Nature is quiet deep enough in itself; the world affords sufficient scope for any sensible man's intellect. Inspirations will not feed the body, and clothe the limbs. The world is a material, and we will keep to our materialism. There is no dearth of religion in our midst, do we not bow in reverence before Plutus (Gold), and Jupiter (Influence), and as visible examples of our creed, look at us. We are like the sunset in our golden coloured prosperity, in the freedom of our earth proximity, and in our intoxicating power.

O, sweetest innocent spirit of a child, hover around, and make thyself known and felt. Here is a broken toy, a torn picture, the marks of tiny fingers. Ah! here is something else, a piece of paper all blotted and scratched and scribbled;
a piece of paper, the pattern of which is completed according to the design of the little baby worker. We do not picture thy material form, little Essie, when we handle thy mementos, but we feel with the supernatural in our natural thy supernatural in thy natural. And this supernatural in thy natural, which combines with the supernatural in ours, is this supernatural, inspiration? Tell us, O child, for thou art fresh from the land of inspiration, and the odours of its sunshine linger about thee still. Verily no, lisps the baby teacher, though both are real and elevating, yet there is a difference between the soul's affinity, and the soul's inspiration; for affinity, like the refreshing dew, is formed on earth, inspiration like the light, originates in Heaven. Affinity eases the soul in the night of sorrow, earthly sorrow, sorrow caused by natural affliction; Inspiration is above all natural confines, beyond all limited seasons. Before the world it was, during the world it is, and after the world it will be; therefore, mortality has no power over it. It is the instrument of God. Like the Light, of which it is a similar, it darts down upon the soul; it forces open the cold calculating petals; it kisses with its rosy lips the centre of all that is real; and in the sudden bursting of life's testa, sheds its aromatic perfume throughout the whole universe.—Inspiration will not feed us.—Dare we live on such costly diet. Diet that can be digested only by the Spirits and Angels. No, when the fruit is ripe we will pass away, and the ripe inspiration we leave with you, my worldly brother. It is what the inspired have done in ages past. Their works did not live, until they were gone. It is what the inspired expect, and look forward to during their earthly career. To the materialist, affinity is more legible, but through its teaching, consanguinity may be made plain. Still I venture to suggest that the rudiments of the Great Consanguinity is, that inspiration is a real not beyond the laws of nature. God is the great Law of Nature,
and nothing is beyond Him. One thought yet remains. Our beautiful sunset! That you should be likened to the modern materialist; the prosperous man who goes to church, who rests on Sundays, who says his grace, and who worships himself. Your gorgeous colours his prosperity; your proximity to earth, his freedom; and your influence, his power. For once in self-defence we must abandon you, visitant of the West. Prosperity may put on her resplendent robes of crimson and gold; but patience waits for her Lord to crown her with the everlasting diadem of blue. Earth’s proximity leads to earth’s liberty, but Divine Animation carries beyond the earth, through sunsets, into the Fountain of Freedom. And power, sunset’s power, the influence of which intoxicates while it lasts, has its limited time, and its limited sphere. Beyond, above, we see the deep enduring blue. Calm, noble, distant. Let the dark clouds of fury pass over its surface. Let the lightning of ridicule and scorn rend the air beneath, let the thunder of misunderstanding follow; what cares it for them. Proudly the inspired prophet towers above all, conscious that in the end he shall win. Oh! when we think of the blessedness of Inspiration, we wonder why men prefer to stumble along through life, guided and tyrannized over by cold calculation and animal instinct. And then the end—the “It is finished”—the action we embrace even in the womb. In the one case, that end is complete, and we follow the completer; in the other case that end you try to fashion for yourself, subsequently the result is that of the blind leading the blind—Failure.

Will God look upon our irregular illegible, yet completed life, with the same tenderness and partiality with which we regarded the work of that child? “As high as the Heavens are above the earth, so much higher are God’s thoughts above our thoughts.” If then our feelings toward those we love are but faint breaths of what God’s feelings are toward us,
what must be their extent? No wonder the human heart has to give up the attempt at measuring, and cry, "Unfathomable," "Immeasurable," "Wonderful Love of God." Pshaw! away with such petty things as failings, irregularities, even sins, they are all swallowed up in the great absorbing I—the I that can wipe out the blood stains of this world's Cains, and even Judases—the I that falls short at only the hardened hypocrite, or the devil "Don't care."

And these are the thoughts which were awakened by a lisping, "I's finished my lessons;" by the glimpse of a soiled and crumpled piece of paper. 'Tis well, O baby dear, that thou art gone, else in our continual intercourse, we would become as Gods, to suffer the degradation of devils; for in the flesh and in the spirit there is but one God, and one Truth. One great voice to speak through the lips of an ass; to draw near in the shape of a little child; and to melt the frozen heart, and let the warm life blood surge through the comatose veins. Essie, little innocent Essie, showed Nellie, that having repeated, therefore forgotten.

Mrs. Remay was a little upset by her sister's departure, consequently Nellie had an extra quantity of parish work to see to. She was out nearly the whole day for the first week, and being tired in the evening, went to bed early. With the exception of giving instructions, and hearing verdicts, aunt and niece seldom conversed together. The house seemed so dreary, so desolate, without those tiny pattering feet, that simple treble. Nellie missed Essie more than anyone could have imagined, and all her old longing for childish sympathy returned. And Mrs. Remay mourned her sister's departure, not knowing if they two would ever meet on earth again. The thousand forgotten little incidents of her girlhood returned to her remembrance, the parents being long ago dead, the twin sister, and their twain enjoyments; all caused the tears, which had never before flowed for her home land,
to course down her faded cheeks, caused the patriotic spirit to heave and swell in the kind bosom. She would never see dear old Scotland again, indeed, she did not wish to go back, but she could weep for the days that were past, without infringing upon the dues of the present. Toward the end of the week, however, things seemed to have got back into their ordinary groove. The house echoed less desolately. Mrs. Remay returned to the dining-room, and for the first time, since their visitor's departure, resumed her accustomed place. She seemed a little ashamed of her weakness, and had Nellie been there, would have apologised for laying so much work on the young girl's shoulders. Presently Nellie's light footsteps came tripping along the passage, and Nellie herself appeared.

"It's so nice to see you in your old place again, auntie," said she, throwing herself on the couch, and smiling her old bright smile.

"You have missed me, dear! How is Mrs. Dunn?"

"Better auntie, much better, and longing to catch a glimpse of your little hooded gig again. She declares it just seems as if you were dead."

"I have been selfish."

There was a few minute's silence. Mrs. Remay, glancing up, was struck by the peculiar expression on Nellie's face. It was as placid as usual, as full of sweet thoughtfulness, but there was a strange burning brilliancy beneath the surface of those motionless features, a new expression filched from the guardian angel. "I am thankful these are not the days of Christian persecution," thought Mrs. Remay. "Yet, why be thankful? There is room in Heaven for many Stephens." Magnetism is a property not confined to steel; the drooping lids lifted, their eyes met. Nellie sprang to her feet, and crossing the hearth, stood before her aunt, the tiniest suspicion of a blush upon her cheeks.
"I have caused you a great deal of anxiety lately, have I not, auntie?"

"Yes child." Two words, but what an ocean of tenderness they enclosed, what a world of solicitude they expressed. Nellie stooped to kiss the gentle utterer, but checked herself, and drawing back, exclaimed: "Not yet. Hear my confession first, and then if you think me worthy of your affection, Oh, auntie, give it to me without reserve. My heart is breaking for perfect confidence. This half-and-half state of being is killing me. I will lay open my heart to-night, perhaps, when you know how deeply I have repented, you will give my trust one more trial."

The long-wished-for hour had come at last. The spell was broken, and through the rent, the prayer caught a glimpse of prayer's effect upon the prayed for. Mrs. Remay had guessed there was something on the girl's mind, but being a sensible woman, and consulting Nellie's feelings, rather than her own inquisitiveness, had refrained from asking for the struggler's confidence. She was one of those rare women who prayed much, but preached little. Putting down her knitting, and half turning toward her niece, she said, in her gentle way:

"Confession. That word implies transgression. What sin have you been guilty of, Nellie?"

"The blackest that can ever be committed by mortal to mortal."

"It must, indeed, have been terrible," answered Mrs. Remay, with an amused smile. She had not studied Nellie's character without success; and she well understood her tendency of using the hardest of names for wrong doings.

"You are laughing, auntie. Why do you do so when I am in such dead earnest," said Nellie in a slightly peevish tone. "Surely you are not as blind as the rest. Because I have a stupidly childish face, detestable winning manners, people think me incapable of doing wrong. What greater
wrong can earth boast of than that of murder, and yet
I am guilty of that heinous crime."

Mrs. Remay almost upset her chair in her astonishment.

"Good gracious child. Do you know what you are
saying?" exclaimed she, and her horrified face, and startled
tone, awoke Nellie to her senses. Her lip curled sarcastically,
and her eyes flashed.

"I did not take the material knife, and strike the
material body. No my crime was too carefully planned to
allow a loop-hole for earthly punishment. The accuser knew
that the gleam of a knife would lose him his cause. Arch
liar that he is. Even the suspicion of worldliness he cleverly
concealed behind self-preservation. What a useful screen in
Satan's hands becomes that text, 'Be ye separate.' Man, I
know, would hold up his finger, and say, 'Hush! not so have
you acted;' but God says, 'Whoso is angered without a
cause, the same is already a murderer.' And who is our
judge but God?"

"Murder too strong a word to use? Then let it be man-
slaughter. Too strong still? Well, heart-breaking, will that
do? We will leave it at that. Yes, aunt, I broke my
father's heart." Nellie leaned against the mantel, and
trembled a little. The utterance of those strange words had
brought back afresh a flood of wild wilful memories.

After the first shock had passed, Mrs. Remay sank back
in her chair, and sat perfectly still, her face hidden in her
hand. A chaos of doubt and wonder seemed to fill her
mind, and entangle in an opaque net, all her previous
surmises.

She had received a hint regarding the tiny romantic
episode in Nellie's life, which was so unromantic as to cause
the separation of the lovers; but not knowing the whole of
the circumstances, drew her own conclusions, believing in her
kind motherly way, she had obtained possession of the key to that hungering, pathetic look on her niece's pale sad face,

"And her beautiful dream of happiness. It was really too bad. What a sweet wedding, what a happy reconciled bride and bridegroom. What pictures of splendid wedding break-
fasts to be partaken in the dear homely manse. It was a disappointment to have all these simple pleasures thrown to the winds. Her father's death after all was the cause of Nellie's strange silent suffering. She could hardly believe it possible." As the young girl paused after her first explosion of words, Mrs. Remay took occasion to remark that she had heard from reliable authority how devotedly she (Nellie) had attended to her father's wants during his last severe illness. It was an ill-directed shaft, and it hit on a very tender part of Nellie's conscience. She smiled bitterly, and the shades deepened in her proud eyes. Memory is a very delicate faculty to deal with, and people should be careful how they deal with it: more especially if they wish to comfort the sorrowing one. In his time of need, a genuine giver derives no comfort from the constant reminding of friends, of the many gifts and bounties he has bestowed upon his fellow men. Nay, rather, in many cases it increases his agitation, and gives him a feeling of awkwardness in the presence of others. But when the giver feels himself undeserving the title "genuine," unworthy of the office of "Giver," let the heart understand the twofold folly of seeking to comfort by recollections. In such a case, if left to itself, memory generally manages to run in a course so deep down in the heart as to make its effect imperceptible to every-day cir-
cumstances; but probe it with a mistaken goad—like an infuriated whale it makes one mad plunge into the deeper depths of the past, then rushing to the surface in the suddenness of its pain, it pours forth from its reeking wound, blood torrents of truth; while at the same time breathes into itself the soothing air of satisfaction.
"Devotedly attended to my father's wants, during his last severe illness," said Nellie in her icy calm. "You need not have reminded me of that last part of my offence, aunt. I would have come to it soon enough. You wonder how devotion (daughterly devotion) could be called offence. I will tell you. By placing it among the wonders of life. Oh! it is a wonderful thing to see a daughter attend to the wants of a suffering father, lose a few paltry night's rest in endeavouring to ease his dying agonies. More wonderful still for that daughter to be so puffed up with self-conceited righteousness, as to forget all the anxiety, care, and love, with which that father guarded his child during her young and helpless years. Forgotten, were the many times the father became the nurse; the weak maiden, the invalid. And once, not many years back, when the dread typhoid fever had thrown its deadly arms around the trembling girl, and had dragged her to the very brink of the grave, that father, by his tireless devotion, his indefatigable love, had, in the face of all the doctors, thrown himself into the breach, and brought his child back—to what? To grudge him a little attention in his own time of need. Yes. All these were forgotten by that wonderfully devoted ungrateful daughter. When I think of it all, I am surprised that father did not rise in his bed, and hurl back into my face, the soft snake-like attention I paid to his poor pain-distorted body. But he was grateful, humbly grateful, as if I, who was being honoured, was honouring him. I agree with the rest of the world, only in a very different sense, 'That my devoted attention to my father, during his last illness, will reap its well-merited reward.'"

"I think, my dear," broke in Mrs. Remay mildly, "You are a little hard on yourself."

"Have I departed from the strict truth, auntie?" demanded Nellie, with kindling eyes. "Tell me! in
every syllable I have uttered, is there the faintest suspicion of falsehood?"

"No, no, child. But children cannot be expected to have the same regard for affection as have their parents."

Nellie laughed, almost hysterically. "Does it need experience to teach gratitude? Does it require the breath of time to give the heart an understanding into the promptings of love? A child will kiss its mother for the gift of a toy. Was that manifestation incited by no deeper feeling than that of selfish pleasure? Methinks the kiss would freeze upon its little lips. The instinct within that child perceives the kindred instinct within its parent, and in this recognition, the child returns the affection by the best means nature has given for that purpose. We are too wise by far, auntie, when we get into our teens; we want some children to shame us back into the true knowledge of ourselves."

There was another pause; a little trifling; then:

"How deceitfully harmless, how beautifully ornamented, is the first step in the wrong path," resumed Nellie in a tender dreamy tone, as if she were conversing with some ethereal listener, and of things far off in ethereal space.

"I verily believe the beginning of my failure had its origin in the heart of my Christian triumph. It seems incredible that the embryo of sin should remain unperceived, and unperceived should grow, in a heart reeking and satiated with the profound depths of Divine Love. Yet, there it was, and there it grew, more exuberant in its growth perhaps, being so carefully shaded by intellectual strife. Yes! in those lonely hours, when I was striving to walk on a higher plain than that of the ordinary work girl, when I was cutting for myself a groove through the thick maze of our solid English literature, I was nursing a wicked distaste of my father's affection. "I was saved,
(How almost hateful those words have grown to me). He was not. Therefore, I was separate, and above him." I wonder if God ever laughs in mockery. I fancy he had just cause to do so, when he looked at me, seated in that abominable judgment seat, and spurning my father's love. My conscience warned me of my impostureship, my heart showed me the cares of pecuniary matters, of physical weakness, (God pointed to the law, of the "Sick needing the physician;" but all were waved aside; and in my coldness I continued to traverse my declining path. My father, divining my thoughts, grew stern; yet often languished, and opening his arms, would seek to fold me to his breast. But my casement of hauteur was too strongly fortified, I repulsed his every advance, and day by day we grew further and further apart. God saw it all: like the boundary of land and sea, He laid his hand upon us, and said, "So far shalt thou go, but no further." I awoke from my sleep. Oh, God! What was it that lay across the awful chasm? An equally awful bridge. Death, dark death, span the gaping gloomy abyss. I put up my feeble hands and tried to shut out that hideous sight, but the demons mocked my efforts, and their elfish faces peeped and dodged between my remorseful fingers. "Ha, ha!" they cried. "We have you now, we will hold you fast. You have followed us so far of your own free will, by the cords of sin, you are bound to us." They danced, and hissed, and, O how they tugged, and tried to draw me away from that bridge, and along the wide tempting way of Indifference; then, as I hesitated, as I shuddering drew back from their alluring embraces, a voice, soft, low and pleading, whispered in my ear, "Cross over." I flung myself on my knees, and cried, "Show me, O show me some other way. Let not my sins be visited upon my father's head. Give me time, restore him health, even if it be but for a few days, and I shall prophecy in Thy name.

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and not in mine own." But the spirit raised its hand; the elfine host ceased tugging, yet continued to dance around, as if in anticipation of my accompanying them.

Pointing to the dark abyss, with its awful bridge, the same low voice continued. "Over that bridge you must pass. For one bought with such a price, loved so dearly, necessity demands this deliverance from destruction. Blame not fate, or thy destiny, because thou art in this plight. Hast thou not been warned, pleaded with, enticed, nay even mine enemy I have suffered to cross your track, that you might be filled with fear, and flee from the error of your ways? But to all, you have turned a deaf ear. As necessity demands deliverance, justice forbids any other way. But be not overwhelmed, others have had the same painful encounters before you. Death is ever the bridge thrown across the chasm of wilful disobedience, leading the penitent back to the confidence of God. The staircase by which the angels ascended to God, and descended to man, was the martyred body of their Lord. Thus mercy softens justice by taking away its sharpest sting. Ye are not alone." The extended hand fell; it rested upon my bowed head; it played with my loose locks, the slightest tremour shook the tender voice. Pass over, I will be with you. I am thy strength, and thy exceeding great reward. Fear not, I will never forsake you." I rose from my knees, I put my hand into that fondling one, I look up to the face of my Spiritual Presence. I recognised my Lord. The same wistful tenderness shone in his smiling eyes; the same radiant light bid all else from my mortal vision. I rose, and stepped to the bridge, encouraged there by the last yearning look of my broken-hearted father. At my sudden movement the elfine host set up a dismal howl, and fled to their habitual abode in the bottomless pit of my being. The full meaning of that last look, I have not yet fathomed, it still haunts me, as if
there remains a desire unfulfilled. In yon Glory Land, where he has gone, perhaps there, and not here, we, father and I, shall know as we are known. I have walked the whole length of that dark and weary way—the way every penitent sinner must walk, if he wish to be restored to his office of trust; for it is not enough that we know we are forgiven, we must work out our own repentance, and prove that we can be trusted. My feet have often been torn and crushed by the terrible gaps and the sharp-edged rocks; and on the meteoric slabs are the red stains of my bleeding wounds; but I have reached the other side in safety. For the sake of Him, who walked beside me, who cheered and encouraged me onward, who mingled His hallowed tears with my filthy ones, whose light from His brow lit up the gloom, and kept me from straying off the bridge and falling into the abyss; for his sake God has restored me to his favour, and once more entrusted me with the lamp of His love." Nellie fell down on her knees, and buried her head in her aunt's bosom. "O auntie, I am holding that lamp up to the world once more," she sobbed, her tears falling thick and fast, and her whole frame quivering with the force of her inward emotions. "But I tremble so. My lesson was a terrible one. As long as I live I shall remember it as a hideous nightmare, the awakening from which revealed the golden day. It shall keep me humble before my God. Aunt, I have crossed, and now by your side I stand." Nellie lifted her eyes, and looked at her aunt. "A fresh means of happiness stretches along my path. Will you trust me with your love, fully freely given; remember how I treated my own father's. Until I had confessed, I dared not wish for your love unstrained; honour forbade me cast myself at your feet."

Mrs. Remay's tears flowed freely. She clasped the girl to her heart, and she kissed her again and again. Her
speech became choked, and she could only frame loving endearing expressions.

"You are not afraid to trust me, dearest auntie," whispered Nellie fondly, as she nestled into the loving encircling arms. "I shall try to be good. I shall do everything 'For father's sake.'"

"My noble, noble Eliny," answered Mrs. Remay. "I trusted you long ago, even when I did not understand you."

"Aunt," said Nellie, after a sweet silence, full of tender thoughts. "Aunt I feel that everything I do and say now, both within my heart, in your home, and in the homes we visit, everything, even my hastening toward Heaven, must be done "For father's sake." I knelt before that new made grave in the well-filled cemetery at Bonsby, the day before I came away, and prayed that a fitting stone might be raised to his memory. Aunt, do you think I shall ever be the shadow of his monument?" Wistful eyes were turned toward the petitioned, a yearning heart beat quickly, hopefully.

"If you unite the Heavenly with the earthly, and labour 'For both fathers' sakes,'" answered Mrs. Remay softly.

"I will."

Pray, O reader, that you may see, in these simple pages, the living monument of a once alive, then dead, now alive again, father. Pray that in your lives may be felt the effect of that journey over the bridge of a father's death. Then, in the great final of at least one life, earthly sojourn life, the I will, will be changed into I have, and the effect will be I am. Thus, on an untrodden but fair and promising path, we leave for a time our friends, who hand in hand, and without the shadow of a cloud between them, traverse their happy cheerful way, making bright the road for many a fellow passenger.
CHAPTER XXIII.

WONDER if Nellie will ever come back to Bonsby, father?"

"I am afraid not. The girl had a rough time of it here, and I do not blame her for not wishing to come back. What has set you thinking, old woman?"

"I hardly know, Presentiment maybe. I always have declared, and always will declare that I do not believe half the tales that were told about Nellie. She is not a girl to act in direct opposition to everyone's wishes unless she had just cause, and I have faith in her character to rely on that cause being consistent with her firm, inflexible sense of right. To my mind her silence has a deeper meaning than that generally understood. She is just one to screen others by letting suspicion rest upon herself. I shall never forget one time when she said, in that strange way of hers which so few interpret aright, 'I consider nothing too great a sacrifice for the prevention of family failings exposure. Nothing short of honour. Indeed, in many cases it should not be looked upon as a sacrifice, but as a sacred duty.' A girl with such a creed as that, although in little danger of adding to those family failings, stands on the very border of a mistaken regard for duty toward families and society at large. Besides, all those whispers concerning money troubles are not without foundation, and you and I well know Nellie's aversion for what she calls 'the Devil's right-hand man.'"

"'The Devil's Man Friday,'" corrected Mr. Alen, with his knowing smile. "'You were always Nellie's steadfast
champion, mother. I hope your confidence will never be shaken."

"It shall not. Nellie herself could not shake my confidence in her. I don't always build my convictions on reason—human reasoning, I mean. I am going to ask Amelia to write—no, I shall write myself, and Amelia can send my letter to her."

"And what are you going to write about, Mrs. Polly?"

"Nellie promised to come to me if ever I needed her. I feel my days are nearly numbered, and I would like to have the child about me at the last."

"What nonsense you talk!" exclaimed Mr. Alen angrily,

"Your days numbered! Why, you are as strong, if not stronger, than I."

"The heart knows its own weakness, father," quietly answered Mrs. Alen, laying her hand a moment on her husband's old grey head as she passed out of the room.

"Polly certainly does not look well," muttered the old gentleman to himself, "I shall go into town to-morrow. Perhaps Amelia will have a spare corner in her home for her old mother-in-law until this melancholy darkness is frightened away. Poor old Poll!" Musing thus, he took his way back to his sheep. And Mrs. Alen, while she tended to her flowers, and cooned over her chickens and birdies, let her mind wander whither it would. Childhood, girlhood, womanhood, parents, children, friends, all arrayed themselves in an even line, and passed before her fading thoughts. Was it possible that she, who had roamed the wide, mutable world, was about to pass away in this remote, desolate spot. And then that death, or vision of death, so long ago, when with hungering eyes she had gazed down into the newly-dug grave, and called to the red, worm-riddled earth to cover her. Between now and then, what lay? Had she caused God to feel pleased He had not cut
her off then? She could think of nothing done. Hers was a commonplace life. There may be plenty left undone; but her mind was too tired to think. She only knew she was glad she had lived; thankful for all that was past; hopeful for all that was to come. Yet she would not ask her life again. She was tired; had lost taste for the world, pleasant and beautiful as it was. Seventy, sixty—indeed fifty years of sojourn here should satisfy the soul. She would not care to take with her wizened, wrinkled face. Would Eva—if she had been called to Heaven first—would she know again the ungrateful woman of her former kindness?" Then the vision of a sweet face, with dark planetary eyes, floated before her mind, and seemed to put everything in order. She turned toward her writing-paper and pen, and wrote her message to the truant one: "Come back; I am in need of thee." And the next day, when the first streaks of dawn painted themselves across the eastern sky, Mr. Alen, mounted on his old white horse, which he had named after his wife, and flourishing his crooked stick, rode into town bearing the sacred message.

"Come and talk to grandpapa, my baby, while mother makes the tea, and then we shall go over and see baby's other grandmamma." Baby did as she was told, which was a wonder, for I do not know whether all babies are like this one, but little baby Alen lorded and tyrannized over Grandpapa Alen, and strange to say, Grandpapa Alen liked to be lorded and tyrannized over. So, while the grey-haired old man danced the fair-haired little child on his knee, they cooned and crowed to one another; the rugged tones of the old blending in pleasing harmony with the soft, inarticulate accents of the young.

"I know mother has not heard from her for some time," said Mrs. Alen as she and her father-in-law set out on their visit to the Main household; "still she will be able to tell
you more than I can. Nellie wrote once since she left, but only to say she was well, and did not wish to be reminded of Bonsby. We concluded she did not care for our correspondence, and therefore wrote no more."

"How long has she been away?"

"About eight months or more, I really forget."

"It is strange she should have gone away so suddenly, and that she should seek to sever herself from her former life."

"It is stupid, madness; I don't understand her, neither does any one else to my thinking. She is the first of our family to leave home, and I should have thought she would have been the last. We are all displeased and disappointed."

"Well, well, she is a rare good little lassie, and there is no fear but that she knows what's best for her. Common clay dare not presume to know the why's and wherefore's of costly china."

"But common clay, as you call us, expect a little consideration."

"Maybe we got it, but did not understand, nor treat it aright. I am sweer to lay doon the law for onybodie, knowing, as I ken, my own lack o' judgment."

"I cannot see where Nellie can be different, nor that she should be treated differently, to anyone else of the family."

"Ah! lassie, no one knows what's in the heart o' t'other. Maybe she has a different course to run, than most young women have. Not but that yer on an equal footing, yet mony a lassie 'ill be wrecked on sunken rocks, others 'ill pass by unperceived."

Mrs. Main's residence stood remote from the surrounding neighbourhood, at the farthest extremity of the town; whither they had moved immediately after Mr. Main's death. It was a pretty little place, almost enclosed by
evergreen trees, and box thorn hedges; and the vacant sections, which stretched around it on every side, gave the home a look of comfort and seclusion. It was well for Mrs. Main, and her family’s peace of mind, that they were thus debarred from too close an intimacy with their neighbours; for where there is a large family of healthy mischievous children, there is not much likelihood of ever having a quaker’s meeting. But when the wayward juveniles were the possessors of sound lungs and wiry limbs; and when they laughed at restraint, until you were compelled, by their genuine happy mirth, to join in the laugh against yourself; and when they would coolly tell you in their saucy innocent way, that since grown up people were not always happy and wise, they intended to remain children as long as they could, so as to be able to say they had once been happy and wise; and when they would dance round, and laughingly defy you; and when you remembered that after all it was all innocent fun, and that they were orphans, the younger ones would never know a father’s love, never see a father’s face, save in the unlike likeness of a portrait, save in the priceless, “that’s father;” when all these things, and many more were taken into consideration, how could the neighbours expect but that the little Main’s would be spoilt, and noisy, and full of mischievous pranks.

The few minute’s silence after Mr. Allen’s kind defence of the absent one, was occupied by turning the corner which brought the visitors in direct view of the home. Suddenly a terrific noise, like the sound of thunder, came rolling toward them. They stopped and listened. The noise increased. “Good Heavens! What can be the matter?” Then a thick black line of smoke arose from among the trees, and began curling its way upward toward the sky. The noise became deafening.
"Quick father. The place is on fire," cried Mrs. Alen, snatching up her child, and setting off toward the house at full speed. "Mother is out, and the children have been up to mischief."

They hurried along, their fears increasing with every increasing volume of sound. The poor old gentleman for once forgot his sore foot, and hobbled along with the air of a veteran soldier. And the mother almost crushed to death "her wee baby," as she hugged it to her trembling breast, and sped on. After what seemed to them an indefinite length of time, the gate was reached. There were no signs of commotion at the front, but then the back was a good way off, and the fire might not have gained much of a hold. So rushing over neat flower-beds, stamping down Mrs. Main's choice hyacinths, and upsetting several pots of fuchsias, they reached the back door; when, lo!—

Mrs. Alen sank down on a bench, Mr. Alen collapsed. Mrs. Alen gasped for breath, Mr. Alen gasped too. Mr. and Mrs. Alen both choked with laughter and relief; and little baby Alen broke away from her mother's arms, and joined her juvenile aunts.

Around the wide kitchen door was gathered a crowd of children, indeed all the children of the immediate neighbourhood seemed to have been invited "To play in their backyard." Each child was furnished with a large tin dish of any conceivable description, and a stick almost as big as themselves; and all were beating away with the lusty goodwill of children; their round happy faces, the personification of mischievous glee. When the noise had subsided a little, and when Mrs. Alen had recovered her breath sufficiently to speak, she asked what they were doing.

"Tin-canning a wedding. We want some cake," uttered a chorus of laughing voices, and then the noise renewed.
Finding it impossible to be heard in such a clamour, Mrs. Alen seized hold of Edie, a little girl of ten, with rosy cheeks and blue eyes, and with a voice as pleasing and merry as the dimples playing about her shell-like face.

"What's all this noise about?" asked she, shaking the child to remind her who spoke.

"We married Milton to Laura's doll," laughed the little girl; "James' room was the church. Pemmy became minister; Stewartie acted as horse and carriage; and I drove the bride and bridegroom home. That is the kitchen. Now we are waiting for the wine and cake. We are the larrikins." The child broke from her sister's hold, and joined the noisy, shouting throng. Suddenly the noise ceased, a moment's pause, then down went every tin-can and stick, and a shriek of laughter rent the air, while the little people began to dance around and clap their hands. There in the doorway stood the little two-year-old Milton, with his doll-bride in his arms. What with the uncommon character of the youthful sport, the pleasure it afforded the mischievous actors, the sober face of the bridegroom, with his equally soberfaced bride in his arms, and the striking likeness between this wedding and a genuine one—for all were dressed after the manner of the office in which they severally officiated—no human being could fail to be tickled by the whole scene, and Mrs. Alen burst out laughing—Mr. Alen had been laughing all the while. One, however, did not share in the mirth. Perhaps the subject touched too near home. Little Laura, seeing the too affectionate embrace with which the husband held his wife, grew fearful of the result. Pushing forward, she attempted to tear the bride from the arms of the bridegroom. Such an outrage was not to be tolerated. The young husband bent forward to make a ferocious attempt at defence, when—oh, horror of horrors!—he mistook his antagonist, and bit the nose off
his bride. Poor Laura set up a dismal wail, and became chief mourner of that sympathizing group, and the youthful wedding party adjourned to the garden to discuss the possibility of restoring to the disfigured bride, her lost beauty.

"It is time we adjourned too," exclaimed Mrs. Alen, leading the way inside, followed by Mr. Alen still in a state of general collapse, and vehemently declaring he would purchase, that very day for the little sorrowing one, "the handsomest doll in the town."

Mrs. Main was out, but expected back every minute, and the cause of that dark line of smoke was through some peculiar leaves being thrown on the fire. They had not long to wait; soon Mrs. Main returned. She willingly promised to address the letter, and along with another very important one, she and her family had just received, to send it to her truant daughter. For the remainder of the afternoon she was entertained and amused by graphic descriptions of her youngest son's marriage, and she laughingly told him he would not always "bear his blushing honour so nicely." It is needless to say that only a very slight hint of this circumstance was needed to incite a smile to the faces of the Main household whenever they were discussing the wedding subject. Mr. Alen returned to his home and his wife, and with the rest, awaited the issue of their message.
CHAPTER XXIV.

In one of the suburban towns of Bonsby, and standing on a picturesque elevation, is a large dwelling-house. The suburb itself is by no means small or poor. The houses are all neat and well kept, and each home, be it ever so small, has its little flower-garden. It is one of the healthiest localities, and being of modern subdivision, boasted of modern architecture and improvements, and what is still more advantageous, of a thrifty, industrious class of people. It was not aristocratic; oh, no, this little suburban town of Bonsby was not aristocratic—neither blue-blood aristocratic nor millionaire aristocratic—it gloried in no sumptuous abodes, no rambling old buildings with wild, luxuriant wilderness of gardens; but it bespoke more of the habitation of the ordinary man, taking upon itself no airs, no wish to be other than it was—a peaceful home for humble man. The house we have particularized—or rather, it has itself particularized to us—was one of the most conspicuous of that and the surrounding districts; and was always the guiding star to uncertain travellers, being the centre from which all directions diverted. This celebrity was due not so much to its size as to its elevation, and the peculiar structure of its well-built walls, with the old-fashioned mode of laying out the grounds. To add to its significations, the bridge which united the suburban town to the main, span the river not many yards from the side entrance. Consequently it was the first house that would catch your eye as you entered that district. It was
also, by reason of its elevation, the mischievous object you
would see peeping at you through every conceivable opening
of trees and shops as you passed up and down the main street
of Bonsby. The grounds were laid out in hexagon-shaped
allotments, consisting of flowers, shrubs, and other minor
adorments. A strip of beautiful green grass fringed the
western border; and around the whole was a well-kept
hedge of stunted trees. The main entrance faced the river,
which was toward the west; and there being little or no
bank to the river, the ground sloped away almost on a level
with its waters. At one corner of the garden stood a boat-
house, wreathed with ivy and vine; and when the tide was
full, you had but to open the door, step into the boat, and
you would find yourself floating gently over the shining
stream. The house itself was of a hexagon shape, the
regularity of its boundary lines being broken only where
the two pillars, which stood opposite each other, projected a
little beyond the hall door, thus forming a pleasing and
picturesque support for the arched-like canopy, that pro-
tected the interior of the hall from the rich blaze of the
setting sun. Other entrances faced opposite directions,
and smiled down upon their own gravelled paths. The
house was well furnished—almost luxuriantly. The soft
carpets, the polished mahogany tables, and carved back
chairs, the shining mirrors, and the numerous assortment
of quaint nick-nacks, all spoke of refinement and taste,
slightly scumbled with extravagance.

Mr. West was a clerk in a government situation, at that
time receiving good pay. By his diligence, and his miserly
regard for those precious fragments of time outside his
business hours, he had succeeded in making his home,
what it was—the diamond of the district. In himself he
was a plain homely man of humble, but refined pretensions;
yet there was a weary air, half melancholy, half bitter,
about him, which made you wonder, as if at one time of his life, he had aimed at something, and missed his mark. Still it was only at times these lines of disappointment appeared; ordinarily, he was a cheerful affable man, genial toward friends, attached to wife and children, rejoicing in his home, and singing night and day the praises of God, and the peace of man.

His indulgent nature, however, did not lead him beyond what was just to himself, and due to his neighbour; and many were the little private bickerings carried on between himself and his wife in the secret seclusion of their bed-chamber; for often the monthly bills could not be made to tally. Nor should Mrs. West be blamed too severely for this womanly weakness, which is common to almost everyone of her sex. She gloated over her ferns and flowers, and nothing gave her so much annoyance as the breaking or damaging of her furniture. After all, a woman's life is spent in her home, and it is natural she should wish to see it arrayed in its best: and, although seldom felt, a woman should be very grateful for having a husband firm enough in principal to deny her full and free access into his purse. Not that I approve of a man being stingy toward his home and his family, but I disapprove, very much, and so does every sensible person, of a wife and family being extravagant upon themselves. In many cases, not in all mind you, a wife's frivolity and heedlessness is the cause of great wrongs, even deaths, which is in such cases but parts of wrongs: and a husband, who would maintain his honour at the sacrifice of his peace, deserves, according to my theory, the highest rank among the brave. It is no easy thing for a man to face, and fight through, a wife's continual peevishness, complaining—or dissatisfied sighs: especially, as is so often the case, when he knows that that wife's peevishness and dissatisfied sighs, are not confined
solely to the four walls of their home. But let man not imagine he is wholly excluded from blame, regarding the unhappiness in the home. If he wish for comfort and enjoyment in his home, he must give that which will bring comfort and enjoyment. He must not draw the strings of his government too tightly around his kingdom, else they will snap asunder. And if the purse be tight, there is no need for the heart to be tight also; nay, the heart’s looseness should seek to make up for the purse’s tightness. Say no, and mean no, but say it kindly; and do not say no, if by any possibility you can say yes. To have a smiling wife, you must surround her with a smiling atmosphere, in most cases it lies in your power to do so, and you will be surprised how soon you will be converted into a smiling husband. For the man, who has a wife that could not become smiling in the warm bright atmosphere of his tender solicitude, and undying affection, I have a profound depth of sympathy, and much he stands in need of it. And for the man who does not grant his wife these tokens of a loving regard, these divinely ordered providences, the whole world of nobility, of inherent chivalry, has an unlimited depth of repulsion and scorn. A man to have a family, and not to provide for it, in so far as the best means God has given him for that purpose, barters his name of man, and exchanges his privileges with the bastard, justly inheriting the bastard’s disdain.

On the evening, in which our story seeks an interview with this hexagon-shaped house, the hall door stands open, and from the interior of a large semi-darkened drawing-room, proceeds the low soft strains of an organ. A young man with quick springing footsteps crosses the bridge, opens the gate, walks up the gravelled path, enters, pausing a moment on the threshold to listen to the familiar strains. From his evident familiarity with the surroundings, it may easily be inferred that he is a constant visitant here.
Perhaps the soft carpet muffled his footsteps, perhaps, something more tender muffled her heart, but the young girl seated at the organ made no signs of perceiving her visitor's presence.

A white shapely hand was laid upon her shoulder. Still no movement. A musical manly voice said, "Alma." The slender fingers continued to wander over the keys, the quiet figure was still, but the half averted face turned slightly in the direction of the sound.

"I thought you were not coming to-night, Percy."

"Do not be vexed, dear. I will not stay long. The evenings that I do not see you, become intolerable to me." The pleading tones of the man, touched, in spite of herself, the tender cords of her heart.

"It is the last night I shall be able to feel I belong to myself, and I think you might have respected my wishes," answered the girl in a slightly petulant tone.

"Is that fair, Alma?" said the young man in a deeply pained voice. "You will always belong to yourself. Am I such a tyrant?"

The girl flushed, and bent her face nearer to the friendly white keys. "Forgive me. I am tired to-night, and out of sorts. I have had such a busy day, Percy." The voice was full of unshed tears.

"My poor darling," murmured the young man, stroking the soft fluffly fair hair, and letting his moustache mingle with her curls, "I know you must be. I do feel for you, drudging here among so many circumstances contrary to your nature. You shall do as you please after to-morrow." Then his voice grew strangely fearful.

"You are not sorry you are going to marry me, Alma, are you?"

"How can you ask, Percy?"
"I don't know dear, but sometimes I wonder if ever you will learn to care for me, as I care for you. You seem so cold, so distant."

The girl trembled a little, and her hands fell together in her lap.

"Must I remind you of our conversation sometime ago, Percy? I told you then, and I tell you again, my love has been given to another; to you I can give nothing more than my deepest, most earnest gratitude. You have ever been solicitous and kind, and I little deserve such. I would be cold, indeed, if I were not grateful. But the light of love is wanting, and that makes me distant. In after days, should you have cause to repent this step, remember it has been of your own free choice."

"You told me your love was unreturned. That a barrier impassable had risen between you. O Alma, Alma," exclaimed the young man, throwing his arms around her, and pressing her to him. "Were it not for that, I would seek to unite you two, even though I should lose you for myself. By holding you to your vow, I am convinced it is for your, and my happiness; and your constancy to your former love, reveals to me the noble side of your nature. Yet, dearest, do not make a mockery of that which is pure and right, by becoming selfish in your disappointment. It may not always be proper to sacrifice every hope on the altar of an unrequitted love."

A slight shiver ran through the slender frame, and the fair head fell against the broad shoulder, and seemed to nestle against the manly heart in search of protection from its own weakness.

"I do not know. Perhaps you are right. I am too tired to question these hidden feelings. But I shall be your faithful wife, Percy. Nothing shall prevent me from being that."
"My darling. May God so deal by me, as I deal by you," said the young man fervently, as he kissed the soft cheeks. Then, after a moment's pause, "Am I forgiven for coming, little one?"

"Yes. If there be anything to forgive. Now go, dearest, and leave me alone."

Percival Graham was a young man of deep feelings, feelings he had from boyhood cultivated and trained to run in the right groove. Quiet and unostentatious he had wandered in and out among his labyrinth of friends, no one guessing he was engaged, until suddenly awakened to the fact of the very near approach of his wedding. Then they set themselves to task, and scolded one another for being so blind; many even regretted they had not been more languishing toward him, for then they might now have been standing in Alma West's shoes. (Though for the matter of that, I do not know how they were all going to get in). There is nothing like a wedding to rise oneself to celebrity or distinction. Percival took no notice of what was in the minds of others; he was happy, and he was going to make Alma happy also. It was a hard won prize, and he knew how to value it. His mother had shown him where to look. She had told him to seek one whom she would be pleased to welcome to their permanent abode, he had added his own thoughts to her words, "One like you." After many failures, much doubting, he had found what he sought. And she was all that he wished,—not beautiful, but sweet—externally cold, but internally a raging fire which only needed the match to set it ablaze—like his mother in every sentiment—like her in the tones of her voice—yet fairer and younger, and to him sweeter. And he was ready, if she would only accept of it, to pour out at her feet the whole wealth of his pent up affection.
Was it to be wondered at then, that his ardour was not checked by a cold word or look? Her very distance made her fairer in his sight, and her pride kindled in his heart a deep reverence. With it all, she was sweet, and good, and patient, and willing to learn from even so foolish a one as himself. He loved her, O! so dearly; she could not help loving him in return. But he did not know what torture the girl was suffering from his every word of endearment, his every caress of affection. He did not know what was passing through the heart of her who lay in his arms, whose head was pillowed on his shoulder, whose bosom rose and fell with the rising and falling of his own.

"I will not stay longer, my darling," he murmured, and then half shyly, added, "Won't you kiss me before I go?"

The shadows deepened in the room, and hid their faces from one another. One strong and manly, and full of pleading; the other strong too, and sweetly womanly, but O so full of pain, and in the soft blue eye a dry tear. The angels, instead of weeping too, rejoiced; for that was the tear of a penitent. There was silence—a deep silence, and the hearts of both beat fiercely. Then two beautiful arms stole round his neck; two soft lips were pressed against his own; two bright eyes smiled. The first kiss Alma West had given to her betrothed. He lifted the drooping form; he clasped her to his heart; he kissed her again and again. All sense of doubt vanished from his mind; one current surged through his being, "Alma was his." He was thrilled to the depth of his great soul, which was a very deep one, indeed. Closer he clasped her, more passionately rained his kisses, until his very vehemence made the girl afraid. At last he turned to leave, but paused to kiss once more the sweet fair face; then as his shadow lengthened in his going, and his tall form was out of sight, the echo of his footsteps returned, and in the young girl's ears, sounded like soft low pleadings.
Pale and cold and motionless she sat, striving to still the awful beating of her heart. "Why does he love me so? I do not deserve it. Oh, if he knew all." But she was not left long to her silent agony. Soon, through the hall, was heard the rushing of many feet, the clamour of many voices. They broke in upon the sacred precincts of her sorrow; they let her see and feel she was not alone in the world.

"Come sister! Come and play with us. This is your last night here. Mamma says you will have to play with Percy to-morrow. Come, come." And regardless of the young girl's protestations, and entreaties to let go, the young plagues continued to pull and tug at her skirts.

"You are tearing my dress. Let go at once, or I will not come." And she tried to wrench herself from their hold.

"No we won't; you'll just run away to your room and shut yourself in like you always do. You must come with us; you must! you must!" And by cheer force they dragged their now passive victim out of her shadowy nook, through the hall, and into their play-room. There they forced her into a chair, themselves gathering around and recommencing their pranks in true spoilt-children fashion. It may here be remarked that the young Wests were by no means unkind at heart, but their training had been of so loose a character that they had become unruly and thoughtless. Their finer feelings had been allowed to stagnate, consequently they had lost all traces of that quick susceptibility so often found in the young, and required in the sweet office of sympathy. Thinking of nothing but their own pleasure, they sought every possible enjoyment, often at the cost of a great deal of pain to others. Then instead of being corrected, they were encouraged in their tantalizing habits by those who should have known better. On this special occasion, with the impending marriage in view, these half-a-dozen little Wests were more unruly, more aggravating than was their wont.
They romped about and squabbled with one another, and paid no heed to the tired, weary look, and the entreatings, and the pleading, of their eldest sister. In the midst of the hubbub, Mrs. West appeared at the door, a peculiar smile on her thin lips. She was a little restless woman, with a care-worn, fretful face, every lineament betraying the presence of selfishness. Her dress and bearing spoke of an unlimited amount of pretended humility; and her manner, though affable, was well seasoned with conceit. She was in reality a personification of our "never-smiling woman," although, strange to say, there was always that perpetual, peculiar smile on her thin lips. She was not devoid of good points, however, for beneath that frivolous exterior beat a kind heart—a heart that would often be moved to tears at the sight of injustice done to others. Therein lies our key to her kindly heart, for perhaps, as is often the case with the selfish, she did not see the wrong or injustice she did herself. Such characters remind me of a quiet observation I made some time ago. It was during a friendly conversation friendly people were having. Of course, the subject was the inevitable "Picking to pieces the characters of other people." Perhaps you smile and say, "What are you doing behind their backs?" I answer, "Quietly observing the pickers." They—these friendly people—were conversing about something very important—something that is looked forward to with great delight, welcomed with keen pleasure, and relished the better being accompanied by so much fun and wit—the election of a new member for our district. I do not know if all towns in New Zealand be alike in this respect, but I do know that Bonsby really enjoys an election. Then you may see the political giants of the day; hear their mighty opinions that would weigh down poor little New Zealand if put in balancing scales; encounter ferocious taxation bulls, with lolling tongues, at every street corner; and while you flee from their
furious attack, you are pursued by yelping dogs, declaring they
"were hungry, have not had work for weeks, and want to feed
upon your dry bones." Whatever you do, don't pause under a
tree by the way, or a cat will be sure to bristle her fur, curl
up her back, hit at you with her paw, spit, and declare in her
peculiar snarl, "She must have her rights." The very birds
atune their notes to "Bridges" and "Roads" and "Break-
waters," while the soft, smooth river glides along murmuring,
"Borrow money! borrow money." Oh, election times are
grand times for the idle observant. Every night, if he
choose, he can go to the hall and hear the voluptuous swell
of musical abuse mingling with the bright blazes of satirical
fireworks; knock his head against the formidable walls of
millions of pounds of borrowed money; and came out as wise
and as en'tightened as when he went in. Then he might right-
about-wheel and enter the hall of another candidate, and
hear and see and feel a contradiction, yet repetition, of the
same scenes; and when he makes his exit, behold the two
contradictions shaking hands with one another. By that
time he returns home a contradiction himself, inwardly won-
dering if his bowels were undergoing political government
as well. But as I was saying, it was during one of these friendly
conversations on a friendly subject that I made a friendly
observation.

"Well, I don't care what you say, or what anyone else
says, I am going to vote for Mr. so-and-so. He shook
hands with father, and I like people who respect my parents."
But now comes the joke, the young lady in question did not
respect her parents herself; and not many minutes before, I
heard her tell her father to "Shut up." I could not help
smiling at the splendid practical illustration of two great
questions of the day,—temperance and election by majority.
However, the thought I wished to arouse, in connection with
Mrs. West, was that she was one of those who "liked people
who respected her parents," but who did not respect her parents herself.

"Mother, I wish you would make these children be quiet," exclaimed the girl, lifting her tired eyes almost pleadingly to her mother. She had long since abandoned the hope of making a companion of that peevish woman, and had grown to look within her heart every womanly feeling, but tonight, on the threshold of a new home, and borne down by numb, wearing, motionless, soundless, struggles, she thought to claim a mother's compassion. "My head aches dreadfully," she continued, in her sad quite tone. "And I would like to go to my room." If she expected any response, she was doomed to disappointment.

"Go to your room, by all means, my child. I do not wish you to stay here against your will. Only I do not think you need grudge the children a few minutes' fun on this your last night among them. You will have plenty of time to be quiet after to-morrow." So saying, and with her sinister smile, the mother turned away, musing on the selfishness of her eldest child, and mistaking her own selfishness for motherly solicitude toward her little ones; deeming their pleasure of far more importance than Alma's pain. This is a mistake often practised by mothers of large families. During infancy many mothers neglect the intellectual training of their children. Then, as those children shoot up, and cast off their little baby attractions, they stand out bare, and ungainly having cultivated nothing wherewith to clothe their youth. The mother not recognizing her share in the nakedness, loses taste for her elder children, and centres her affections among her younger; leaving those, who really need her care, to wander whither they please in search of sympathy. This leads to contentions, which generally end in open rebellion. The mother feels no pain, her affections are with her little ones; it is the child girl or girl woman who suffers. But at
your afternoon teas it is the mother who makes the most display, and mourns her child's failings; who is the wronged one, and the one to suffer. Can parents expect respect, when they show themselves unworthy? Can children be blamed, when there is so much thrown in their way? To escape the consequences of her own unfaithfulness, the mother spends her afternoons abroad, and the child rejoices over the peaceful seclusion of her own leisure hours. There is no unity between the two; knotty subjects are consulted beyond the precincts of home. Who is to blame? Not the child. Of course, there is the converse to this rule, but the converse rule did not predominate in the West household, one glance at Mr. West's face would tell you that; and Alma's life was lived more often in tears than in smiles. She did her best to appear cheerful, and succeeded very well, but she was often impatient, and many were the times she would have liked to shake her little sisters and brothers.

She sat a few minutes after her mother had left, thinking deeply; but as soon as she got the chance, she slipped away, fled up to her own room, and locked herself in. Flinging herself upon her knees, she buried her face in her hands, and remained, for several hours, silent and motionless in the grey darkness. She felt very desolate indeed, and for the first time for ever so long, great drops hung upon her drooping lashes. But there was another power wrestling with her heart; and in those hours of darkness, like Jacob of old, she was crying, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me." An hour passed; two hours. She rose and stretched her cramped and stiffened limbs, and lifted her clear blue eyes to the stars. They were bright now—those sweet sad eyes—bright with an ethereal light—and in their liquid depth were stamped the words, "I will leave it all with Jesus." Opening the door, she crept quietly down stairs, and entered her father's study.
"I came to say good night, father," she said gently. "It is my last night under your roof, you know."

"I hope not, my dear," said the gentleman, drawing the half hesitating figure toward him, and kissing her affectionately. "Remember child, this will ever be your home. You still have a father; and should anything happen, be it ever so direful, a father's love oversteps all."

For the first time the father realized the importance of the step his daughter was about to take. A feeling of regret crept into his heart, as he thought of the many times he had allowed little incidents pass without thinking, or taking any notice of them. So much might have been done to make his daughter's life happy—but he was always so much absorbed in his own reflections. A sigh rose to his lips, as he thought of his own life, and that disappointed expression flitted across his face; but he chased them away as unwelcome visitors, and earnestly prayed for his child's welfare. He could see he had bequeathed to this slender girl his firm affectionate nature, and by his own disappointments, knew what she would suffer, if placed in such a position as he himself occupied. But Percival Graham was not one of those unstable young men, whom to love was a waste of affection, so all shadow of doubt fled from his mind.

He soothed and caressed the fair head, so like his own, and silently let her feel he was her "Father." Oh, Alma. Why do you shed tears of sorrow upon your father's shoulder? Does the ghost of a past sin haunt you? And are you fearful of the future?—the future that should be so bright, so full of scented flowers? It must be so, else otherwise, those would be tears of gladness. Think of your many sisters, who, on the eve of their wedding, stand serene and smiling in the midst of the gay circle of friends, but who in their hearts weep bitter tears; who mourn the absence of a father's bosom; who gaze into the fleshless
hollows of a father's face,—who weep, but find no comfort in sympathy, no relief in tears. Heavenly Father fill up, we beseech thee, those vacant thrones in the hearts of such. By the sweetness of thy presence, grant solace to our contradictory natures. Embalm our spirits with the spice and myrrh of thy Fatherly love. Thou hast promised to be a "Father to the fatherless," be especially dear on the eve when thy children need thee most, the eve of their wedding day.

It is not necessary to depict that wedding ceremony.Everyone is familiar with the white dress and flowing veil of a bride; with the proud bridegroom; the gaily-dressed bride's maids; and the mischievous twinkling-eyed best man; with the flower-decorated church, the carpeted gravel walk, the carriages, the crowd of faces, the congratulations, and the rice. And everyone knows how eagerly they are questioned by those less fortunate than themselves, as to the appearance of the bride. "Did she look happy?" And the bearing of the bridegroom, "Did he kiss her?" No dark omen shadowed that happy day. The wedding was as a wedding should be. But once, when the bride bent before the altar, and the bridegroom turned to look at his new-made wife, he thought he saw in her eyes a look of strange deep dread. It was gone in a moment, and the sweet fair face smiled, but the look and the pathos haunted him. Ah, above they "twa" smiled the All-loving Father. What though the intertwining of their lives made mysteries effective in Eternity, unrivalled in mutability—the reins were in Divine hands, and there are no mysteries to the Divinity. Mistakes and misunderstandings may arise and cause the heart great grief, but in a Divinely ordered life such great steps are superintended by a Superior Wisdom. There is no need to fear their results; no need to say "Oh that I had not done so!" apart and above floats the universal song, "Rejoice for
the Lord, he is God, The only faithful. The Providence of a People."

And so for a while our bride will make her adieux, and slipping into her carriage, will drive home in company with her husband. When we see her again, it will be to love her, perhaps better than we do already, for then we shall understand the meaning of that strange cold chill that seems to enshrine her heart.
CHILDREN at school are often puzzled to know the use of learning the row upon row of historical dates. As they advance they become interested in comparing dates, and in placing side by side the chief events of different nations happening on the one day. But when they leave school, this science of chronology becomes more interesting, and, indeed, to them more useful, as they compare the history and chief events of their own lives. It is to one of these private chronological tables that we have to refer in order to obtain the precise date on which the subject of this chapter took place. And it is very interesting, and not a little strange, to note that this subject, and the subject of our former chapter—namely, the wedding—took place on one and the same day, although, as you will learn hereafter, in a different town—or, more strictly speaking—in a different district. Shrink not back, oh reader, because I take you for a brief space of time into one of New Zealand's slums. It is well to know a little about the different phases of life. Wealth and respectability are habitations we would fain dwell in always; but it is a strange fact that in every human life there is a by-path that leads to an immediate connection with a slum of some sort. It matters not whether the person be on the highest pinnacle of social elevation, one has but to lift the trap door of Haughty Respectability, and he becomes aware of the dark vaults beneath, studded with its chalky sun bleached bones, its ashes, and its grinning toothless scull. Close the door over these vaults as quickly as you can, for the stench of its
blue vapour is overpowering; and the heart decays, while pumping through it those basilisk draughts. It is well, nay, it is a divine plan, that, with highly strung natures, the trap-door of their own Respectability can cover those hideous vaults, else the poisonous, stifling vapour, which arises and floats upward, would kill them where they stood—would, perhaps, do worse—would drag them down to be an inhabitant of their own dark abode. Nay, I know of no greater torture the soul of a good being can be put to, than that of gazing, even for a brief moment, down into the slum vault of its own earthly life; the slum vault, hewn out by others, but deplored, agonised over by itself. Of course, there are slums and slums; some of infinitely more degrading characters than others; some of more respectable propensities than others. Neither are all slums the associations of filth and squalor—the visible associations I mean. Many are decorated in the gaudy guise of social appearances. This latter difference constitutes the distinction between the slums of London, and the New Zealand slums. We have not the degrading, grovelling poverty and wretchedness of our parent country, or, at least, we ought not to have. Land and climate forbid it. Men and women have no right to live in wretchedness in New Zealand. If they choose, they can all supports themselves and their families in the necessary requirements of life by the sweat of their brow. It is all rubbish for man to say, “There is no work.” The whole Island or Islands, abound in work; the trouble is, will man work? Oh no, he cries to the government for work, when he should be searching for work himself. Perhaps, you say you have searched, and have not found. I answer, “Search again.” But see that you search in a right spirit; see that you do not confine yourself to the narrow way of, ‘I would not do this,’ and ‘I would not do that,’ as if you were the honoured one.” I do not say that the government should not
provide work for the people, but I do say only a certain class of people would throw themselves upon the charity of the government—the Unfortunate and the Drones. There is a great hue and cry (and I dare say I am raising one by writing thus, but I speak not with offensive assumption, or with groundless proof. I have not disguised myself in working man's clothes, and filled working man's offices for nothing.) raised in these times about the working class, by that I mean the menial working class; we are unworthy of life if we do not all belong to some working class. But it is possible to ride a hobby horse to death. Granting that the working man needs the most consideration, does not mean that the man, who devises ways and means for giving that man work, should be slighted. Then too, because a man is poor in purse, he gets all the compassion of the world, and the prayers of the church. The rich man is neglected, and perhaps he has the most need of your compassion and prayers. I do not attempt to unravel these social mysteries; they are best left to the public to unravel; but it seems to me that the upper class is not wholly to blame for the line of distinction between themselves and the lower class; and also that, if this spirit of scorning to "Render honour unto whom honour is due," be allowed to grow in our midst, New Zealand will suffer the same shame and loss Victoria is suffering at the present day. I was sitting in one of the upper stories, and looking out of the window of one of the largest shops in our main street. It was sometime ago, when the Governor visited our town. Many people came out to see him as he passed, but only one man had the courtesy and grace to raise his hat in dutiful obeisance. That to me was a striking illustration of that rebellious spirit. Did that dutiful subject, think you, lower himself, or step down from his dignity, by thus showing his respect for one socially above himself? No. He raised himself infinitely
above his fellow men; and he marked himself as a capable master, by being a capable servant. And was the Governor elated by that subject's obeisance? No. He felt his own unworthiness to fill an exalted position; he was humbled by the weight of his responsibility—by his office of humanity he placed himself on a level with his dutiful subject. These are the kind of people we want in New Zealand, and these are the kind we will have. We want no Rothschilds, we want all Garfields. And what is to prevent us from having what we want? With New Zealand's mild, and almost perfect, climate; with her rich fertilizing soil; her easy mode of transhipment; her accessibility, and ready communication with other countries; and yet her isolation, which forbids a too familiar intercourse; with all these, and a thousand other blessings, it becomes the infallible duty of every human being, be they man or woman, to so conduct themselves as to rise their country to an eminence on a level with the most advanced state recorded in the annals of every succeeding nation. To those who abuse these privileges, I include the dishonest statesman, who feeds himself and his relatives on the wages of his constituency; though for him a double punishment is waiting. In that time, when man must stand alone and despoiled of earthly garments, he must render his account unto God, and not unto his fellow man. There will be no filching of attributes, no party concealment then: to those, I say, who abuse these privileges by indulging in hollow shams and sinful practises, we assign no place in our island. Like the mountain fern that grows upon our hills, we burn them from the face of the earth, and in their stead plant a growth that will clothe and beautify the soil that nourishes them. Still, however, all this requires time to aid in its accomplishment; meanwhile, let us cast about among the rubbish, and, as is the case with the diamond, find gems of such rich and sparkling qualities as to put our
pure purged gold into insignificance. There in the midst of its dark slum surroundings it flashes out upon our wondering gaze. Well might we, as we mark its living brilliant lustre, shrink back and cry, "Strange! Strange! Strange!" In its rude neglected state it surpasses us, who, though purged and beaten and moulded, still remain dead cold polished gold. Costly and useful though the gold may be, it is eclipsed by the single diamond dug from out of the slums of evil influence; the diamond which stands forth in all its spotless brilliancy; and untempered, soars beyond the understanding of our tried faith: soars into a sphere, which like Moses, we stand on our Neboes, and view our Canaans from afar. But I feel that I am tiring you. What is a Colonial slum? In what parts of the country does it exist? And who are the inhabitants thereof? There are many such places; they are of various characters; they extend throughout the length and the breadth of the land; and they are inhabited by a composition of rich and poor, of wise and foolish, of men and women. The branch we wish to bring specially under notice, and with which our narrative has to deal is the "Racecourse." And let me explain, it was during the most important, and most dangerous act of that horse performance, that the diamond of self-sacrifice was forced to the surface of a living rubbish heap; revealing beneath, the existence of a treasure mine filled with noble thoughts, which had become hidden and almost annihilated by the accumulation of evil indulgences, and unsuppressed passions. Half the day had passed in the ordinary routine of a racing day. The excitement had been just sufficient to keep the people interested in the performance—for what is horse-racing but an outdoor theatrical performance.—The horses, the *dramatis personæ*; the gay coated jockeys playing a subordinate part; the onlookers filling the place of the audience; while the owners and backers of the horses
take up their position near the principal actors, in the enclosure reserved for the orchestra. For those whose minds are not troubled, and anxious about the issue of the performance, it is certainly a very interesting amusement to watch the movements, and note the different characters of the surging throng gathered on the racecourse. Well do I remember a similar scene in my own life, when, with quiet observance, I crept into a sheltered corner on the very highest place of that high grandstand, and drank in with childlike wonder, the endless variety of scenes enacted by that living seething mass of human actors. Child as I was, there were strange contrary currents of thought running through my mind. The ladies were dressed so beautifully, and the gentlemen so sprucely; and the people were so lively and full of fun; and the horses looked so sleek and nice; and through my young thoughts ran such a current of pleasure, such thankfulness to God for creating man. But suddenly a contrary current of disgust flowed past, and wrestled with the sweet waters of my shining ones: the beautifully dressed ladies were gambling, the sprucely dressed gentlemen were helping them, and all the lively funny people were mingling in the sister revelry of that sinful carousing before the Flood; while the horses, the poor deluded horses, were the only worthy actors of the whole scene. When my father, who was in the orchestra, returned, and announced the success of his part in the performance, his child calmly turned to him two grave wondering eyes, and exclaimed: "Oh, father, I am so sorry, I have been watching another play, and forgot all about yours." Nor is the stage of this outdoor theatre less attractive than that of its indoor brother. Looking at it from our elevation, one can hardly realise the existence of the great evil practised in the very heart of these New Zealand slums. The stage is carpeted with the identical covering which leads to the bridal hall; the
decorations are those that ornament the lover's bower. The music is the melody that lulls to sleep the idle dreamer beneath the farmer's sheaf; and the illuminations are those we shall dwell among for ever and ever when we pass away, and this world becomes nought.—Strange thoughts to be associated with a slum.—Well! life is strange. Should we be surprised at anything that comes beneath the range of human comprehension. But now for the practical part of our play. There are stalls filled with vistuals, and attended by maids: there are bars filled with spirits, and attended by men: there are rooms superintended by both; and there are customers for all. There are private sweep, with their ruling priestess; the totalisator, sanctioned by order of the Government, and supported by the gambling dupes of both sexes.

Suddenly up a narrow flight of steps which lead to the platform of a small stand near the business part of the course, lightly runs a man, and the sharp ring of a bell proclaims his purpose. The ladies straighten themselves and shake out the folds of their flowing, silken gowns. The gentlemen sling away their half-finished cigars, and turn their steps to the saddling-paddock. A feeling of suspense hangs over all, for this is the most important event of the day. Even the children know better than bother their parents with their trivial chatter. The horses will have to exercise their skill, not only in fleetness, but also in power and firmness, for they have to clear several fences in their journey round the course. One after another those chestnut, and bay, and black, and dappled quadrupeds file through the narrow alley, and perform their steady, graceful preliminary. How sleek and noble they look as they canter past the attentive crowd, their fiery spirits held in check by the firm, familiar hand of their Joseph-coated riders. How they stretch their long, wiry limbs, and arch their proud necks. How their
nostrils extend as they toss back their flowing mane and utter their low, pleased neigh. It is a worthy sight to view, with honest eyes, the shining grand competitors of a steeplechase contest. And of the riders. Can it be that there is no fear in the hearts of those pale, emaciated youths, who for the past few weeks have done their very best to destroy the robust constitutions God had given them, in order that they may be the desired weight? Again we are tempted to turn aside from leading facts, and spend a few minutes contemplating this accursed habit. Youths, who might be growing into fine strapping men, I have seen stalking about during the very heat of the day clad in thick, heavy top-coats, and smothered in enormous woollen mufflers. I have known them to live for days on nothing but bread and water, to deny themselves all indulgences in fat-producing food, and to sit for hours with the sweat streaming down their poor, thin faces, during the sweating process. In less than three years afterwards, I have seen the same youths—youths no longer—and instead of enjoying robust prime, they are shrivelled and stunted old men, shrinking with dread from all that is bracing and manly—a laughing-stock for the very men for whose benefit they had ruined their lives. This inhuman practice should not be allowed, and man should have more regard for his fellow man. Believe me, this is no imaginary picture. For New Zealand’s posterity, I wish it were. If you doubt its reality, go and inspect the stables for yourselves; or, perhaps, what is better, keep your eyes open during the training seasons. If still unsatisfied, question the miserable, puny man who passes your door, and learn from him the cause of his ill-health and untimely grey hairs. To return to our race. Those who have had anything to do with the working of these slums well know the dishonesty that lurks behind the passive exterior of these visible farces; and many a daring rider has, for several nights after-
wards, entertained his eager, listening associates, with tales of his clever deceptions, practiced, either on his master, or his master's rival. Our hearts sicken at the thought of what might be the intentions of these reckless riders as they spend, for aught they know to the contrary, their last hours on earth. It is terrible to think that they might be ushered into the presence of God, clutching in a close embrace a treacherous and deceitful heart.

The course is cleared. The horses draw up in a close, even line; their expanded nostrils and panting flanks declare their impatience at the delay. The flag drops; the horses respond to the signal; they bound forward; are checked by the hand upon the rein; and in a steady, moderate pace, the great race begins. In almost one body the horses rise to the first hurdle. "Over!" The cry rings out from half a hundred throats. Up to the grand-stand the excited audience rush; on every conceivable elevation they post themselves. The ladies rise from their seats and view the scene with abated breath; their husbands' cheeks are slightly paler than before the race began. How closely the horses keep together; you can scarcely see which is leading. Some are lagging a little. On, on, they gallop; the second, the third, the fourth obstructions are passed. There has been no serious mishap—a hurdle struck, a rider unseated, a cap blown halfway across the field, but that is all. On, on. "Over. Over." How the onlookers shout! How they declare first one horse to be leading, then another, and another. Oh what a clang, what a deafening clatter. We put our fingers into our ears to deaden the dissonant din. Our efforts are unsuccessful; the excited voices of this multitude of pulsating people rend the air for miles around. For once the "C'rect card o' the races; age, weight, the colours and the riders," forget their incessant cry, and stand open-mouthed. On, on those flying figures speed, but it is not a moderate pace now. The test is
coming, is at hand. One more hurdle, a few yards straight running, and what? That which, for many months past had been the object of so much thought, so many plans, plots, would be decided, and the performers would take themselves from the stage, either lamenting or rejoicing. But hush, the horses are rounding the bend, they are facing the last hurdle. The audience is silent now—there is the stillness of death in the air. Suddenly two horses single themselves out from the rest of the company and take the lead. No one speaks—amidst the dust and excitement the horses are not known; and the owners stand and wonder who are the leaders. Now their heads appear above the hurdle; now they rise. "Over." A shrill cry—one alone appears in the straight. The laggards dash through the breach (many adding to the heap of confusion), and gain upon the solitary leader. On, on they dash, spurring, whipping, flying. Faster, faster. They sweep past the judge’s box; they rein in; those panting sides white with foam. The red-coated conductor rides out, and returns between the two. And a mighty shout rends the air, "Dead heat!"

Away triumphant! Away victorious! Wear your wreath of laurels. Boast of your success. Pocket your gain. But in your rejoicings forget not to be pitiful toward the unfortunate.

Our attention is now turned in the direction of that confused heap. A shrill cry rings in our ears. The pale-faced owner leaves our side and hastens toward the mass of fallen. He is a poor man, and a great many castles were built on the tottering foundation of that hoped—for successful race. He has a faint, fearful suspicion now as to which was the second leading horse. Slowly, and with difficulty, each of the fallen extricate themselves and make their way toward the weighing-room. One, alone, remains immovable. A crowd of spectators flock round to see the cause of this
inactivity, and to render assistance if needed. The white-faced owner is deathly now. His castles have crushed him. Half an hour afterwards a sharp pistol shot announces the solemn truth that the pride and favourite of the course lay a heap of quivering rubbish; and the same sound also seals the last appearance of its owner upon the Racecourse Stage; while at the same time a close cab draws up in front of the cool hospital door. Four men alight; gently lift out a still burden; quietly proceed into a private ward; and tenderly lay a mangled form upon a soft white bed.

And on the racecourse the spectators continue to applaud, giving but an indifferent glance to the awful tragedy enacted in their midst but half-an-hour before.

Brief and exciting has been this racecourse performance, and variable have been the results. Such also are the characteristics of our racecourse life on earth. Each one steps upon the platform with the same object of happiness as the great and final end. In our hearts similar hopes and aspirations rule, and point us to a similar end—similar hopes and aspirations; but different modes of working those hopes and aspirations. As we rush across the racecourse span of birth and death we separate. Some lag behind; some shoot ahead; some fall and rise again; some continue in a steady, fearless gallop; and some fall, to rise no more, of their own free will. By the compassion of One, who is all compassion, many of those fallen are borne off the course, and placed in His private ward; there to receive upon their mutilated conscience the nard of forgiveness; finally to be ushered into the Mansion where no more nard is needed, and no more mutilation takes place. And those who run the race in a steady, fearless gallop, and those who fall and rise again, may both pass the judge’s box with a triumphant “Dead heat!”

It is well for the human race that the prize—the prize of completed happiness—is not awarded until the end is reached,
else would not many pause half way, satisfied with the
vapoury result—the vapoury present. Push on, push on,
faster, faster; the winning-post is near, is at hand—the
winning-post which is the consummation, the reward.
CHAPTER XXVI.

Yet again, O reader, must we refer you to our private chronological table. We found on previous study, that within a short distance of one another, two events took place in almost the same hour—namely, a happy wedding, and a tragic accident. But New Zealand is not the only country in the world; neither are marriages and racecourse catastrophes the only events that can happen on the one day; and, as we study our table more carefully, we find another event in another land, happening on the same date, and in almost the same hour. I daresay you are wondering why I should be flitting about from one new scene to another; and why I do not take up the leading chain of our narrative, and travel along in a smooth regular track. I will explain. Because life is not always, nay, it is never, alone and solitary, and this is the true history of a life. Every life has its complicated environments. Every life has ancestors dating back to Adam. Every life is a small part of another; and itself becomes another’s, or several others’, whole. How many years may a life live on earth? When it is twenty years old, has it passed through and become acquainted with as much and as many of its environments as it has passed through and become acquainted with at the age of thirty, sixty? Yet those environments existed years and years before the life became aware of their existence. Tributaries may have their beginning from the same standard river. They may flow in the same direction for miles and miles; but a strip
of land divides them, and they, those waters from the one
source, do not encounter one another, know not of one
another's existence, until they meet at the confluence.
Again, is it not possible that each tributary may have
tributaries of its own, starting from various and opposite
sources, but all running in the one direction, and all
meeting in the two tributaries, borne down to the
confluence, united, and made acquainted as aforesaid.
The onward, united course to the one great ocean we have
nothing to do with. That is not for the pages of this
book—perhaps not for the pages of this world's book. This,
then, my friend, is my reason for flitting about from one
scene to another. I am introducing you to the tributaries.
It is just about here they meet. Presently I will show you
the confluence. In the meantime you must learn about
the different waters, that when they become united, you
will have no difficulty in anatomizing their various shades.
Otherwise the Great would lose half its Greatness—the
Depth would be robbed of its Shadows—The contour of
that Wonderful Hand beneath, wielding, slowly silently
surely, wielding the whole, would not be seen.

Similar, too, my friend, is my reason for going through
the three great introductions together. Because it is just
about here the life discovered it was a part of another, or
others; and that, it in itself, became another's whole, or
several others' whole. Although, as you probably know,
that life was neither thirty or sixty. You must remember
we began very young. As is often the case with life; a
few ordinary, unconscious, unfelt, forward steps of time;
then a rushing together of every particle; a crash; a
mighty whirl of melodious echoes; and then a soft, steady
continuation of that united onward flow. Mark well these
words, O reader; dip beneath and find the meaning thereof.
They are the thought expressions of your own life's plan—
the symbols and calculations of your mystic consolation—
the groundwork of your Ark.

As I said before, New Zealand is not the only country in
the world. That indicates a voyage to another country.
Come, fasten Mercury's wings on your feet. Pshaw! ye
have wings of your own. Many people call the fastening
on of these wings "Thought Voyage." I call it "Trans-
shipped Incarnate Senses." Thought voyage! Why the
whole being drops down upon that foreign soil; every
faculty mingles with that foreign people. Your manner—
nay, your very accent—is lighted at their torch. You
bathe in foreign sunshine, and fall asleep in foreign moon-
light. Can such be simply "Thought Voyage?" If so, you
would hear the whirr of that wheel by your side; you
would sing while you feast; you would be lost between
the two lights. Oh, no; the thoughts are not the only
voyagers. The wings are fastened to the feet, and the
whole being, the incarnate senses, is winged to that
foreign land. Then to the foreign land we speed
—the foreign land of Scotland. It is a parting scene
we contemplate, a parting of mother and son, and it
is on the thronging Glasgow wharf. The boat lies low
upon the water; and seems waiting for the touch on her
life-spring, to rise, and with one great wave of her mighty
arm, sweep her living freight from her decks, on to the
shores of their colonial destination. The phantom finger
draws near and hovers over the life-spring; and from bow
to stern, through that huge vessel, runs an awakening
shudder.

"O my boy, my boy!" cried the pale mother, straining
the tall form of her eldest son to her sorrowing heart, while
the tears flow down her cheeks. "My boy, my boy, be
brave, and strong, and good. If we are to meet no more
on earth, let us meet Above. Remember and deliver faith-
fully all I have entrusted unto your care. And, O! when you see those relatives in that far off country, tell them one heart, that loved their beloved, is sharing with them the pain of a bereavement."

The young man bends from his height and kisses the weeping woman. "I shall be your faithful son, my mother," he says in his deep, earnest tones. "I can promise nothing higher. But," and for her sake he tried to speak lightly; "but, mother, never before have you been so distressed at my journeying. I shall come back in less than a year."

"My heart tells me you are following my cousin's footsteps. Sad memories arise and open the once dried font of my tears. Those who leave the Homeland seldom return," said the mother, sadly.

"Because they have not a dear loving mother, praying for them here." But the chains began to rattle, and the hovering finger grew closer to the life spring.

"Good-bye, mother. True. Noble. Heaven guard the qualities you have bequeathed into me, your son; Heaven grant you a rich harvest ingathering."

"Good-bye, my boy. God watch over you."

One last close embrace, one fervent kiss, and mother and son were sundered. The phantom finger touched the spring, the vessel leapt forward; across the water they gazed into one another's eyes, they faded from one another's vision. The mother turned away (proud and graceful even in sorrow) to weep alone, and in the silence of her chamber. ' Look at her as she paces up and down; her flowing black silk robes sweeping over the soft carpet; her tall form drawn up to the full height of her majestic stature; her hands—white, exquisitely shaped, purple veined—clasped before her; her face, smooth and soft, and perfectly chiselled; her rich, abundant, waving grey hair drawn back from her thoughtful
brow, and fastened in a massive knot at the back of her Grecian shaped head; her eyes, clear, limpid, shining—at times all pupils, now grey, misty, and full of a double sorrow. Oh, as she rises before me, and steps through the pen and paper of my manuscript, I think of the mother of Jesus. It is not often one sees such perfect symmetry in the aged, and when once seen, never forgotten—never wholly out of the mind. Time had not worked with her wasting hand, sorrow had not ploughed with her double-furrow. The grey locks were silken, were soft and misty like the halo round the moon; the mouth, once weak and pouting, was firm, and sweet, and peaceful; and the big grey eyes were steady and shining, and full of a hidden expression; time and sorrow had taken from them all foolish languishing; and her stately step had grown in stateliness with the constant tread of a stately mind. In short, this woman of the silent chamber—this woman so strangely in keeping with her turreted, stone built home—was a perfect type of that fine old Hebrew text: "Strength and honour are her clothing, above rubies her value."

Mark well this woman, for by and by you may be requested to trace in the matron some lineaments of the maid. But turn now, and study the "Mother's boy," the son. He stands upon the deck, and waves farewell to his native land. Who stood just so many years back? And whose footsteps is he following? Many have stood thus, and many have gone before. Aye! but they are the many of a different whole; they are parts, and they become the wholes, of different parts. We have nothing to do with them. They are the tributaries of different rivers. Others may follow up their flow, perhaps, we, even, will go back and pick up their stray parts, and piece them together; but for the present, one whole and its environments, one river and its tributaries, sufficeth us. Who stood just so
many years back? Whose footsteps is he following? Walter Main stood just so many years back; and it is Walter Main’s footsteps, Walter Main Thornton is tracing. Can you guess now of the relationship between the “Matron and the maid?” We leave in your hands the riddle; and once more putting on our winged shoes, will return to our native land.—As we, with joyful hearts, near our beloved Island, a faint breeze is wafted toward us; a faint breeze, scented with the awful but fascinating scent of that recent tragedy.—A soft white bed, and a motionless, mangled form.

The day was just beginning to break, or rather it had broken; but what a breaking! The very heart stands still to behold; how then can the lips move to explain. But we said it had broken. Ah, then it is past, and we can look back and explain, for our hearts are released from the thralldom of its breaking. Yet, why should the breaking of day paralyse our speech, when in the rich blaze of its retiring our faculties are free, and burning lambent? I hardly know. But there is a degree beyond even the empyrean of light—it is the empyrean of shadow. And these also are the degrees of our rising and our resting. It is the wonderful empyrean of the shadow which paralyses our faculties, and makes us solemn, and hushed, in the light of the Soul’s Great Dawn. Does not the earth—our part of the earth, for after all some part beholds the ineffaceable sun—gather unto herself Greater Grandeur, Mightier Majesty, more Awing Dignity, by stepping out of the dark folds of her Hereditary Night? What wonder that the shadows, from that Great Mystery into which for a few hours she had been plunged, hang over her surface, and linger in the hollows of her chiselled form. What wonder that the Contour of her vast and billowy Dream is deflected against the sky. What wonder that the
counterdeflection awes our senses, and holds our souls spellbound. Even now, when the first great greeting is past, we are beggared for expression. We can only throw up our hands, and cry, "Darkness became Dawn." But the dawn is passing—The Mighty Inexpressible Dawn,—and the day draws near, and unlocks our chains.

A bright playful sunbeam tips the edges of a frosted window pane, and shooting across the silent room, lights up by its cheerful presence, the depressed atmosphere, and kisses the pale lips of the sufferer. Outside, the lark springs up from its lowly bed, and soaring into the heavens, pours forth its morning song to its Creator; little heeding the ungrateful indifferent audience beneath; happy and thankful in the employment of the gifts of its Great Giver. Even the trees, the flowers, the springs, clap their hands and rejoice in the sunshine, and call to sluggard man to arise from the dull clods of Carnal Sleep, and to learn the science of Spiritual Awaking; promising as a reward, to infuse into his nature the sweet perfume of their "Peace on earth, and good will toward man."

There is no movement of the almost lifeless figure stretched beneath that white coverlet; nothing but the watchful eyes betray any signs of life. "What does this unnatural stillness indicate? a dull reckless indifference? or a superhuman endurance of pain?" Alas! for that fatal act of steeplechase riding. Too plainly told of excruciating agony, the clenched teeth, the compressed lips, the distorted brow, the livid hue. Save an occasional closing of the eyelids when the pain was at its highest, there had never once moved a muscle of that mangled form since it was carried off the stage—racecourse, I mean—and brought into its last earthly abode. Presently the door opens, or at least, opens more widely, for it always stood a little ajar, and a young girl walks in. She is a privileged person
as the early visiting hour indicates. But then she was so caressing, so sweet and cheerful, so full of sympathy for the poor sufferers, and so helpful to the nurses, that the very ice-bergs would open out and let her pass through into the beautiful emerald sea beyond; and nurses are by no means icebergs. So this young girl, this nursling of nature, wandered in and out, and did what she pleased, which was always what was useful and good. But in these visitations something else prompted her besides her own inclination, perhaps two other things: A pale yearning look in the Home-land; and in far away China, the vision of a face not unlike her own, ministering unto the spiritual ailments of a swathy-faced, black-eyed, plaited-haired and bearded people. It may be in the mists by that figure’s side she pictured her own slight form. Were they not both working “For Father’s Sake?”

Fresh and sweet as the pure morning air she had but quitted, was this young girl as she stood by the sufferer’s bed, and gazed long and earnestly down upon the haggard distorted face. But why did the eyes of the invalid close as if this sweet presence, those pitying eyes, were giving him torture? And why were the hands of the caressing girl, more caressing, more tender than usual, as she stroked the dark hair back from the clammy brow, murmuring the while, “My poor, poor brother.” But her caresses added torture to torture, and she saw it and wondered. The eyelids were locked now as firmly as the mouth, and words and caresses were apparently useless. So turning to leave, the fair face bent over the deathly, and the fair sweet spirit hovered around the warring, tortured one. “Forget the past,” she whispered “save where it lightens the future. Oh Albert, let not those by-gone memories interfere with my usefulness to you now, in these sad, sad moments of your need.” She was gone; the while-robed figure had vanished; but
the echo of her footsteps remained; and the breath of her spirit lingered about the penitent's heart.

In the afternoon the same white-robed figure is seated beside an open window, and gazing across an open sea. She is idle; at least, her hands are, for her thoughts are very busy. But presently a small boy walks up the gravelled path beneath her window, and she looks down to see and surmise. The door bell rings; steps on the polished floor of the hall; voices; then steps on the stairs; shadows; a tap on her door; a voice, "A note for you, Miss Main;" and the steps and the tap and the voices are silent once more.

Nellie, for she this white-robed figure is, tears open the envelope and reads the few firmly-penned, pointed words.

"St. Andrew's Hospital.

Dear Miss Main.

A dying man wishes to see you. We do not think he will live through the night. Come as soon as possible.

Yours in haste,

Sister Dora."

Nellie folded the note and thought. She looked at her watch. Some previous appointment demanded her immediate attention. She fell on her knees, and for a few minutes there was perfect stillness, save for the gentle rise and fall of the snowy lace on the pure young bosom. In that brief space of time she was attuning her vital energies to meet the coming contest; though for the matter of that, those energies were always taught. Then she rose, feeling strong, and calm, and strangely happy. She changed her white dress for a neat black one—black and white were the only colours she would wear—and smoothing back her loose tumbled hair, went down stairs. But the important task was mechanically performed, for the shadow of two
deep blue eyes haunted the young girl's thoughts. Yet not as they appeared *that* day did she dream of them; but as they appeared many *many* days before, when, with a strange burning in their depths, they flashed into her own an unacquiescent acquiescence to her refusal to permit their owner accompany her home from that happy picnic ground so long ago. As soon as she could get away, Nellie, after letting her aunt see the note, made her way to the hospital. Half-an-hour afterwards she was in possession of two secrets, one intimately connected with herself, the other the sparkling diamond of which we have already spoken, and which revealed to the observer's gaze, the treasure mine filled with noble thoughts; both of which had been dug from the slums of evil influence.

As the end of mortality's victim drew near, and the mortal voice failed, the deep blue eyes grew deeper by reason of its increased immortality, and over the whole face spread the glorious hallowed light of that Empyrean Dawning Shadow. The same Setting sun of one country, is the Rising of another. There is no break, only a bend; a bend soft, smooth, and beautifully arched: and, although the sky be blue in mid-day and black at night, the rosy streaks, the wild pencilled golden fleeces, the melting transparent purple-tinted greys, and the indigo depths, of This Life's Setting Sky, are the continued radii of the Next Life's Rising—the last heart beat being the focus.

The hallowed light grew limpid and shining, and the face of Albert Maurice was earthly no more. The soft wave of his guardian angel's wing brushed away the fluttering breath; and on the bosom of that Ethereal Calm, the soul was borne back to its Creator, its Provider, its Sanctifier; borne back to its God. They closed the eyes; they straightened the limbs, they folded the hands; they left the body. But one girl returned for a last sad look. She drew down the
sheet, and pressed a long lingering kiss on the still warm lips; then covering the rigid lifeless form, she raised her dark eyes to heaven—hot lights burning in their dry depths—and prayed that her own father might be first to clasp the hand of this quiet sleeper, and lead him in. "His ways on earth had not always been the ways of God, and the poor trembling soul might, on its first entrance into those glorious lights, feel strange without the warm pressure of a once brother sinner's hand." Then she went away; and the dead was alone.

Oh, thou who bearest away that lifeless dust, do so with tenderness and love. Remember, he was "Somebody's darling"—"Somebody's boy." It may not hurt him if you refuse to do so. It is only a body perhaps; a body from which the soul has fled; and therefore your careless handling, your rough words, will have none effect. But O! we like to touch with reverence, the caskets which once enclosed our priceless treasures. We like to treat a dead form with reverence. After all, which of you living beings could make, or annihilate, that body?

Thus rested Albert Maurice, the treacherous friend, who for his own selfish gain, sought to ruin a comrade: and who, when his victim attempted to extricate himself from those hateful toils, smiled sarcastically; and jeeringly prescribed him a dose he himself drank, but found incapable of cure. What we mean, you are soon to understand. Yet do not think too hardly of the dead my reader. Nay! think not hardly, think kindly. Which of us if robbed of our borrowed virtues, would disclose a perfectly unselfish life? The heart is sealed in selfishness, and it is only by careful prayer, by continual practice, and by unfaltering heart searches, that the life can appear (not wholly become) clothed in unselfish gain. As I contemplate on this life, and put the pieces together—for mind you I know the
end which contains the embryo of the beginning—I think of that blessed parable of the "wandering boy." Albert Maurice had demanded his portion of freedom; he had wandered away to a foreign land, which, after all was not foreign, for his Father's eye was upon him; had fallen low, very low; had risen; had returned; had been met and embraced and kissed by a loving Father; had been borne home midst great rejoicings. The very straying endearing him to his outraged Parent. Aye; and giving him an added value in his fellow servant's eyes; for it takes a strong brave man to truly repent.

How thankful we should be, that, in the early years of his life, when our hearts were sore and smarting at the thought of his sinful practices, we left his case with God; else how could we, with clear conscience, stand bare headed beside his mouldering dust.

Man is ever in need of solemn warning concerning his eagerness to step into the Judgment seat. In our narrow range, and imperfect sight, we would have assigned to that wanton sinner a place with the Unrighteous. And to prevent further contamination of the world, we would have hastened his Shade into Charon's battered lighter; with our own hands pushing off the boat, that the weedy wharf of Styx might not hinder the swift deliverence into the state chamber of Persephone. Thank Heaven, there is a wiser judge than the fool man. A mightier range than human perception. Beneath the Kingdom is the Kingdom's God who sees and feels; and knows whom to spare until the eleventh hour. Oh, let the earth rejoice; let the trees clap their hands; let the whole nation sing praises; let man dance and shout; let them make a mighty noise, for in all things "The Lord reigneth, Blessed be our Lord."
CHAPTER XXVII.

COME child, you must go and lie down. This hot sun is too much for you. Why you are quite feverish.” Mrs. Remay laid her hand lightly on the girl’s shoulder and looked down anxiously into the flushed face. It was the day after the one which beheld Nellie seated beside a dying man, and listening to his dying words. Since then a strange restlessness had taken possession of her. She was no longer the calm firm woman; she had returned to her mutable maiden-hood; and all the mutation of her maidenhood seemed stirring in her soul. Nearly the whole of the night before she had lain awake thinking, and thinking; and when the morning broke it found her thinking still. She tossed, and turned, and tried to sleep, but the burning eyes scorched their eyelids, and the sweeping eyelashes flew open and refused to close again. Toward morning, however, she sank into a dazed stupified kind of trance, consisting of a half distance between sleep and awake. With eyes wide open and faculties asleep, yet with certain attitudes working with a sure and diligent activity, Nellie had passed through the first hours of dawn. Rigid and motionless she lay and gazed, yet not gazed, at the fast greying ceiling of her room; when softly, like the slow peaceful motion of falling snow, a misty cloud from some space imperceptible, gently enshined her, and she felt herself being borne away on its soft sweeping billows. Yet no motion stirred her own being; she was still with the stillness of unconsciousness, and her mind
was shrouded in mystery; and in the midst of the mystery, or the soft sweeping billows, she did not know which, there was a Reddish Purple Light. And thus she floated for a moment, which was as a millenium of moments, over a dark space—nay, not wholly dark, there were light beams which arose from that vault and shot past, even past her motionless floating; still they revealed not the secret depth of the chasm from which they sprang; somewhere in her fancy she thought the name of that country was "Childhood:" and as thus she floated, impelled by a force she knew not, nor understood; borne motionless along in her motionless chariot, which after all was not voluntarily motionless, but strangely confused and raging if freed from its unseen force: and as thus she floated, and as thus she paused, whether obeying the power, whether she herself was not ethereal enough for its silky folds; she felt the misty billows part; and she felt herself glide slowly, silently, as if rocked in a cradle, down, down. Her feet rested on a beautiful Island in the midst of a smooth, calm, but very, very, deep River; and as she swept past the coast, she read beneath the waters, on the blue arched basin, the silver pencilled word "Time." But it was nothing to her, that Motionless Water with its Motionless Name, so she turned away and rejoiced in the glory of her beautiful Island. Above, the misty sweeping billows had changed into Golden, and their fleecy brightness were tipped with that Reddish Purple Light. But who was this at her side? This glorious being of radiant light? Ah, at first she was afraid; afraid of the strange fascination; afraid of the burning brightness; but he spoke, and his words were as balm, his voice like the ripple of Echoes; and her young heart was fearful no more. "Weave for us both, weave wreaths, and garlands, and a crown." So with shining eyes, with the roses in her cheeks, with the lilies around
her heart, she wove wreaths, and garlands, and a double crown; and with these those two bright beings, bound themselves together. And oft in the midst of their beautiful work they stopped, and kissed, and embraced; and stopped, and kissed, and embraced again.

But the Reddish Purple tips tormented Nellie; she did not know whether to look at them or not; the Golden Billows she loved, they were so like the light on her brow, in their Island, and most of all around him by her side. How happy she was, how joyfully, radiantly happy; and how beautiful the Rainbow which encircled her head; around her waist was a girdle of Moon Beams; on her feet White wings; but she was not proud; she was glad of her beauty for the sake of him who held her hand, and whispered that magic word. They wandered over the beautiful sunny land; they plucked the velvety, and silky, and diamond tipped flowers, and they were perfectly happy. When suddenly, as they stood a moment to kiss and embrace, a harsh grating noise like the crunching of gravel under wheels, broke through the dream of peace. She started, and turned her dark fearful eyes up to her companion's face. He was pale; and much of the brightness had left his brow. Then through the shining border of their sunny Island, the bow of a small Shallop appeared, and in the sheats a Dark-faced Ferryman with a Net in his hand. He beckoned, and she felt a quiver run through the being by her side; his hand unloosened its clasp.

"Oh, must we be parted? Oh, my heart's dearest! have we not bound our hearts and souls together? Must we part. We who have loved?" In the agony of her soul, she wrung her hands and wept. But the Ferryman threw his Net around her lover and swept him into the boat. "I bound your hearts together, and I have the right to sever; the soul God alone can bind." And
with those stern words the boat with its figures were lost in the mists. But now all the light had left the Island; the Moonbeams around her waist, the Rainbow over her head, the Golden Billows above, all were now gone; all was now dark and laden; the Reddish Purple Light went, she neither knew nor cared; and the garlands, and wreaths, and crown, lay at her feet, withered and cold and severed. Some unseen hand had cleft them in twain. Then as she gazed with streaming eyes upon the drooping flowers, they changed, they arose, many crumbled into ashes, and flying up, burt her weeping eyes; many turned into thorns and pricked her whenever she touched them; others heaped themselves together and became huge jagged rocks, which tore her flesh, and cut deep furrows into her heart. But one flower—for a while she was afraid to touch it—looked up and smiled, and when her tears fell on it, it shone the brighter, and smiled the sweeter. She remembered she had kissed it long and often when she was weaving it into their crown. It was a sweet blue violet—"Faithful;" and it offered her its sweetest comfort. She stooped and lifted it, and kissing it again and again, placed it in her sorrowful bosom. And now the land moved, moved, and she felt it gliding over the deep, dark River. How quickly it moved, and how glad was she that it did; she wanted to reach the Great Ocean; she longed to leave this darkened land, the land that had become dark because he, who made it light, was not. But what was that sound? Her heart stood still, and the blood of her soul sprang into her eyes. "'Twas the awful roar of a Cataract." And she, she was gliding nearer, and nearer; and swiftly, and still more swift. She pleaded for help, but her voice was dumb; she prayed, but her heart was locked; she shrieked, but the cry was frozen. Oh the agony; would
nothing save her? In her darkness she forgot the Light, and lifted her eyes to Man. But Ah, of what value to man is the single life, the single sufferer? Only God puts his price upon it; the priceless price of blood. And man not knowing, not caring to know; not valuing, not caring to value. So in the darkness, and amidst the gloom, she drifted on. The falling sheet of water rose before her; the dark, foam fringed, Abyss sunk beneath; over she glided, still locked in her dream; over and down, over and down—"Thud."

Starting up with a smothered scream Nellie had found the perspiration standing out in great beads upon her brow, and her heart making hollow, deep sounding, thuds against her side. She sank back among the pillows feeling sick, and faint, and feeble. But now the depth of space enveloped her; and on a shoulder, which seemed to be rising from the foam of some hollow cavern—ah, it was that awful Abyss, her bleeding body, the blood drops of which turned into stars and flying upwards, vanished with the beams that had gone before; was borne away and placed on the green velvety slopes of a mighty Mountain; and she nestled and pressed herself into the soft encircling moss, and dreamed of Motherly Arms. She could have wept, but all her tears had turned into stones, and had sunk to the bottom of that deep dark Cavern. And so for a second time she wandered over sunny land; trod on soft springy moss; breathed in the sweet air; listened to musical bells; and gathered scented flowers, not deep red carnations, arums, ivy geraniums, vermains, but laurel leaved magnolias, American cowslips, stars of Bethlehem, moss. Yet the Light was not so golden here; and the spray from that hollow Cataract, and the gloom from that floating Island hung around and on her brow. She raised her eyes, and lo! there above her appeared again the Sweeping Billows
with the Reddish Purple Light burning in the midst of their soft silky folds. It was all Red now, Red and bright, and full of an Empyrian shadow. In its depths she saw a Silver Cord which at one end touched her soul, and at the other led through a mist, and into a grand, lofty Court with a floor of Golden Water. Then the Red light which had been almost purple, went away, born on the wings of its Empyrian shadow; and she saw it stand back, far back in the cleft ravine of immesurable space. Then she took up her flowers, her flowers of dignity, Divine beauty, purity, home affections, and wandered on, plucking more as she went. She came to the base of that mountain Faith, and she paused by the banks of a stream. A stream? nay a river. The same dark river of Time. But she feared it no more. She loved it. She bathed in its waters. She played with its sparkling drops, and she lifted them to her lips to taste their wonderful flavour. And when it became enraged at her boisterous sport, and when it sent its dark faced, stern voiced Ferryman with his Boat and his Net to bear her away, and crush her, she hurled them back into one another's arms, and laughed loud, and long. And when she saw them struggling together, that dark Time and its accomplices Circumstances, she danced and shouted and inspired them on in their strife; enjoying with a fierce enjoyment to see them tear and hack at one another. She no longer gazed down the fast running waters, she no longer turned imploring eyes to the Ferryman; she gazed across the river, and over the Ferryman, despising and rending in shreds the misty Net. In short, she who had once been subjected to, tyrannized over, beaten and mangled, by these two strange deities, had now become their master; had obtained dominion over them, had made and continued to make them bow in humble obeisance to her. And while she thus sported and wildly laughed, she heard the sound
of distant Music, soft low and full of a deep ringing melody. The air filled, overflowed; from a nothingness past it seemed to be journeying to a nothingness future. It drew nearer, it:—Behold once again the countless number of glorious white robed angels! under their wings they carried beautiful garlands and wreaths of amaranthine flowers; in the hands of their Queen rested an Alchemy crown. They swept towards her on the bosom of their music; they stripped her of her white robes which looked dark and stained beside theirs; they dressed her in one fresh from the hands of the Maker; and after kissing and embracing and caressing her many times, they threw around her their garlands and wreaths; they crowned her and kissed her long; and by the voice of their music told her their purpose. Because in her bosom she carried that sweet blue violet, she was blessed among many women. The garlands, and crown, and billows were made by the hand of the Creator. She had conquered Darkness and now she was to become the Queen of Light. She had wrestled with the Reddish Purple Light; by her own integrity she had changed it into wholly red, wholly bright, and had placed it beyond the Golden Billows—Mighty radiant Red Renunciation—Henceforth for the few short moments she was needed on Earth she would be their companion, their care. That just above, they awaited the signal to bear her away to the Home-land. Then, after looking at her, and smiling, they rose upward; and the Golden Billows entered her heart. Now she understood those sweeping waves; understood why they appeared mists at first; then many radiant lights; now one bright, glorious, soul stirring, whole. Love as it should be—Love from God, and delivered to man by angels. Love stained with the blood red stains of Self Renunciation. Love filched from the bosom of Love; infused into the hearts of mortality;
fanned into flame by the hand of Divinity; and crowned: and, though the Lovers be in their mortal chrysalis, made companions of by the angels.

Then as ages of little nothings passed, and as she paused beside a Fountain Basin that quivered and sparkled with numberless hues, and as she opened her lips to catch the fast falling sprays of the silvery fountain, and as the drops melted and sent a deep immeasurable wave through her soul which flooded her being with beauty, she heard the soft silence of music, and felt the angel's wings enfold her. The Fountain Water was too rapturous, too lovely, too earthly resplendent, for her; and the angels feared to lose, for their Master, their care; so they bore her away while yet the starry drops hung on her lips. Softly away, softly peaceful; they in themselves silent and motionless moving; the air around rushing and noisy. Softly away she was borne; over dark Vaults, but the the angels would not allow her to look; past Suns and Spaces and Stars, but the angels covered her sight; through Revolving Air that would have drawn aside the host were it not for the unseen central power, but the angels hurried on. Softly away like the medullary rays, she was borne to the Central Focus of the universe, the Central Focus of the millions, and thousands, and thousand millions of worlds. The gate was reached, the Golden Gate of that Holy City; and in the open doorway, surrounded by thronging faces, was the Heavenly Renunciation. He clasped her in his arms; the Golden Billows in her heart welled up and flooded the throne; the waters of Love returned to its own bright fountain. Her's was a triumphant entry, and the Saviour himself had led her in. As she nestled in sweet solemn peace, against the bosom of the Wonderful, a loud voice proclaimed, and many trumpets blew; and over the solemn silence which followed, rang out the words of the Lamb.
"These are they which come out of great tribulation and have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in His temple; and He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more. Neither shall the sun light on them nor any heat. For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them into living fountains of water, and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

The voice ceased; she raised her head, now shining and bright like the sun, and gazed around for him, whom God had created as her Soul's Affinity. Among the faces at the gate she fancied she saw the other part of her being; some reflection of an advancing figure—her heart's dearest. The shades closed round; the soul returned to the body; and the spirit put on its manacles.

The breakfast bell was ringing: and the dream of a dream had vanished.

Now as she sat out there in the shady garden, with the fragrant honeysuckle shedding it bloom around her, the sweet hum of insects playing like music in her ears, she thought of that strange vision, and wondered if the End were as faithfully pictured as was the Beginning. She was tired and weary, and such a stranger on earth. Would the journey be long? It was Evening now; evening full of calm pure light; but would it continue to be evening long? There was no Night for her. The darkness was her dawn. And in her inmost heart, she felt that she would have to rise and travel early. What wonder that the flush deepened to a carnation in her cheeks, and that her eyes burned with an unnatural brilliancy. What wonder that her aunt hesitated to add to her excitement.
Lifting her eyes to Mrs. Remay's face Nellie became suddenly aware that she had been spoken to. "I beg your pardon aunt," she exclaimed in a little confusion, "I did not hear what you said."

Mrs. Remay thought awhile; then stooping, kissed the fair flushed face. "Never mind dear," said she, and as she turned away, two thick letters, sealed and stamped with the Bonsby post mark, lay in the young girl's lap.
CHAPTER XXVIII.

It has previously been mentioned that, for a time, Nellie had cut herself off from any communication with her native town. She had several reasons for so acting; the predominating one being to save herself, as much as possible, the constant remembrance of her previous pain. It was cowardly of her no doubt; the better part would have been to wrestle with those sorrows, as she had wrestled with the greater ones of her heart, they were only external troubles after all, and as down to spikes when compared with the internal conflicts. But do not expect too much from her, remember she is but mortal, with mortal weaknesses; remember she had been cut to the quick of her soul with the awful knife of Remorse, and she was now letting her blood fall into the basin "Too Late." Perhaps now that you have seen into her heart, you will understand why that Radiant Presence, which bore her away and "placed her in the arms of one of his own," should have spared her make her own defence, using those precious words: "I remember that you are but dust." It must also be understood that Nellie was no heroine; no superhuman being imbued in the womb with those sterling qualities which characterise the heroine. Indeed, judging from the external evidences, she was almost the reverse. Her childhood had by no means been free of those little deceptions and vice buds, which, according to the wise, disclose in the child the man, or as is in this case, the woman. Her character had to be fashioned, and beaten, and moulded; and being in the Good Potter's Hands,
was neither over-wrought nor underdone. It is not the fierce blaze of Celestial Striving, nor the steady accumulating of Terrestrial Burrs, which irregulates the working; it is the clashing of the two; the descent from Celestial Plains, to wrangle with Terrestrial Burrs. The mortal feels no intellectual strivings within, if walking on the broad road of Immortal Ignorance and Indifference; neither does the God-intoxicated Being, whose intellect lies in celestial raptures, feel the heaving and piling up of the earth beneath, and of the air just above the earth. But let the one descend, and the other ascend, and see what a confusion and strife floods the intellect of man. See what a mighty chaos of darkness and light, of weakness and strength, of motion and cessation, of hope and despair, of christian faith and heathen despotism, rage in that small brain casket. It was but natural to her heritage of humanity that Nellie should seek, as much as possible, to walk free of the burrs while her brow was, on its journey to the Eternal Calm, passing through the Ether. Perhaps, with those Bird Judges, many are saying that she had no business to leave her home when trouble filled its four walls. You are right; she should never have left her home had she been Immortal and sojourning with Sister Spirits; but as she was Mortal, and a very mortal mortal at that, she possessed Mortal’s limit to endurance, besides—but more of this anon.

Naturally enough Mrs. Remay felt not a little anxious at the arrival of two letters from Bonsby. She did not know the ins and outs of everything, but she sympathized with the emotions of the young girl, and she knew that the absence of the Bonsby mail was through Nellie’s instigation. She had been sorely tempted to suppress those letters until she had investigated their contents. She did not care to see the girl so excited and feverish, and she was fearful of adding to her heightened tempera-
ture. Indeed when, on the night before, and that morning, she chanced to look at her niece's face, her heart grew still with a nameless dread, and her questions regarding that death bed froze on her lips. For many days past, nay, many weeks, ever since that penitent confession, which had drawn Aunt and Neice so much closer together, she had been filled with a strange sensation, which held in its nothingness a something. Now that something took shape; and, with half doubting, horrified eyes, she gazed at its spiritual form. It may be that from the ashes of Nellie's great sorrow there sprung up the embryo of a mortiferous disease.

There was something so uncanny beautiful, so Heaven-inspired in the large glance of the deep dark eyes, something so softly lovely in the expression of the peaceful mouth, some strange nobility about the grace and dignity of her every movement and word; that Mrs. Remay trembled while she gazed; fearing the very beauty she and her husband strove to teach, vaguely understood, and yearned to grasp. The promptings of Nellie's humanity seemed to be uttered in the Light of Eternity; and that Light hung about them as they floated to earth, making her actions appear mystical and absurd to those among whom her mortality moved. And once, when the bright sunshine was playing on the waters, and a brighter beam danced on her brow, and the whispering silence of spirits was around her, and the great eyes rested on the lambent sparkle of all, she sighingly turned, and in that brief glance, which was momentary and fleeting, and cast on her aunt's mortality, Mrs. Remay saw the golden blaze of the Homeland Lights. It seemed indeed, as Nellie had once said: "I feel that the travelling will be early. There is no night for me. I have passed through the only night of the soul. Already the Setting, which is but the con-
continued radii of the Rising, rests upon my brow; while around my waist I feel the pressure of my silvery moonbeam girdle."

No wonder Mrs. Remay hesitated when she saw this strange new emotion stirring her niece’s being. Could it be the visible beginning of that mystical continuation? Then she remembered that two odd numbers made an even; that the properties of one poison, when applied to the properties of another, often had the effect of destroying the lethal germs of both. She applied the antiseptic, and, from her secluded seat in the garden, she watched its effect upon her patient.

How still and motionless that white-robed figure. It might be cold and dead for all the life it displayed. And the half-reclining posture—had she sunk to sleep while under the incubation? Ah! no; for presently the stiffened limbs began to relax; their rigidity thawed; and the patient arose, and, lifting her eyes, gazed long into the great blue heavens. In her hands she clasped the crushed casket of the restorative. Then slowly she turned, and slowly, quietly, made her way into the soul-inhabited solitude of her room. The day faded; the minister returned from his pastoral visitations; the lamps were lit; for once for many a long day husband and wife supped alone.

"We are going to have tea by ourselves to-night, Nole," said Mrs Remay, in answer to her husband's enquiring look. "Nellie is tired. She has had a great deal of excitement lately. Sit down, and I will tell you what I know, which is very little."

So they sat down and conversed long and earnestly about the events of the past two days. Dear loving souls! May the angels of God encamp round about you always, as they do to-night, while your hearts beat so lovingly toward the lonely little figure just above your heads. In the shadows
yonder I see a radiant hand place in your rainbow diadem a Small White Stone of priceless value, bearing in its transparent depths a name which only angels and spirits can read.

Tea over, they adjourned to the library, and continued their uninterrupted conversation, making the air rich and fragrant with kind suggestions and intentions regarding their more than daughter's welfare.

In the midst of a happy speculation, a gentle tap was heard, and a little white face with great dark eyes appeared in the doorway. "Am I disturbing you, uncle?" said a sweet firm voice.

"No, no, child; certainly not. Come in," answered Mr. Remay, rising and offering a chair with the courtesy and grace that looked so well, and which gave his aged form that humble dignity that claimed reverence from even the froward. Nellie sank into the seat, and for a few moments remained silent, her hands clasped, and her eyes bent thoughtfully on the empty grate. During that interval Mrs. Remay watched the girl's face through her half-closed lashes. There is a peculiar faculty in the human intellect which is, perhaps, a little difficult to explain, although it is by no means uncommon. It is agitated, in the first place, by a certain attribute, such as a turn of the head, a peculiar drooping of the eyelids, or such like, of the being of our contemplation. As time passes, and we become accustomed to the face, we forget the impression made upon us by that attribute; perhaps (for a very good reason) there is nothing in the face or form to keep alive that impression. Yet it must be understood that within us the faculty lies asleep. Long afterwards the dormant faculty may suddenly be awakened by the re-appearance of that attribute; and with the reawakening of the faculty, returns also the remembrance of the circumstance which occasioned the appearance of the attribute. To speak more plainly:—In my intercourse with
my fellow men I make a new acquaintance. It need not necessarily be a new acquaintance; it might be a friend. We do not meet again for some time; and in the meanwhile a great calamity has fallen upon him. When we meet again, in the first glance I discover that attribute. There is something about the person which betrays the working of the soul. I knew the nature of the calamity; knew the fortitude with which it had been met; and guessed the rest. From that time I saw the face continually, but it had lost that attribute. It had resumed its ordinary expression, and I forgot all about the circumstance. Years afterwards, that latent faculty within me is again awakened by the reappearance of that attribute. Although as yet I know nothing of the nature of the present calamity, I know there must be one; and I know also that it has been met with the same fortitude and success as its predecessor. My thoughts naturally turn to the former occasion; and that particular string of my intellect plays its own weird tune.

This is precisely what took place in Mrs. Remay's mind, as she scanned the young face before her. There was in Nellie's bearing that peculiarity which recalled to her remembrance the circumstances of its former appearance. And by the reappearance of that peculiarity she understood what as yet was unexplained. Naturally enough, her thoughts returned to the former occasion, and her heart grew strong with its hope. She saw two figures standing on a curved shining beach—a lady and a child. The waves were advancing and receding, and lashing and breaking, with all their restless regularity. Stooping, the child lifted a piece of weed that lay at her feet, and threw it into the boiling surf. Backward and forward that tiny weed was borne. The anger of the waves increased. How dare this mite do battle against their giant strength? Fiercer and fiercer grew the fight, the weed slowly and silently advancing; the howling roaring
waves lashing it back again and again. But the mighty waves were spent, and the weed was calmly triumphant. Disgusted with the whole encounter, the foaming enemy lifted the quiet victor upon its crest, and tossed it into the great blue calm beyond.

The lady looked down at the child beside her. "What are you thinking of, little one?" said she, gently stroking the sunburnt cheek.

"I don't know. Yes, I do. But—but—Can you tell a think, lady?" With the perplexity of the last question, the attribute had vanished.

"Not always, dear. I am afraid few can." Then the child ran down to the waters and sported with their curling waves.

When childhood's uncertain utterances had given place to woman's purely pronounced words, the thought found a way of expression. One day, as they two were seated together, engaged in the sweet communion of saints, the woman-child, now a child-woman, lifted her great eyes to the lady's face, and in her earnest tones said, "O aunt, how like floating weeds are our Christian lives. By an Invisible Hand we are placed into the waters of an unknown ocean. And, oh! the thrilling delight of our new element. We gaze across the sea with scornful pride. With a single bound we are going to reach our haven; living, always living, in the intoxication of this new delight. Short-lived pride! Too soon the rising tide envelops us; too soon we are swallowed up. But we appear again. We rise, impelled by an under-current. Then back to the shore we are cast, where, upon our knees, we struggle to beat off the hideous mixture of Carnal Sand and Spiritual Water. The under-current again lifts us, and bears us onward; and at last, over the great foaming breakers we are cast, and into the calm ocean we now float, until the form of our mortality becomes immortal, and we sink to rest beneath
our wave-washed sky. And O, auntie, that rest! Not the
dead and silent rest of the grave. In the grave there may
be less tranquility than on the earth. It is the Rest I feel
now. The Rest that thrills my being, and awakens within
me new worlds, new lives, new wildernesses of thought."

"My child shall win," murmured Mrs. Remay, as her eyes
rested proudly on the fair face. "Victory leads on to
victory."

Nellie's voice disturbed her quiet musings; and soon the
three were engaged in an earnest consultation. At last
Nellie lifted her head from her hands, whither she had let it
fall for a few moments, and looked quietly, sadly at her
uncle.

"You approve of my going? I could send, you know,
but I hardly think it would be right."

"I entreat you to hasten, my child," said Mr. Remay, in
a broken voice; "although God knows the separation will
be hard to bear."

Nellie did not attempt to speak cheerfully; she was too
broken in spirit herself. "When does the boat leave,
uncle?" she asked.

"To-morrow evening."

"So soon? O, my child! my child! How shall I bear
this wrench! The thought of it is killing me." Mrs.
Remay flung her arms around the girl and pressed her pas-
sionately to her bursting heart, the tears streaming down
her cheeks. For a moment Nellie was thrown off her guard,
and sobbed liked a baby. But a fierce battle had to be
fought, of which this was but the shadow; so, casting aside
her grief as she would a cumbriance, she stood up calm and
firm, and sternly ready for the conflict. In that painful
parting, she alone, who really had the most cause for distress,
was serene and cheerful. The same indomitable will, which
for a time had lain asleep in the Arbour of Ease, sustained
her and gave her peace. With her uncle she arranged about everything concerning her departure. She left a few instructions, regarding her work, with her aunt. She charged them both to say good-bye to all the friends among whom she had been so peacefully happy; and then for the first time her voice shook a little. She arose and stood just before the two dear hearts—dearer to her by far than was her own.

"My aunt, my uncle," she cried, a world of love and tenderness shining in her earnest eyes. "My more than parents, How can I ever thank you for all you have been to me? To-night I feel so small, so weak, as I stand in the light of your own good natures. I have prayed that you might learn to love me. I have striven to be worthy of your love. I have twined my heart about yours until I feel I cannot stand alone. Is it wrong to pray for love? Twice I have asked and received; and twice I have had to renounce it. No! no! Not renounce my love, but renounce myself. My love for you will never fade. It shall be placed in the same casket that holds my father's. I never asked for my father's love, but I got it; and when I got it, I did not know how to use it." Then, throwing herself upon her knees, she took the hands of both in a yearning clasp. "Have I caused you one moment of regret? From the depth of my heart I plead forgiveness. Oh, forget my failings, and love me for my love."

What could they do but pet her? What could they say but that they loved her? Ere they separated on this their last night together for many many days, they knelt down and committed their ways unto their God. And the voice of the aged grew deep and mellow as he pleaded for Divine grace and blessing on this their wandering daughter.

The next day was too full of preparations to allow much indulgence in grief, and only once Mrs. Remay failed in her fortitude. It was when they three sat down to dinner, and
the kind loving heart pictured the lonely meal of the morrow. Two wilful tears forced their way down her cheeks and fell into her plate; and to hide her emotion she had to pretend there was something in the kitchen wanting her attention. Her husband and Nellie tried to look as if they did not suspect what was the matter, and succeeded admirably by feeling very sheepish. In the afternoon, Mrs. Remay and Nellie drove away from home, one never to come back again. Mr. Remay was to meet them by-and-by.

"You are sure you do not mind my going alone, auntie?" said Nellie, as they bowled along the dusty road.

"I would not go with you, dear. It would be wrong of me to wish to come. People speak more freely when there is not a third party listening. I shall let you down at Mrs. May's gate. You can walk the remainder of the way, as you will need to find the place by following my directions. Then we shall meet again, and all go down to the wharf together." She drew up, and the girl alighted, and stood for a few moments watching the little hooded gig as it drove quietly up a winding gravelled carriage drive and disappeared behind a clump of tall green trees. Then Nellie turned, and quietly threaded her path alone.
CHAPTER XXIX.

It has previously been mentioned that the main town in which Mr. and Mrs. Remay resided was at some distance from the harbour. Not that it was distant from the sea; but, being built further round the Bay, and on three imposing hills, which, although not pleasant for business people, gave it a picturesqueness for the idle pleasure-seeker, it was kept free of the scattered confusion attending ship exporting and importing. However, for some distance around the wharf there were houses and homes, with their accompanying men and women. The locality was low-lying and unhealthy, and the houses were of the poorest and dirtiest description. Two large buildings, one a wholesale store which looked like an enormous one-stall stable, the other the freezing works, not much better in appearance, several small shops, and one or two moderately tidy houses, were the only places of distinction, if such striking peculiarities can be called distinction. Yet we are slightly wrong. To say that these were the only places of distinction is not speaking correctly. In the midst of this meagre population three large hotels reared their imposing walls, and carried on their devastating practices; kept in luxury by people who fail to support themselves in bare necessities. Here, indeed, is a practical illustration to the havoc of drink; and it is a visible proof of that Colonial characteristic, "Where two or three houses are gathered together there you will see a hotel in the midst of them." The heart bleeds at the knowledge of this stain on the fair name of New Zealand. Who are the upholders of this drink
curse? The grimy-faced, scantily-clad children, the bloated blear-eyed parents, the shattered-glass rag-stuffed windows, the tottering doorstep, all rise up and disclose the effect; but the cause must be ascertained before the cure can be effected. And to discover a cause, especially one so complicated as this, needs much study and many failures. Before us stands the great class—man. Divide it into four parts. Wealthy, Poor, Influential, Lowly. Yet ever bear in mind that numbers from all four parts worship at the shrine of this Drink God, and that all are screened behind the cloak Christian Civilization. Thus day after day, and year after year, priest and people pay tribute to their god by sacrificing upon his altar all their better qualities and higher hopes; celebrating the ceremony by lifting the flagon to their lips and draining the filthy draught. "O God," in the bitterness of our souls we cry; "Is there no God in Israel, that thy people send to foreign lands for foreign gods?" But come, we are searching for the cause. Drill deeper and deeper into the services of this drink-worshiping nation. There in the inner court you perceive the poor deluded man performing his religious rites, and receiving his god's responses. He is from the wealthy class; has paid his tribute; and is now celebrating the ceremony. Presently he will adjourn to his couch, whither, perhaps, his wife has preceded him. Why should not the both receive their responses together? They are not very well, and think it best to remain quiet for a day or two.

A second man enters the inner court; but his clothes and gait mark him as from the opposite class. He enters and bows. Lo! he is a priest, for around him is gathered his family. He is not very strong, so is permitted a chair; and of course his people follow suit. There he sits in the midst of poverty and squalor, brandishing his pannikin of beer, and singing his drunken song; while
his wife and children clap their hands and join in the merry worship. They are all happy, very happy. Their mirth exceeds even that of their predecessor. The priest has paid his tribute long ago; it behoves him now to celebrate the ceremony, and to teach his children the service. "Czienup, my hearties!" he cries, throwing down his empty mug, and rising to his feet with the intention of dancing a jig. But the spirits have entered his brain; he reels, staggers, and would have fallen, but for the timely help of his half-intoxicated wife. The interference arouses the sleeping demon within. Supporting himself by holding on to the table, the man stands up, a beast personified, bursting to give vent to his brutal instinct. His fierce eyes fall upon his wife; but she, too, has been worshipping at Bacchus' shrine, and her trembling limbs refuse to help her escape. With profane oaths, blow after blow is rained upon the woman's body. The children, uttering terrified screams, flee from the house, and seek shelter from a neighbour. But soon the man grows tired of his brutal occupation, and after beating his wife black and blue, turns her out of doors. By this time his rage is spent. The responses have been rather more than his strength of mind was capable of receiving. He cringes and shivers, and slinks into the farthest corner. The least sound sends a shudder through him. He weeps like a baby. "Where is thy wife and children? Their blood cries unto thee from the ground." At the question, a cold perspiration breaks out over his brow. His face assumes a dogged haunted expression.

"They were drunk, and I turned them out;" said the wretched man covering his face with his hands.

"By what authority did you act so? Were you not worse than they?"

"Oh, no. I am not drunk. No one can say I am. I have never been drunk in my life." In his endeavour to
vindicate himself, the poor man rises. "Hiccough!" Ugh! A reel; and the quivering mass falls prostrate, to vomit up the costly, soul-bought poison.

Disperse! Leave him to his wallowing. He will soon copy his fellow-worshipper, by sleeping off the responses. But what of the wife and children? O Compassion! Compassion! Where art thou, that thou art not aroused at the thought of their abandonment? Ah! here is the answer, before even the neighbour's door is reached. The rattle of mugs, mingling with wailings; the shadow of hands waving half-drained bottles. What do they tell? And what does the whole story tell? What the whole worship? That the indulgers in this drink consumption are like babes. "They know not what they do." And after the manner of babes should they be treated. Why heed their lisping words, "We are happy. Let us alone. We are doing you no harm. We must live. This is the easiest way of getting a livelihood."

Awake! awake! O man and woman! Awake and put forth every effort to stem this awful current. Do you not see the poor prisoners stretching out their arms for aid? It is on you, who are grown up, as it were; who see and feel the darkness of such worship, that the responsibility of this crime rests. Neither the buyers nor the sub-sellers are to blame for the stain put upon our proud Island, for the allurements for both are great. It is you; you who calmly stand and mock at the poor suppliants.

"This must not be! This shall not be?" we cry; and as the shout rends the air, a Being of infinite tenderness appears before our gaze. He is standing at the open graves of intemperate men's souls. He is standing and weeping. "O, Father!" we cry; "how He loved them." Then the Being lifts up His glorious voice, and commands men and women to come forth and unloosen the napkins, and let the
dead free. At the sound of that voice, Satan trembles in his exalted seat; and the thick walls of his fortress shake beneath the shells of truth hurled at them by our Prohibitionists. Fight on! Fight on, and win! We know that those walls have taken years to build. What fortress worth storming has not? We know that the land whereon those fortresses are built is more solid and fertile than the soil of ordinary vice. But we also know that by the power of God, we shall prevail. For at the last shout of our seventh day's march those walls shall fall, and the chosen children shall enter in and take possession. Work and labour in the right spirit; the spirit of Pity and Holy Indignation; the spirit in which the Saviour worked and laboured; and nothing shall fail. All shall come to pass.

It was just such a neighbourhood Nellie entered; and it was among just such people her errand took her. And while she pauses in front of a grimy little shop, and looks up at the faded sign board, let us learn the brief history of this insignificant little building.

In the first place, it was built many years before by an energetic enterprising business man. He began business at the very bottom of the ladder, and for some years, like Caleb Balderstone in "The Bride of Lammermoor," told as many lies, and invented as many ruses "for the credit of his honour," as would erect a second Tower of Babel. I hardly think he went so far as to light a fire on the roof of his house, but many were the "spit bearing the wild foul" he made off with; although for the matter of that, he never waited for them to get to the cooper's bickering fire, preferring rather to do his own cooking. And the cooking was as ludicrous as the procuring. It may be he inherited his culinary accomplishments from his Scotch great grand father, for this peculiar little man was what the vulgar would call "a Scotch Jew." After having as he termed it "released
the poor animal from the pangs of life," he dipped it in water, rolled it round and round in white clay, which he kept in a case at the back door, and which mystified his neighbours not a little; and deposited it among the glowing embers; then he closed the kitchen doors, and no one dare enter until the "divine assiduous" had finished its consultation. Naturally these little peculiarities, along with several others, marked him as singular. Many, indeed, looked askance at him, in their hearts hearing the voice of superstitious whispers. But he persevered in his work, and soon found himself a thriving business man, possessing a large boot manufacturing establishment, and commanding a brisk and extensive trade. Even then those early superstitions hung about him, placing him in awkward positions at times. For instance, his business necessitated his journeying to other towns, and it was with difficulty the skippers of the small coasting vessels could be persuaded to tranship him. He was looked upon as a modern Jonah, whom to have in the vessel was a direct challenge to the storm; singulary enough, two or three of these little boats had been wrecked while he was journeying by them, which perhaps gave rise to the superstition. Nevertheless, this funny little man was not so bad as he was painted, or at any rate everyone did not look upon him with the same repulsion; for one day he returned from one of these foreign visits, bringing with him a wife. Thus for many days he "grew like a green bay tree, spreading aloft his great branches," and drinking in the fragrant air of success. But the worm lay at the root eating its way into the vital parts, although for a time its direful presence remained concealed. Just as he was about to resign business, and spend the remainder of his days in retirement, a sudden illness laid him low; and a far more lasting place of rest, a far more satisfactory retirement, opened its door for him.
Now the presence of the worm began to make itself felt. The business drooped. The capital became exhausted. Debts accumulated. Bankruptcy. A few days after the crash, a fire broke out in one of the rooms and consumed more than half the shop. How it originated no one knew for certain, although many suspected. The remaining portion of the once fine building was patched up and made habitable. And thus after the lapse of several years, it stood before the perplexed girl, a delapidated ugly little shop, with three or four hob-nailed boots, and about half-a-dozen pairs of laces all looking as if they came out of the Ark, blinking at her through the red screened window.

Satisfied with her inspection, Nellie stepped in, and tapped on the counter. An elderly woman appeared, and with a courteous "Good afternoon," asked in a strangely mellow voice, "what can I do for you Miss?"

Nellie was a little startled by the woman’s appearance; naturally enough she had expected to see something in keeping with her surroundings. Then she remembered hearing that at one time this was the "Darling of society," and she well understood the reason of that application.

The woman was tall and stately, and moved and spoke with that quiet grace which is the heritage of birth alone. She was neatly dressed, even tastefully, and her hand, as it rested on the counter, though painfully thin, was well formed and white. But it was the expression of her face, and the music of her voice which struck one most. The latter was low, but clear and decided, and somehow gave you the impression that it had been trained for the hall. The former pale, strongly marked, expressive of deep sense, and, but for the peculiar restlessness of the eyes would have been reflective: and her grey hair, which was rather loosely braided, indicated a time when it clustered around a tender maidenly brow in soft raven ringlets.
"I have some private business with you," said Nellie, in answer to the woman's question. "We can hardly converse without interruption, here," glancing around the tiny shop.

"Step this way please," and leading the way into the room she had just quitted, she offered Nellie a chair. "Excuse the untidiness Miss, but I have not had the heart to do anything much since my son——Perhaps you knew my son. A fine strapping young man, but not obedient to his mother. It nearly broke my heart when he left his home; just when I needed him most too. But there, I forgive him; may the Lord forgive him also. Pray that you might never know the pangs of mothers, Miss." She rather overdid herself, and there was something so hollow about her forgiveness, and her hope, that "The Lord would forgive him also," that Nellie's lip curled scornfully, and she wondered if the woman were one of those canting religious jades that infest the public streets, and barricade the private doors. The thick laden atmosphere plainly showed she was no Salvation Army member, and for the first time Nellie detected the traces of drink. This, by the way, was the latent worm. Presently the woman began to whine, and then her fortitude gave way. Throwing her arms across the table, and bowing her head upon them, she moaned: "O my son, my only boy. His father left me, and now he has left me. What shall I do? I am alone, alone."

"After all," thought Nellie, "the woman has a little motherly feeling left. Aunt told me she was a good kind woman, spoiled. She was all right so long as her husband was alive and able to keep a restraint upon her evil indulgence. After that—but there, we have all our failings. Yet it is dreadful to think of the consequences of our folly." Her heart softened toward the woman, and going over to the table, she placed a hand on the bowed shoulder, saying in a gentle voice: "I am sorry for your trouble, Mrs.
Maurice; it is about your son I am come to speak; I was with him at the last, and received his dying instructions."

Instantly the woman ceased her discordant wail, and sprang to her feet as if she had been subjected to a current of electricity. She turned to the startled girl a face hideous with its expression of cunning expectancy. "Has he left me any money?" she hissed; "Have you brought it?"

Nellie shrank back, her great eyes fixed on the woman's face; infinite disgust stirring in her soul. "Could this be the same woman? A moment before she had mourned, and that with sincerity, the bereavement of husband and son. She had uttered God's name and pretended to know his ways. Now she stood up a deified Judas; her better nature bartered at the shrine of gold. Nay, at what she had worshipped so long, and what the gold could buy. Nellie shuddered, and her voice was icy cold as she answered. "Your son has left you a small sum of money, but it is under restriction. You are to receive the interest, which will be barely enough to keep you in idleness during your lifetime. It is so disposed as to leave you no loop hole for indulging in what was your, and partly his own, ruin. After your death the capital goes to the hospital. However, my visit has nothing to do with money matters. You will hear the particulars from another source. Your son charged me to make known to you the truth concerning his last earthly act. Not, that he wished for any compliance toward himself from you, but that you might see in his death something beyond obliteration; and also, that when you come to meet your own end it might be a comfort to know that your son died honouring the name both you and he had, during life, made a hiss and by-word for every tongue. Sit down, Mrs. Maurice," commanded Nellie, pointing to the chair the woman had so suddenly quitted. "Sit down, and I will tell you my message." The
woman did as she was commanded, and Nellie, drawing her own chair forward, began.

"You are aware of the fact, I suppose, that your son gradually fell from the high position his father's affection and wealth had fitted him to fill. The ladder down which he slid all too quickly, you understand better than do I. The last step, which in reality was his first to a higher, was the insignificant post of a jockey. How much of the fall lies at your door, you best know. Perhaps a little lies at mine." The last few words seemed to have a soothing effect, and Nellie's voice grew softer as she remembered the bright flash in two deep blue eyes. Then she told to the mother the noble deed of her noble son. Told how Albert Maurice had refused to be bribed into dishonesty; but worn out by the persistency of his tempters, and crushed by the influence of his former dissipated life, he at last gave in. When the day dawned for the execution of this gigantic fraud, his better nature rose to the surface. As he rode out on to the course, he flung the silver down at the feet of the Pharisees, and refused to be a Judas, declaring he would win if possible. Then, when with beating heart, he found himself winning, passing the wished-for winner, his companion, out of revenge, struck him with his whip just as his horse was rising to the last hurdle. He swerved. Down came horse and rider, and on rode the cruel traitor. All this Nellie told, and much more. Told of a noble forgiveness, and a generous silence. Told that almost his last words were to allow no one else but his mother know of the fraud and of the results. Told that the slightest breath of the story getting abroad would lose her her income; that in the hour of death he shielded his murderer. Told, and showed, the diamond of self-sacrifice dug from the slums of evil influence.

The old woman's face softened a little, and she promised to respect her son's last wishes. But her main thoughts
seemed to be the income. "How did he come by the money, Miss?" asked she, after a few moments' pause.

"His life was well insured, and he has always managed to pay the premium," answered the girl.

"It was very good of Albert. But what use is it to me if I can't do as I please with it?"

Again that feeling of repulsion swept over the girl, and rising, she said in her freezing tone, "I presume our business is at an end, Mrs. Maurice. I expected to hear a word of commendation for your son's noble conduct. I am disappointed. How you could be the mother of so brave a man I cannot understand. I have but one word to say in parting. Have a care how you employ the remainder of your life. It will not be the same now as it was before. You drifted, and were more to be pitied than blamed. But this is a warning; and it has come to arrest your downward course. If you do not heed, then that drifting or failing becomes a sin, and you will have to atone accordingly. Good afternoon."

She turned and left the room and the shop; and that was the first and last time those two met and conversed. Their ways diverged, and they regarded one another with the feeling of an accidental acquaintance. Perhaps in the other world they will be drawn closer together by the personal presence of their introductory theme. But of ourselves we might add that never from that day was Mrs. Maurice seen the worse of liquor. On the outskirts of that little scaport, you will notice a neat little cottage almost smothered in vine. Over the mantelpiece of its tiny parlour is a large picture of a handsome young man, with dark features and raven curly hair, with square chin, short drooping moustache a shade lighter than his hair, and with strange fascinating eyes. He is dressed in jockey clothes, and is standing beside a noble looking horse. At his feet lies a dragon with a silver coin in its mouth, which it seems to be holding out to the young
man. But the white face of the young man is slightly
turned towards the horse, and his foot rests upon the
dragon's head. This picture is the only ornament in the
room, indeed, it is almost the only article of furniture worth
noticing. The sole inhabitant of this little palace is an
elderly lady—she is a lady now, that you cannot help seeing
at the first glance—and if you were to ask her about the
picture, she would quietly say, "He is my son;" then her
lips would be sealed, and you would get no more information
regarding it.

The story of Albert Maurice's heroic conduct never eked
out. It was buried like many another such like, beneath the
stone which marked his earthly resting place. Nevertheless
that story may have its resurrection, and in the Lamb's book
of Life many shall see it written across the page which
contains the record of his life's.
CHAPTER XXX.

Two years after her exit, Elmy Main landed once more in her native town of Bonsby. He grief at parting with her kind benefactors was too deep for words; even the "Good-bye" froze in her heart. It was not the separation altogether she dreaded. It was the having to stand alone. Throughout the time of preparation necessity had buoyed up the fainting spirits; but with the removal of necessity came the removal of strength. As the vessel moved away, and she realized that the distance between her beloved friends and herself was gradually increasing, Nellie's false strength gave way. For hours she lay groaning in spirit, and refusing to be comforted. All the persuasions of the kind stewardesses were of no avail. She would not stir from her bunk, where she had thrown herself in her abandonment of grief. When at last the first paroxysm had passed, and she was prevailed upon to go on deck, it was only to look with hungering eyes along the ship's wake; and to feel her heart sink like lead at the near approach of her destination. Truly it was time she left her pleasant life, else she would become of no great use in the world. Her dream-land of ease was unfitting her for the rough sea shore. Surrounded by those loving friends, she may be able to bathe in the waters of Time; to gaze across the river. But that is not all that is needed for a soldier of Christ. Those waters must be brought into subjection. The Dark-faced Ferryman must be made to surrender, and his net must be torn to shreds.
This grief may seem strange to the reader. Why should there be such a dread of returning to her native place in Nellie's heart? I hardly know; but there seems to me a strange affinity between mental and physical susceptibilities. As the flesh quivers at the reappearance of the physician's mutilating knife; so also the lacerated heart shudders at the reappearance of those circumstances and places enshrouded in so much pain and pleasure.

Night fell ere the vessel entered the Bay. The little launch steamed alongside, received her freight, and tore off again, leaving the great steamer despoiled of half her attractions, and laughing at the sullen gloomy monster out in the dark. Up to the wharf this lively little sea-carriage glided, and bade her drivers dismount. With swift steady steps, a small figure, clad in a long loose mantle, mounted the gangway and disappeared in the crowd on the wharf. No one recognised the thin white face and delicate frame. No one could connect with it the once bright lively tomboy. Two years had indeed wrought their changes, turning the child into a woman. She stood well back in the shadow of the lights, watching for her luggage, when a hand was laid upon her arm, and a voice of eager doubtfulness whispered, "Nellie!" She turned quickly. "Grace!" There was silence for a few minutes, while sister was clasped in the arms of sister. Nellie never forgot that meeting, and in after days the remembrance of her sister's kindness in coming to welcome the wanderer home, was the means of passing over to that sister a happiness that could have been her own.

"How did you know I was coming, Grace?" asked Nellie, looking up at her tall sister, who stood almost head and shoulders above herself.

"We suspected. The letters, you know. But someone else is here to welcome you home, Nellie."
“Who?” asked Nellie glancing around.

“Your old mother,” answered a voice at her side, and there sure enough was the mother with her tearful smile. Thus although in parting there had been pain and derision; in re-union there was pleasure and reconciliation. Do as we please we cannot alter God’s purposes; and whether in obedience or in rebellion; whether in pain or in rejoicing, His will is being done in defiance of man’s feeble remonstrances.

Mother and daughters drove home in the moonlight, and peace reigned in the dismembered home. With ravishing delight Bonsby’s gossips seized upon this tempting bit of news, and entertained one another with graphic descriptions regarding Nellie’s appearance, and bearing, and many other items peculiar to feminine curiosity. While the tiny bird circle at first looked askance at her, but finding that no notice was taken of them, and that their opinions were regarded with not so much as a hearing, they veered round and sought to draw attention by condescending patronage. Even that did not win an access, and finally they were obliged to retire—well—rather mystified. Nellie had learned, during her absence, to build up her character and promptings on a surer foundation than that of the opinions and approbations of her fellow sojourners.

Once, and once only did she take an active part in pecuniary discussions. Not that money matters were entirely dispensed with, necessity, or perhaps better, appearances, required that they should be considered in her presence, but she became a “dead head” as it were; listening without speaking, judging without giving a verdict; apparently a puppet to be considered in name alone.

In the earlier part of our narrative we purposely refrained from mentioning pecuniary matters, for the reason that it seems sacrilege to do so, when the heart is well nigh
m addened with the pain of bereavement and remorseful gnawings. Nevertheless, such matters did exist, so also the troubles arising from such matters. It will be remembered, however, that we mentioned that the last weight which broke the camel's back, was not a diamond, but a straw. Then it may be understood that these money troubles was the straw of our story. Still there is no need to describe the nature of this straw; everyone, more or less, has been made acquainted with title deeds, transfers and signatures, and the hundred and one devil heads of the Modern Hydra, Law. What a pity we have not a Modern Hercules to complete the legend and slay the monster.

The once indicated was on the second evening after Nellie's arrival. The whole family had gathered together in the Main drawing Room, to discuss the contents of one of those letters Nellie had received on that memorable day, when she decided to return home. The second letter as the reader probably guesses, was the one from Mrs. Allen, Senior. At the close of the family discussion, Nellie drew herself apart, and in her quiet determined way, told them that henceforth her voice would be heard no more in matters connected with money.

"You do not agree with me," added she in conclusion, "that we give up to these distant relatives what they demand from us as their just due, and in a worldly point of view—nay, in all points of view—you are right. Nevertheless, I will not be my father's exhumor, as I was his grave-digger. I would rather resign every penny of his hard-earned money, and by my own exertions become the bread-winner of the family, than drag the dead from the grave to answer, whether false or true, for things done in the flesh. While he was in the flesh, he did the things of the flesh, and our own experiences with our fleshy natures, reveal too plainly that such deeds are seldom, if ever, un-
alloyed; but now that he is in the spirit, no mortal has the right nor the authority to meddle with him. The least in in the kingdom of Heaven is greater than the greatest on earth. It therefore behoves us to make reparation, if needed, without applying to the dead for an explanation. However, I have no more to do with the affair. I have suffered too keenly and too recently to be anxious to enter again into the torturing rack of money squabbles.

"Are we to understand that you cast off the duty imposed upon you by your father? And do you know that the world will look upon you as unworthy of his trust?"

"You are to understand that a Higher Father has imposed upon me a Higher Duty, a more dignified office than that of filling a vacancy among the crowd of gnashing, foaming, money-governors. You are to understand that my father, being now in the spirit, looks at things through spiritual eyes, and that, seeing further in his immortality than he did in his mortality, he has released me from his former commands, and has placed a new command upon his child; that of keeping his memory green, and his name untarnished, by living a virtuous peaceful life. Thus in obeying the one I fulfill my duty to both parents. As for the world's opinion, Pshaw! I count that as nothing. In the midst of the world I stand alone. I take nothing from it, therefore I give it nothing in return. Too long have I hearkened to its cringing promises of reward; too deeply have I felt its faithlessness to its promises. I have done with it for ever, and I defy its power."

"Then you have nothing more to do with the estate?"

"Nothing, save in name alone. I leave the management of such matters in the hands of those who find pleasure in their administration."

The meeting broke up and the parties dispersed; many inwardly declaring that Nellie was not only a fool, but also
a religious fanatic, who cared nothing for pounds, shillings and pence. If they had seen her but an hour afterwards, counting up every item of expenditure, and balancing her accounts, they would have changed their opinion. However they did not, and to this present day Nellie is thought of as the despiser of Gold. The reason of the difference between the two modes of treatment, was, that in the latter case, an account was being rendered unto God for money lent; in the former the money account collided with the moral, which collision resulted in the destruction of the weaker power. Let it be understood that christians do not consider it a sacred duty to relinquish all connections with pecuniary matters; on the contrary, they are more careful of their pounds, shillings and pence, than is their worldly brother, for they realize that their money was entrusted unto their care for the purpose of improving their own condition morally and physically, and also for helping along their less favoured companion. Whereas the world-wise-brother confines the use of his property to himself and to his physical surroundings; deeming it waste in his brother spending on moral culture, that which he himself would have spent upon physical comforts. We sympathize with the calculating man who calls it folly to deny self the luxuries of life in order to promote the prosperity of a poor neighbour; and we agree with him that there would be more sense in carpeting the floor with costly carpets, and in levelling the lawns and gravelling the paths, than there is in sending the superfluous earnings to help support a thankless community; indeed all the logic would be on his side were it not for the fact that a christian’s expenditure is upon such stock as will bring him in a two-fold return; which returns go toward beautifying their permanent home. What kind of sense, think you, would there be in raising Capital for the purpose of beautifying a temporary abode,
when by the exercise of a little patience, sufficient interest could be obtained to luxuriate a perpetual home. While at the same time that capital is so deposited as to be the means of skimming out the limited supply of a poorer companion, and indeed to be his main substance leading to higher things. Methinks this is not a question of religious fanaticism, but a plain practical piece of logic, which even the business satiated man cannot fail to understand. As for moral culture—if the being is to take its place in a higher standard of life, is it not necessary for that being to pass through such training as to fit it for gracing such eminence? How then can moral culture be carried on without moral expenditure? Methinks this is a piece of logic which even the society lady cannot fail to understand. Beside all this arguing there is another, perhaps more forcible, being taught by the sense of sight. What man, having spent all his substance on his home, or his earthly comforts, is, really comfortable, really satisfied. If he were so, he would not so often seek new attractions, new phases of life. It is inherent in man to be dissatisfied, and all the wealth and influence of Solomon will not take away that inherent craving after fresh scenes. A much more valuable elixir is needed to satisfy the human soul.

Not many days after this pecuniary discussion, a cablegram arrived telling the Mains to take no further steps in the matter; Cousin May's eldest son bearing explanatory notes, was coming to them across the water. One can guess the commotion occasioned in the Main household at the reception of this tiny bit of news. For days nothing else was talked about,—"I wonder what he is like." "Who could have believed that such connections existed."

The preparations made for his welcoming were many; and the plans drawn out for his enjoyment past numbers.

In the mean time Nellie took up her life in a strange sad dreary style. Day after day she would wander around
and about her home, scarcely speaking a word. The place never echoed with her favourite song; its melody was hushed in the reminiscence of the past. The elder children grew tired of appealing to deaf ears and withdrew their sympathies; the younger gazed at her from afar and firmly refused to acknowledge her presence. But Nellie took no notice, and lived on in an atmosphere of her own: an atmosphere full of sad sad spirits. Ah! some may be able to bury a father with less concern than can others; may forget him after the lapse of a few weeks, and growing weary of a seclusion which is meaningless to them, may be able to cast it off and resume their ordinary life. Some may feel the bereavement very acutely at first, but as time passes, and circumstances alter, the pain becomes as a dream to be recalled to remembrance at the sound of only certain strains. But with some, bereavement stops neither at words nor feelings; it finds its utterances in the Stillness of the Hereafter. The rolling on of Time, and the changing of Circumstances, serve to widen and deepen the great loss. Those things which for a time were forgotten, start up and gape at them with every turn of the wheel, every change of the life. Womanhood's trials cry for a father's bosom whereon to sob out their soreness. Manhood's impetuosity needs the grasp of a father's moderation hand. And even our own paternal officiation may throw fresh light upon that tomb.

Soon the town and its surroundings became distasteful to Nellie; she longed for—yet dared not ask—a change. But one day, the owner of what was once her father's station, released her from her prison, and carried her off to his home in the country; and strange to say, this man was none other than our old friend Mr. Watson. He was married now, had grown up children. I wonder if he ever thought of a fair girl in a far off heathen land.
This may seem strange proceedings on Nellie's part, to seek to find comfort in the very midst of the memorabilia. But it must be understood that every item spoke of that father's living presence. It was here the happiest part of his life was spent: happy by being filled with unaccomplished ambition. It was here the sparks of a fully developed enterprising nature, were caught by the weak newly born soul of its offspring, and by that offspring, nourished and converted into a blazing furnace almost equal to its own. It was here among the cornfields, and the sheep pens, that the child had first discovered in the parent those hidden gems that were to be transferred to her own nature, enhancing its sparkle, and giving it strength: and it was here that the spirit of reverence made every blade, every stone, speak to the Sorrowing Left, of the Beloved Departed, in the angel language of Love. We leave her for a while in her country home, and we return to town, and retrace our steps to an incident which took place the week after her arrival in Bonsby.
CHAPTER XXXI.

ONE bright afternoon, a lady dressed in black, and wearing a thick veil, might have been seen standing at the door of a pretty little cottage in the very heart of Bonsby. The surroundings were bright and cheerful, and although on a small scale, were scrupulously kept. The trailing vines and honeysuckle, and the shell-ornamented pots of green fern, made a very pleasant and striking contrast to the dusty road and busy traffic of town. The inmates of this little abode were a young married couple, who could well afford a much larger dwelling place, but who preferred quality to quantity, and comfort to elegance. They were well pleased with their choice of a home, and had, by their united efforts, converted it into a little sparkling Elysium, full of fun and music. It would have amused many of their friends had they been unseen eyewitnesses during the work of transformation; and the young wife often laughed to herself at the accidental reappearance of mementos which remind her of her husband’s witty sayings. Even the young husband loved to joke about those first few weeks of married life; and if he ever heard of anyone about to follow in his footsteps, he would suddenly grow serious, and warn them in very solemn tones to be careful. “You are kept night and day hammering and tacking, and pulling down and putting up, until you begin to think you yourself are getting hammered and tacked, and pulled down, and put up. Then when you have finished, and are inwardly shaking hands with your-
self, rejoicing at the thought of being "such a clever fellow,"
lo! your wife comes along, declares it will not do, pulls it to
pieces, and you have to start and do it afresh. I would not
live those few weeks over again for a pension, so help me
bob, I wouldn't." Then, lowering his voice he would
whisper in his wife's ear, while he playfully pinched her
arm, "With anyone else, my Alma; but with you I am
always living them, and the last is better than the first."
And Alma would grow rosy under his praise, and would
wish she could return pretty speeches. But her discontented
desire would be kissed away by her husband, who lovingly
told her "her little caress was worth more than all his
speeches." And they never forgot those early charms,
which had made them so dear to one another. The hus-
band never left his wife without kissing her farewell, and
murmuring some word of loving endearment; and the wife
never neglected to expect and to return his caress. When
the evening came, came also the evening benediction. And
after the lapse of many years, husband and wife would be
clasped in one another's arms as fondly, nay, more fondly,
than they were during the first few weeks of their married
life. Indeed, with the constant practice, they became
masters of Affection's Lore. They had not become as one,
but they had become the united part of a One; and they
had atuned their spirits to the harmony of that One. Their
honeymoon days they did not look upon as the happiest
part of their lives, full of happiness as it was. In their
maturer minds, around those days was shed a sense of
effort, of transformation, which now in their latter years
had grown and ripened, and reached beyond all endeavours.

And thus should it be with all marriages. Why should
those little graces be put on only when in company? Be-
because husband and wife live in unbroken unity, there is
no reason for living in broken valour. There is all the more
reason for uniting and increasing in steadfastness. To my mind, familiarity should deepen the feelings, and should agitate a greater tenderness. It should teach husband to understand and have regard for his wife’s feelings; it should teach wife to soothe her husband’s troubled brow, and to point him to higher things. By revealing the failings of each, it should unite them together in the endeavour to conquer those failings; and it should show husband and wife the folly of judging one another’s characters and actions by each other. On the whole, humanity is alike; but there are traits peculiar to each sex of humanity, and accordingly should be dealt with. Neither sternness nor languor is required in the married life; but a firm adherence to the moderation or intermediate space; each, though walking in perfect unity, living separate, and separately striving against their own separate weakness. Marriage is not, as it is so often considered, an institution granted to mortal for mortal indulgences. It is the very opposite. It is an institution granted by the compassion of a loving Father, who, seeing the weakness of mortal nature, provides for it an intermediate law, whereby those mortal passions may be kept in restraint, and finally conquered.

It is *marriage*, and not *love*, that we are speaking of; therefore it is the mortality we are dealing with. In the immortal law of Love we soar beyond the law of Marriage, and find our utterances in the presence of angels. There will be no marriages in Heaven, because there will be no mortals to marry. All that will be done away with, even as our flesh is done away with. But there will be Love in Heaven, and Love’s unity also. There will be that same thrilling separate oneness in the Great Oneness, only intensified in itself, and despoiled of all its earthly clogs. Why, even on earth, but for the instability of the mortal
nature, there would be no need for the mortal law of marriage. The familiarity and intercourse of a home should, therefore, bring out the high lights of character, should turn darkness into dawn, trouble into blessing, grief into joy. Were it not for familiarity and intercourse, instead of being a sympathetic and vibrating creation, we would be icy, stolid and impassive; each one living in utter disregard for the other. "Familiarity breeds contempt," is a phrase that should not be allowed a place among our grand English proverbs; and it would not have a place if men and women used it as a servant, and not as a guide or teacher; used it as mortal stepping-stones to immortal proficiency; as laws governing the lower strata of their being.

A neat servant girl appeared at the door in answer to the bell, and on the lady requesting to see Mrs. Graham, she was shown into a dainty little parlour.

"What name shall I say?" asked the girl as she was about to retire.

"Never mind, just say a lady wishes to see her particularly."

In less than five minutes the rustling of a dress coming along the passage put a stop to the stranger's criticism of the room. The door opened, and Mrs. Graham in a soft grey dress stood before her visitor. For a few moments she did not discern the features of the lady who rose at her entrance, and raised her veil; but when her eyes grew accustomed to the darkness she perceived who it was. A deep crimson blush mantled her brow, and spread itself over cheek and neck. She did not lose her composure, however, and stepping backward, asked in a cold metallic voice, if she might know to what she was indebted for this unexpected visit.
"Your recollection of old faces is remarkable Mrs. Graham. I came with the full expectation of having to introduce myself afresh. I am glad someone of my old acquaintances recognizes me." For the life of her, Nellie could not refrain from inserting a slight touch of sarcasm in her voice and words.

"That is apart from the question, Miss Main. May I know what brings you here as my visitor?"

Nellie was no hard-hearted extortioner, seeking to exact to the uttermost farthing, penance for offence; but she was smarting under the evident contrast between the lives of those two conspirers against her own happiness. Were it not that she felt how unavailing were their united efforts; how far removed from all earthly propagation her actions, she would have found it in her heart to be bitter toward this woman. Then when she thought of what the consequences might have been, her words grew stern, and her lip curled into a mocking smile.

"Why should it not be the enjoyment of a quiet conversation with you, Mrs. Graham? With your new name have you purchased new friends? I should have advised the purchasing of new morals also. Alma West used not to be so scrupulous with her capabilities."

"I know enough of you, Miss Main, to understand that no mere accident brings you here. Perhaps I deserve your reproaches, else I would request you to leave my presence with your business untransacted. Yet, remember, we are cast in the same mould, and if you have any feeling, let your object be known in as brief words as possible."

Nellie looked at the proud defiant woman, and for the first time in her life, felt for her a deep admiration. She knew that beneath that bosom, beat a raging tumultuous heart; and she respected the strength that flinched not before its accuser. Whether a mistaken idea or not Nellie
could not tolerate the spirit that would grovel to a fellow being.

"We are all in need of forgiveness," she would declare with stinging irony. "And no one mortal has the right to demand reparation from another. The knee should bow to God alone, who being the only Pure is the only Recipient. Why should we microbes set ourselves up to be judges and priests. It is God whom we offend when we wrong a neighbour, and it is unto God we should confess. The dissoluble nature that would languish at every rebuff, is not worthy of consideration; being too weak for either good or evil."

It must be remembered, however, that Nellie's training had been such as to make her rather dogmatic on this point. Often she had been forced to make her apologies for grievances she was very glad she occasioned, and to make them to people who would have, and who had, committed the same offences without indulging in the necessary apology.

As she looked at the fair face, with its defiant eyes, and resolute expression, she thought of a time years back when she turned away from the same face with the contemptuous words: "Dolly—nothing in her; right enough for a pet." And then, as if in answer to her thoughts she heard the whisper: "That gawky Main girl! I cannot see what he finds to admire in her. Her sallow complexion and piercing black eyes are enough to give anyone the horrors. As for her manners, I think she is positively rude."

"I wonder," thought Nellie, "If I have changed as much as she has, and if my alteration runs in the same direction. No one could say that that was a dolly face, and that that woman was only fit for a pet. She is no heroine with striking characteristics, and remarkable aptitudes, but she is more, she is a true good woman, gentle and tender; her distance makes her fair, while her fairness evokes our
advances. It is to such as she, that humanity owes its
gratitude for the germinating and cultivation of peace and
virtue, for she will bequeath to her boys what her sex pre-
vents her from making public; and by their hands the
laws of right and justice will be established. She might
well be the inspiration of those lines: 'Not too good for
human nature's daily use; and yet a woman pure and
bright; with something of an angel light."

And what were Mrs. Graham's thoughts? May they
not have been something similar. May she not be con-
trasting the "gawky Main girl," with the refined graceful
woman; the piercing black eyes with the calm deep liquid
brown ones; the pert satirical manner with the tranquil
considerate air. Ah! there had been great changes in the
lives and appearances of these two women since first they
crossed one another's track on that happy picnic ground
long ago. But all this takes less time to think than to
write; and all this passed through the minds of those two
women while they were uttering those short words of intro-
duction.

"You are right, and your are wrong, in your surmises,
Mrs. Graham," said Nellie, still in a tone of hauteur.
"An accident brings me here, though it is not by accident
I come. But it is a long story, difficult to tell, and painful
to hear. Will you not take a seat while I relate it?

Inwardly reviling against the effrontery of her visitor,
yet considering it prudent to forbear hostility, Mrs. Graham
accepted the proffered chair.

"Please make your story as short as possible, Miss
Main," she said in her cold hard voice; "my time is not
my own this afternoon."

"So be it," answered Nellie, sinking down into her own
seat, and turning a stern face toward her hostess: "We
will end this foolish parlance and begin in earnest. Mrs.
Graham, I have in my possession papers given me by a
dying man. These I promised to return to you, their right-
ful owner; and when my story is finished I will fulfil my
promise. It will be a great relief for me to do so, for they
are fresh from the hands of the dead."

The listener started and turned pale; she opened her lips
to speak, but Nellie's face was stern, and the eyes warned
her to be still. Then she sank back with a shudder, and
covering her face with her hands remained mute and
motionless during the whole recital.

"A little more than a fortnight ago," continued Nellie,
"I tended the wants, and listened to the words of a dying
man, who is now beyond the power of temptation, and the
obeisance of the tempter. His career was the career
of thousands. He began life with every hope and every
promise of prosperity. A fair path of happiness lay before
him. On an evil day, he, partly from his own inclinations,
and partly from the influence of others, took his first down-
ward step. The fatal exhalation lured him on, paving the
dark road with sunny flowers. Crushing down the good
which in his nature held preeminence, he, to satisfy a
selfish craving, cultivated and fertilized the sinful. Thus
from bad to worse, from position to abasement, from wealth
to poverty, he gradually traversed his declining path; until
with a groan he found himself on the brink of the grave;
there he awoke to a realization of his wasted career, his
buried talents, his abused privileges. The few remaining
hours of his life he spent in making such reparation for
his misspent life as lay in his power. Mrs. Graham, you
did not think, when you engaged Albert Maurice to execute
your scheme of treachery, that this would be the final.
Thank God with all your heart, that your object was not
accomplished; that the end has not been in accordance
with your planning; else would your retribution be greater
than would be your remorse. Yet do not reproach yourself too severely for the part you played. The dupe you imagined you procured for the furtherance of your scheme was no dupe of yours; he was a dupe of his own inclinations. Far above, and higher than either you or I could reach, soared his love for me, and his determination to win me for his own."

Nellie's eyes glistened with a lambent brightness, and her voice grew tremulous as she recalled the scene of that half penitent, half exultant confessor; for at this point he had stretched out his poor bruised arm and clasping the hand of the girl, looked into her sorrowing eyes, his own glorious and ethereal with the power and depth of his worshipping love, and had welcomed his fate for the bliss of the moment.

"What, said he," continued Nellie, "was our petty-mistaken affection in comparison to his deep life absorbing worship, his soul's permanent love? Hope did not depart, nor did that love ever become extinguished; and his ready acquiescent to your proposal, was but to further his own plans; my continual rejection to his suit, only serving to inspire him on. He failed, as will all who seek to build their happiness upon wrong doing. In his efforts he over-reached himself; he forgot the most essential part, the firm unfaltering resistance of the object for which he strove. And you, Mrs. Graham, what have you to say?" demanded Nellie; fixing her eyes upon the woman. "Had he succeeded, think you your part would have been crowned with success? or being crowned, would you have been happy? I dare to say, No! The evidences and appearances of your present life speak in their own truthful language. You are happier and more blessed in the sphere that has been provided for you, than you would ever have been in the one you sought to lay out for yourself."
Nellie rose, and taking a few closely-written letters from her handbag, placed them in Mrs. Graham's lap.

"Here are your letters, Mrs. Graham. They are the only proofs left of your treachery. They were kept with the intention of being used against you; but the time on earth was shorter than expected. Burn these tell-tale writings, and let the story they tell sink with their ashes. In me you may rely for silence." She turned as if to sweep from the room, but Mrs. Graham prevented her doing so.

"What of yourself, Miss Main?" she exclaimed, raising her head and speaking in a hurried way. "Is there nothing whereby I may show my penitence? Believe me, I have suffered. Think you there is no humiliation for a proud spirit to stoop to deceit in order to gain her ends. Can you, who remained chaste because untried, find in your heart no excuse for me, who sinned because I loved, and because the love I sought was not returned, but given to you? Oh! Miss Main, Nellie! if your heart is still hard and unrelenting toward me, my earnest prayer is that you might never stand in the position in which I have stood."

Nellie's hauteur fled, and her voice assumed those sweet tones so suited to it.

"You are right, Alma West; and I respect you above all women of my early recollections. Yet do not misunderstand my intentions. I came here not as your accuser, else it would be presumption indeed. I bear a name alone, and have no right to demand your tears. I might have sent you these letters and their particulars, but I wanted to see you in your new life; and to know if you were happy. I know too well that the heart that nourishes the thought of former sin unpardoned can never be entirely at rest. So I hastened to do what lay in my power to remove the shadow. Believe me, you have nothing to ask from me,
for I have taken nothing from you; and your part in my life was as nothing. Be happy in your present happiness, and in the future be hopeful. Farewell. Our intercourse has been too painful for either of us to wish to renew our acquaintance, but if in the future you feel a want that I can supply, fear not to ask." She stooped and kissed the weeping woman, then opened the door and passed out. And as she walked home in the gathering twilight—for the afternoon had waned into twilight during their absorbing conversation—something like the sound of a deep heart-rending moan escaped her lips. The trees caught up the sound, and passing it from one to the other, sent it away into the distance, until it was heard like the last note of an expiring echo; but the breaking waves of the ever-restless sea rescued the failing sound. Seizing it in their harsh tumultuous roar, they hurled it back. Sharp and keen as the piercing of a knife, that sound re-entered the heart, and Nellie knew 'twas vain to cast it out. "O God," she cried, "is it always to be thus? Must the heart always be torn with the thought of what might have been? Not that I regret the, what is; but if the what might have been be not in accordance with Thy will, as Thou hast so clearly shown, why should the thwarting of that 'what' have power to fill our souls with sorrow? And I thought I had crushed it! Must this worm lie for ever at my root, eating away my vital substance? I feel it drinking the protoplasm of my being, yet am I powerless to become its destroyer. O! the mockery of my life; the hypocrisy of this assumed laughter. How I dread the approaching withering that reveals the presence of that worm. This is the awful knowledge that hushes the voice of commendation; that makes me shudder at the word, strength. Where is my strength that I cannot bury the dead?" She raised her eyes, and between the tall poplars, caught a glimpse of
the blue sky. A fleecy cloud hurried past as she gazed, and, as if dropped in its haste, there appeared on the for-saken path a tiny tiny star. So faint, so far away, so pure was that tiny twinkling light. Then the ever present angels whispered, and their soothing presence calmed the troubled heart. “As high as the Heavens are above the earth, so high are my ways above your ways, and my thoughts above your thoughts.” Clasping her hands together, a strange mixture of humility and injunction shining in her great dark eyes, Nellie cried, “Then by the intermediate space, sweet Comforter, I measure the capa-bilities yet to be attained. Yonder star shall be my aim; the measurement of this poor stunted body the capabilities already achieved. In thine own good time thou wilt dig about my roots, and destroy the worm; and the interim shall be filled with Hope and Excelsior. The distance of my attainment shall not appal me, for in my heart and life I bear the promise, ‘These things thou shalt do, and greater things also, for thou trustest me.’ Why! already the space between us is shortening; and the star grows brighter.”

The concluding events of that death-bed scene Nellie refrained from making known to Mrs. Graham. To her sensitive nature such scenes were too sacred for mortal disquisition; but that night, as she knelt beside her own quiet couch of rest, she lived again those closing moments. Once again she thrust those tell-tale letters into her pocket, and murmured soft words of comfort and hope. Once again a weak, almost helpless hand, was laid upon her own, while two deep blue eyes, filled and beautiful with a parting benédiction, looked into her own tear-filled ones. Once again she heard a triumphant voice exclaim, “I am glad, and rejoice at the misfortune, which is in reality a happy incident, that brings me here, for it has brought us
together again. And now, Nellie, you are convinced that the love you scorned and rejected for another, perhaps less worthy, was no weak boyish fancy, no burning passion, but a deep life-long devotion; a soul’s undying reverence. I am thankful my love was given to you, and not to one unworthy; for, believe it or not as you please, I know that there is within me capabilities of deep enduring affection. If I had my life to live again, I would request that I might retain my love. Not that I would expect any return—that is impossible; light cannot be united with darkness; but because it made me respect the love of others; and it prevented me from joining in the farce of love-making, in which so many of my companions indulge and pride themselves.”

Nellie had put her head down on the pillow beside the white face, and wept.

“You do not despise me, Nellie? After the life I have led, you still can shed tears for me?” The feeble hand touched the dark bowed head; the feeble lips tried to kiss the girl’s soft cheek.

“Oh, do not speak as if I were so much above you,” cried the girl, raising her head and dashing away her tears. “Why do you not despise me seeing how little I understood you? It is always thus. Those who are kindest, I neglect; those who are foolish, I love and honour. And always there is the cry ‘Too Late’ Albert, I once scorned your love; retaliate by rejecting my pity.”

A smile like the bright sunshine after a summer shower, lit up the face of the dying man.

“Reject that which bears me to the gate of another land? No! No! you tell me that in the heaven I am about to enter, there is peace. You say that love rules the life; that joy and gladness reign perpetually in the heart; that that life is but a continuation of this, only without the
trammels of flesh, the shackles of sin; that everything is pure and holy and true: then, if such be the case, my love for you will not remain on earth, nor be buried beneath my tomb. It is the only purity I have enjoyed here, therefore God will not deny me it in Heaven. You may love another; you may make fresh ties of affection; you may live for years, centuries; these things will make no difference to me. I will wait for you beside your father. I will watch your coming; and at your entrance I will come forward and claim my share of your presence. The claims of others, great though they be, will not have power to wrestle from me my own. Up Yonder we shall rejoice in an all absorbing, universal love. A love that will need no scheming to win it; no marriage vows to bind it; no crucified flesh to make it sacred.”

The faltering voice ceased, the tired eyes closed. The girl pushed back the wavy tumbled hair from the broad white brow, her tears falling fast upon the coverlet.

“lt is growing dark, Nellie, but there is such a bright light about you. I do not like to go, for O! you were so dear to me; and this world is too cold, too cruel; you will not be happy here.”

The deep blue eyes opened now, and all mists had cleared away.

“But, if Jesus is kind, he will let me come and watch over you Nellie. He cannot keep me away. Come nearer dear, I cannot see your face.”

The tired voice grew fainter and fainter, but the eyes were bright and shining.

“Kiss me Nellie; I will tell your father all about you. Don’t be long in coming. It will be so lonely up there without you, and I am weary of waiting already.”

The tired voice ceased; the dark head fell back; and the arm that had been placed around Nellie’s neck as she stooped
to kiss the pale lips, dropped on the white coverlet. The rest of the scene we already know.

Kneeling there in the silence of her room, Nellie contrasted the romance of that man's life with the romance of her own. How insignificant hers looked beside his. And she had thought her own so grand, so noble in its complete failure. She had put away present happiness because she had seen the shadow of future suffering; and because she had done this, she had fancied herself a heroine. While he had put away his integrity to win her love; then, having failed he had calmly stepped into the future, brushed away the shadowy cloud, and paused on the threshold of the Beyond to wait for the coming of his beloved. And yet, throughout it all, he knew that she did not, and never could, return half his affection.

"And I thought him so far beneath Iwand," she mused. "Time! Time! what hast thou done for me? Thou hast rent the veil that hid the apparent from the evident. Thou hast unmasked the weak, and laid open the strong. Thou hast separated the true from the untrue, the right from the wrong. I render thee, O Mighty One! my thanks, for the wisdom thou hast taught, and for the knowledge thou art yet to teach. And thou, O man! who hast the power of winning woman's love, have a care how thou usest thy power. Probe thine heart, and find out whether there be anything therein contrary to the law of truth and unselfishness. Upeave those evil germs, and lay them open to the devastation of the elements. In their places cultivate the seeds of Sincerity, Manliness, Nobility of Character and Purpose. And above all, do not trifle with thy power. Be warned by the fall of Samson. Fear not that thou wilt be made a dupe for the society butterfly. Thy God shall protect thee, and give thee discernment."
"Iwand, dear Iwand," sobbed Nellie, as she tossed her weary head upon the pillows, and tried to close her sleepless eyes. "Iwand, I loved thee so; and thy love for me was great. Oh, my heart's dearest! why didst thou prove thyself unworthy of my love."

"'Tis well for me, my Saviour, that thou dost guide my footsteps; for, alas! what a wreck this life would be."
LIKE one in a dream, Mrs. Graham sat perfectly motionless. "Could this be the end," she thought, and thought, until her head spun round and round, and her body shivered with cold. The papers Nellie had placed on her lap, fell to the floor and lay there unheeded, and the darkness hid them from her sight. But presently the twilight faded, and the great moon peeped over the Eastern hills to see what the world was doing. Her cold, steely rays shot through the open window, and crossing the floor, rested upon the talisman of a girl's weakness. The woman started as if the eyes of a serpent were fixed upon her. Stooping, she made as if to seize them, but their touch electrified her; she sprang up, and stood gazing down upon them with fear. Gradually a calmness crept into her heart, and her mind grew clear with its fixed purpose. A voice at the door disturbed her; she turned, and without waiting to hear what the girl said, bade her bring in the lights. "Yet stay! we will have the gas."

Poor Mary looked quite crest-fallen as she turned up the gas and closed the window. "Mistress is going to have company to-night, and what would George say? She would not be able to keep her appointment; and she had put a piece of new ribbon on her hat too! It was hard."

"May I ask if you be having company to-night, Mrs. Graham?" said she with much hesitancy, and many side glances.
"I am not Mary, but I wish the house to look bright."
Her wish was gratified, for soon the little Elysium shone
and sparkled in the rich blaze of its bright artificial light.
"You may go when you please, Mary. I shall see after
Mr. Graham's tea myself," was the next command, and Mary
nothing loath, obeyed.
Leaving the letters where they lay, Mrs. Graham went to
her room and changed her grey dress for one, pure white.
She pinned a tiny diamond broach at her throat, and
arranged the lace about her neck. She fastened a piece of
ribbon in her hair and straightened the disorderly curls.
Then stepping back, viewed herself in the large oval looking
glass. If she were not satisfied with her appearance she
should have been. The dainty little figure, the sweet face
with its expression of resolute calmness, the fair curling
ringlets that would in spite of every effort to prevent them,
brake out of their confines and dance mischievously around
the girlish face. All made a very pleasing picture, and with
the shadow of a smile on her lips, Mrs. Graham turned away,
and re-entered the parlour. Stationing herself a little dis-
tance from her letters she stood calm and quiet.
Alma Graham knew what she was doing. She had not
sat at her father's table, nor entertained her husband's
friends, without understanding the power beauty had upon
men.
Standing thus, her hands clasped together, a crimson spot
on each cheek, a dangerous gleam in her blue eyes, the room
sparkling with its reflected light, and the letters lying at
her feet, she waited for her husband; and such was the sight
that met his wondering gaze.
"Why Alma, what's going to happen?" exclaimed he,
stepping into the brightly-lighted room, and advancing to-
ward his wife; his eyes shining as brightly as the bright
gas light, "You look like—you don't look like—you look
sweeter than yourself my Alma."
But Alma pushed her husband away, and gently but firmly said—“Wait until I have told my story before you kiss me Percy! Perhaps then you will not be so anxious to do so. I have often wished to tell you something, but you would never listen. The time has come when you must hear, and I must tell.”

“A moment, Alma. Understand, nothing can change my feelings toward you; nothing,” interrupted Mr. Graham.

“Wait and see.” Walking over to the fireplace, Mrs. Graham stood leaning against the mantelpiece, and gazing down at the great bunch of roses stamped upon the fender stool. Mr. Graham drew a chair close to his wife and seated himself therein.

“Years ago,” began Mrs. Graham; “long before I knew you, Percy, when I was but a girl in years, though an old woman in society’s ways, a man stepped across my path, and—well, I loved him. And he—he was kind and good, and seemed to care for me a great deal. Ah! it was not right of him to pretend he loved me, to whisper those words that to my unaccustomed ears sounded so sweet, and then to leave me for another. But I do not reproach him,” she added, bitterly. “It is the common practice of his sex. Why should he be an exception? The circumstance which occasioned the disillusion was one after my own heart, and one in which I exalted and shone. It was at the annual celebration of our church picnic that I first became aware of the fact that it was only a secondary place I occupied in Iwand Enswav’s heart.” Mrs. Graham paused a moment; then continued: “I was the ringleader of all the fun at that picnic, and I was very happy, for I imagined myself very pretty, and that everyone else imagined the same. Luncheon time drew near, and we all clustered together under the trees. I had been too busy before to notice much, but now I missed Iwand. Looking around, I espied him
running toward us in company with Elmy Main. Something in Iwand's face struck me as strange. I drew back among the crowd and watched. I don't know," and here Mrs. Graham spoke in a dreamy tone, as if communing with herself. "I do not know, but within my heart I felt something snap. It gave me no pain, only a strange feeling. As I stood there and watched those two, he with bare head, she with bowed; he tall and fair and bright, she dark and small, and, to my mind, ugly, together, receiving the benediction of our beloved white-haired minister, I felt there was no more for me. When the benediction was pronounced, and the hushed attentive crowd began to stir, I saw the girl look up into her companion's face; I saw the eager watchful gaze of her companion, and the light of love in his sunny eyes; and I ground my teeth when I caught sight of their smile. Who was she that she should usurp my place?" I cried. I made enquiries, for I had never seen her before, and found she was an Elmy Main; that she and Iwand had been playmates, schoolmates, every other mate conceivable; that for a time they had been separated, and that this probably was the first meeting for ever so long. I learned all this, and as the day advanced I learned more. I learned that I was wholly forgotten, and that all my artful practices were powerless to attract the return of the once attentive deceiver. My blood boiled every time I saw those two together. Was I, who had always reigned supreme in the small circle in which I moved, to be dethroned by that chit, 'that gawky Main girl,' with the tanned face, straight black hair, and owi eyes? The thought drove me nearly distracted, and I vowed revenge. Upon this came Iwand's promotion to a higher office in another town; and in less than a week after he set sail. Among my acquaintances there was a young man named Albert Maurice. By accident I discovered he had no special liking
for Iwand Ensway, and would, if it lay in his power, do him an injury. I tempted him by spreading out the bait, and he was caught. Thus, following in Iwand Ensway's wake, Albert Maurice went to fulfil his commission—that of ruining his friend's reputation. Short-sighted that I was, I might have guessed that his own inclination was his master. They went; and I set myself to watch and wait. As for Nellie, she returned to her babies and her seclusion.

Those are the products of that waiting time," exclaimed Mrs. Graham, pointing to the letters; "but let them rest longer, until I have finished;" for her husband had attempted to take them. "They are only commendations and instructions to my accomplice. His letters to me I destroyed the eve of our wedding. Several times during that and the following year, Albert Maurice returned, but went away again after a few days' sojourn. Somehow, I suspected there was more in these hurried visits than he cared to tell me; yet he seemed cheerful, and spoke as if he were succeeding admirably. Indeed, we were both succeeding; he, in making Iwand a drunken and disreputable man, and I, in spreading the defaming news. For myself, I knew that Iwand would come out right in the end; he esteemed society's patronage too greatly to remain long under the bane of its displeasure; but I wished Nellie to bear of his apostasy, and cast him off. I was foiled. Although Nellie would have nothing more to do with him when he returned, it was not through my interference. This she told me herself this afternoon. After vainly trying to win Iwand a second time, out of malice and wounded pride, I accepted you. And now, Percy, you have heard all my abasement. I have not attempted to exculpate myself in the least. What do you think would be the best thing to do?" Mrs. Graham turned and faced her husband, a
strange mixture of entreaty and defiance shining in her bright blue eyes.

"She is worth a dozen of me," inwardly commented Mr. Graham, as he looked at his wife. He had never seen her so agitated before, and this new phase of her character amused as well as pleased him. "Blowed if I'd have had the courage to make that confession. And the minx pretends it was out of pique she married me. Rough on a fellow, if he believed it. No, no, Mistress Alma; I can see further than you think I can, and I know more than you imagine I know."

Stooping, Mr. Graham picked up the telltale letters, and carrying them over to the gas, carefully lit the corners of each. The flames curled round his hand, and threatened to burn his fingers; and with one sweep he hurled them into the grate. Then when nothing but black crumbling tissues remained, Mr. Graham opened his arms, and gathered his wife to him.

"Alma, dearest, that is what I think best to do, and this is what I am doing. Did you think I was wholly ignorant of your former life? Ah! my darling, with all your faults and failings, you are better by far than I. I fear if the one for whom I plotted was my Alma, I would not pause where you paused. You are the dearest and bravest of little wives in Christendom;" he gently stroked her soft fluffy hair, and kissed the tired tear-filled eyes. "And you have made me the happiest and most blessed of mortals living in the same place. So now, Alma, my own, put away these tears. We must have all smiles in our homeland." And Alma, looking up to the tender manly face, caught the love-lights which played at hide and seek in his proud earnest eyes. Letting her fair curly head fall against his broad shoulder, as a weary child does upon its mother's bosom, Alma Graham realized for the first time the blessedness of a husband's love and protection.
"My husband," was all she said, as she nestled into his close embrace.

"My wife," he answered; and from that evening they dated the true nuptials of their wedding.

Thus it may often be the case. They who sigh the most in courtship, may not smile the least in marriage. The devotedly attached husband and wife are not necessarily the most ardent lovers.
CHAPTER XXXIII.

The evening was drawing to a close. The sun was about to retire to his rest; already he had lifted the mantle of his couch. Across the door of his bed chamber the screen had been drawn; and above and below that cloudy curtain, appeared the melting light. Beautiful golden and silver streaks were those joyful reflections as they strove to cover the blue dome above. Oh! ambitious artist, how these glorious colours mock thy power, and defy thee to paint upon thy canvas, and in thy writings, what the Master Painter paints upon, and in herself. We refused to describe the Dawn once. Why? Because the spiritual lessons it taught beggared our mortal expression. We could find no language save in that of Eternity's stillness. And, lo! here we have a Sunset, and the same weird spell bewitches us. But the glory is not sudden; we have grown used to the light during the day, therefore we can look up and muse on the wonders of Sunset. Vast and various are the phases of life which may be compared to, or illustrated by, the retiring sun. And his moods, as he retires to rest, afford ample scope for the imaginative mind. At one time, after having traversed the full length of his day's circuit in one steady unscreened blaze, he might pass into his quiet bed chamber with all the pomp of his majesty and might; pass in, dressed in his regal robes, wearing his jewelled crown, and bearing in his hand his sceptre of radiant light. In such moods he is correlative with the death of the illustrious, who retire to rest robed in their hereditary garments of Fame, the crown
of Worth, studded with its sparkling jewel Consolation, upon their brow, and in their hands the sceptre of Kindly Thoughts. At another time he might retire as he had risen, and as he had continued his diurnal course; retire hidden behind a dark tempestuous sky. And in this manner he forms a striking simile to the thousands, and hundreds of thousands of beings, who are born, and who continue their earthly course, and who at last sink to rest, all behind the screen of Ordinary Vocation; and who, according to the opinion of the sage, are unworthy of a pageantry. But he might pass away as he is passing to-night; pass away with his face concealed behind a small grey cloud, fringed with gold. In the morning he had risen clearly and brightly, and his appearance gave promise of a beautiful day. Toward noon the sky became dull and heavy, and the threatening clouds spread like an unwelcome sheet between sun and earth. Then as the noon passed, and the evening drew near, the sunlight reappeared, the sun himself remaining behind his shadowy shroud. Ere he sank to rest he suffered a glimpse of his outer rim to be seen. Thus it is with many an earthly pilgrim. The dawn breaks, and the appearances and circumstances give promise of a beautiful life of prosperity and usefulness. But soon the brilliancy is veiled by failings and short-comings. The onlookers, ever ready to mount into the judgment-seat, turn away disappointed, declaring the life lost. Then, as evening approaches, the reflection of that once bright light reappears, proving that the light was always there, though for a short time concealed. Now, as if offended at the mistrust of his fellow men, that light keeps its greater grandeur in ambush, behind a small grey cloud, the remains of its former failings. We plead forgiveness, and to show its perfect reconciliation, that life, ere it sinks to rest, lifts the corner of its concealment, and gives us a glimpse of its joyful triumphant entry.
And, ah! its greater glory, its more majestic pageantry, is reserved for the awakening Dawn.

Such were the thoughts that filled the young girl's mind as she stood bare headed in the quiet country garden, watching the fast-fading sunset; and as we stand in the ether above, and turn our eyes upon her, our thoughts assume a different character. Among the flowers and shrubs which are the offshoots of flowers and shrubs planted and tended by her father, she, his own offshoot, stands; and back to our minds floats the words "We run the same course which our fathers have run." And ever and anon as she gazes at the sweet forget-me-nots, she stoops and presses her lips to their velvety petals, while her hands wander caressingly down their stalks and over their soft green leaves. "Dear loving creatures," she murmurs. "They know thee not who say that thou art silent and unsympathetic. Dost thou not respond to my embrace by the returning pressure of thy rosy lips? Who can say those lips are mute, and know not the language of our souls? And thy leaves, so soft and green; are they not seeking to touch the hem of my garments in earnest entreaty that I might see and understand? O Nature! Nature! why humble thyself to one so much thine inferior? Thou whisperest words from my father, and I hearken unto thee; tell me! is it because thou art a seedling as I am a seedling, that our language is made known to one another? And is the spirit that knits us together the sweet spirit of Consolation? Speak on! speak, for the purity of thy language reproaches the impurity of mine own, and our voiceless intercourse will teach me to use thy idioms." But now all traces of sunset had left the sky, and the soft mystic twilight was creeping round with solemn noiseless steps. "Father," she cried, lifting her head from its lowly incline, and standing up in the attitude of a privileged supplicant; while her eyes
gazed beyond, into the infinite space, where none but the
favoured view. "Father! in that shadowy land, which to
thee is bright and radiant, art thou looking down upon thy
child? And dost thou know the emotions of her heart?"

Then a soft wave of noiseless rushing filled the air, and
passed over her entranced being. It came from a bright
Beyond, and it passed away to a Brighter Yonder; and the
only darkness which remained was the sealed eyes of sealed
mortality. "O, father!" breathed his child. "I fear this
life no longer, death I have conquered long ago. Henceforth
we, you and I, my father, live in undivided unity. Heavenly
Father, I thank Thee for this knowledge of my father's
abiding watchfulness." A shuffling step is heard coming
along the gravelled path; a bent form pauses before the
ethereal gazer; a voice like the last strains of a worn out
organ, breaks through the spell, and brings the superannalling
back to the earthling.

"Missie Main! Ha'e ye nae word for a' auld servant? It's richt gled I am tae see ye, no' but that ye're looking
strange; ye're no sae pulky as ye used tae be, an' I wadna
hae known ye, bit Missis she taught me ye were in the
gardin. Hooty tooty! lassie; dinna arrangle the heed o'
me." For Nellie had sprang forward, and seizing his hand,
was raining kisses down upon his grizzly weather beaten
face.

"John, dear John, is it really you? How glad I am
to see your good old face again." In her ecstasy, Nellie
forgot all about decorum; forgot all about the dignity
required of a woman; she only remembered that it was dear
old John; the much tormented, and many times laughed at
John; the John of all her girlhood's caprices, and the faith-
ful John of her father.

It is a proved fact, that in order to be able to respond to
an emergency at a critical moment, the life must be built
up by continual perseverance. But there is a converse to this fact which has also been proved, namely:—On such occasions as above mentioned, all the perseverance ever yet practised on an impulsive nature, has not the power to quench an emotional display. Though for two years Nellie had studied, and with credit passed, the highest degrees of that science known as Self Composure; yet she would become deeply agitated at the sight of an old wrinkled face, and at the sound of a hard solecistic voice.

When she had gained her equilibrium, and had given the man room to breathe, and time to answer the volley of questions hurled at him in one disorderly heap, he explained how he came to be on the old farm. "I couldn't leave the auld place," said he, in his peculiarly pronounced language. "I didna get muckle more nor my keep; but I am satisfied. An auld man like me dinna want muckle. Mr. Watson be very kind, and the misses is a grand woman; but mony's the time I would be under the auld master agin, though there were times he would hae ye work purty hard."

"It was all for our good, John," answered the girl, turning to retrace her steps to the dear old house. "But we did not know, and perhaps at that time did not want to understand."

That evening, to please Nellie, Mrs. Watson brought John into the family circle. At the dinner table he occupied the honoured seat beside his old master's daughter; and as he perched himself, half monkey fashion, on the edge of the chair, he declared in his funny jovial manner, "that it was not often he got into Heaven, but now that he was in, by the holy ghost of Mahommed! he intended to enjoy himself." He not only carried out his declaration to the very letter, but he made everyone else a partaker of his enjoyment. What with his queer Scotch sayings, his queerer grimaces, and his comic, half tragic, attitudes, he kept the whole company in a state of continued explosion.
After dinner, they all repaired to the drawing-room, and here John rose to the height of his glory. He revelled in his half-forgotten witcheries; he became transported by his recitations and songs; and he threatened to sink into oblivion if his audience did not encore him. The mirth reached its highest at the extraordinary rendering of "My Pretty Jane." This item was by request, for had John been allowed his own way, the audience would have had to listen to "Highland Mary," "Annie Laurie," &c., the whole evening. Up rose John (by the way, his name was really not John, but we have christened him such for convenience sake. One could hardly say Wallace Robert Burns Bruce whenever they wished to speak of him). Well, as I was saying, up rose John. All music had to cease when he was on the boards; and into the centre of the room he gravely walked. Then throwing back his head until his sandy-grey bearded chin stood almost perpendicular, and stretching out his two hands, which quivered and shook in his endeavour to play his imaginary accompaniment on space, he commenced his wonderful song. And it was a wonderful song; and a wonderful width was his mouth when he attempted to scale the highest notes. I am sure there was room for the exit of half a dozen "Pretty Janes," and for the entrance of half a dozen more (songs I mean). To make up for the extra stretch of his vocal organs, John's eyes were firmly closed, and not once during the whole song did he open them. This was fortunate, for had it been otherwise he would have become aware of a rather unpleasant sensation. One of the young mischievous Watson boys (and I believe this was why he was so loud in his demand for that particular song), rose from his seat behind the door, and giving Nellie a roguish wink, seized a lighted candle, held it over the extended jaws, and solemnly peered down into the cavity from which the seraphic strains emanated.
The company collapsed, and soon the entertainment broke up.

Harry Watson afterwards explained that he was trying to see what John had had for his supper; "For," said he, "Willie Nash says that when Old John opens his mouth, the whole township knows the different meats he gobbled up the night before." "It is quite true," added Master Harry, seriously. "I saw several pieces of cake, some bread and butter, and an unlimited quantity of tea." But the young rogue had watched John eat his supper, therefore knew exactly what to say. As punishment for his impertinence, he was chased out of the kitchen by Nellie, who declared she would not allow the poor old man to be spoken of in that disrespectful manner. And Harry laughingly kissed his hand to her in defiance as he rode off to school.

They were happy peaceful days Nellie spent in the country, and many times she lived them over again when she returned to town. One day she rode over to see Mrs. and Mr. Alen, and although Mrs. Watson would not spare her visitor more than a day with them, she promised to return when things were more settled, and with that Mrs. Alen had to be satisfied. In the evening of her return, she questioned Mr. Watson about Eva Evans' father, and learned little more than she already knew, namely, that he was a quiet reticent man, possessing a station on the West Coast. But what filled her with sadness was the manner of his death. He had been found lying, cruelly butchered, on the road leading from his home to the township. When he was carried home it was discovered that life was not extinct; but he regained his speech only to leave a few parting injunctions with his daughter. "No one knew for certain," added Mr. Watson, in conclusion. "But just about that time several desperadoes frequented the neighbourhood, and
their hands were not free from the stains of blood. Mr. Evans, we think, must have fallen into their murderous clutches. Who he was, and whence he came, we knew not, nor asked. He was a gentleman, and all his dealings were worthy of that title."
CHAPTER XXXIV.

HERE'S Nellie! Here's Nellie." A chorus of merry voices echoed the joyous shout, while several noisy rollicking children tore down the garden path to meet the new comer. Like the touch on the spring of Jack in the Box, the cry affected the whole household; in windows and doorways popped out many faces. But the younger brood fast held sway, and the elder had to bide their time. In vain Mrs. Main tried to check those little dancing feet, in vain Grace scolded; those little angels of our world knew nought, cared for nought, save that they were glad, and that Nellie had returned; forgotten were all former grievances, all past negligence.

"Nellie, you should not encourage the children to be so noisy," exclaimed Mrs. Main. "Such conduct is really outrageous."

"I am surprised," echoed Grace, in a tone of angry remonstrance. But Nellie, remembering her previous behaviour, stooped and kissed her little baby brother.

"They are not vindictive, mother dear," answered she, playing with the soft brown curls. "They are returning good for evil. But mother," added Nellie, looking up with the brightest look they had seen on her face since her return, "I am sick of speechifying, and the thraldom of hunger is upon me. Under such circumstances, I am the patroness of 'Bustling Martha.'" The coquettish look which was thrown in the direction of the kitchen, had its desired effect. Mrs. Main and Grace burst into a merry
peal of laughter; and the tantalizing children gathered around, and sought to lead indoors, the sham starveling.

"This is going too far," exclaimed Mrs. Main angrily, and Nellie seeing her mother's displeasure, bade the children begone. "I shall tell you all about my country visit by and by. Play about in the garden until I am ready," said she, as she turned to follow her mother indoors. O, what a beautiful thing is that love, which unites together the inmates of a family. How it mocks those outward attractions, which are often so essential to Affinity's Love. How it defies the attempts of time to teach it forgetfulness. How it scorncs the grave that would seek to separate its tendon; and, when circumstances add their weighty influence to the furtherance of that annihilation, what a disdainful laugh ascends from the depth of Filial Love. Let new attractions arise, let fresh ties be made, let the heart grow rich in the fat of reversionary things; calm and serene above its rivals towers the ligament that binds together the offspring of the same parents; and in the spirit of the patriarch David it cries, "O brother, O sister! Thou Jonathans of our soul; lovely and glorious art thou in thy life time, and in death we are not divided. Thy love is above all, surpassing even the love of our affiliation." And while these children were holding up their palm branches and crying "Rejoice;" from the drawing room window someone else was viewing the joyful entry, and smiling half wistfully, half amusingly, at the innocent character of the triumph.

"Whom do you think is here," asked Mrs. Main, as they entered the front door, and stood a moment in the large hall which Grace had made resplendent in every description of Maori curio in the anticipation of their Glaswegian's visit.

"A king by the look of the house, and a prince by the look of Grace's face," answered Nellie, first glancing around
the hall and then up at her sister's face, the last with a
mischievous twinkle in her eyes.

"Right, wiseacre," gaily answered Grace. "You have
learned the science of divination during your country sojourn.
As a reward for your foresight, you will not be kept any
longer in suspense. Lo! the hero of your prophecy,"
stepping aside to give the stranger room for advancement.
"Now, mother, for the formal introduction."

"Walter Main Thornton. My daughter Elmy," came in
very measured accents.

"Extremely honoured by the renewal of our acquaint-
ance," politely responded a familiar voice, and a white hand
was outstretched, and two laughing grey eyes looked down.

"Why!"—Nellie dropped her half extended hand, and
gazed at the man in speechless astonishment.

"Don't throw those great eyes at me, cousin Elmy,"
laughed the culprit. "They are too lovely to give away.
I owe you a grudge, you know. But come, don't be
malicious," added he, pleadingly; "won't you shake hands,
and make it up?"

"But surely," began Nellie, doubtfully; "surely you—"
here her words forsook her again, and she could only stand
and stare.

"I surely am your cousin, if that is what you mean. Do
you know, aunt," and the young man turned to look at Mrs.
Main, who was no less astounded than her daughter. "Do
you know this young lady rejected the privilege of an intro-
duction about two years ago, and now she is repeating the
offence. I don't know what I have done to be so treated."

By this time Nellie had regained her self-possession.
"Cousin Walter," she said, in her calm clear tones. "I
will not beg your pardon, for I have committed no offence.
But," and raising two dark shining eyes to his face, and
stretching out two small gloved hands, "I welcome you to
New Zealand with all my heart." Her eyes filled with glad tears, and for a few moments she could say no more.

Then there came an explanation, and Mrs. Main and Grace became possessors of the knowledge of that steamer episode two years back. Laughing and marvelling at the strange incidents of life, they turned to see what repast they could find for their hungry truant, leaving Nellie and her cousin a few minutes alone.

"Are you not sorry for your refusal, Miss Nellie!" asked Walter Thornton, looking down at the sweet face, and inwardly admiring its winning expression. "We might have become good friends by this time. Indeed, we should have, for the names would be our link."

Nellie looked out at the bright sunshine, at the pretty gay coloured flowers, at the happy children in their play, and in her mind there arose the vision of a steamer, with its crowded deck, its moonlight, and its conversation. "No, cousin Walter, I am not. My action was the fruit of impulse, and not of self-consideration. Had it been God's will that we became known to one another, I would not have had that feeling of restraint. We both had work to do before our introduction; but," and for a second time Nellie raised her eyes to the fair manly face; "I am so pleased to make your acquaintance now, and I trust with intercourse, to be made your friend." Then her eyes took a sad dreamy look, and she continued, half to herself, "You are not much like him, cousin Walter. You are taller and fairer, and of course much younger. But you have his broad open brow and his voice. Ah! that was what struck me as familiar on our first acquaintance. I am pleased—more than pleased; 'twere better the likeness be not too striking, else the remembrance would become too prevalent, and the inevitable too often lamented." Then, rather abruptly, "You are like your mother, I suppose!"
"Yes and no. At least, I am like both parents."

"And your mother," asked Nellie, softly: "what is she like?"

"By the photo, like your father, without his beard."

A tender smile lit up the face of the questioner, and her soft eyes glistened like two shining stars. "Thank you, Walter. Papa spoke of your mother on his death-bed, and I shall never forget his words." Then she brushed away her thoughts, and listened to the voice of her mother, who was reminding her that she (Nellie) was hungry, and that Bustling Martha (Mrs. Main) was impatient.

"Come, cousin Walter," commanded Nellie, in a playful tone. "Come; and while I relieve Martha's feelings, do you recount the means whereby you discovered that I and that wilful girl of your former acquaintance were one and the same."

"It took some time, I can assure you, Miss Nellie," began Mr. Thornton, seating himself opposite the girl, and looking across the table at the saucy face. "It was not until I saw your photo, and heard of your recent return from a trip you had taken about two years ago, that I dropped upon the truth. My suspicions had been aroused by the likeness in your sister; but I knew I had not seen her face before. So I ransacked my brains to find out where I had seen its counterpart. I am afraid I appeared very rude at first, did I not, cousin Grace?" and he turned his smiling eyes toward the window, where Grace had encased herself in a huge arm-chair.

"Well, I hardly know," came from a mysterious depth. "I certainly thought you stared at me very hard, and that you were uncommonly stupid when I spoke to you. But," here Grace assumed a condescending tone: "but, there! of course I put it down to Home training. I would not be the least surprised at anything Homelands did. I met a
girl the other day, one new from Home, I mean, and because she had to get through the fence she actually cried."

Mr. Thornton burst out laughing. "That's really too bad of you Grace. First you label me uncouth, and then you back up your statement by the use of an allegory of polish."

"Hum: If crying be Home polish it certainly is not Colonial."

"I don't mean the crying, I mean the getting through fences. You have no idea what a difference there is between life out here and life at home," added Mr. Thornton turning to Nellie. "Why, if a girl in Scotland were seen doing half what I have seen girls do here, they would be looked upon as indecent, vulgar."

"And yet," answered Nellie, ever ready to defend her native land. "And yet those highly respectable people would slander one another; would criticise, and rudely pull to pieces, one another; would, if thwarted in their purposes, do to those who crossed them, all the injury that lay in their power."

"Is that attribute confined to the homelands, Miss Nellie," questioned Mr. Thornton, throwing a meaning look toward the half-concealed figure in the window. "A little while ago, I heard some one severely criticise a passer by, who had crowned herself with a tiny black hat, from the back of which projected a huge white ostrich feather, the which, by reason of its continued waving and sweeping, was doubtful whether to remain where it was or 'take the wings of the morning and fly away.'"

A roguish smile crept into Grace's face, and she opened her lips to make a cutting retort, when Nellie's voice intercepted her.

"Oh no!" answered Nellie, her thoughts reminding her of some rather painful encounters with the critic and the
backbiter. "Colonials can be just as bitter towards one another. Still, I think the fence-climbing, and such like experiences, tend to take the thoughts from one's own person, and to divert the mind from petty spite. What I mean, is that the freedom and openness of colonial life keep the mind in activity, and prevent the thoughts from getting putrid by its imaginary grievances. There!" exclaimed Nellie, suddenly taking up her knife, and commencing to do a little sensible work. "There! I have been speakingifying again, I declare. I do wish you people would not make me talk. Talking always drives away my common sense. Avaunt! with you two, and leave me in peace."

Both Walter and Grace did their best to draw Nellie into further conversation, but failed, and at last had to retire; but just as they were passing out of the room, a thought seemed to suddenly strike Nellie, and she called them back. "Oh! by the way, cousin Walter, I forgot to ask you. Did you come out to New Zealand with the intention of picking up a rich heiress and thus making your fortune? On my way down this afternoon I happened to overhear a rather peculiar conversation between two new arrivals from your country. A parvenu I guessed by the accent, and by the entire ignorance of colonial ways."

"Auw," said one, opening his mouth lengthways instead of the ordinary vulgar sideways, and flourishing his silver headed riding whip, which to my thinking was all the silver he possessed. "Auw, it's a gweat mistake two come two the Colonies for wolves. There are no moneyed young women in New Zelland."

Mr. Thornton burst out laughing, more at the disgusted face of the mimicker, than at her words. But Nellie was too serious to laugh, and a bright angry look flashed into her dark eyes,
"I warn you before hand, cousin Walter," said she, throwing aside her light jaunting tone. "Although you are our cousin, if that thought prompted you to seek your fortune in New Zealand, you will either have it rudely taken from you, or you will be made to return to whence you came. Thank goodness, there are no moneyed young women here, but there are moral; and I pity the man who marries a New Zealand girl for what money she possesses. Why, to the end of his days she would despise him."

"Nellie! demanded her mother. "How dare you speak to your cousin like that. You ought to be ashamed of yourself."

Then that peculiar winning smile broke out over Nellie's face and she looked at her cousin, herself restored.

"I was not speaking so much to you as to myself, cousin Walter," she said. "But such craven spirits in men arouse my indignation. We are a simple people, we colonials; and we welcome, with an unstrained welcome, the foreigner. But let that foreigner understand, we will not tolerate his airs; and the moment he starts his 'Avas,' we despise him with a silent holy scorn. You, Walter, we understand, for have we not your cablegram?"

That evening the chamber of business consultation was thrown open, and all those of the Main family who had reached the age of official dignity, entered and took their respective seats. But for a little while we shall turn our steps toward the nursery or play-room, or whatever room you choose to call it, and interview the juvenile quarter.

I wonder if my reader has ever had anything to do with children attending the public school. If so, the home-lesson scene will not be unfamiliar, and my poor little description not needed. Should the answer be otherwise, though I hope not, by enlarging to a threesfold my feeble words, you will get a pretty good idea of that amusing entertainment.
Oh, the babble of noisy chattering tongues, and the constant um um of the inarticulated words, and the pat pat of the feet, and the silly childish squabbles and makes-up. It certainly is amusing, and a pleasant change, to take an occasional peep into the room, as we are doing now, for instance; but to remain there long would, I fear, drive you distracted. Two children, little girls, were reading aloud; indeed, they seemed to be competing with one another which could read the loudest. Two were writing and squabbling at intervals; and one, being too young for anything else, was superintending the whole. A large table, crowned with an innumerable assortment of books, consisting of half-torn exercises, copy books, arithmetics, and goodness knows what not, stood in the middle of the floor. From the display anyone would imagine that the young students, although themselves ranging from three to thirteen, had achieved in their youth the wisdom of Socrates in his senility.

Suddenly one of the juvenile scriptors looked up from the all-absorbing picture of a cow he had been carving on the back of his exercise, and exclaimed in a mysterious whisper, “I say, Eed! wouldn’t it be dandy fun if cousin Walter married Nel? What a jolly feed of cake we would have. My!” smacking his lips; “don’t I remember Milly’s. We had whips of cake then. It’s too bad of Nellie keeping us waiting so long for hers.”

“O, Tom, you glutton! Just fancy wanting Nellie to get married and go away like Milly, all because you would like some cake. But it would be dandy fun though.” And the little preacher lost herself in glowing pictures of sumptuously loaded feast boards, and flower crowned halls.

The superintendent looked horrified. If those two thought it “would be dandy fun,” he did not. In his little brain similar feelings may have been at work to those that heat the heart blood of older people to a white heat when
they see the frequent sacrifices of every virtue upon the mistaken altar of worldly comfort, and, as in Tom's case, for the enjoyment of a piece of rich indigestible cake.

"What do you, a baby like you know about marriage," said Tom contemptuously, as he surveyed with pride his hieroglyphic handiwork.

"Indeed, I know a great deal, Mister Tom-ass, and I mean to get married myself when I grow up."

Tom burst out laughing. "You get married! Oh! that's good, to be sure. You will have to wait till the joker asks you; and," another scornful laugh "and it's a monty that joker won't be a patch upon cousin Walter."

"Edie's rosy lips pouted, and her saucy blue eyes danced. "And who wants a cousin Walter patched joker? You perhaps, certainly not me. I am going to marry a gentleman, not a long-legged giraffe."

Down went the reading books of the two listeners. "Oh! I'll tell, I'll tell. You called cousin Walter a long-legged donkey."

"I didn't! I didn't," cried the trembling culprit.

"What did you say then?" demanded the two.

"I didn't call him anything. I said he was nice."

"O, you story teller. You called him a monkey. You are not allowed to call people names. Now we'll tell," and out of the room the two tale-bearers trooped, leaving their sister in tears, and the superintendent delighted; he (the superintendent) was having his revenge.

"Tom," moaned Edie, "don't you tell what I said, will you? Those nasty things to go and tell. I sha'n't lend them my pencil again, the spiteful cats."

Tom pretended not to hear his sister's pleadings, but presently he began turning his head from side to side somewhat like a duck when trying to see the sky.
"Don't you think you're a fool, Edith Marvell Main? They won't tell, they dare not; but it would serve you jolly well right if they did; you airing your knowledge! what next?"

Edith dried her eyes and resumed her work. Presently back trooped the little tattlers.

"We-ell, and did you te-ell? and what did mamma say?"

Edie was defiant now, and could afford to sneer a little.

"You're going to catch it when Mamma comes. We told, of course we did, didn't we go out?"

The two little girls stood hand in hand surveying their sister, and as they spoke, wagged their towsey heads and pointed with their disengaged fingers, and really looked very comical.

"How can you tell such lies?" indigantly echoed the exercise. "You need not say any more; I can't bear storytellers."

Order reigned in the nursery for the space of two minutes, then—"But I say Eed!" Tom made a dart at his sister and snatched the ruler out of her hand. "It would be dandy fun wouldn't it?" commencing to rule his exercise.

"You mean sneak—give me my ruler," wailed the little girl, and once again the flood gates of her eyes were opened, and the torrents rushed forth. "I'll te-el; give it to me." A sudden dart forward. A scornful laugh from Tom. A renewal of the attack; and then Master Tom brandishing the ruler above her head, and perambulating about the room, defied his sister's advances. Poor Edie subsided into plaintive sobs; and Tom satisfied that he was master of the situation returned to his interrupted ruling. Five minutes afterwards—

Bang! The children almost leapt out of their skins.

"Finished! thank goodness." Then without any warning, away flew all books. From the table and from the hands they were snatched, and scattered to the four walls of the
room; and two struggling squealing little victims were being dragged all about the floor.

"Tom! you fool! you will spill the ink. Let go the table cloth, can’t you?" cried Edie, holding on like grim death to the corner of the cloth and the edge of the table. "Squeek!" "Squeek!" came from the half-choked victims. "Ha, ha!" from the laughing garroter. Back rebounded the strained cloth; and back rebounded Edie, measuring her full length on the floor. "Oh, my poor head;" jumping up and rubbing her damaged topnot, and laughing as gaily as usual.

"Blind man’s holiday!" and blind man’s holiday it was. Tom, of course, was blind man; the fraud, he could see all the time; and the rest acted holiday, I think. Then came a romping, and a crawling, and a whispering, and a poking, until the wily blind man lay down and feigned sleep. Nearer and nearer crept the unsuspicious attackers. How their hands itched to insert their sharp nails into the flesh of the poor blind man. A whoop! and a dart! and one of the little prisoners were struggling and kicking in Tom’s great arms.

"Wasent that good? Wasent it now, young shaver? Tom good boy. Tom catch Laura, all same Cousin Walter catch Nellie. Tom very clever boy, Tom is;" this to the little superintendent.

"Do away, bad Tom. Milton don’t like Tom. Tom taid Tousin Walter take my Nellie away;" and the indignant little superintendent tried to hide behind Edie. Tom made a grab at his little brother—there was a scrimmage, a forward rush, a crash; and Tom and Edie and Milton, and the tablecloth, and the ink, and all, rolled over on the floor, a heap of glorious confusion. Ah! it was well for these young miscreants that the elder members of the family were so busily engaged, and so far removed from their din. Milton,
however, did not forget his grievances, poor fellow, he forgot he himself had been married not many months before, and the next day, when all were quietly seated at the table—in honour of Cousin Walter's visit the little ones were permitted this breach of nursery laws—and when the solemn blessing was being pronounced; after gazing intently first at Nellie then at Walter, he startled the whole company, and stopped the verbal completion of the blessing, by exclaiming in an Irishman's whisper, "You won't take my Nellie away, will you Tousin Walter? Tom say you married her. Nellie won't leave Milton more."

A general titter was passed round the table, then a stifled laugh, then an explosion, and in the midst poor little Milton was ordered from the table. He went away quite passively, but ever and anon as he went, he turned his pleading eyes toward his sister, as if to entreat her not to leave him.

Yet while the baby play was being acted in all the openness peculiar to children, a similar performance was being acted by the adults. Like the juniors, many of the seniors declared "it would be dandy fun." Some had their doubts, and others wholly ignored the matter; and throughout it all Nellie and Walter met and conversed, and exchanged laughter and thoughts, and looked at the sham acting with indifferent eyes.
CHAPTER XXXV.

SCENE—Business consultation chamber.

Locality—Drawing-room of "Spea."

Dramatis Personae—Such of the Main family as aforesaid.

A table, strewn with papers, surrounded by persons, and resplendent in the rich gas-light which fell from the polished brass gas-alier above. In the far corner of the room, a couch, occupied by a white-robed, black-girdled figure, which is almost concealed by the soft drapery of the mantelpiece and the downy cushions.

Occupation—Reading, talking, listening, thinking, criticising, and dreaming. At the head of the table (which, by-the-way, had no head), and in the speaker's chair, sat Mr. Walter Thornton; on his right-hand side, Mrs. Main; on his left, Mrs. Allen, junior; Grace opposite; and the rest, with the exception of Nellie, who had a back-ache, and was permitted the use of the couch, filed in martial array between the above-mentioned. Dear me! How important they look; those at the table, I mean; for, of course, you can guess who was the critic, the dreamer, and the moralist. Has it ever struck you, my reader, what a remarkable likeness there is between the faces of the business debaters (anything in the way of business, I mean) and the solemn, wise, chiselled features of our sculptured heads? Next time you get a chance, look well at the faces of a business assemblage, and see if you do not find some rare good amusement that will keep you for an hour or more in one continual state of inward explosion. Only, let me advise
you, do not yourself have anything to do with the business, or you, too, will become petrified.

And the critic and moralist, in her corner, quietly made her observations, and inwardly commented upon the company.

"How manly, how refined is the face of the speaker," mused Nellie. "How white his hands as he sorts those papers. And that voice. Ah! it just seems as if I were listening to another, dearer by far. I wonder why he wears whiskers. I shall persuade him to shave by and by. I believe he has a dimpled chin, and, like all conceited young men, is ashamed of it. Are you conceited, young man? You do not seem to be; but that's nothing to go by. I find judging character by 'seeming to be' is a mistake. In such cases it all depends upon the cleverness of the character to conceal its failings. But you have a good face, Walter; very, very good; yet, I think, a little effeminate. We will soon cure that defect, however. New Zealand's climate and climatization (I think that's the word) will soon make a man of you. I like that word 'Man.' It suggests all that is brave and strong; and it is free from all foppish prefixes, and caddish affixes. I wonder why I am so fond of brave and strong things. Perhaps because I am not very strong myself. Well, about 'man'—the word, not the being. It is a rugged word, and it signifies tact in its application. When I hear a person say, 'Ah! he is a man,' I think to myself, here is something worth unravelling. Either the man is good, gentle and considerate but not ostentatious, rather hiding his virtues; or else the person is a man, and by his tact, has discovered in the man what he himself possesses in person. There! Did anyone ever see such a donkey? Here I am moralizing when I should be listening. How very serious Grace looks. I wish I could read her thoughts. I wonder if they are occupied with the reading
or the reader. Isn't she improving? I declare she looks quite—quite—let me see—yes, quite beautiful. No wonder Master Tom said she cuts the shine out of me. Although, for my part, I never knew I had any shine to cut out. You certainly have a very nice face Miss Grace; some would say peculiar; and I would not be a bit surprised if it—never mind," casting a roguish glance at the fair face at the head of the headless table. "'Pon my word! mother looks quite young again. What's going to happen? Well, you are a goose, Nellie," contemptuously. "Because you are smitten with Walter, you think everyone else is. Am I, though! Oh dear, Oh dear; this is getting worse and worse. You really must listen. I'll not look at them," turning away her head. "Now I come to think of it, I wonder how," back wandered the eyes to the faces. "Yes, you look well, Amelia. Better than you used to look before you were married. You certainly give the lie to the affirmative side of that question, 'Is marriage a failure?' Then there is my brother. He—oh, I'll leave him to someone else's criticism. I am getting sick of this nonsense." She closed her eyes, and tried to keep back the rushing waves of thought. "The Main family are a queer lot. I wonder what they are all going to do;—spiritually, I mean. Live—beg—borrow—steal. I suppose there is a place reserved for each, both here and Yonder." Up rose the reclining figure. "Nellie, Nellie, this will never never do." The look of settled resolution lasted for the space of three whole minutes; then down came the fortress with a crash, and the waters of meditation rushed in and flooded the actual, the swift-flowing tide being checked only by the dropping of that inate slide of susceptibility, which slide awakened the dreamer to the fact that there was something of vast importance taking place in the outward surroundings. Listen!

"I may explain to you," began Mr. Thornton, looking up and down the column of faces on each side of the table; "I
may explain that it was not until I returned from my trip to the Colonies, two years ago, that I became aware of Mr. Main’s existence, or of our relationship to him. The circumstance which first led to the discovery was singular. While in New Zealand, I had collected a few Maori curios, and mother, ever anxious for news of that, to her, wonderland—the land that report says is almost paved with gold; where rich and poor live on a level; where humanity and nature dwell in unity; where, by reason of its liberty and freshness, mortality and immortality walk hand in hand, and converse on such subjects as has power to raise the terrestrial to that eminent standard occupied by the celestial—mother, ever anxious for news of that land, was the first to undo the parcel. After looking at the various articles, and admiring what I thought almost hideous, she took up the wrappings. The inner one was a piece torn from one of the colonial newspapers. This she began glancing carelessly over. Suddenly she uttered an exclamation, and on looking up I saw her face was white as death, and that her hand which held the torn fragment was trembling. Pointing to a paragraph, she exclaimed, “Read that to me, please.” It was the announcement of your husband’s death. I read it through and handed back the paper.

"Who is he? Do you know him?" I asked, it striking me as strange that I should have the same name attached to my father’s; but mother was too agitated to answer, and I left her at her own command to recover her self-possession. That evening she told me who and what Mr. Main was, and why I was named after him; but I was not at all satisfied, and I felt that there was something kept back. Time passed; troubles thickened; and the circumstance, though not forgotten, was laid aside. Deeper and deeper into pecuniary difficulties my father sank, and at last the disgrace of bankruptcy stared us in the face.
It is a very humiliating position for a proud man; and father, while smarting under the uplifted lash, wrote that letter to you. To do him justice, he thought, as did everyone but mother, that the money he demanded was his wife’s just due. Where he was to blame was his writing secretly. Had he told mother, all would have been explained. Poor mother! I shall never forget the look of horrified sorrowing that was on her face when she bade me go and make reparation. “Go, my son,” she said, “New Zealand is not far away. Take these papers, they will explain all. They were given to me by my uncle, who was Walter’s uncle also. But I promised not to disclose their secret unless some unforeseen danger arose. That danger has arisen, and the secret must be a secret no longer.” Then she told me Walter Main was her lover as well as her cousin. That he had left Scotland a homeless orphan, and had gone to the Colonies to seek his fortune, and to make a home for her and him. But as time passed, and no word came from the wanderer, she had mourned him as one dead. Her hopes and prayers grew silent, and one day, being pressed by necessity, and numb with the pain of her heart’s bereavement, she consented to become the wife of a wealthy merchant. Thus she continued to live, loved by her husband, worshipped by her children, and respected and courted by the best of society. Yet, although happy, her thoughts would often wander back to the old paths, and she would long to know the footsteps traced by that early beloved. “More than this I will not tell you,” added my mother mournfully, and in her dear eyes I saw the gathering tears. “But you may read those papers while you are journeying. And, O, tell Walter’s children that I never believed a word that was said about their father.” Like a flash there leapt into my hazy recollections a scene in my childhood: Mother and uncle George were conversing. Uncle must have said something disagreeable,
for in the middle of their conversation I saw mother lift her
head and rise. "You lie, uncle George, and you know you
do. Something tells me that you, and not he, are guilty.
Good-bye." She swept out of the room, and as she passed,
too deeply agitated to notice me, I saw her face was
deathly white, and her eyes had great black lights burning
in their depth. From that day until the day of uncle's
death, they two never met. It was then that mother was
sent for and received charge of these and several other
papers. Father knew nothing about them, and with the
rest, believed report."

Taking up the papers, Mr. Thornton, after glancing
around to see if all were in attention, commenced to read.

There were a few dates, some bare instructions, formal
introductions of not much consequence, and then :—

"I know not whether this, almost the last action of my
life, will be of any use, or whether there is any need of my
acting thus. Still, a spirit within speaks, and I feel I must
obey. I feel my end drawing in apace, for I am old now,
and the hopes of youth hang no more around me. Ah! I
fear I have loved thine approbation too dearly, O World!
else why should thy mists laden my departing foot-
steps? But thy fruits were sweet to my mouth; and
I have enjoyed my sojourn under thy cool branches.
What is that I see in the distance? It is the pyramid
I have built upon my Saharan Desert. Oh! how the
sand burns my naked feet as I walk toward it, for I
must view it once more before I enter my barque. Does
the Pleasure of Possession recompense the Pain of Achieve-
ment? Is the Aim worth the Means? Not always. Perhaps
I have made my aim my idol. I have worshipped my
pyramid! But I cannot take it with me. I feel there will
be no place for it Yonder. Ah! Walter, my nephew, my
brother's only son, you are amply avenged; for at the best
of times I have not been happy. And your white set face, with my brother's eyes, ever rises between myself and my possession. Stay! In fancy, you are before me now. Stand thus, and unto thee I will speak. Walter, I falsified those debts. I wanted your inheritance. But you were in my way here, so I sent you away, and put that stain upon your name. Then, when you wrote, I was afraid of your return, and, consequently, my exposure; so intercepted the letter. That note I sent you from your cousin I penned with my own hand. There! nephew; a proud man has confessed. Take and value that confession accordingly. Yet am I not, as they say, truly sorry. Nothing but remorse gnaws at my heart, and makes me wish, without incurring my own exposure, to rid your name of that stain. This, you see, is not repentance; but these are my feelings. You were a thoughtless, careless young man, Walter; and you had been spoiled by your excessive indulgences. How was I to know but that you, in your unrestrained manhood, would follow the bent of your youth? The Main heirlooms were too valuable to be exposed to such a risk; and the blow of relinquishment would sober your fiery spirits; while I, who had always coveted my brother's prosperity, would occupy and increase. But that inheritance was full of haunting spirits, and, for my own peace of mind, I had, in the end, to barter it. Ah! although for the name's sake I did it, for the name's sake I received my punishment; and you, Walter, were not the only one to suffer from that stain. The weapon hurled, rebounded, and struck deep into the heart of the hurler."

There was more written in the same half-penitent, half-vindicating, peculiar style. The name of George Main was signed at the bottom; and the tiny piece which had leavened the lump, lay bare.

Mr. Thornton put down the papers, and leaning his elbow upon the table, rested his head on his hand. The others
were mute and motionless. Then clear as a bell rang out a voice from the shadowy corner:

"God forgive all who sin for such a purpose as freely as I forgive George Main. God grant all who are concerned in, and all who are the consequences of similar sins, the peace that He has granted us. But for that deed, I, for one, would not be in existence. A Being would not have known the truth of Life. Ere this, father and his uncle have met, and paid their vows before a 'Mercy-seat.' Let us rejoice in the Spirit that shapes our ends, rough hew them as we will." The white figure rose, glided across the room; and the silent air became flooded with silvery sounds. Soft and low, like the ripple of many waters, began that trembling air; then deeper, higher, louder, stronger; until with a mighty roar, a song of adoration was poured forth from the melodious throat of that modern timbrel. At the end of the accompaniment, the people received the keynote of the song, and rising of one accord from their seats, they, with their earnest voices, pierced through the distant sky, and rolled in at Heaven's gate, the glorious song of praise,

"God moves in a mysterious way,
His wonders to perform."

Then, as the last strain died away, the fingers of the player glided into that pleading prayerful tune,

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."

The angels who received the volume at Heaven's gate, and who carried it to the feet of their Master, returned to breathe into the hearts of the singers their glorious "Amen."
CHAPTER XXXVI.

GRACE MAIN! At the mention of that name there rises before my mind the vision of a sweet fair face; small, dimpled, pleasing. A face naturally pale, but subject to crimson floods, whenever the tides of shyness rushed up the channels of her heart. The eyes were blue, small, but calm and restful, and capable of dangerous flashes. The lips were full and rosy, and about their corners lingered an undefinable expression; and the nose, though inclined to be long was well shaped. The whole face, from one tiny ear, over the forehead, and down to the other tiny ear, was encircled by fair wavy hair, which was naturally smooth, but which, by the interference of fashion had become twisted and crumpled. Do not abuse fashion in this case, however; the curly hair was a decided improvement. Every face has not the prerogative of dispensing with artificial decorations; every face cannot stand out calm and unsurpassed, defying the power of art and the charm of ornaments, and resting solely upon its light and expression. About Grace Main's face there was a peculiarity—the eyebrows and eyelashes; clear, arched, and almost black in the former; in the latter, thick curved and tipped with what many would call red. This peculiarity may seem strangely out of keeping with the extreme fairness of the other features, but it did not require much study to perceive the advantage it had upon the otherwise insipid face. The dark brow and lashes had the effect of bringing out the transparency of the lighter shades, while in their own dark depths they gathered a warmer light. Looking at
that face one cannot help meditating on the character of which the face was the index. But meditations are selfish and useless if left unexpressed, and what needs more expression than does the expression of a face. By the interchange of thought, the opinions are moulded and fashioned into their proper groove; and their uncouth adolescence is ushered into maturity by the expressions and reasonings of others. But the art of expressing one's thoughts with clearness, and of standing by one's opinions with firmness, is no easy art to master. Opinions, as well as thoughts, must be based upon a very high elevation before they are worthy an interchange; yet this elevation is not beyond the reach of the humblest man, for it is that lowly mound at the foot of the cross of Christ; there the thoughts, if not always conjunctive, do not collide, the variances of the one serve to stimulate the fortitude of the other. But we are not confined to literal language, and in our expressions, the figurative language we love the best. Thus by figurative language, I seek to make known my thoughts and opinions concerning the face which is the index of Grace Main's character.

Take your present position and start out westward (be careful you do not go round and return by the east (in a straight line, until you walk yourself off the material globe. Surrounded by space, and lying direct in your pathway, is an island, the physical aspect of which is strangely irregular. This island consists of mountains of various heights, of valleys of various depths, of shadowy pools, of shining streams. It is subject to periodical showers and periodical sunshines: yet, by reason of the continual upheaving and swaying, no vegetation grows upon its surface. Once or twice, during the allotted time of its existence this island became threatened with extinction; but, although at first the internal earthquakes shook it to its very foundation, eventually they were the means of enlarging the frontiers. In this Amanthine
"Thought Island," there lived a great artist. He was an eccentric ambitious, hot-headed, imaginative man, and he wished to do something that would, when he was gone, immortalize his name. One day he stood upon Mount Already Achieved, and gazed long and earnestly down into the deep shining waters of the river Hope. Spirits, Angels, Seraphim, Cherubim, Nymphs; all the deities of ancient and modern times, reflected themselves upon the surface of that water; but he sighed them all away, and at last there appeared, as if rising from the misty unfathomable depths of the river, the face of a woman.

"I have it," cried the artist, standing back and letting his deep voice float down the running stream. "I have it, I have it. I cannot paint spirits; but I know enough to paint a woman. I may not be capable of doing her justice; life and perfection I cannot give; and standing at this distance, life and purity I cannot receive; but," and his eyes wandered to the top of Mount To-be-Achieved, then back to the River Hope, and along the narrow toilsome path Perseverance—"but, I shall describe that which I can view from afar. I shall paint into my picture Music, Poetry, Harmony. I shall give it Grace, and Elegance, and Refinement; and the background I shall shade with Charity."

With trembling haste he took up his brushes and pallet, and commenced his work. Gradually a face of marvellous beauty took shape, and stood out with startling vividness upon the canvas. He stepped back to view his handwork. The face was fair and sweet and almost perfect, but there was something wanting. For days, and weeks, and months he laboured at his fruitless task, but the effect was not attained—the material could not be made to express what the immaterial had conceived. At last the man became impatient, throwing down the brush and pallet, in his despair he cried, "Must I give it up? Are all my labours in vain?
And must the ideal remain to rot in the mind because of the inability of these hands to reach the germ and send to the surface the life-revealing plumule? Yet why not let it alone? It is perfect in its symmetry, divine in its expression, glorious—,” he paused as he was about to utter some Solar enravishing expression.

One moment. Two moments.

“Father! A soft little voice from the doorway spoke, a tiny fairy tripped into the enchanted ground, two innocent sunny eyes looked up at the great artist’s great work.

“Oh, how good of you, papa,” cried the child triumphantly. “Did you paint that for me? Is that my dolly?” And the fair, impassive face of the doll was held before the picture.

Like a flash the defect was noticed. Seizing his brush the artist drew it across the brow, and dashed some dark colour into the eye-lashes. The effect was marvellous.

“There!” cried he, throwing down his brush this time in triumph, and splashing his clothes with the dark paint. “There! I have spoiled the face of an angel, but I have painted the face of a woman. That is a Being possessing capabilities of deep emotions. What does it signify whether your capabilities run in the direction of good or evil? you are a pulsating woman, the other half of man.” As he paused to drink in the gentle power of the being he had painted, but could not understand, a brilliant ray shot across the canvas and settled itself upon the fair proud head. The soft pure light played among the curls and pressed upon the marble brow like a diadem of burnished gold.

“Satisfied,” murmured the artist, glancing back along the path he had traversed; “such a crown could not be worn by one who nourishes dark intentions.”

By this myth, or allegory, or legend, or conglomeration of the three, it will be understood that Grace Main was a girl of strange temperament, and it was only by becoming
acquainted with the Thought Island that you could get a glimpse of her true character, for, like all beings of strange temperaments, she kept her feelings well disguised, and no one knew how to take her. She was good and sensible, but there were dark capabilities needing careful watching, and should circumstances arise to agitate those passions, the result would be questionable. In appearance the two sisters, Grace and Elmy, were entirely different, the one being almost a perfect blonde, the other, as we already know, a perfect brunette.

Somewhat similar meditations disturbed Nellie's thoughts as she sat in a secluded corner of the garden and watched Grace and Walter laughing and chatting together on the wide shady verandah of "Spes."

"Are you not ashamed of yourself, Mr. Thornton? Fancy reading on this lovely afternoon. It is positively scandalous, and I wonder the sun does not go away and leave you to your books and your candle light." Grace's ringing laugh reached the ears of the recluse, and the merry banter chased the cloud a moment from her brow.

"Don't scold me, Gracie," pleaded Mr. Thornton, and his tender using of her pet name sent the rich bloom to the girl's cheeks, "I am not reading," putting aside the book.

"Then you are worse than a simpleton, Walter," laughed Grace with a merry toss of her pretty head, "you are a hypocrite. Never take up a book in my presence again, or I shall ask you if you be eating."

Walter Thornton laughed, and his pleasant laugh was sweet to hear. "Oh Gracie, I would like to take you Home. What a sensation you would cause," and he laughed again, while he playfully pinched the girl's tiny ear.

"Indeed I don't want to cause a sensation," pouted Grace. Little minx! she knew very well no one enjoyed admiration better than she. "What is the good. I think
people who cause sensations must have more patience than I, for I know I should shock everyone by doing something desperate."

"You would not get the chance to do anything desperate, my fair coz."

"Then I would say something desperate," retorted Grace, drawing back and pretending not to like Walter's teasing. "Now go and get your hat and come with me, there's a good boy."

"Indeed, mistress commander, but you will please to tell me where you are going. The lamb likes not to be led to the slaughter unprepared; and if 'tis to mother ——"

"That will do. No more rich names if you please," interrupted Grace, holding up a warning finger. "We are not going to afternoon tea. We are going to town to get something for our own tea. Will that suit you, Mr. Particular?"

"Admirably," answered Walter, jumping up and vanishing through the open window.

Grace stood a few minutes on the grey stone steps, buttoning up her gloves. Very sweet and cool she looked, and with that dreamy expression which of late had crept into her face, she would have, as the artist said, satisfied the fastidious. Her dress was of a rich cream colour, and the light flimsy material fell about her youthful figure in soft, sweeping folds. A saucy bow of ribbon was pinned at her throat, and seemed, by its continual fluttering in the breeze, to be inviting everyone to take a peep at the little dimpled chin. Her hat was of the same rich colour, trimmed with ribbon and ornamented with large drooping ostrich feathers. But, O those persistent feathers, how they would creep over the broad brim of her hat; and how they would get between Walter's and her own eyes; and how they would refuse to go back to their proper places when they were told; until at
last she declared they were spiteful and jealous, and that she would never wear them more, and that after all she believed she looked nicer in that hat than in any other.

Walter reappeared, loudly calling for Nellie, but was told to be respectable in respectable company, and together they sauntered down the garden path, Walter fastened a beautiful cream rose-bud in Grace's dress as they passed the rose-bed.

When they were out of sight, Nellie rose from her seat, a strange look of pain in her dark eyes. For a moment she stood leaning against the trunk of a tree, then turned and passed swiftly out of the garden, round to the stable, and ordered her horse to be saddled. Returning to the house she quickly donned her habit, and five minutes afterwards she was galloping at full speed along the sunny beach, and enjoying herself to her heart's content. Such is life—one moment's sharp pain, then eternity's pleasure: one moment in sorrow, the next rejoicing. On, on she galloped, the soft sea-breeze blowing about her dark, loose locks, the exhilaration sending the warm blood into her cheeks, making them burn like crimson clouds, the motion and excitement causing her bright eyes to flash and dance and rival the sunlit waves. She was in her element, this nursling of nature, and had put on her regal crown. And the waves knew her, and did obeisance to their queen, for they bowed themselves to the earth as she passed, and sought to touch her flying robes. "Oh my beautiful sea, my friend, my comforter, my subject," she cried as she paused on a slight elevation to give breath to her foam-flecked steed. "You roar, and tumble, and lash, and I am proud of the spirit within you. You could seize this body, and crush out this breath, but I would still be your queen. I would still rule my kingdom beneath your watery sky; I would make you obey my voice by demanding the release of the dead. Up
up! lash on, foam on. With all thy might I am greater than thou, for I am the breath of thy God. Yet should the choice of my grave be given me, thine arms would I choose, thy soft white foam my pillow, and on thy sweeping billows would I lay this body to rest. The earth has her treasures; unto thee, O mighty sea, I would not grudge this gem, this tiny star of God.” She turned her horse’s head inland, and came home by the country road. Her homeward flight was not as rapid as was her sea-ward, and the shadows were creeping round when she passed along the tree-girt streets, and drew rein at the stable door.

“Why, Walter! what are you doing here?” exclaimed Nellie as a tall form advanced from the shade to help her off.

“I came round to interview the harness,” answered the young man hesitatingly. “We start early to-morrow, you know, Nellie.”

Nellie suffered herself to be lifted from the saddle, a thing she seldom did, and somehow she felt as if Walter held her longer than was needed. “You are hungry, I dare say; go in and get your tea, dear. I heard aunt giving strict orders that the best of everything should be kept. I will see about your horse.” He smiled down into the dark eyes, then turned quickly and led away the horse, while Nellie gravely and quietly made her way toward the house. Her thoughts were troubled again, and all that evening she was very quiet. And thus it was, and always remained. Although Walter Thornton handled repartees with Grace and the rest of the family, and although Nellie’s voice was seldom heard in the debate, yet there was always a deference in his addressing his little dark cousin. Some strange instinct seemed to soften his voice, and make tender his actions, when looking at that saintly face.
Next day Walter and Nellie went for a drive into the country, where Walter obtained a situation as cadet on a large station.

As they were nearing home in the waning afternoon, Walter startled Nellie from a reverie by saying quietly:

"I shall learn all I can from Mr Gould, and when my education is finished, perhaps father will be able to advance me some money for a station of my own. I shall never be satisfied until I have one."

"But, Walter, I thought you told us your father's business was failing. Do you think it fair to expect money from him?"

"How else can I get it. Things began to take the turn for the better when I left home. Who knows what a few years may bring forth."

"They will teach you independence, Walter; they will teach you wisdom; they will break down the falsely-built castles, and will help forward the building of the true. If you depend upon what years may bring forth, you must not neglect the bringing hours; and Walter, it does not become the nature of a true man to speculate on his father's property. Every man should stand alone."

"There you are again," exclaimed Walter, a trifle impatiently. "Always cold. How can you be so calculating over every minute incident. Even if I have to work for my Run, I need not be despondent. 'Sufficient unto the day,' etc.,—I mean to enjoy the present. And by-and-bye,"—the young man looked at the sweet face beside him, and a great yearning began to take possession of his heart.

"And by-and-bye?" asked Nellie, lifting her great calm eyes and looking beyond the present. "What by-and-bye! Like many a young man by-and-bye brings its visions of wife, home, children. It brings thoughts of happy times, peaceful times, restful times. I hope you will be happy, Walter, O!"
I hope you will." A small hand stole into his, and two earnest eyes looked up into his face. "But so much lies between now and then. Must all this precious time be wasted because you wish to be prosperous and happy by-and-bye. You are going to enjoy life, Walter. Oh, do not. Enjoyment is not happiness. You wonder how I can be so calculating about every item, and why I should appear grave now because of the uncertain by-and-bye. Dear Walter, although I am grave at times, I am never despondent. I am happy—none happier. I am careful of the Items because the Sum depends upon their correctness. And why I dislike to hear of people speaking too strongly of the happiness of by-and-bye, is because I feel my own father depended too much upon what the years were to bring for him."

Walter Thornton was silent, and they traversed the remainder of the way in unbroken thought.

A few days afterwards Mr. Thornton took up his station in the country, and did his best to become a New Zealander. He succeeded very well, and although at first he got terribly sunburnt; and his hands got blistered, and his temper got ruffled, and his clothes got torn, and his language got polished, he gradually resigned himself to his fate, and joked about his own awkwardness. His holidays were always spent at "Spas," and nothing gave him so much relief as a dose of "Main society." Thus time went on, and in time's wake travelled time's children. Each day Nellie grew brighter and more cheerful; each day Grace grew quieter and more subdued; each day Mrs. Main superintended and surveyed; each day the children went to and fro; and each day and each hour and each minute led them all toward their end.
CHAPTER XXXVI.

DEAR Reader, have you ever been entranced by the overflowing tide of memories? Have you ever covered your eyes and given yourself up to the society of angels? Ah! if you be a musician you have—a player of the soul's great music. Thus I feel as I sum up the whole, and seek to write the concluding chapter. I have been playing Beethoven's "Adieu," and perhaps that has something to do with my entrancement; for ah! this is an adieu, both of my own and of my Heroine. My pen runs heavily, indeed it has been running so for some time, although I have tried to make it run cheerfully, and the swash, swash of my sad sad thoughts causes the tears to fall upon these pages. They are dropping fast, those wilful tears, and I cannot chase them away. They are spoiling my paper and ink, and I cannot see through their watery film. Oh angels! among whom I dwell, brush them away with thy soft white wings, and let me finish my story, for the time draws in apace, the journeying has been early, and the Dawn is almost reached. Yet who beholds that radiant Focus? Who marks the Medullary Rays, the Sunsetting and the Sunrising Radii? Only the journeyer. Look around you, O sister sojourners, be careful I plead, lest, like Elisha, you hold up your hands, wringing with infinite sorrow, and witness the ascending figure, yourself awake at last to the reality of the Early Rising, but, alas! too late to say the last Good-Bye. Hush! bush! the dawn is bright, the journey sweet, and you make us weep with these sad musings. Ah! we weep for ourselves; we weep for our
earth; we wanted her so, that bright pure star; for our earth is so dull and our hearts full of shadows, and she made sunshine wherever she went. She fed us with fruit from the Tree of Life; she bathed our wounds in the Crystal Stream. In the sparkling Jasper Carriage of Love she drew us along to our Immortal Home. "Oh, why did she go, that bright, pure star, and leave us the rest of this dark journey alone?"

Ye heeded her not, dissatisfied one. Ye mocked at her tears and rejected her love. But the Father valued His tender one, and took her away to her home above. Mourn no more for what ye have lost. But steadily traverse your journey on. Among that radiant, heavenly host, she is still drawing your Chariot along.

"Nellie, put on your hat and come for a stroll. The walk will do you good. You have tired yourself too much, and the cool air will freshen you up for to-night. Besides, I have something particular to tell you before I go back, and I start early in the morning."

Walter Thornton was standing beside the piano, on which Nellie was playing a sad, weird tune. His manly sunburnt face, as he bent over the entranced girl, for Nellie had lost all sense of her surroundings, and was living in the spell of her magic world, was flushed, and his eyes shone like stars. He has improved greatly since last we saw him. His face has lost that effeminate look, and the country air and "roughings" has given it a proud, manly cast. The soft brown hair curled loosely back from the open brow; and as Nellie once declared she would effect, he cultivated no more than a moustache now. His manners also have changed. He was as gentlemanly as ever, and as courteous to the ladies; but his voice was not so often used in trivial compliments, and his courtesy partook more of the Earnest Inborn Growth than of the Outward Enamelling. He had many friends, for he was just the stamp to win his way into the hearts of all, and his
life was full of sunshine; but there were times when he felt a shadow creeping into his heart, and he would shut his eyes to chase it away. These times were when he looked, as he is looking now, at the almost spiritualized face of his cousin.

The slender, almost transparent fingers did not cease until the piece was finished, then they fell together in the girl's lap, and she lifted her great planetary eyes, in which the shadows lay, and looked at her companion.

"Oh Nellie," exclaimed Walter, throwing his arms around the slight figure, "you frighten me when you look like that. Why don't you look like other girls? I shall burn this horrid music."

Nellie rose and withdrew herself from her cousin's arms. "Do I, Walter?" she said, with a bright, winning smile. "I am so sorry. I have been to Heaven, and heard the angels sing. They have such sweet voices, and they were so pleased that I should go and listen to them. But you wanted me to go for a walk, didn't you? Yes, I will go, for I feel so peaceful, as if now that the work was done, there is sweet rest somewhere." She turned to leave the room, and just as she was crossing the hall she caught a glimpse of a fluttering white dress. She pressed her hand to her brow, to try and push back the sudden sickening sensation, but found it impossible to do so. Passing quickly through to the dining-room, she said in her clear, decisive tones, "I am going for a walk with Walter, mother. My head aches a little, and the air will do me good. Tell Grace to put the flowers I have been arranging into their proper places. I will be back in plenty of time." Again that sickening sensation crept over her as she turned away, for through the deep bay window she had seen a white face with strange, angry eyes. Only a moment it had appeared, then it vanished; but the dark brows had almost met across the forehead, and the jetty, red-tipped lashes had flown back and formed, around the eyes, a misty circle like the red wave of warning,
"Oh, Father, grant unto thy child strength and wisdom," prayed Nellie, as she stood before the glass and pinned on her hat. "The trial is at hand; I feel Thy warning spirit. Incline my heart unto Thy ways, and let not my footsteps depart from following after Thee."

She met Walter in the hall, and together they made their way, as of one accord, to the great restless Ocean. On the little hand-bridge, the very one we mentioned long ago, they paused a moment and looked at the slowly moving stream.

"Do you remember our conversation on board that steamer, Nellie?" said Walter. "I do; I shall never forget it. The remembrance of that strange encounter hastened my coming back. Although I did not know you, I felt there was a strange affinity between us, and those strings of remembrance drew me back to seek the holder."

"I have often thought of that time, Walter. I have passed through much since then. My body had passed through much before, but after, it was my spirit's great battle."

"I hardly think much more could be needed. You had conquered the fear of death then; and darkness to you was light. What else can there be for the soul's great flight? If I remember aright, you took me beyond the 'Dream of the Universe,' into the 'Vision of Heaven.' Do you mean to say the soul can get beyond Heaven?"

"I took you to the Gate, and showed you the Golden City. I pointed out the twelve gates with their twelve angels; the walls with their apostle foundations; but I did not take you in; I did not let you see the 'Holy Jerusalem' descend unto man. Yes, the soul can get beyond Heaven, it can get into God. I was angry with that man, and with the inferior rank I then held, I acted right in destroying his book; but I feel that now I could look on and pity him, comparing his puny strength, with the struggling feather that floats down
the silent stream. I was in Heaven then, but my feet touched the earth. I am in God now, and His Glory prevents me from feeling the dull world. But let us go, it will be evening soon."

They traversed the rest of the way in silence, until they stood on the edge of the great blue sea.

"What is this great secret you wish to tell me, Walter?" asked Nellie, by way of helping him out of his difficulty, for she guessed his thoughts.

"Oh, Nellie, you surely know," burst from Walter Thornton's lips. "I am not yet in a position to offer you a home, but I am trying very hard, and next month I become manager of the Tuturi station. Dear, I think of everything for you. If I get impatient, I feel your cool hand on my brow. Nellie dear," he took the girl's cold thin hand between both his own, "let me love you as I yearn to do. Let me feel your warm arms around my neck, and your sweet kisses on my cheek. It is so hard for me, loving you as I do, to have to stand by and wait for these sweet blessings until I can offer you a home, and yet when I look at your face, I dare not ask for these until you promise to be my wife."

Nellie had been gazing out across the water all the while Walter was speaking. When he finished, she turned her eyes to his face, and placed her disengaged hand upon his shoulder. Oh, what a mighty power lies in a small, white hand. It can soothe and set at rest the awful torrent of an imperious will; it can lead the favoured into the land of sunshine and hope; it can agitate into roaring, heaving billows the calm waters of an equable mind; and it can strike with sure and certain aim, the poisoned arrow into many a brave, strong heart.

Away in the distance a soft breeze arose, and gathering in volume during its onward progress, it swept past the two
motionless figures like a whirlwind, striking itself with
terrific force against the huge white cliff, and becoming
dashed into a thousand pieces. The broken fragments
rebounded, many were lost in the great air ocean, but some
settled upon the land. Then when the mist had lifted, those
fragments were seen to unite and become dissolved, and in
the form of a gentle stream they wended their way to the
sea. But the surface, over which that thread-like stream had
passed, had been left unmasked of Memory's Dust, and on
the marble slab of an Antique Grave there appeared a name.
Ah! the vicinity of that moss-grown tomb was no place for
that tale of love.

"Walter," said Nellie's sweet voice, "I cannot be your
wife, for I am betrothed to another."

The young man started back, and shook from his shoulder
the girl's thin white hand.

"Don't interrupt me, dear," continued Nellie, half
sadly. "There will be no occasion for duels. My
betrothed is in Heaven. I once had a vision, Walter
—a strange, complicated, visionary dream—and although
it was vague and misty, yet there was one bright light,
and I knew by its clearness that that was the object of
my vision. You do not believe in fancy, Walter? Neither
do I, but this was no fancy. I was awake when Heaven
opened it to my senses. In it that light began to show itself
long before my chaotic intellect took shape; many times it
was hidden by nearer lights, once it was entirely lost; but
there it shone, and I felt it had been travelling toward me
from the creation. Walter, you have no connection with
that light, therefore I know you are not my betrothed.
Besides, do you not understand why I am as you say,
'Different from any?' Why do I frighten you at times,
Walter? Can one, who is wrapped so closely around with
God's glory that the earth becomes invisible, be long for the
desert air? Oh, look at me, dear, and tell me, do you not read in my face the title of my office? I am only waiting until the last stitch is put in my wedding garments, and then I shall go to meet my dear, dear bridegroom. I do not think it will be long before the angels come to dress me, Walter; already I see them preparing the marriage feast. Oh, it will be so nice to go Home, dear. I feel that I have been there before—yes, I remember, before I came to this earth—that is why I am such a stranger here."

"O, Nellie, little cousin." Walter Thornton held out his arms, and Nellie suffered herself to be clasped in a close fond embrace. It was all explained now—that dread feeling when he looked at that dear face, the mystery around that dear quiet life—and yet his heart did not break. He could kiss her now, but it was as if he kissed a saint; perhaps as his arms encircled the slender figure, he expected to feel it suddenly vanish into space.

"Tell me," said he, as they paused a moment before entering their gate; "is it true what mother writes me?"

"Yes, Walter. I have no more need of it now. The rest have plenty; and, you know, it is "For Father’s Sake."

That evening the wide folding doors of "Spes" were thrown open, and for the first time, for many many days, reception room, and sitting room, and hall, were thronged with gay laughing visitors. The night was lovely—lovelier by far than the day. The great shining moon stood out in the blue sky like a burnished silver penny; and the tiny stars spangled the arched heavens, and seemed as silver-headed nails, keeping up the dome-shaped ceiling. Soft white clouds floated beneath, reminding the Terrestrial that the Celestial were very near. And the trees and flowers and fields looked motionless as the dead, yet in silent majesty holding up their heads to receive the blessing of their Sovereign. Around the wide verandah, and amongst the garden trees, hung myriads of
Chinese lanterns; and if the fruit which proved fatal to poor Eve were as tempting as these great golden apples, humanity should not blame her too severely for her enravishment. Within was all that the gay desire. The sparkling conversation, laughing repartee, the beautifully-dressed ladies, the gallant gentlemen. Grace stood beside her mother, and helped to receive the guests; and Walter stood beside Grace and helped her. They looked very well, those three proud forms, for on their cheeks, and in their eyes, blazed the rich light of excitement; and as they welcomed all with their rare bright smiles, the visitors felt the pleasure and comfort of well-trained courtesy. In her own quiet room, Nellie was seated with two young women.

"I am so glad you brought Queenie, Marion," said that tender familiar voice. Then turning to a fair young woman, dressed in a shining satin gown, she put her arms around her, and pressed her lips to the soft smooth cheek. "You will be good to Iwand, Queenie, won't you? I will not be here to see your marriage, but I may witness it from afar."

They did not exactly understand her; but the rich blood rushed into the fair girl's cheek, and "Queenie promised to be good to Iwand."

"And you, Marion; you are lovelier than ever. You were always beautiful, dear. I think you are perfectly lovely now."

But the music was striking the first notes of their opening dance, and they turned to add their mite to the swelling throng.

"Lyly," said Marion, placing a detaining hand upon the girl's white arm. "Lyly, what is the matter with you? Norman tells me you are ill. Dear, you do not look ill. But O! what is it? If I look perfectly lovely, Lyly, you look perfectly—divine."
"I am not ill, dear. I am perfectly happy, and O, so strong."

Then Marion and Queenie returned to the lights and the enjoyments; and Nellie quietly slipped out, and, shirking the lights, entered the deserted shrubbery. No one saw her go, no one missed her; it was usual to find her place vacant at the dancing board, and no one offered a comment. "She does not care much for company," and with that answer the questioner was satisfied.

And out in the moonlight Nellie stood, and watched the angels descend, bearing her completed wedding garment, and her snowy bridal wreath and veil. And still further back, she saw the Great Open Hall, with its floor of Golden Water; and from its depth she saw arise that strange advancing figure. Was he strange? Ah! no. She knew him now, for he was dressed in his wedding robes, and his face was lost in the light of his soul. Nothing stood between them now, and her own soul leapt forward to meet its affinity.

"O, hasten, my bridesmaids!" she cried; "for long have we been apart; and my soul is weary—weepry of being alone. But where is my father? and where is that other red light? Why are they not here to welcome me?"

But the angels brushed away the tears with their kisses, and bade her be patient. "They are preparing the Feast, sweet one; and you must appear before the Throne before you can be Heaven’s Ordained. The Mighty Renunciation, The Holy Love, must put His Name in your forehead first, my child."

Then the soft clouds passed beneath; the star lay at her feet. Away! Away!

And in the boudoir of a large stone turreted house, among the redeemed heirlooms of the past Main generations, which, by the tacit consent of all parties, had been transferred to the most faithful, stands a noble-looking lady. In her hand she
clasps the salvation of her husband's honour; but her streaming eyes and heaving bosom tell too plainly these pleasures were not without their subsequent pain.

And yet again, not so far away, two dear old people find their eyes filled with their soul's hot tears.

"O, auntie, dear! I told you once that I felt my journeying would be early. It is almost traversed, and, as I said, there is no darkness for me. The white wings of the angel messengers hide from me all shadows; and I float Away, Away. I wish I could have seen your dear face once more, and heard uncle's dear voice. But yet perhaps it is better so, for then the parting would have a pang. Farewell! my dear ones; my tears would flow and mingle with yours, but O, there is so much brightness Beyond, that I cannot pause to weep. Farewell! Farewell!"

Reader, my pen runs heavily; indeed, it has been running so for some time, for this is our Farewell; and the swash, swash, of my sad thoughts cause the tears to fall upon these pages. They are dropping fast, those wilful tears, and I cannot chase them away. They are spoiling my paper and ink, and I cannot see through their watery film. O angels, among whom I dwell, write then, in tears, with thy snow-white wings, these sad sweet words, "It is finished."

The author now asks her reader's leave to add a few conclusive notes, in order to impress more firmly upon their minds, the various reasons for thus inflicting upon them the tedious duty of reading the story of "For Father's Sake." The predominating motive, as anyone will see without much trouble, is to show the very close connection there is between Heaven and Earth. Many speak of Heaven as some place far away, and of God as some Being seated on a distant throne. Of course they will say "God bless you!" and mean it. And they will uplift their eyebrows and declare, "The ways of
God are wonderful, and in everything we see the guiding hand of God." Yet they do not live these truths, they do not trust to that near, personal, guiding, hand. In fact, they are satisfied with a distant worship of God, and a near worship of themselves. And more than this: the current literature of the day holds the same defect. Heaven and earth, God and man are too widely separated. And why? Because these peaceful times have influenced man to depend upon his own power and strength; because angels and spirits are looked upon as beings apart from this world, beings after their own vulgar conception; because religion is being made by man, instead of being used as a completed act. Listen, O man, to my parable.

I wandered about among my people, seeking, ever seeking, for the golden apple—the apple of Religion. I lifted my eyes to the Heavens, and almost despaird. When suddenly there arose before me a range of mighty mountains. The side next me fell away in a gentle decline toward a level plain. On the border of the plain, and extending to the distant horizon, was an unknown ocean. This was the ocean of Hell. I turned my face to the heights, and clearly and distinctly, against the blue sky, I perceived a narrow shining path. Few and far between were the travellers along that path, for the immense height and the limited breadth made the way difficult to traverse. There were many paths winding at certain intervals along that slope, and the ones near the plain were wider and more easily traversed than those near the shining track. Plain and paths were peopled. Listen, and you will hear the conversation of those who frequent the lower tracks:

"A straight and narrow way, indeed! Ours is the better path. It is broad and level, and free from dizziness. See! have we not grass at our feet; flowers and trees on every side; the tombs of our Jacobs lie behind, and golden spaces
in front. These sights are pleasures enough. What need to look at those shining heights, or at that shadowy depth? Is not the sky above? Then let those fanatics mount ever so high, they will see no more than do we. And we say our prayers regularly and solemnly, which is more than they do, for they often pause in their journey and look upward. We are all going to heaven, when we die. That is all that is required from mortal."

Yet see, they turn and begin to contend among themselves. Listen again. Do not laugh, for this is a serious contention, and in the lives of those revilers it has serious results.

"You are wrong; you worship ceremony. You are not right; you adore your pride. As for you, Immersion has become your idol. You harp and grow rusty on a few solitary opinions. And you, and you, are simply fools; fanatic fools; fractious fools."

I am tired of this conversation. Are you? You are. Then let us ascend. See, those lofty travellers beckon us up. Ah! haste, haste! We ascend. Bright, bright track! We cannot pray, for we ourselves are prayer. Why do we stop and gaze upward? Because the Holy Jerusalem, and not the sky, is our canopy; and the gates of that city are open. Look down. The golden land of Canaan lies at our feet. And what is that? What that strange surging movement? It is the people of Christ, with their faces turned in the one direction. The sight is glorious. We feel our hearts bursting with delight; and in our enravishment, we forget the thousand and one Isms, remembering the one deep, universal Christ-ism alone. This is Religion; the Golden Apple; the Salve of all our Mortality.

Then there are subordinate reasons; but these you will understand better by reading the book, and pondering over the preface. Peace on Earth has been my motto; peace Above my Aims. Doubtless there will be much against your
belief; much unsuited to your taste; out of keeping with your experiences. I can only answer, "I speak the Truth," and close my lips.

My hour of oration has transpired, and the curtain is trembling in the Call Boy's hand. Dear reader, I have obeyed that voice; I have addressed my beloved country. Forgive the mistakes of my baby speech. Here in your open palm I lay "A Tale of New Zealand Life," and ask you to read it "For Both Fathers' Sakes."

THE END.