

May my labours be accepted as an endeavour to atone for some of the evil we cause here."

"Dear Robin! what did Mr. Parsons say? was he not very glad?"

"No; there lies the doubt."

"Doubt?"

"Yes. He told me that he had engaged as many curates as he has means for. I answered that my stipend need be no consideration, for I only wished to spend on the parish, but he was not satisfied. Many incumbents don't like to have curates of independent means; I believe it has an amateur appearance."

"Mr. Parsons cannot think you would not be devoted."

"I hope to convince him that I may be trusted. It is all that is left me now."

"It will be very cruel to you, and to the poor people, if he will not," said Phœbe, warmly; "what will papa and Mervyn say?"

"I shall not mention it till all is settled. I have my father's consent to my choice of a profession, and I do not think myself bound to let him dictate my course as a minister. I owe a higher duty, and if his business scatters the seeds of vice, surely 'obedience in the Lord' should not prevent me from trying to counteract them."

It was a case of conscience to be only judged by himself, and where even a sister like Phœbe could do little but hope for the best, so she expressed a cheerful hope that her father must know that it was right, and that he would care less, now that he was away, and pleased with Augusta's prospects.

"Yes," said Robert, "he already thinks me such a fool, that it may be indifferent to him in what particular manner I act it out."

"And how does it stand with Mr. Parsons?"

"He will give me an answer to-morrow evening, provided I continue in the same mind. There is no chance of my not doing so. My time of suspense is over!" and the words absolutely sounded like relief, though the set stern face, and the long breaths at each pause told another tale."

"I did not think she would really have gone!" said Phœbe.

"This once, and we will mention her no more. It is not merely this expedition, but all I saw at Wrapworth con-

vinced me that I should risk my faithfulness to my calling by connecting myself with one, who, with all her loveliness and generosity, lives upon excitement. She is the very light of poor Prendergast's eyes, and he cannot endure to say a word in her dispraise; she is constantly doing acts of kindness in his parish, and is much beloved there, yet he could not conceal how much trouble she gives him by her want of judgment and wilfulness; patronizing and forgetting capriciously, and attending to no remonstrance. You saw yourself the treatment of that schoolmistress. I thought the more of this, because Prendergast is so fond of her, and does her full justice. No; her very aspect proves that a parish priest has no business to think of her."

Large tears swelled in Phœbe's eyes. The first vision of her youth was melting away, and she detected no relenting in his grave resolute voice.

"Shall you tell her?" was all she could say.

"That is the question. At one time she gave me reason to think that she accepted a claim to be considered in my plans, and understood what I never concealed. Latterly she has appeared to withdraw all encouragement, to reject every advance, and yet Phœbe, tell me, whether she has given you any reason to suppose that she ever was in earnest with me?"

"I know she respects and likes you better than any one, and speaks of you like no one else," said Phœbe; then pausing, and speaking more diffidently, though with a smile, "I think she looks up to you so much, that she is afraid to put herself in your power, for fear she should be made to give up her odd ways in spite of herself, and yet that she has no notion of losing you. Did you see her face at the station?"

"I would not! I could not meet her eyes! I snatched my hand from the little clinging fingers;" and Robert's voice almost became a gasp. "It was not fit that the spell should be renewed. She would be miserable, I under constant temptation, if I endeavoured to make her share my work! Best as it is! She has so cast me off that my honour is no longer bound to her; but I cannot tell whether it be due to her to let her know how it is with me, or whether it would be mere coxcombry."

"The Sunday that she spent here," said Phœbe, slowly, "she had a talk with me. I wrote it down. Miss Fennimore says it is the safest way."

"Where is it?" cried Robert.

"I kept it in my pocket-book, for fear anyone should see it, and it should do harm. Here it is, if it will help you. I am afraid I made things worse, but I did not know what to say."

It was one of the boldest experiments ever made by a sister, for what man could brook the sight of an unvarnished statement of his proxy's pleading, or help imputing the failure to the go-between?

"I would not have had this happen for a thousand pounds!" was his acknowledgment. "Child as you are, Phœbe, had you not sense to know, that no woman could endure to have that said, which should scarcely be implied. I wonder no longer at her studied avoidance."

"If it be all my bad management, cannot it be set right?" humbly and hopefully said Phœbe.

"There is no right!" he said. "There, take it back. It settles the question. The security you childishly showed, was treated as offensive presumption on my part. It would be presuming yet farther to make a formal withdrawal of what was never accepted."

"Then is it my doing? Have I made mischief between you, and put you apart?" said poor Phœbe, in great distress. "Can't I make up for it?"

"You? No, you were only an over plain-spoken child, and brought about the crisis, that must have come somehow. It is not what you have done, or not done; it is what Lucy Sandbrook has said and done, that shows that I must have done with her for ever."

"And yet," said Phœbe, taking this as forgiveness, "you see she never believed that you would give her up. If she did, I am sure she would not have gone."

"She thinks her power over me stronger than my principles. She challenges me—desires you to tell me so. We shall see."

He spoke as a man whose steadfastness had been defied, and who was piqued on proving it to the utmost. Such feelings may savour of the wrath of man, they may need the purifying of chastening, and they often impel far beyond the bounds of sober judgment; but no doubt they likewise frequently render that easy which would otherwise have appeared impossible, and which, if done in haste, may be regretted, but not repented, at leisure.

Under some circumstances, the harshness of youth is a healthy symptom, proving force of character and conviction, though that is only when the foremost victim is self. Robert was far from perfect, and it might be doubted whether he were entering the right track in the right way, but at least his heart was sound, and there was a fair hope that his failings, in working their punishment, might work their cure.

It was in a thorough brotherly and Christian spirit that before entering the house, he compelled himself to say, "Don't vex yourself, Phœbe, I know you did the best you could, as kindly as you could. It made no real difference, and it was best that she should know the truth."

"Thank you, dear Robin," cried Phœbe, grateful for the consolation; "I am glad you do not think I misrepresented."

"You are always accurate," he answered. "If you did anything undesirable, it was representing at all. But that is nothing to the purpose. It is all over now, and thank you for your constant good will and patience, my dear. There! now then it is an understood thing that her name is never spoken between us."

Meanwhile, Robert's proposal was under discussion by the elders. Mr. Parsons had no abstract dread of a wealthy curate, but he hesitated to accept gratuitous services, and distrusted plans formed under the impulse of disappointment or of enthusiasm, since in the event of a change, both parties might be embarrassed. There was danger, too, of collisions with his family, and Mr. Parsons took counsel with Miss Charlecote, knowing indeed that where her affections were concerned, her opinions must be taken with a qualification, but relying on the good sense formed by rectitude of purpose.

Honor's affection for Robert Fulmort had always been moderated by Owen's antagonism, her moderation in superlatives commanded explicit credence, and Mr. Parsons inferred more, instead of less, than she expressed; better able as he was to estimate that manly character, gaining force with growth, and though slow to discern between good and evil, always firm to the duty when it was once perceived, and thus rising with the elevation of the standard. The undemonstrative temper, and tardiness in adopting extra habits of religious observance and profession, which had disappointed Honor,

struck the clergyman as evidences both of sincerity and evenness of development, proving the sterling reality of what had been attained.

"Not taking, but trusty," judged the vicar.

But the lad was an angry lover. How tantalizing to be offered a fourth curate, with a long purse, only to find St. Wulstan's serving as an outlet for a lover's quarrel, and the youth restless and restive ere the end of his diaconate!

"How savage you are," said his wife, "as if the parish would be hurt by his help or his presence. If he goes—let him go—some other help will come."

"And don't deprive him of the advantage of a good master," said Honor.

"This wretched cure is not worth flattery," he said smiling.

"Nay," said Mrs. Parsons, "how often have I heard you rejoice that you started here."

"Under Mr. Charlecote, yes."

"You are the depository of his traditions," said Honor, "hand them on to Robert. I wish nothing better for Owen."

Mr. Parsons wished something better for himself, and averted a reply, by speaking of Robert as accepted.

Robert's next request was to be made useful in the parish, while preparing for his ordination in the autumn ember week, and though there were demurs as to unnecessarily anticipating the strain on health and strength, he obtained his wish in mercy to a state only to be alleviated by the realities of labour.

So few difficulties were started by his family, that Honora suspected that Mr. Fulmort, always chiefly occupied by what was immediately before him, hardly realized that by taking an assistant curacy at St. Wulstan's, his son became one of the pastors of Whittington streets, great and little, Richard Courts, Cicely Row, Alice Lane, Cat Alley, and Turnagain Corner. Scarcely, however, was this settled, when a despatch arrived from Dublin, headed, "The Fast Fly Fishers; or, the modern St. Kevin," containing in Ingoldsby legend-like rhymes, the entire narration of the Glendalough predicament of the "Fast and Fair," and concluding with a piece of prose, by the same author, assuring his sweet Honey, that the poem though strange, was true, that he had just seen the angelic anglers on board the steamer, and it would not be for lack of good advice on his part, if Lucy did not present herself at

Woolstone Lane, to partake of the dish called humble pie, on the derivation whereof antiquaries were divided.

Half amused, half vexed by his levity, and wholly relieved and hopeful, Honora could not help showing Owen's performance to Phœbe for the sake of its cleverness, but she found the child too young and simple to enter into it, for the whole effect was an entreaty that Robert might not see it, only hear the facts.

Rather annoyed by this want of appreciation of Owen's wit, Honora saw, nevertheless, that Phœbe had come to a right conclusion. The breach was not likely to be diminished by finding that the wilful girl had exposed herself to ridicule, and the Fulmort nature had so little sense of the ludicrous, that this good-natured brotherly satire would be taken for mere derision.

So Honor left it to Phœbe to give her own version, only wishing that the catastrophe had come to his knowledge before his arrangements had been made with Mr. Parsons.

Phœbe had some difficulty in telling her story. Robert at first silenced her peremptorily, but after ten minutes relented, and said, moodily, "Well, let me hear!" He listened without relaxing a muscle of his rigid countenance, and when Phœbe ended by saying that Miss Charlecote had ordered Lucy's room to be prepared, thinking that she might present herself at any moment, he said, "Take care that you warn me when she comes. I shall go home that minute."

"Robert, Robert, if she come home grieved and knowing better. . . ."

"I will not see her!" he repeated. "I made her taking this journey the test! The result is nothing to me! Phœbe, I trust to you that no intended good nature of Miss Charlecote's should bring us together. Promise me."

Phœbe could do nothing but promise, and not another sentence could she obtain from her brother; indeed, his face looked so formidable in its sternness, that she would have been a bold maiden to have tried.

Honora augured truly, that not only was his stern nature deeply offended, but that he was quite as much in dread of coming under the power of Lucy's fascinations as Cilla had ever been of his strength. Such mutual aversion was really a token of the force of influence upon each, and Honor assured Phœbe that all would come right. "Let her only come

home and be good, and you will see, Phœbe ! She will not be the worse for an alarm, nor even for waiting till after his two years at St. Wulstan's."

The reception of the travellers at Castle Blanch was certainly not mortifying by creating any excitement. Charles Charteris said his worst in the words, "One week !" and his wife was glad to have some one to write her notes.

This indifference fretted Lucy. She found herself loathing the perfumy rooms, the sleepy voice, and hardly able to sit still in her restless impatience of Lolly's platitudes and Charles's *insouciance*, while Rashe could never be liked again. Even a lecture from Honor Charlecote would have been infinitely preferable, and one grim look of Robert's would be bliss !

No one knew whether Miss Charlecote was still in town, nor whether Augusta Fulmort was to be married in England or abroad ; and as to Miss Murrell, Lolly languidly wondered what it was that she had heard.

Hungering for some one whom she could trust, Lucilla took an early breakfast in her own room, and walked to Wrapworth hoping to catch the curate lingering over his coffee and letters. From a distance, however, she espied his form disappearing in the school porch, and approaching, heard his voice reading prayers, and the children's chanted response. Coming to the oriel, she looked in. There were the rows of shiny heads, fair, brown, and black ; there were the long sable back and chopped-hay locks of the curate—but where a queen-like figure had of old been wont to bend, she beheld a tallow face, with sandy hair under the most precise of net caps, and a straight thread paper shape in scanty gray stuff, and white apron.

Dizzy with wrathful consternation, Cilla threw herself on one of the seats of the porch, shaking her foot, and biting her lip, frantic to know the truth, yet too much incensed to enter, even when the hum of united voices ceased, the rushing sound of rising was over, and measured footsteps pattered to the classes, where the manly interrogations sounded alternately with the shrill little answers.

Clump, clump, came the heavy feet of a laggard, her head bent over her book, her thick lips vainly conning the unlearned task, unaware of the presence of the young lady, till Lucilla touched her, saying, "What, Martha, a ten o'clock scholar ?"

She gave a little cry, opened her staring eyes, and dropped a curtesy.

"Whom have you here for mistress?" asked Lucilla.

"Please, ma'am, governess is ruined away."

"What do you mean?"

"Yes, ma'am," replied the girl, developing powers of volubility such as scholastic relations with her had left unsuspected. "She ran away last Saturday was a week, and there was nobody to open the school when we came to it a Sunday morning, and we had holidays all last week, ma'am, and mother was terrified * out of her life, and father, he said he wouldn't have me never go for to do no such thing; and that he didn't want no fine ladies, as was always spiting of me."

"Every one will seem to spite you, if you keep no better hours," said Lucy, little edified by Martha's virtuous indignation.

The girl had scarcely entered the school before the clergyman stood on the threshold, and was seized by both hands, with the words, "O, Mr. Prendergast, what is this?"

"You here, Cilla? What's the matter? What has brought you back?"

"Had you not heard? A sprain of Ratia's, and other things. Never mind. What's all this?"

"Ah! I knew you would be sadly grieved!"

"So you did frighten her away!"

"I never meant it. I tried to act for the best. She was spoken to, by myself and others, but nobody could make any impression, and we could only give her notice to go at the harvest holidays. She took it with her usual grand air. . . ."

"Which is really misery and despair. Oh, why did I go? Go on!"

"I wrote to the mother, advising her, if possible, to come and be with the girl till the holidays. That was on Thursday week, and the old woman promised to come on the Monday—wrote a very proper letter, allowing for the Methodistical phrases—but on the Saturday, it was observed that the house was not opened, and on Sunday morning I got a note—if you'll come in I'll show it to you."

* Terrify, to tease or worry.

He presently discovered it among multitudinous other papers on his chimney-piece. Within a lady-like envelope was a thick, satin-paper, queen sized note, containing these words :

"REVEREND SIR—It is with the deepest feelings of regret for the unsatisfactory appearance of my late conduct that I venture to address you, but time will enable me to account for all, and I can at the present moment only entreat you to pardon any inconvenience I may have occasioned by the precipitancy of my departure. Credit me, reverend and dear sir, it was only the law of necessity that could have compelled me to act in a manner that may appear questionable. Your feeling heart will excuse my reserve when you are informed of the whole. In the mean time, I am only permitted to mention that this morning I became a happy wife. With heartfelt thanks for all the kindness I have received, I remain,

"Reverend sir,

"Your obedient servant,

"EDNA."

"Not one message to me," exclaimed Lucilla.

"Her not having had the impudence is the only redeeming thing!"

"I did not think she would have left no word for me," said Lucy, who knew she had been kinder than her wont, and was really wounded. "Happy wife! Who can it be?"

"Happy wife!" repeated the curate. "It is miserable fool, most likely, by this time."

"No surname signed! What's the post-mark? Only Charing Cross. Could you find out nothing, or did you not think it worth while to look?"

"What do you take me for, Cilla? I inquired at the station, but she had not been there, and on the Monday I went to London and saw the mother, who was in great distress, for she had had a letter much like mine, only more unsatisfactory, throwing out absurd hints about grandeur and prosperity—poor deluded simpleton!"

"She distinctly says she is married."

"Yes, but she gives no name nor place. What's that worth? After such duplicity as she has been practising so

long, I don't know how to take her statement. Those people are pleased to talk of a marriage in the sight of heaven, when they mean the devil's own work!"

"No, no! I will not think it!"

"Then don't, my dear. You were very young and innocent, and thought no harm."

"I'm not young—I'm not innocent!" furiously said Cilly. "Tell me downright all you suspect."

"I'm not given to suspecting," said the poor clergyman, half in deprecation, half in reproof, "but I am afraid it is a bad business. If she had married a servant, or any one in her own rank, there would have been no need of concealing the name, at least from her mother. I feared at first that it was one of your cousin Charles's friends, but there seems more reason to suppose that one of the musical people at your concert at the Castle may have thought her voice a good speculation for the stage."

"He would marry her to secure her gains."

"If so, why the secrecy?"

"Mrs. Jenkins has taught you to make it as bad as possible," burst out Lucy. "O, why was not I at home? Is it too late to trace her and proclaim her innocence?"

"I was wishing for your help. I went to Mr. Charteris to ask who the performers were, but he knew nothing about them, and said you and his sister had managed it all."

"The director was Derval. He is fairly respectable, at least I know nothing to the contrary. I'll make Charlie write. There was an Italian with a black beard and a bass voice whom we have had several times. I saw him looking at her. Just tell me what sort of woman is the mother. She lets lodgings, does not she?"

"Yes, in Little Whittington Street."

"Dear me! I trust she is no friend of Honor Charlecote's."

"Out of her beat, I should think. She dissents."

"What a blessing! I beg your pardon, but if any thing could be an aggravation, it would be Honor Charlecote's moralities."

"So you were not aware of the dissent!"

"And you are going to set that down as more deceit, as if it were the poor thing's business to denounce her mother. Now, to show you that I can be sure that Edna was brought

up to the Church, I will tell you her antecedents. Her father was Sir Thomas Deane's butler; they lived in the village, and she was very much in the nursery with the Miss Deanes—had some lessons from the governess. There was some notion of making her a nursery governess, but Sir Thomas died, the ladies went abroad, taking her father with them, Edna was sent to a training school, and the mother went to live in the City with a relation who let lodgings, and who has since died, leaving the concern to Mrs. Murrell, whose husband was killed by an upset of the carriage on the Alps."

"I heard all that, and plenty besides! Poor woman, she was in such distress that one could not but let her pour it all out, but I declare the din rang in my ears the whole night after! A very nice, respectable-looking body she was, with jet-black eyes like diamonds, and a rosy countrified complexion, quite a treat to see in that grimy place, her widow's cap as white as snow, but, oh! such a tongue! She would give me all her spiritual experiences—how she was converted by an awakening minister in Cat Alley, and yet had a great respect for such ministers of the Church as fed their flocks with sincere milk, mixed up with the biography of all the shopmen and clerks who ever lodged there, and to whom she acted as a mother!"

"It was not their fault that she did not act as a mother-in-law. Edna has told me of the unpleasantness of being at home on account of the young men."

"Exactly! I was spared none of the chances she might have had, but the only thing worthy of note was about a cashier who surreptitiously brought a friend from the 'opera,' to overhear her singing hymns on the Sunday evening, and thus led to an offer on his part to have her brought out on the stage."

"Ha! could that have come to anything?"

"No. Mrs. Murrell's suspicions took that direction, and we hunted down the cashier and the friend, but they were quite exonerated. It only proves that her voice has an unfortunate value."

"If she be gone off with the Italian bass, I can't say I think it a fatal sign that she was slow to present him to her domestic Mause Headrigg, who no doubt would deliberately prefer the boards of her coffin to the boards of the theatre."

Well, come along—we will get a letter from Charles, and rescue her—I mean clear her.”

“Won’t you look into school, and see how we go on? The women complained so much of having their children on their hands, though I am sure they had sent them to school seldom enough of late, that I got this young woman from Mrs. Stuart’s asylum till the holidays. I think we shall let her stay on, she has a good deal of method, and all seem pleased with the change.”

“You have your wish of a fright. No, I thank you! I’m not so glad as the rest of you to get rid of refinement and superiority.”

There was no answer, and more touched by silence than reply, she hastily said, “Never mind! I dare say she may do better for the children, but you know I, who am hard of caring for any one, did care for poor Edna, and I can’t stand pæans over your new broom.”

Mr. Prendergast gave a smile such as was only evoked by his late rector’s little daughter, and answered, “No one can be more concerned than I. She was not in her place here, that was certain, and I ought to have minded that she was not thrust into temptation. I shall remember it with shame to my dying day.”

“Which means to say that so should I.”

“No, you did not know so much of the evils of the world.”

“I told you before, Mr. Pendy, that I’m twenty times more sophisticated than you are. You talk of knowing the world? I wish I didn’t. I’m tired of everybody!”

And on the way home she described her expedition, and had the pleasure of the curate’s sympathy, if not his entire approval. Perhaps there was no other being whom she so thoroughly treated as a friend, actually like a woman friend, chiefly because he thoroughly believed in her, and was very blind to her faults. Robert would have given worlds to have found her *once*, what Mr. Prendergast found her *always*.

She left him to wait in the drawing-room, while she went on her mission, but presently rushed back in a fury. Nobody cared a rush for the catastrophe. Lolly begged her not to be so excited about a trifle, it made her quite nervous; and the others laughed at her; Rashe pretended to think it a fine chance to have changed “the life of an early Christian,”

for the triumphs of the stage; and Charles scouted the idea of writing to the man's employer. "He call Derval to account for all the tricks of his fiddlers and fingers? Much obliged!"

Mr. Prendergast decided on going to town by the next train to make inquiries of Derval himself, without further loss of time, and Cilly declared that she would go with him, and force the conceited professor to attend; but the curate, who had never found any difficulty in enforcing his own dignity, and thought it no business for a young lady, declined her company, unless, he said, she were going to spend the day with Miss Charlecote.

"I've a great mind to go to her for good and all. Let her fall upon me for all and sundry. It will do me good to hear a decent woman speak again! besides, poor old soul, she will be so highly gratified, that she will be quite meek" (and so will some one else, quoth the perverse little heart), "I'll put up a few things, and not delay you."

"This is very sudden!" said the curate, wishing to keep the peace between her and her friends, and not willing that his sunbeam should fleet so "like the Borealis race!" "Will it not annoy your cousins?"

"They ought to be annoyed!"

"And are you certain that you would find Miss Charlecote in town? I thought her stay was to be short."

"I'm certain of nothing, but that every place is detestable."

"What would you do if you did not find her?"

"Go on to Euston Square. Do you think I don't know my way to Hiltonbury, or that I should not get welcome enough—ay, and too much, there?"

"Then if you are so uncertain of her movements, do you not think you had better let me learn them before you start. She might not even be gone home, and you would not like to come back here again; if. . . ."

"Like a dog that has been out hunting," said Lucilla, who could bear opposition from this quarter as from no other. "You won't take the responsibility, that's the fact. Well, you may go and reconnoitre, if you will; but mind, if you say one word of what brings you to town, I shall never go near the Holt at all. To hear—whenever the Raymonds, or any other of the godly school-keeping sort come to dinner—of

the direful effects of certificated schoolmistresses would drive me to such distraction, that I cannot answer for the consequences."

"I am sure it is not a fact to proclaim."

"Ah! but if you run against Mr. Parsons, you'll never abstain from telling him of his stray lamb, nor from condoling with him upon the wolf in Cat Alley. Now, there's a fair hope of his having more on his hands than to get his fingers scratched by meddling with the cats, and so that this may remain unknown. So consider yourself sworn to secrecy."

Mr. Prendergast promised. The good man was a bit of a gossip, so perhaps her precaution was not thrown away, for he could hardly have helped seeking the sympathy of a brother pastor, especially of him to whose fold the wanderer primarily belonged. Nor did Lucy feel certain of not telling the whole herself in some unguarded moment of confidence. All she cared for was, that the story should not transpire through some other source, and be brandished over her head as an illustration of all the maxims that she had so often spurned. She ran after Mr. Prendergast after he had taken leave, to warn him against calling in Woolstone Lane, and desired him instead to go to Masters's shop, where it was sure to be known whether Miss Charlecote were in town or not.

Mr. Prendergast secretly did grateful honour to the consideration that would not let him plod all the weary way into the City. Little did he guess that it was one part mistrust of his silence, and three parts reviving pride, which forbade that Honora should know that he had received any such commission.

The day was spent in pleasant anticipations of the gratitude and satisfaction that would be excited by her magnanimous return, and her pardon to Honor and to Robert for having been in the right. She knew she could own it so graciously, that Robert would be overpowered with compunction, and for ever beholden to her, and now that the Charterises were so unmitigatedly hateful, it was time to lay herself out for goodness, and fling him the rein, with only now and then a jerk, to remind him that she was a free agent.

A long-talked-of journey on the Continent was to come to pass as soon as Horatia's strain was well. In spite of wealth and splendour, Eloïsa had found herself disappointed

in the step that she had hoped her marriage would give her into the most *élite* circles. Languid and indolent as her mind was, she could not but perceive that where Ratia was intimate and at ease, she continued on terms of form and ceremony, and her husband felt more keenly that the society in his house was not what it had been in his mother's time. They both became restless, and Lolly, who had already lived much abroad, dreaded the dullness of an English winter in the country, while Charles knew that he had already spent more than he liked to recollect, and that the only means of keeping her contented at Castle Blanch, would be to continue most ruinous expenses.

With all these secret motives, the tour was projected as a scheme of amusement, and the details were discussed between Charles and Rashe with great animation, making the soberness of Hiltonbury appear both tedious and sombre, though all the time Lucy felt that there she should again meet that which her heart both feared and yearned for, and without which these pleasures would be but shadows of enjoyment. Yet that they were not including her in their party, gave her a sense of angry neglect and impatience. She wanted to reject their invitation indignantly, and make a merit of the sacrifice.

The after-dinner discussion was in full progress when she was called out to speak to Mr. Prendergast. Heated, wearied, and choking with dust, he would not come beyond the hall, but before going home he had walked all this distance to tell her the result of his expedition. Derval had not been uncivil, but evidently thought the suspicion an affront to his *corps*, which at present was dispersed by the end of the season. The Italian bass was a married man, and had returned to his own country. The clue had failed. The poor lost leaf must be left to drift upon unknown winds.

"But," said the curate, by way of compensation, "at Masters's, I found Miss Charlecote herself, and gave your message."

"I gave no message."

"No, no; because you would not send me up into the City, but I told her all you would have had me say, and how nearly you had come up with me, only I would not let you for fear she should have left town."

Cilla's face did not conceal her annoyance, but not understanding her in the least, he continued, "I'm sure no one

could speak more kindly or considerately than she did. Her eyes filled with tears, and she must be heartily fond of you at the bottom, though may be rather injudicious and strict, but after what I told her, you need have no fears."

"Did you ever know me have any?"

"Ah, well! you don't like the word, but at any rate she thinks you behaved with great spirit and discretion under the circumstances, and quite overlooks any little imprudence. She hopes to see you the day after to-morrow, and will write and tell you so."

Perhaps no intentional slander ever gave the object greater annoyance than Cilly experienced on learning that the good curate had, in the innocence of his heart, represented her as in a state of proper feeling, and interceded for her, and it was all the worse because it was impossible to her to damp his kind satisfaction, otherwise than by a brief "Thank you," the tone of which he did not comprehend.

"Was she alone?" she asked.

"Didn't I tell you the young lady was with her, and the brother."

"Robert Fulmort?" and Cilla's heart sank at finding that it could not have been he who had been with Owen.

"Ay, the young fellow that slept at my house. He has taken a curacy at St. Wulstan's."

"Did he tell you so?" with an ill-concealed start of consternation.

"Not he; lads have strange manners. I should have thought, after the terms we were upon here, he need not have been quite so much absorbed in his book as never to speak!"

"He has plenty in him instead of manners," said Lucilla; "but I'll take him in hand for it!"

Though Lucilla's instinct of defence had spoken up for Robert, she felt hurt at his treatment of her old friend, and could only excuse it by a strong fit of shy conscious moodiness. His taking the curacy was only explicable, she thought, as a mode of showing his displeasure with herself, since he could not ask her to marry into Whittingtonia, but "That must be all nonsense," thought she, "I will soon have him down off his high horse, and Mr. Parsons will never keep him to his engagement—silly fellow to have made it—or if he does, I shall only have the longer to plague him. It will

do him good. Let me see ! he will come down to-morrow with Honor's note. I'll put on my lilac muslin with the innocent little frill, and do my hair under his favourite net, and look like such a horrid little meek ringdove that he will be perfectly disgusted with himself for having ever taken me for a fishing eagle. He will be abject, and I'll be generous, and not give another peck till it has grown intolerably stupid to go on being good, or till he presumes ! ”

For the first time for many weeks Lucilla awoke with the impression that something pleasant was about to befall her, and her wild heart was in a state of glad flutter as she donned the quiet dress, and found that the subdued colouring and graver style rendered her more softly lovely than she had ever seen herself.

The letters were on the breakfast-table when she came down, the earliest as usual, and one was from Honor Charlecote, the first sight striking her with vexation as discomfiting her hopes that it would come by a welcome bearer. Yet that might be no reason why he should not yet run down.

She tore it open.

“ My dearest Lucy—Until I met Mr. Prendergast yesterday, I was not sure that you had actually returned, or I would not have delayed an hour in assuring you, if you could doubt it, that my pardon is ever ready for you.”

Many thanks, was the muttered comment. O that poor, dear, stupid man ; would that I had stopped his mouth !

“ I never doubted that your refinement and sense of propriety would be revolted at the consequences of what I always saw to be mere thoughtlessness.”

Dearly beloved of an old maid is, I told you so !

“ —but I am delighted to hear that my dear child showed so much true delicacy and dignity in her trying predicament ”

Delighted to find her dear child not absolutely lost to decorum ! Thanks again.

“ And I console myself for the pain it has given by the trust that experience has proved a better teacher than precept.”

Where did she find that grand sentence ?

“—so that good may result from past evil, and present

suffering, and that you may have learnt to distrust those who would lead you to disregard the dictates of your own better sense."

Meaning her own self!

"I have said all this by letter, that we may cast aside all that is painful when we meet, and only to feel that I am welcoming my child, doubly dear, because she comes owning her error."

I dare say! We like to be magnanimous, don't we? O, Mr. Prendergast! I could beat you!

"Our first kiss shall seal your pardon, dearest, and not a word shall pass to remind you of this distressing page in your history."

Distressing! Excellent fun it was. I shall make her hear my diary, if I persuade myself to encounter this intolerable kiss of peace. It will be a merey if I don't serve her as the thief in the fable did his mother when he was going to be hanged.

"I will meet you at the station by any train on Saturday that you like to appoint, and early next week we will go down to what I am sure you have felt is your only true home."

Have I? Oh! she has heard of their journey, and thinks this my only alternative. As if I could not go with them if I chose; I wish they would ask me though. They shall! I'll not be driven up to the Holt as my last resource, and live there under a system of mild browbeating, because I can't help it. No, no! Robin shall find it takes a vast deal of persuasion to bend me to swallow so much pardon in milk and water. I wonder if there's time to change this spooney simplicity, and come out in something spicy, with a dash of the Bloomer. But, maybe, there's some news of him in the other sheet, now she has delivered her conscience of her rigmarole. Oh! here it is—

"Phœbe will go home with us, as she is, according to the family system, not summoned to her sister's wedding. Robert leaves London on Saturday morning, to fetch his books, &c., from Oxford, Mr. Parsons having consented to give him a title for Holy Orders, and to let him assist in the parish until the next Ember Week. I think, dear girl, that it should not be concealed from you that this step was taken as soon as he heard that you had actually sailed for Ireland, and

that he does not intend to return until we are in the country."

Does he not? Another act of coercion! I suppose you put him up to this, madam, as a pleasing course of discipline. You think you have the whip hand of me, do you? Pooh! See if he'll stay at Oxford!

"I feel for the grief I'm inflicting"

Oh, so you complacently think '*I have made her sorry . . .*'

—"but I believe uncertainty, waiting, and heart-sickness would cost you far more. Trust me, as one who has felt it, that it is far better to feel oneself unworthy than to learn to doubt or distrust the worthiness or constancy of another."

My father to wit! A pretty thing to say to his daughter! What right has she to be pining and complaining after him. He, the unworthy one! I'll never forgive that conceited inference! Just because he could not stand sentiment! Master Robert gone! Won't I soon have him repenting of his outbreak?

"I have no doubt that his feelings are unchanged, and that he is solely influenced by principle. He is evidently exceedingly unhappy under all his reserve"

He shall be more so, till he behaves himself, and comes back humble! I've no notion of his flying out in this way.

"— and though I have not exchanged a word with him on the subject, I am certain that his good opinion will be retrieved with infinite joy to himself as soon as you make it possible for his judgment to be satisfied with your conduct and sentiments. Grieved as I am, it is with a hopeful sorrow, for I am sure that nothing is wanting on your part but that consistency and sobriety of behaviour of which you have newly learnt the necessity on other grounds. The Parsonses have gone to their own house, so you will not find any one here but two who will feel for you in silence, and we shall soon be in the quiet of the Holt, where you shall have all that can give you peace or comfort from your ever-loving old

"H. C."

Feel for me! Never. Don't you wish you may get it? Teach the catechism and feed caterpillars till such time as it pleases Mrs. Honor to write up and say 'the specimen

is tame !' How nice-! No, no. I'll not be frightened into their lording it over me ! I know a better way ! Let Mr. Robert find out how little I care, and get himself heartily sick of St. Wulstan's, till it is, ' turn again Whittington indeed !' Poor fellow, I hate it, but he must be cured of his airs, and have a good fright. Why don't they ask me to go to Paris with them ? Where can I go, if they don't ? To Mary Cranford's ? Stupid place, but I *will* show that I'm not so hard up as to have no place but the Holt to go to ! If it were only possible to stay with Mr. Prendergast, it would be best of all ! Can't I tell him to catch a chaperon for me ? Then he would think Honor a regular dragon, which would be a shame, for it was nobody's fault but his ! I shall tell him, I'm like the Christian religion, for which people are always making apologies that it doesn't want ! Two years ! Patience ! It will be very good for Robin, and four-and-twenty is quite soon enough to bite off one's wings, and found an ant hill. As to being bullied into being kissed, pitied, pardoned, and trained by Honor, I'll never sink so low ! No, at *no* price.

Poor Mr. Prendergast ! Did ever a more innocent, mischief-maker exist ?

Poor Honora ! Little did she guess that the letter written in such love, such sympathy, such longing hope, would only excite fierce rebellion.

Yet it was at the words of Moses that the king's heart was hardened ; and what was the end ? He was taken at his word.

" Thou shalt see my face no more."

To be asked to join the party on their tour, had become Lucilla's prime desire, if only that she might not feel neglected, or driven back to Hiltonbury by absolute necessity ; and when the husband and wife came down, the wish was uppermost in her mind.

Eloïsa remarked on her quiet style of dress, and observed " that it would be quite the thing in Paris, where people were so much less *outré* than here."

" I have nothing to do with Paris."

" Oh ! surely you go with us ! " said Eloïsa ; " I like to take you out, because you are in so different a style of beauty, and you talk and save one trouble ! Will not she go, Charles ? "

"You see, Lolly wants you for effect!" he said, sneeringly. "But you are always welcome, Cilly, we are woefully slow when you ain't there to keep us going, and I should like to show you a thing or two. I only did not ask you, because I thought you had not hit it off with Rashe, or have you made it up?"

"Oh! Rashe and I understand each other," said Cilly, secure that though she would never treat Rashe with her former confidence, yet as long as they travelled *en grand seigneur*, there was no fear of collisions of temper.

"Rashe is a good creature," said Lolly, "but she is so fast and so eccentric that I like to have you Cilly, you look so much younger, and more ladylike."

"One thing more," said Charles, in his character of head of the family, "shouldn't you look up Miss Charlecote, Cilly? There's Owen straining the leash pretty hard, and you must look about you, that she does not take up with these new pets of her's and cheat you."

"The Fulmorts? Stuff! They have more already than they know what to do with."

"The very reason she will leave them the more. I declare, Cilly," he added, half in jest, half in earnest, "the only security for you and Owen is in a double marriage. Perhaps she projects it. You fire up as if she had!"

"If she had, do you think I should go back?" said Cilly, trying to answer lightly, though her cheeks were in a flame. "No, no, I'm not going to let slip a chance of Paris."

She stopped short, dismayed at having committed herself, and Horatia coming down, was told by acclamation, that Cilly was going.

"Of course she is," said forgiving and forgetting Rashe, "Little Cilly left behind, to serve for food to the Rouge Dragon? No, no! I should have no fun in life without her."

Rashe forgot the part more easily than Cilla could ever do. There was a certain guilty delight in writing

"MY DEAR HONOR—Many thanks for your letter, and intended *kindnesses*. The scene must, however, be deferred, as my cousins mean to winter at Paris, and I can't resist the chance of hooking a marshal, or a prince or two. Rashe's strain was a great sell, but we had capital fun, and shall hope for more success another season. I would send you my diary

if it were written out fair. We go so soon that I can't run up to London, so I hope no one will be disturbed on my account.

"Your affectionate CILLY."

No need to say how often Lucilla would have liked to have recalled that note for addition or diminution, how many misgivings she suffered on her peculiar mode of catching Robins, how frequent were her disgusts with her cousin, and how often she felt like a captive. The captive of her own self-will.

"That's right!" said Horatia to Lolly, "I was mortally afraid she would stay at home to fall a prey to the incipient parson; but now he is choked off, and Calthorp is really in earnest, we shall have the dear little morsel doing well yet."

CHAPTER VII.

"O ye, who never knew the joys
Of friendship, satisfied with noise,
Fandango, ball, and rout,
Blush when I tell you how a bird
A prison, with a friend, preferred,
To liberty without."—COWPER.

HAD Lucilla Sandbrook realized the effect of her note, she would never have dashed it off; but like all heedless people, pain out of her immediate ken was nothing to her.

After the loving hopes raised by the Curate's report, and after her own tender and forgiving letter, Honor was pierced to the quick by the scornful levity of those few lines. Of the ingratitude to herself, she thought but little in comparison with the heartless contempt towards Robert, and the miserable light-mindedness that it manifested.

"My poor, poor child!" was all she said, as she saw Phoebe looking with terror at her countenance; "yes, there is an end of it. Let Robert never vex himself about her again."

Phoebe took up the note, read it over and over again, and then said, low and gravely, "It is very cruel."

"Poor child, she was born to the Charteris nature, and cannot help it! Like seeks like, and with Paris before her, she can see and feel nothing else."

Phœbe vaguely suspected that there might be a shadow of injustice in this conclusion. She knew that Miss Charlecote imagined Lucilla to be more frivolous than was the case, and surmised that there was more offended pride than mere levity in the letter. Insight into character is a natural, not an acquired endowment; and many of poor Honor's troubles had been caused by her deficiency in that which was intuitive to Phœbe, though far from consciously. That perception made her stand thoughtful, wondering whether what the letter betrayed were folly or temper, and whether, like Miss Charlecote, she ought altogether to quench her indignation in contemptuous pity.

"There, my dear," said Honor, recovering herself, after having sat with ashy face and clasped hands for many moments. "It will not bear to be spoken or thought of. Let us go to something else. Only, Phœbe, my child, do not leave her out of your prayers."

Phœbe clung about her neck, kissed and fondled her, and felt her cheeks wet with tears, in the passionate tenderness of the returning caress.

The resolve was kept of not going back to the subject, but Honora went about all day with a soft, tardy step, and subdued voice, like one who has stood beside a death-bed.

When Phœbe heard those stricken tones striving to be cheerful, she could not find pardon for the wrong that had not been done to herself. She dreaded telling Robert that no one was coming whom he need avoid, though without dwelling on the tone of the refusal. To her surprise, he heard her short matter-of-fact communication without any token of anger or grief, made no remark, and if he changed countenance at all, it was to put on an air of gloomy satisfaction, as though another weight even in the most undesirable scale were preferable to any remnant of balancing, and compunction for possible injustice were removed.

Could Lucilla but have seen that face, she would have doubted of her means of reducing him to obedience.

The course he had adopted might indeed be the more excellent way in the end; but at present even his self devotion was not in such a spirit as to afford much consolation to

Honor. If good were to arise out of sorrow, the painful seed-time was not yet over. His looks were stern even to harshness, and his unhappiness seemed disposed to vent itself in doing his work after his own fashion, brooking no interference.

He had taken a lodging over a baker's shop at Turnagain Corner. Honor thought it fair for the locality, and knew something of the people, but to Phœbe it was horror and dismay. The two small rooms, the painted cupboard, the cut paper in the grate, the pictures in yellow gauze, with the flies walking about on them, the round mirror, the pattern of the carpet, and the close narrow street struck her as absolutely shocking, and she came to Miss Charlecote with tears in her eyes to entreat her to remonstrate, and tell Robin it was his duty to live like a gentleman.

"My dear," said Honor, rather shocked at a speech so like the ordinary Fulmort mind, "I have no fears of Robert not living like a gentleman."

"I know—not in the real sense," said Phœbe, blushing, "but surely he ought not to live in this dismal poky place, with such mean furniture, when he can afford better."

"I am afraid the parish affords few better lodgings, Phœbe, and it is his duty to live where his work lies. You appreciated his self-denial, I thought? Do you not like him to make a sacrifice?"

"I ought!" said Phœbe, her mind taking little pleasure in those acts of self-devotion that were the delight of her friend. "If it be his duty it cannot be helped; but I cannot be happy at leaving him to be uncomfortable—perhaps ill."

Coming down from the romance of martyrdom, which had made her expect Phœbe to be as willing to see her brother bear hardships in the London streets, as she had herself been to dismiss Owen the first to his wigwam, Honor took the more homely view of arguing on the health and quietness of Turnagain Corner, the excellence of the landlady, and the fact that her own Cockney eyes had far less unreasonable expectations than those trained to the luxuries of Beauchamp. But by far the most efficient solace was an expedition for the purchase of various amenities of life, on which Phœbe expended the last of her father's gift. The next morning was spent in great secrecy at the lodgings, where Phœbe was

so notable and joyous in her labours, that Honor drew the conclusion that housewifery was her true element; science, art, and literature only acquired, because they had been made her duties, reckoning all the more on the charming order that would rule in Owen Sandbrook's parsonage.

All troubles and disappointments had faded from the young girl's mind, as she gazed round exulting, on the sacred prints on the walls, the delicate statuettes, and well-filled spill-holder and match-box on the mantel-shelf, the solid inkstand and appurtenances upon the handsome table-cover, the comfortable easy chair, and the book-cases, whose contents had been reduced to order due; and knew that the bedroom bore equal testimony to her skill, while the good landlady gazed in admiration, acknowledging that she hardly knew her own rooms, and promising with all her heart to take care of her lodger.

Alas! when, on the way to the station, Honor and Phoebe made an unexpected raid to bring some last improvements, Robert was detected in the act of undoing their work, and denuding his room of even its original luxuries. Phoebe spoke not, but her face showed her discomfiture, and Honora attacked him openly.

"I never meant you to know it," he said, looking rather foolish.

"Then to ingratitude you added treachery."

"It is not that I do not feel your kindness"

"But you are determined not to feel it!"

"No, no! only this is no position for mere luxuries. fellow curates"

"will use such conveniences of life as come to them naturally," said Honor, who had lived long enough to be afraid of the freaks of asceticism. "Hear me, Robert. You are not wise in thrusting aside all that brings home to you, your little sister's love. You think it cannot be forgotten, but it is not well to cast away these daily memorials. I know you have much to make you severe—nay, morose, but if you become so, you will never do your work efficiently. You may repel, but never invite; frighten, but not soothe."

"You want me to think my efficiency dependent on arm-chairs and table-covers."

"I know you will be harder to all for living in needless discomfort, and that you will be gentler to all for constantly

meeting tokens of your sister's affection. Had you sought these comforts for yourself, the case would be different; but, Robert, candidly, which of you is the self-pleasing, which the mortified one at this moment?"

Robert could not but look convicted as his eyes fell on the innocent face, with the tears just kept back by strong effort, and the struggling smile of pardon.

"Never mind, Robin," said Phœbe, as she saw his air of vexation; "I know you never meant unkindness. Do as you think right, only pray think of what Miss Charlecote says."

"She has one thing more to say," added Honor. "Do you think that throwing aside Phœbe's little services will make you fitter to go among the little children?"

There was no answer, but a reluctant approach to a smile gave Phœbe courage to effect her restorations, and her whispered "You will not disturb them?" met with an affirmative satisfactory to herself.

Perhaps he felt as of old, when the lady of the Holt had struck him for his cruelty to the mouse, or expelled him for his bad language. The same temper remained, although self-revenge had become the only outlet. He knew what it was that he had taken for devoted self-denial.

"Yes, Robin," were Miss Charlecote's parting words, as she went back to days of her own long past. "Wilful doing right seldom tends to good, above all when it begins by exaggeration of duty."

And Robert was left with thoughts such as perchance might render him a more tractable subordinate for Mr. Parsons, instead of getting into training for the Order of St. Dominic.

Phœbe had to return less joyfully than she had gone forth. Her first bright star of anticipation had faded, and she had partaken deeply of the griefs of the two whom she loved so well. Not only had she to leave the one to his gloomy lodgings in the City, and the toil that was to deaden suffering, but the other must be parted with at the station, to return to the lonely house, where not even old Ponto would meet her—his last hour having, to every one's relief, come, in her absence.

Phœbe could not bear the thought of that solitary return, and even at the peril of great disappointment to her sisters,

begged to sleep that first night at the Holt, but Honor thanked her, and laughed it off. "No, no! my dear, I am used to be alone, and depend upon it, there will be such an arrear of farm business for me, that I should hardly have time to speak to you. You need not be uneasy for me, dear one; there is always relief in having a great deal to do, and I shall know you are near, to come if I want you. There's a great deal in that knowledge, Phoebe."

"If I were of any use....."

"Yes, Phoebe, this visit has made you my friend instead of my playfellow."

Phoebe's deepening colour showed her intense gratification.

"And there are the Sundays," added Honor. "I trust Miss Fennimore will let you come to luncheon, and to the second service with me."

"I will try very hard!"

For Phoebe could not help feeling like the canary, who sees his owner's hand held out to catch him after his flight, or the pony who marks his groom at the gate of the paddock. Cage and rein were not grievous, but liberty was over, and free-will began to sink into submission, as the chimneys of home came nearer, even though the anticipation of her sisters' happiness grew more and more on her and compensated for all.

Shrieks of ecstasy greeted her; she was held fast as though her sisters feared to lose her again, and Miss Fennimore showed absolute warmth of welcome. Foreign tongues were dispensed with, and it was a festival evening of chatter, and display of purchases, presents, and commissions. The evidence of Phoebe's industry were approved. Her abstracts of her reading, her notes of her museums and exhibitions, her drawing, needlework, and new pieces of music, exceeded Miss Fennimore's hopes, and appalled her sisters.

"You did all that," cried Bertha, profiting by Miss Fennimore's absence; "I hope to goodness she won't make it a precedent."

"Wasn't it very tiresome?" asked Maria.

"Sometimes, but it made me comfortable, as if I had a back bone for my stay."

"But didn't you want to feel like a lady?"

"I don't think I felt otherwise, Maria."

"Like a grown-up lady, like mamma and my sisters?"

"O examples!" cried Bertha. "No wonder Maria thinks doing nothing the great thing to grow up for. But, Phœbe, how could you be so stupid as to go and do all this heap? You might as well have stayed at home."

"Miss Fennimore desired me!"

"The very reason why I'd have read stories, and made pictures out of them, just to feel myself beyond her talons."

"Talents, not talons," said Maria. "Cats have talons, people have talents."

"Sometimes both, sometimes neither," observed Bertha. "No explanation, Phœbe, what's the use? I want to know if Owen Sandbrook didn't call you little Miss Precision?"

"Something like it."

"And you went on when he was there?"

"Generally."

"Oh! what opportunities are wasted on some people. Wouldn't I have had fun! But of course he saw you were a poor little not-come-out thing, and never spoke to you. Oh! if Miss Charlecote would ask me to London!"

"And me!" chimed in Maria.

"Well, what would you do?"

"Not act like a goose, and bring home dry abstracts. I'd make Miss Charlecote take me everywhere, and quite forget all my science, unless I wanted to amaze some wonderful genius. Oh dear! won't I make Augusta look foolish some of these days? She really thinks that steel attracts lightning! Do you think Miss Charlecote's society will appreciate me, Phœbe?"

"And me?" again asked Maria.

Phœbe laughed heartily, but did not like Bertha's scoffing mirth at Maria's question. Glad as she was to be at home, her glimpse of the outer world had so enlarged her perceptions, that she could not help remarking the unchild-like acuteness of the younger girl, and the obtuse comprehension of the elder; and she feared that she had become discontented and fault-finding after her visit.

At nine, when she rose as usual to wish good night, Miss Fennimore told her that she need not for the future retire before ten, the hour to which she had of late become accustomed. It was a great boon, especially as she was assured that the additional hour should be at her own disposal.

"You have shown that you can be trusted with your time, my dear. But not to-night," as Phœbe was turning to her desk; "remember how long I have suffered a famine of conversation. What! were you not sensible of your own value in that respect?"

"I thought you instructed me, I did not know you conversed with me."

"There's a difference between one susceptible of instruction, and anything so flippant and volatile as Bertha," said Miss Fennimore, smiling. "And poor Maria!"

"She is so good and kind! If she could only see a few things, and people, and learn to talk!"

"Silence and unobtrusiveness are the only useful lessons for her, poor girl!" then observing Phœbe's bewildered looks, "My dear, I was forced to speak to Bertha because she was growing jealous of Maria's exemptions; but you, who have been constantly shielding and supplying her deficiencies, you do not tell me that you were not aware of them?"

"I always knew she was not clever," said Phœbe, her looks of alarmed surprise puzzling Miss Fennimore, who in all her philosophy had never dreamt of the intuitive sagacity and watchful instinct of affection.

"I could not have thought it," she said.

"Thought what? Pray tell me! O what is the matter with poor Maria?"

"Then, my dear, you really had never perceived that poor Maria is not—has not the usual amount of capacity—that she cannot be treated as otherwise than deficient."

"Does mamma know it?" faintly asked Phœbe, tears slowly filling her eyes.

Miss Fennimore paused, inwardly rating Mrs. Fulmort's powers little above those of her daughter. "I am not sure," she said; "your sister Juliana certainly does, and in spite of the present pain, I believe it is best that your eyes should be opened."

"That I may take care of her."

"Yes, you can do much in developing her faculties, as well as in sheltering her from being thrust into positions to which she would be unequal. You do so already. Though her weakness was apparent to me the first week I was in the house, yet owing to your kind guardianship, I never perceived its extent till you were absent. I could not have imagined

so much tact and vigilance could have been unconscious. Nay, dear child, it is no cause for tears. Her life may perhaps be happier than that of many of more complete intellect."

"I ought not to cry," owned Phœbe, the tears quietly flowing all the time. "Such people cannot do wrong in the same way as we can."

"Ah! Phœbe, till we come to the infinite, how shall the finite pronounce what is wrong."

Phœbe did not understand, but felt that she was not in Miss Charlecote's atmosphere, and from the heavenly, "from him to whom little is given, little will be required," came to the earthly, and said imploring, "And you will never be hard on her again!"

"I trust I have not been hard on her. I shall task her less, and only endeavour to give her habits of quiet occupation, and make her manners retiring. It was this relaxation of discipline, together with Bertha's sad habit of teasing, which was intolerable in your absence, that induced me to explain to her the state of the case."

"How shocked she must have been."

"Not quite as you were. Her first remark was that it was as if she were next in age to you."

"She is not old enough to understand."

The governess shook her head. "Nay, when I found her teasing again, she told me it was a psychological experiment. Little monkey, she laid hold of some books of mine, and will never rest till she has come to some conclusion as to what is wanting in Maria."

"Too young to feel what it means," repeated Phœbe.

She was no great acquisition as a companion, for she neither spoke nor stirred, so that the governess would have thought her drowsy but for the uprightness of the straight back, and the steady fold of the fingers on the knee. Much as Miss Fennimore detested the sight of inaction, she respected the reverie consequent on the blow she had given. It was a refreshing contrast with Bertha's levity; and she meditated why her system had made the one sister only accurate and methodical, while the other seemed to be losing heart in mind, and becoming hard and shrewd.

There was a fresh element in Phœbe's life. The native respect for "the innocent" had sprung up within her, and her

spirit seemed to expand into protecting wings with which to hover over her sister as a charge peculiarly her own. Here was the new impulse needed to help her when subsiding into the monotony and task-work of the schoolroom, and to occupy her in the stead of the more exciting hopes and fears that she had partaken in London.

Miss Fennimore wisely relaxed her rules over Phœbe, since she had shown that liberty was regarded as no motive for idleness; so though the maiden still scrupulously accomplished a considerable amount of study, she was allowed to portion it out as suited her inclination, and was no longer forbidden to interrupt herself for the sake of her sisters. It was infinite comfort to be no longer obliged to deafen her ears to the piteous whine of fretful incapacity, and to witness the sullen heaviness of faculties overtaken, and temper goaded into torpor. The fact once faced, the result was relief, Maria was spared and considered, and Phœbe found the governess much kinder, not only to her sister but to herself. Absence had taught the value of the elder pupil, and friendly terms of equality were beginning to be established.

Phœbe's freedom did not include solitary walks, and on week days she seldom saw Miss Charlecote, and then only to hear natural history, the only moderately safe ground between the two elder ladies. What was natural science with the one, was natural history with the other. One went deep in systems and classifications, and thrust Linnæus into the dark ages; the other had observed, collected and drawn specimens with the enthusiasm of a Londoner for the country, till she had a valuable little museum of her own gathering, and was a handbook for the country curiosities. Star, bird, flower, and insect, were more than resources; they were the friends of her lonely life, and awoke many a keen feeling of interest, many an aspiration of admiring adoration that carried her through her dreary hours. And though Miss Fennimore thought her science puerile, her credulity extensive, and her observations inaccurate, yet she deemed even this lady-like dabbling worthy of respect as an element of rational pleasure and self-training, and tried to make Bertha respect it, and abstain from inundating Miss Charlecote with sesquipedalian names for systems and families, and, above all, from her principal delight, setting the two ladies together by

the ears, by appealing to her governess to support her abuse of Linnæus as an old "dictionary maker," or for some bold geological theory that poor Honor was utterly unprepared to swallow.

Bertha was somewhat like the wren, who, rising on the eagle's head, thought itself the monarch of the birds, but Honor was by no means convinced that she was not merely blindfolded on the back of Clavileno Aligero. There was neither love nor admiration wasted between Honor and Miss Fennimore, and Phœbe preferred their being apart. She enjoyed her Sunday afternoons, short enough, for school must not be neglected, but Honor shyly acceded to Phœbe's entreaty to be allowed to sit by her class and learn by her teaching.

It was an effort. Honor shrank from exposing her own misty metaphors, hesitating repetitions, and trivial queries to so clear a head, trained in distinct reasoning, but it was the very teaching that the Squire's daughter most desired, and she treasured up every hint, afterwards pursuing the subject with a resolution to complete the chain of evidence, and asking questions sometimes rather perplexing to Honor, accustomed as she was to take everything for granted. Out came authorities, and Honor found herself examining into the grounds of her own half-knowledge, gaining fresh ideas, correcting old ones, and obtaining subjects of interest for many an hour after her young friend had left her.

While, at home, Phœbe, after running the gauntlet of Bertha's diversion at her putting herself to school, when Scripture lessons were long ago done with, would delight Maria with long murmuring discourses, often stories about the scholars, but always conveying some point of religious instruction. It was a subject to which Maria was less impervious than to any other; she readily learnt to croon over the simple hymns that Phœbe brought home, and when once a Scripture story had found entrance to her mind, would beg to have it marked in her Bible, and recur to it frequently.

Miss Fennimore left her entirely to Phœbe at these times, keeping Bertha from molesting her by sarcastic queries, or by remarks on the sing-song hymns, such as made Phœbe sometimes suspect that Maria's love for these topics rendered them the more distasteful to the younger girl. She tried to

keep them as much sheltered as possible, but was still sometimes disconcerted by Bertha's mischievous laugh, or by finding Miss Fennimore's eyes fixed in attention.

Phœbe's last hour on these evenings was spent in laying up her new lore in her diligently-kept note-book, weighing it and endeavouring to range it in logical sequence, which she had been duly trained to consider the test of reasoning. If she sometimes became bewildered, and detected insufficient premises for true conclusions, if she could not think allegory or analogy the evidence it was made at the Sunday school, and which Miss Charlecote esteemed as absolute proof, her sound heart and loving faith always decided her that she should discover the link in time; and the doctrine had too strong a hold on her convictions and affections for her to doubt that the chain of argument existed, though she had not yet found it. It was not the work for which so young a head was intended, and perhaps it was well that she was interrupted by the arrival at home of the heads of the family.

Augusta and her husband were to spend the winter abroad; Juliana had met some friends whom she had accompanied to their home, and though she had exacted that Phœbe should not come out, yet the eldest daughter at home was necessarily brought somewhat forward. Phœbe was summoned to the family meals, and went out driving with her mother, or riding with her father, but was at other times in the schoolroom, where indeed she was the most happy.

The life downstairs was new to her, and she had not been trained to the talk there expected of her. The one event of her life, her visit to London, gave evident dissatisfaction. There were growls whenever Robert was mentioned, and Phœbe found that though permission had been given for his taking the curacy, it had been without understanding his true intentions with regard to Whittingtonia. Something had evidently passed between him and his father and brother, while on their way through London, which had caused them to regard him as likely to be a thorn in their side; and Phœbe could not but fear that he would meet them in no spirit of conciliation, would rather prefer a little persecution, and would lean to the side of pastoral rather than filial duty, whenever they might clash. Even if he should refrain from speaking his full mind to his father, he was likely to use no

precautions with his brother, and Phœbe was uneasy whenever either went up for their weekly visits of inspection at the office.

Her mother gently complained. "Honora Charlecote's doing, I suppose. He should have considered more! Such a wretched place, no genteel family near! Your papa would never let me go near it. But he must buy an excellent living soon, where no one will know his connection with the trade."

The only sympathy Phœbe met with at home on Robert's ordination, was in an unexpected quarter. "Then your brother has kept his resolution," said Miss Fennimore. "Under his reserve there is the temper that formed the active ascetics of the middle ages. His doctrine has a strong mediæval tinge, and with sufficient strength of purpose, may lead to the like results."

When Phœbe proudly told Miss Charlecote of this remark, they agreed that it was a valuable testimony, both to the doctrines and the results. Honor had had a letter from Robert, that made her feel by force of contrast that Owen was more than three years from a like conception of clerical duty.

The storm came at last. By order of the Court of Chancery, there was put up for sale a dreary section of Whittingtonia, in dire decay, and remote from civilization. The firm of Fulmort and Son had long had their eyes on it, as an eligible spot for a palace for the supply of their commodity; and what was their rage when their agent was out-bidden, and the tenements knocked down to an unknown customer for a fancy price! After much alarm lest a rival distiller should be invading their territory, their wrath came to a height when it finally appeared that the new owner of the six ruinous houses in Cicely Row was no other than the Reverend Robert Mervyn Fulmort, with the purpose of building a church and schools for Whittingtonia at his own expense.

Mervyn came home furious. High words had passed between the brothers, and his report of them so inflamed Mr. Fulmort, that he inveighed violently against the malice and treachery that scrupled not to undermine a father. Never speaking to Robert again, casting him off, and exposing the vicar for upholding filial insolence and undutifulness, were the mildest of his threats. They seemed to imagine

that Robert was making this outlay, supposing that he would yet be made equal in fortune by his father to the others, and there was constant repetition that he was to expect not a farthing—he had had his share, and should have no more. There was only a scoff at Phœbe's innocence, when she expressed her certainty that he looked for no compensation, knowing that he had been provided for, and was to have nothing from his father; and Phœbe trembled under such abuse of her favourite brother, till she could bear it no longer, and seizing the moment of Mervyn's absence, she came up to her father, and said, in as coaxing a tone as she could, "Papa, should not every one work to the utmost in his trade?"

"What of that, little one?"

"Then pray don't be angry with Robert for acting up to his," said Phœbe, clasping her hands, and resting them fondly on his shoulder.

"Act up to a fool's head! Parsons should mind their business, and not fly in their fathers' faces."

"Isn't it their work to make people good?" continued Phœbe, with an unconscious wiliness, looking more simple than her wont.

"Let him begin with himself, then! Learn his duty to his father! A jackanapes, trying to damage my business under my very nose."

"If those poor people are in such need of having good done to them"

"Scum of the earth! Much use trying to do good to them!"

"Ah! but if it be his work to try? and if he wanted a place to build a school"

"You're in league with him, I suppose."

"No, papa! It surprised me very much. Even Mr. Parsons knew nothing of his plans. Robert only wrote to me when it was done, that now he hoped to save a few of the children that are turned out in the streets to steal."

"Steal! They'll steal all his property. A proper fool your uncle was to leave it all to a lad like that. The sure way to spoil him! I could have trebled all your fortunes if that capital had been in my hands, and now to see him throw it to the dogs! Phœbe, I can't stand it. Conscience? I hate such coxcombry! As if men would not make beasts of themselves whether his worship were in the business or not."

"Yes!" ventured Phœbe, "but at least he has no part in their doing so."

"Much you know about it," said her father, again shielding himself with his newspaper, but so much less angrily than she had dared to expect, that even while flushed and trembling, she felt grateful to him as more placable than Mervyn. She knew not the power of her own sweet face and gently honest manner, nor of the novelty of an attentive daughter.

When the neighbours remarked on Mrs. Fulmort's improved looks and spirits, and wondered whether they were the effect of the Rhine or of "getting off" her eldest daughter, they knew not how many fewer dull hours she had to spend. Phœbe visited her in her bedroom, talked at luncheon, amused her drives, coaxed her into the garden, read to her when she rested before dinner, and sang to her afterwards. Phœbe likewise brought her sisters' attainments more into notice, though at the expense of Bertha's contempt for mamma's preference for Maria's staring fuschias and feeble singing, above her own bold chalks from models and scientific music, and indignation at Phœbe's constantly bringing Maria forward rather than her own clever self.

Droning narratives, long drawn out, had as much charm for Mrs. Fulmort as for Maria. If she did not always listen, she liked the voice, and she sometimes awoke into descriptions of the dresses, parties, and acquaintances of her youth, before trifling had sunk into dreary insipidity under the weight of too much wealth, too little health, and "nothing to do."

"My dear," she said, "I am glad you are not out. Quiet evenings are so good for my nerves; but you are a fine girl, and will soon want society."

"Not at all, mamma; I like being at home with you."

"No, my dear! I shall like to take you out and see you dressed. You must have advantages, or how are you to marry?"

"There's no hurry," said Phœbe, smiling.

"Yes, my dear, girls always get soured if they do not marry!"

"Not Miss Charlecote, mamma."

"Ah! but Honor Charlecote was an heiress, and could have had plenty of offers. Don't talk of not marrying, Phœbe, I beg."

"No," said Phœbe, gravely. "I should like to marry some one very good and wise, who could help me out of all my difficulties."

"Bless me, Phœbe! I hope you did not meet any poor curate at that place of Honor Charlecote's. Your papa would never consent."

"I never met anybody, mamma," said Phœbe, smiling; "I was only thinking what he should be like."

"Well, what?" said Mrs. Fulmort, with girlish curiosity. "Not that it's any use settling. I always thought I would marry a marquis's younger son, because it is such a pretty title, and that he should play on the guitar. But he must not be an officer, Phœbe, we have had trouble enough about that."

"I don't know what he is to be, mamma," said Phœbe, earnestly, "except that he should be as sensible as Miss Fennimore, and as good as Miss Charlecote. Perhaps a man could put both into one, and then he could lead me, and always show me the reason of what is right."

"Phœbe, Phœbe! you will never get married if you wait for a philosopher. Your papa would never like a very clever genius or an author."

"I don't want him to be a genius; but he must be wise."

"Oh, my dear! That comes of the way young ladies are brought up. What would the Miss Berrilees have said, where I was at school at Bath, if one of their young ladies had talked of wanting to marry a wise man?"

Phœbe gave a faint smile, and said, "What was Mr. Charlecote like, mamma, whose brass was put up the day Robert was locked into the Church?"

"Humfrey Charlecote, my dear? The dearest, most good-hearted man that ever lived. Everybody liked him. There was no one that did not feel as if they had lost a brother when he was taken off in that sudden way."

"And was not he very wise, mamma?"

"Bless me, Phœbe, what could have put that into your head? Humfrey Charlecote a wise man? He was just a common, old fashioned, hearty country squire. It was only that he was so friendly and kind-hearted that made everyone trust him, and ask his advice."

"I should like to have known him," said Phœbe, with a sigh.

"Ah, if you married any one like that! But there's no use waiting! There's nobody left like him, and I won't have you an old maid! You are prettier than either of your sisters—more like me when I came away from Miss Berrilees, and had a gold-sprigged muslin for the Assize Ball, and Humfrey Charlecote danced with me!"

Phœbe fell into speculations on the wisdom whose counsel all asked, and which had left such an impression of affectionate honour. She would gladly lean on such an one, but if no one of the like mould remained, she thought she could never bear the responsibilities of marriage.

Meantime, she erected Humfrey Charlecote's image into a species of judge, laying before this vision of a wise man all her perplexities between Miss Charlecote's religion and Miss Fennimore's reason, and all her practical doubts between Robert's conflicting duties. Strangely enough the question, what would Mr. Charlecote have thought? often aided her to cast the balance. Though it was still Phœbe who decided, it was Phœbe drawn out of herself, and strengthened by her mask.

With vivid interest, such as for a living man would have amounted to love, she seized and hoarded each particle of intelligence that she could gain respecting the object of her admiration. Honora herself, though far more naturally enthusiastic, had with her dreamy nature and diffused raptures never been capable of thus reverencing him, nor of the intensity of feeling of one whose restrained imagination and unromantic education gave force to all her sensations. Yet this deep individual regard was a more wholesome tribute than Honora had ever paid to him, or to her other idol, for to Phœbe it was a step, lifting her to things above and beyond, a guide on the road, never a vision obscuring the true object.

Six weeks had quietly passed, when, like a domestic thunderbolt, came Juliana's notification of her intention to return home at the end of a week. Mrs. Fulmort, clinging to her single thread of comfort, hoped that Phœbe might still be allowed to come to her boudoir, but the gentlemen more boldly declared that they wanted Phœbe, and would not have her driven back into the schoolroom, to which the mother only replied with fears that Juliana would be in a dreadful temper, whereon Mervyn responded, "Let her!"

Never mind her, Phœbe. Stick up for yourself, and we'll put her down."

Except for knowing that she was useful to her mother, Phœbe would thankfully have retired into the west wing rather than have given umbrage. Mervyn's partizanship was particularly alarming, and, endeavour, as she might, to hope that Juliana would be amiable enough to be disarmed by her own humility and unobtrusiveness, she lived under the impression of disagreeables impending.

One morning at breakfast, Mr. Fulmort, after grumbling out his wonder at Juliana's writing to him, suddenly changed his tone into, "Hollo!—what's this? My engagement...."

"By Jove!" shouted Mervyn; "too good to be true. So she's done it. I didn't think he'd been such an ass, having had one escape."

"Who?" continued Mr. Fulmort, puzzling, as he held the letter far off—"engagement to dear—dear Devil, does she say?"

"The only fit match," muttered Mervyn, laughing. "No, no, sir! Bevil—Sir Bevil Acton."

"What! not the fellow that gave us so much trouble! He had not a sixpence; but she must please herself now."

"You don't mean that you didn't know what she went with the Merivales for?—five thousand a year and a baronetcy, eh?"

"The deuce! If I had known that, he might have had her long ago."

"It's quite recent," said Mervyn. "A mere chance; and he has been knocking about in the colonies these ten years—might have cut his wisdom teeth."

"Ten years—not half-a-dozen!" said Mr. Fulmort.

"Ten!" reiterated Mervyn. "It was just before I went to old Raymond's. Acton took me to dine at the mess. He was a nice fellow then, and deserved better luck."

"Ten years' constancy!" said Phœbe, who had been looking from one to the other in wonder, trying to collect intelligence. "Do tell me."

"Whew!" whistled Mervyn. "Juliana hadn't her sharp nose nor her sharp tongue when first she came out. Acton was quartered at Elverslope, and got smitten. She flirted with him all the winter, but I fancy she didn't give you much trouble when he came to the point, eh, sir?"

"I thought him an impudent young dog for thinking of a girl of her prospects, but if he had this to look to!—I was sorry for him too! Ten years ago," mused Mr. Fulmort.

"And she has liked no one since?"

"Or no one has liked her, which comes to the same," said Mervyn. "The regiment went to the Cape, and there was an end of it, till we fell in with the *Merivales* on board the steamer, and they mentioned their neighbour, Sir Bevil Acton, come into his property, and been settled near them a year or two. Fine sport it was, to see Juliana angling for an invitation, brushing up her friendship with Minnie *Merivale*—amiable to the last degree! My stars! what work she must have had to play good temper all these six weeks, and how we shall have to pay for it!"

"Or Acton will," said Mr. Fulmort, with a hearty chuckle of triumphant good humour.

Was it a misfortune to Phœbe to have been so much refined by education as to be grated on by the vulgar tone of those nearest to her? It was well for her that she could still put it aside as their way, even while following her own instinct. Mervyn and Juliana had been on cat and dog terms all their lives; he was certain to sneer at all that concerned her, and Phœbe reserved her belief that an attachment, nipped in the bud, was ready to blossom in sunshine. She ran up with the news to her mother.

"Juliana going to be married! Well, my dear, you may be introduced at once! How comfortable you and I shall be in the little brougham."

Phœbe begged to be told what the intended was like.

"Let me see—was he the one that won the steeplechase? No, that was the one that Augusta liked. We knew so many young men, that I never could tell which was which, and your sisters were always talking about them till it quite ran through my poor head, such merry girls as they were!"

"And poor Juliana never was so merry after he was gone."

"I don't remember," replied this careful mother; "but you know she never could have meant anything, for he had nothing, and you with your fortunes are a match for anybody! Phœbe, my dear, we must go to London next spring, and you shall marry a nobleman. I must see you a titled lady as well as your sisters."

"I've no objection, provided he is my wise man," said Phœbe.

Juliana had found the means of making herself welcome, and her marriage a cause of unmixed jubilation in her family. Prosperity made her affable, and instead of suppressing Phœbe, she made her useful, and treated her as a confidante, telling her of all the previous intimacy, and all the secret sufferings in dear Bevil's absence, but passing lightly over the last meeting, which Phœbe respected as too sacred to be talked of.

The little maiden's hopes of a perfect brother in the constant knight rose high, and his appearance and demeanour did not disappoint them. He had a fine soldierly figure, and that air of a thorough gentleman which Phœbe's Holt experience had taught her to appreciate; his manners were peculiarly gentle and kind, especially to Mrs. Fulmort, and Phœbe did not like him the less for showing traces of the effects of wounds and climate, and a grave, subdued air, almost amounting to melancholy. But before he had been three days at Beauchamp, Juliana made a virulent attack on the privileges of her younger sisters. Perhaps it was the consequence of poor Maria's volunteer to Sir Bevil—"I am glad Juliana is going with you, for now no one will be cross to me;" but it seemed to verify the poor girl's words that she should be hunted like a strange cat if she were found beyond her own precincts, and that the other two should be treated much in the same manner. Bertha stood up for her rights, declaring that what mamma and Miss Fennimore allowed, she would not give up for Juliana, but the only result was an admonition to the governess, and a fierce remonstrance to the poor meek mother. Phœbe, who only wished to retire from the stage in peace, had a more difficult part to play.

"What's the matter now?" demanded Mervyn, making his way up to her as she sat in a remote corner of the drawing-room in the evening. "Why were you not at dinner?"

"There was no room, I believe."

"Nonsense! our table dines eight-and-twenty, and there were not twenty."

"That was a large party, and you know I am not out."

"You don't look like it in that long-sleeved white affair, and nothing on your head either. Where are those ivy leaves you had yesterday—real, weren't they?"

"They were not liked."

"Not liked! they were the prettiest things I have seen for a long time. Acton said they made you look like a nymph—the green suits that shiny light hair of yours, and makes you like a picture."

"Yes, they made me look forward and affected."

"Now who told you that? Has the Fennimore got to her old tricks?"

"Oh no, no!"

"I see! a jealous toad! I heard him telling her that you reminded him of her in old times. The spiteful vixen! well, Phœbe, if you cut her out, I bargain for board and lodging at Acton Manor. This will be no place for a quiet, meek soul like me!"

Phœbe tried to laugh, but looked distressed, uncomprehending, and far from wishing to comprehend. She could not escape, for Mervyn had penned her up, and went on. "You don't pretend that you don't see how it is! that unlucky fellow is heartily sick of his bargain, but you see he was too soft to withstand her throwing herself right at his head, and doing the 'worm in the bud,' and the cruel father—green and yellow melancholy, &c., ever since they were inhumanly parted."

"For shame, Mervyn. You don't really believe it is all out of honour."

"I should never have believed a man of his years could be so green; but some men get crotchets about honour in the army, especially if they get elderly there."

"It is very noble, if it be right, and he can take those vows from his heart," moralized Phœbe. "But no, Mervyn, she cannot think so. No woman could take any one on such terms."

"Wouldn't she, though?" sneered her brother. "She'd have him, if grim death were hanging on to his other hand. People aren't particular when they are high upon their third ten."

"Don't tell me such things! I don't believe them, but they ought never to be suggested."

"You ought to thank me for teaching you knowledge of the world."

He was called off but heavy at her heart lay the text, "The knowledge of, wickedness is not wisdom."

Mervyn's confidences were serious troubles to Phœbe. Gratifying as it was to be singled out by his favour, it was distressing to be the repository of what she knew ought never to have been spoken, prompted by a coarse tone of mind, and couched in language that though he meant it to be restrained, sometimes seemed to her like the hobgoblins' whispers to Christian. Oh! how unlike her other brother! Robert had troubles, Mervyn grievances, and she saw which were the worst to bear. It was a pleasing novelty to find a patient listener, and he used it to the utmost, while she often doubted whether to hear without remonstrance were not undutiful, yet found opposition rather increased the evil by the storm of ill-temper that it provoked.

This last communication was dreadful to her, yet she could not but feel that it might be a wholesome warning to avoid giving offence to the jealousy, which when once pointed out to her, she could not prevent herself from tracing in Juliana's petulance toward herself, and resolve to force her into the background. Even Bertha was more often brought forward, for in spite of a tongue and temper cast somewhat in a similar mould, she was rather a favourite with Juliana, whom she was not unlikely to resemble, except that her much more elaborate and accurate training might give her both more power and more self-control.

As Mervyn insinuated, Juliana was prudent in not lengthening out the engagement, and the marriage was fixed for Christmas week, but it was not to take place at Hiltonbury. Sir Bevil was bashful, and dreaded county festivities, and Juliana wished to escape from Maria as a bridesmaid, so they preferred the privacy of an hotel and a London church. Phœbe could not decently be excluded, and her heart leapt with the hope of seeing Robert, though so unwelcome was his name in the family that she could not make out on what terms he stood, whether proscribed, or only disapproved, and while sure that he would strive to be with her, she foresaw that the pleasure would be at the cost of much pain. Owen Sandbrook was spending his vacation at the Holt, and Miss Charlecote looked so bright as she walked to church leaning on his arm, that Phœbe had no regrets in leaving her. Indeed, the damsel greatly preferred the Holt in his absence. She did not understand his discursive comments on all things in art or nature, and he was in a mood of flighty fitful spirits,

which perplexed her alike by their wild, satirical mirth, and their mournful sentiment. She thought Miss Charlecote was worried and perplexed at times by his tone; but there was no doubt of his affection and attention for his "Sweet Honey," and Phoebe rejoiced that her own absence should be at so opportune a moment.

Sir Bevil went to make his preparations at home, whence he was to come and join the Fulmorts the day after their arrival in town. Mrs. Fulmort was dragged out in the morning, and deposited at Farrance's in time for luncheon, a few minutes before a compact little brougham set down Lady Bannerman, jollier than ever in velvet and sable, and more scientific in cutlets and pale ale. Her good nature was full blown. She was ready to chaperon her sisters anywhere, invited the party to the Christmas dinner, and undertook the grand *soirée* after the wedding. She proposed to take Juliana at once out shopping, only lamenting that there was no room for Phoebe, and was so universally benevolent, that in the absence of the bride elect, Phoebe ventured to ask whether she saw anything of Robert.

"Robert? Yes, he called when we first came to town, and we asked him to dinner; but he said it was a fast day, and you know Sir Nicholas would never encourage that sort of thing."

"How was he?"

"He looked odder than ever, and so ill and cadaverous. No wonder! poking himself up in such a horrid place, where one can't notice him."

"Did he seem in tolerable spirits?"

"I don't know. He always was silent and glum; and now he seems wrapt up in nothing but ragged schools and those disgusting City missions. I'm sure we can't subscribe, so expensive as it is living in town. Imagine, mamma, what we are giving our cook!"

Juliana returned, and the two sisters went out, leaving Phoebe to extract entertainment for her mother from the scenes passing in the street.

Presently a gentleman's handsome cabriolet and distinguished looking horse were affording food for her descriptions, when to her surprise, Sir Bevil emerged from it, and presently entered the room. He had come intending to take out his betrothed, and in her absence, transferred the offer to her

sister. Phœbe demurred, on more accounts than she could mention, but her mother remembering what a drive in a stylish equipage with a military baronet would once have been to herself, overruled her objections, and hurried her away to prepare. She quickly returned, a cheery spectacle in her russet brown and scarlet neck-tie, the robin redbreast's livery which she loved.

"Your cheeks should be a refreshing sight to the Londoners, Phœbe," said Sir Bevil, with his rare, but most pleasant smile. "Where shall we go? You don't seem much to care for the Park. I'm at your service wherever you like to go." And as Phœbe hesitated, with cheeks trebly beneficial to the Londoners, he kindly added, "Well, what is it? Never mind what! I'm open to anything—even Madame Tussaud's."

"If I might go to see Robert. Augusta said he was looking ill."

"My dear!" interposed her mother, "you can't think of it. Such a dreadful place, and such a distance."

"It is only a little way beyond St. Paul's, and there are no bad streets, dear mamma. I have been there with Miss Charlecote. But if it be too far, or you don't like driving into the City, never mind," she continued, turning to Sir Bevil, "I ought to have said nothing about it."

But Sir Bevil, reading the ardour of the wish in the honest face, pronounced the expedition an excellent idea, and carried her off with her eyes as round and sparkling as those of the children going to Christmas parties. He stole glances at her as if her fresh innocent looks were an absolute treat to him, and when he talked it was of Robert in his boyhood. "I remember him at twelve years old, a sturdy young ruffian, with an excellent notion of standing up for himself."

Phœbe listened with delight to some characteristic anecdotes of Robert's youth, and wondered whether he would be appreciated now. She did not think Sir Bevil held the same opinions as Robert or Miss Charlecote; he was an upright, high-minded soldier, with honour and subordination his chief religion, and not likely to enter into Robert's peculiarities. She was in some difficulty when she was asked whether her brother were not under some cloud, or had not been taking a line of his own—a gentler form of inquiry, which she could answer with the simple truth.

"Yes, he would not take a share in the business, because he thought it promoted evil, and he felt it right to do parish work at St. Wulstan's, because our profits chiefly come from thence. It does not please at home, because they think he could have done better for himself, and he sometimes is obliged to interfere with Mervyn's plans."

Sir Bevil made the less answer because they were in the full current of London traffic, and his proud chestnut was snuffing the hat of an omnibus cad. Careful driving was needed, and Phoebe was praised for never even looking frightened, then again for her organ of locality and the skilful pilotage with which she unerringly and unhesitatingly found the way through the Whittingtonian labyrinths; and as the disgusted tiger pealed at the knocker at Turnagain Corner, she was told she would be a useful guide in the South African bush. "At home," was the welcome reply, and in another second, her arms were round Robert's neck. There was a thorough brotherly greeting between him and Sir Bevil, each saw in the other a man to be respected, and Robert could not but be grateful to the man who brought him Phoebe.

Her eyes were on the alert to judge how he had been using himself in the last half year. He looked thin, yet that might be owing to his highly clerical coat, and some of his rural ruddiness was gone, but there was no want of health of form or face, only the spareness and vigour of thorough working condition. His expression was still grave even to sadness, and sternness seemed gathering round his thin lips. Heavy of heart he doubtless was still, but she was struck by the absence of the undefined restlessness that had for years been habitual to both brothers, and which had lately so increased on Mervyn, that there was a relief in watching a face free from it, and telling not indeed of happiness, but of a mind made up to do without it.

She supposed that his room ought to satisfy her, for though untidy in female eyes, it did not betray ultra self-neglect. The fire was brisk, there was a respectable luncheon on the table, and he had even treated himself to the *Guardian*, some new books, and a beautiful photograph of a foreign cathedral. The room was littered with half unrolled plans, which had to be cleared before the guests could find seats, and he had evidently been beguiling his luncheon with

the perusal of some large MS. sheets, red-taped together at the upper corner.

"That's handsome," said Sir Bevil. "What is it for? A school or almshouses?"

"Something of both," said Robert, his colour rising. "We want a place for disposing of the destitute children that swarm in this district."

"Oh, show me!" cried Phœbe. "Is it to be at that place in Cicely Row?"

"I hope so."

The stiff sheets were unrolled, the designs explained. There was to be a range of buildings round the court, consisting of day-schools, a home for orphans, a *crèche* for infants, a reading-room for adults, and apartments for the clergy of the Church which was to form one side of the quadrangle. Sir Bevil was much interested, and made useful criticisms. "But," he objected, "what is the use of building new churches in the City, when there is no filling those you have?"

"St. Wulstan's is better filled than formerly," said Robert. "The pew system is the chief enemy there; but even without that, it would not hold a tenth part of the Whittingtonian population, would they come to it, which they will not. The Church must come to them, and with special services at their own times. They need an absolute mission, on entirely different terms from the Woolstone quarter."

"And are you about to head the mission?"

"To endeavour to take a share in it."

"And who is to be at the cost of this?" pursued Sir Bevil. "Have you a subscription list?"

Robert coloured again as he answered, "Why, no, we can do without that so far."

Phœbe understood, and her face must have revealed the truth to Sir Bevil, for laying his hand on Robert's arm, he said, "My good fellow, you don't mean that you are answerable for all this?"

"You know I have something of my own."

"You will not leave much of it at this rate. How about the endowment?"

"I shall live upon the endowment."

"Have you considered? You will be tied to this place for ever."

"That is one of my objects," replied Robert, and in reply to a look of astonished interrogation, "myself and all that is mine would be far too little to atone for a fraction of the evil we are every day perpetrating here."

"I should hate the business myself," said the baronet; "but don't you see it in a strong light?"

"Every hour I spend here shows me that I do not see it strongly enough."

And there followed some appalling instances of the effects of the multiplicity of gin-palaces, things that it well nigh broke Robert's heart to witness, absorbed as he was in the novelty of his work, fresh in feeling, and never able to divest himself of a sense of being a sharer in the guilt and ruin.

Sir Bevil listened at first with interest, then tried to lead away from the subject; but it was Robert's single idea, and he kept them to it till their departure, when Phœbe's first words were, as they drove from the door, "Oh, thank you, you do not know how much happier you have made me."

Her companion smiled, saying, "I need not ask which is the favourite brother."

"Mervyn is very kind to me," quickly answered Phœbe.

"But Robert is the oracle! eh?" he said kindly and merrily.

"Robert has been everything to us younger ones," she answered. "I am still more glad that you like him."

His grave face not responding as she expected, she feared that he had been bored, thought Robert righteous over much, or disapproved his opinions; but his answer was worth having when it came. "I know nothing about his views, I never looked into the subject, but when I see a young man giving up a lucrative prospect for conscience sake, and devoting himself to work in that sink of iniquity, I see there must be something in him. I can't judge if he goes about it in a wrong-headed way, but I should be proud of such a fellow instead of discarding him."

"Oh, thank you!" cried Phœbe, with ecstasy that made him laugh, and quite differently from the made-up laughter she had been used to hear from him.

"What are you thanking me for?" he said. "I do not imagine that I shall be able to serve him. I'll talk to your father about him, but he must be the best judge of the discipline of his own family."

"I was not thinking of your doing anything" said Phœbe; "but a kind word about Robert does make me very grateful."

There was a long silence, only diversified by an astonished nod from Mervyn driving back from the office. Just before setting her down, Sir Bevil said, "I wonder whether your brother would let us give something to his church. Will you find out what it shall be, and let me know? As a gift from Juliana and myself—you understand."

It was lucky for Phœbe that she had brought home a good stock of satisfaction to support her, for she found herself in the direst disgrace, and her mother too much cowed to venture on more than a feeble self-defensive murmur that she had told Phœbe it would never do. Convinced in her own conscience that she had done nothing blameworthy, Phœbe knew that it was the shortest way not to defend herself, and the storm was blowing over when Mervyn came in, charmed to mortify Juliana by compliments to Phœbe on "doing it stylishly, careering in Acton's turn-out," but when the elder sister explained where she had been, Mervyn too deserted her, and turned away with a fierce imprecation on his brother, such as was misery to Phœbe's ears. He was sourly ill-humoured all the evening; Juliana wreaked her displeasure on Sir Bevil in ungraciousness, and such silence and gloom descended on him that he was like another man from him who had smiled on Phœbe in the afternoon.

Yet, though dismayed at the offence she had given, and grieved at these evidences of Robert's ill-odour with his family, Phœbe could not regret having seized her single chance of seeing Robert's dwelling for herself, nor the having made him known to Sir Bevil. The one had made her satisfied, the other hopeful, even while she recollected with foreboding that truth sometimes comes not with peace, but with a sword, to set at variance parent and child, and make foes of them of the same household.

Juliana never forgave that drive. She continued bitter towards Phœbe, and kept such a watch over her and Sir Bevil, that the jealous surveillance became palpable to both. Sir Bevil really wanted to tell Phœbe the unsatisfactory result of his pleading for Robert, she wanted to tell him of Robert's gratitude for his offered gift, but the exchange of any words in private was out of their power, and each si-

lently felt that it was best to make no move towards one another, till the unworthy jealousy should have died away.

Though Sir Bevil had elicited nothing but abuse of "pig-headed folly," his espousal of the young clergyman's cause was not without effect. Robert was not treated with more open disfavour than he had often previously endured, and was free to visit the party at Farrance's, if he chose to run the risk of encountering his father's blunt coldness, Mervyn's sulky dislike, and Juliana's sharp satire, but as he generally came so as to find his mother and Phœbe alone, some precious moments compensated for the various disagreeables. Nor did these affect him nearly as much as they did his sister. It was, in fact, one of his remaining unwholesome symptoms that he rather enjoyed persecution, and took no pains to avoid giving offence. If he meant to be uncompromising, he sometimes was simply provoking, and Phœbe feared that Sir Bevil thought him an unpromising *protégé*.

He was asked to the Christmas dinner at the Bannermans', and did not fulfil Augusta's prediction that he would say it was a fast day and refuse. That evening gave Phœbe her best *tête-à-tête* with him, but she observed that all was about Whittingtonia, not one word of the past summer, not so much as an inquiry for Miss Charlecote. Evidently that page in his history was closed for ever, and if he should carry out his designs in their present form, a wife at the intended institution would be an impossibility. How near the dearest may be to one another, and yet how little can they guess at what they would most desire to know!

Sir Bevil had insisted on his being asked to perform the ceremony, and she longed to understand whether his refusal were really on the score of his being a deacon, or if he had any further motive. His own family were affronted, though glad to be left free to request the services of the greatest dignity of their acquaintance, and Sir Bevil's blunt "No, no, poor fellow! say no more about it," made her suppose that he suspected that Robert's vehemence in his parish was meant to work off a disappointment.

It was a dreary wedding, in spite of London grandeur. In all her success, Juliana could not help looking pinched and ill at ease, her wreath and veil hardening instead of softening her features, and her bridegroom's studious cheerfulness and forced laughs became him less than his usual

silent dejection. The Admiral was useful in getting up stock wedding-wit, but Phœbe wondered how any one could laugh at it; and her fellow bridesmaids, all her seniors, seemed to her, as perhaps she seemed to them, like thoughtless children, playing with the surface of things. She pitied Sir Bevil, and saw little chance of happiness for either, yet heard only congratulations, and had to be bright, busy, and helpful under a broad, stiff, white watered silk scarf, beneath which Juliana had endeavoured to extinguish her, but in which her tall rounded shape looked to great advantage. Indeed, that young rosy face, and the innocently pensive wondering eyes were so sweet, that the bride had to endure hearing admiration of her sister from all quarters, and the Acton bridemaids whispered rather like those at Netherby Hall.

It was over, and Phœbe was the reigning Miss Fulmort. Her friends were delighted for her and for themselves, and her mother entered on the full enjoyment of the little brougham.



CHAPTER VIII.

When some dear scheme
Of our life doth seem
Shivered at once like a broken dream;
And our hearts to reel
Like ships that feel
A sharp rock grating against their keel.—C. F. A.

It was high summer; and in spite of cholera-averting thunder-storms, the close streets and the odour of the Thames were becoming insufferable. Mr. Parsons arranged a series of breathing times for his clerical staff, but could make Robert Fulmort accept none. He was strong and healthy, ravenous of work, impervious to disgusts, and rejected holidays as burdensome and hateful. Where should he go? What could he do? What would become of his wild scholars without him, and who would superintend his buildings?

Mr. Parsons was fain to let him have his own way, as had happened in some previous instances, specially the edi-

fice in Cicely Row, where the incumbent would have paused, but the curate rushed on with resolute zeal and impetuosity, taking measures so decidedly ere his intentions were revealed, that neither remonstrance nor prevention were easy, and a species of annoyed, doubtful admiration alone was possible. It was sometimes a gratifying reflection to the vicar, that when the buildings were finished, Whittingtonia would become a district, and its busy curate be no longer under his jurisdiction.

Meantime Robert was left with a companion in priest's orders, but newer to the parish than himself, to conduct the services at St. Wulstan's, while the other curates were taking holiday, and the vicar at his son's country-house. To see how contentedly, nay, pleasurably, "Fulmort" endured perpetual broiling, passing from frying school to grilling pavement, and seething human hive, was constant edification to his colleague, who, fresh from the calm university, felt such a life to be a slow martyrdom, and wished his liking for the deacon were in better proportion to his esteem.

"A child to be baptized at 8 Little Whittington-street," he said, with resigned despair, as at the vestry door he received a message from a small maid, one afternoon, when the air looked lurid yellow with sultry fire.

"I'll go," replied Robert, with the alacrity that sometimes almost irritated his fellows; and off he sped, with alert steps, at which his friend gazed with the sensation of watching a salamander.

Little Whittington-street, where it was not warehouses, was chiefly occupied by small tradesfolk, or by lodging houses for the numerous "young men" employed in the City. It was one of the most respectable parts of that quarter, but being much given to dissent, was little frequented by the clergy, who had too much immorality to contend with, to have leisure to speak against schism.

When he rang at No. 8, the little maid ushered him down a narrow, dark staircase, and announcing, "Please, ma'am, here's the minister," admitted him into a small room, feeling like a cellar, the window opening into an area. It was crowded with gay and substantial furniture, and contained two women, one lying on a couch, partially hidden by a screen, the other an elderly person, in a widow's cap, with an infant in her arms.

"Good morning, sir, we were sorry to trouble you, but I felt certain, as I told my daughter, that a minister of the Gospel would not tarry in time of need. Not that I put my trust in ordinances, sir; I have been blest with the enlightening of the new birth, but my daughter, sir, she follows the Church. Yes, sir, the poor little lamb is a sad sufferer in this vale of tears. So wasted away, you see; you would not think he was nine weeks old. We would have brought him to church before, sir, only my daughter's hillness, and her 'usband's habsence. It was always her wish, sir, and I was not against it, for many true Christians have found grace in the Church, sir."

Robert considered whether to address himself to the young mother, whose averted face and uneasy movements seemed to show that this stream of words was distressing to her. He thought silence would be best procured by his assumption of his office, and quietly made his preparations, opened his book, and took his place.

The young woman, raising herself with difficulty, said in a low, sweet voice, "The gentleman is ready, mother."

As there was no pressing danger, he read the previous collects, the elder female responding with devout groans, the younger sinking on her knees, her face hidden in her wasted hands. He took the little feeble being in his arms, and demanded the name.

"Hoeing Charterhouse," replied the grandmother.

He looked interrogative, and Hoeing Charterhouse was repeated.

"Owen Charteris," said the low, sweet voice.

A thrill shot over his whole frame, as his look met a large, full, liquid pair of dark eyes, such as once seen could never be forgotten, though dropped again instantly, while a burning blush arose, instantly veiled by the hands, which hid all up to the dark hair.

Recalling himself by an effort, he repeated the too familiar name, and baptized the child, bending his head over it afterwards in deep compassion and mental entreaty both for its welfare, and his own guidance in the tissue of wrongdoing thus disclosed. A hasty, stealthy glance at the hands covering the mother's face, showed him the ring on her fourth finger, and as they rose from their knees, he said, "I am to register this child as Owen Charteris Sandbrook."

With a look of deadly terror, she faintly exclaimed, "I have done it! You know him, sir; you will not betray him!"

"I know you, too," said Robert, sternly. "You were the schoolmistress at Wrapworth!"

"I was, sir. It was all my fault. Oh! promise me, sir, never to betray him; it would be the ruin of his prospects for ever!" And she came towards him, her hands clasped in entreaty, her large eyes shining with feverish lustre, her face wasted but still lovely, a piteous contrast to the queenly being of a year ago in her pretty schoolroom.

"Compose yourself," said Robert, gravely; "I hope never to betray any one. I confess that I am shocked, but I will endeavour to act rightly."

"I am sure, sir," broke in Mrs. Murrell, with double volume, after her interval of quiescence, "it is not to be expected but what a gentleman's friends would be offended. It was none of my wish, sir, being that I never knew a word of it till she was married and it was too late, or I would have warned her against broken cisterns. But as for her, sir, she is as innocent as a miserable sinner can be in a fallen world. It was the young gentleman as sought her out. I always misdoubted the ladies noticing her, and making her take part with men-singers and women-singers, and such vanities as is pleasing to the unregenerate heart. Ah! sir, without grace, where are we? Not that he was ever other than most honourable with her, or she would never have listened to him not for a moment, but she was over-persuaded, sir, and folks said what they hadn't no right to say, and the minister he was 'ard on her, and so, you see, sir, she took fright and married him out of 'and, trusting to a harm of flesh, and went to Hireland with him. She just writ me a note, which filled my 'art with fear and trembling, a 'nonymous note, with only Hedna signed to it; and I waited with failing eyes and sorrow of heart, till one day in autumn he brings her back to me, and here she has been ever since, dwining away in a nervous fever, as the doctors call it, as it's a misery to see her, and he never coming nigh her."

"Once," murmured Edna, who had several times tried to interrupt.

"Once, ay, for one hour at Christmas."

"He is known here; he can't venture often," interposed

the wife; and there was a further whisper, "he couldn't stay, he couldn't bear it."

But the dejected accents were lost in the old woman's voice,—“Now, sir, if you know him or his family, I wouldn't be wishing to do him no hinjury, nor to ruinate his prospects, being, as he says, that the rich lady will make him her hare; but, sir, if you have any power with him as a godly minister or the friend of his youth, may be——”

“He is only waiting till he has a curacy—a house of his own—mother!”

“No, Edna, hold your peace. It is not fit that I should see my only child cut down as the grass of the field, and left a burthen upon me, a lone woman, while he is eating of the fat of the land. I say it is scandalous that he should leave her here, and take no notice; not coming near her since one hour at Christmas, and only just sending her a few pounds now and then; not once coming to see his own child!”

“He could not; he is abroad!” pleaded Edna.

“He tells you he is abroad!” exclaimed Robert.

“He went to Paris at Easter. He promised to come when he comes home.”

“You poor thing!” burst out Robert. “He is deceiving you! He came back at the end of three weeks. I heard from my sister that she saw him on Sunday.”

Robert heartily rued his abruptness, as the poor young wife sank back in a deadly swoon. The grandmother hurried to apply remedies, insisting that the gentleman should not go, and continuing all the time her version of her daughter's wrongs. Her last remnant of patience had vanished on learning this deception, and she only wanted to publish her daughter's claims, proceeding to establish them by hastening in search of the marriage certificate as soon as Edna had begun to revive, but sooner than Robert was satisfied to be left alone with the inanimate, helpless form on the couch.

He was startled when Edna raised her hand, and strove to speak,—“Sir, do not tell—do not tell my mother where he is. She must not fret him—she must not tell his friends—he would be angry.”

She ceased as her mother returned with the certificate of the marriage, contracted last July before the registrar of the huge suburban Union to which Wrapworth belonged, the centre of which was so remote, that the pseudo-banns of

Owen Charteris Sandbrook and Edna Murrell had attracted no attention.

"It was very wrong," feebly said Edna; "I drew him into it! I loved him so much; and they all talked so after I went in the boat with him, that I thought my character was gone, and I begged him to save me from them. It was my fault, sir; and I've the punishment. You'll not betray him, sir; only don't let that young lady, your sister, trust to him. Not yet. My baby and I shall soon be out of her way."

The calm languor of her tone was almost fearful, and even as she spoke a shuddering seized her, making her tremble convulsively, her teeth knocking together, and the couch shaking under her.

"You must have instant advice," cried Robert. "I will fetch some one."

"You won't betray him," almost shrieked Edna. "A little while—stay a little while—he will be free of me."

There was delirium in look and voice, and he was compelled to pause and assure her that he was only going for the doctor, and would come again before taking any other step.

It was not till the medical man had been summoned that his mind recurred to the words about his sister. He might have dismissed them as merely the jealous suspicion of the deserted wife, but that he remembered Lucilla's hint as to an attachment between Owen and Phœbe, and he knew that such would have been most welcome to Miss Charlecote.

"My Phœbe, my one bright spot!" was his inward cry, "must your guileless happiness be quenched? O, I would rather have it all over again myself than that one pang should come near you, in your sweetness and innocence, the blessing of us all! And I not near to guard nor warn! What may not be passing even now? Unprincipled, hard-hearted deceiver, walking at large among those gentle, unsuspecting women—trading on their innocent trust! Would that I had disclosed the villany I knew of!"

His hand clenched, his brow lowered, and his mouth was set so savagely, that the passing policeman looked in wonder from the dangerous face to the clerical dress.

Early next morning he was at No. 8, and learnt that Mrs. Brook, as the maid called her, had been very ill all night, and that the doctor was still with her. Begging to

see the doctor, Robert found that high fever had set in, an aggravation of the low nervous fever that had been consuming her strength all the spring, and her condition was already such that there was little hope of her surviving the present attack. She had been raving all night about the young lady with whom Mr. Sandbrook had been walking by moonlight, and when the door of the little adjoining bedroom was open, her moans and broken words were plainly audible.

Robert asked whether he should fetch her husband, and Mrs. Murrell caught at the offer. Owen's presence was the single hope of restoring her, at least he ought to behold the wreck that he had wrought. Mrs. Murrell gave a terrible thrust by saying, "that the young lady at least ought to be let know, that she might not be trusting to him."

"Do not fear, Mrs. Murrell," he said, almost under his breath. "My only doubt is, whether I can meet Owen Sandbrook as a Christian should."

Cutting off her counsels on the unconverted nature, he strode off to find his colleague, whom he perplexed by a few rapid words on the necessity of going into the country for the day. His impatient condition required vehement action; and with a sense of hurrying to rescue Phoebe, he could scarcely brook the slightest delay till he was on his way to Hiltonbury, nor till the train spared him all action, could he pause to collect his strength, guard his resentment, or adjust his measures for warning, but not betraying. He could think of no honourable mode of dealing, save carrying off Owen to London with him at once, sacrificing the sight of his sister for the present, and either writing or going to her afterwards, when the mode of dealing the blow should be more evident. It cost him keen suffering to believe that this was the sole right course, but he had bound himself to it by his promise to the poor suffering wife, blaming himself for continually putting his sister before her in his plans.

At Elverslope, on his demand for a fly for Hiltonbury, he was answered that all were engaged for the Horticultural Show in the Forest; but the people at the station, knowing him well, made willing exertions to procure a vehicle for him, and a taxed cart soon making its appearance, he desired

to be taken, not to the Holt, but to the Forest, where he had no doubt that he should find the object of his search.

This Horticultural Show was the great gaiety of the year. The society had originated with Humfrey Charlecote, for the benefit of the poor as well as the rich; and the summer exhibition always took place under the trees of a fragment of the old Forest, which still survived at about five miles from Hiltonbury. The day was a county holiday. The delicate orchid and the crowned pine were there, with the hairy gooseberry, the cabbage and potato, and the homely cottage-garden nosegay from many a woodland hamlet. The young ladies competed in collections of dried flowers for a prize botany book; and the subscriptions were so arranged that on this festival each poorer member might, with two companions, be provided with a hearty meal; while grandees and farmers had a luncheon-tent of their own, and regarded the day as a county pic-nic.

It was a favourite affair with all, intensely enjoyed, and full of good neighbourhood. Humfrey Charlecote's spirit never seemed to have deserted it; it was a gathering of distant friends, a delight of children as of the full-grown; and while the young were frantic for its gipsying fun, their elders seldom failed to attend, if only in remembrance of poor Mr. Charlecote, "who had begged one and all not to let it drop."

Above all, Honora felt it due to Humfrey to have prize-roots and fruits from the Holt, and would have thought herself fallen, indeed, had the hardest rain kept her from the rendezvous, with one wagon carrying the cottagers' articles, and another a troop of school children. No doubt the Forest would be the place to find Owen Sandbrook, but for the rest——

From the very extremity of his perplexity, Robert's mind sought relief in external objects. So joyous were the associations with the Forest road on a horticultural day, that the familiar spots could not but revive them. Those green glades where the graceful beeches retreated, making cool green galleries with their slender gleaming stems, reminded him of his putting his new pony to speed to come up with the Holt carriage; that scathed oak had a tradition of lightning connected with it; yonder was the spot where he had shown Lucilla a herd of deer; here the rising ground whence

the whole scene could be viewed, and from force of habit he felt exhilarated as he gazed down upon the slope of heather, where the fine old oaks and beeches, receding, had left an open space, now covered with the well-known tents; there the large one, broadly striped with green, containing the show; there the white marquees for the eaters; the union jack's gay colours floating lazily from a pole in the Outlaw's Knoll; the dark, full foliage of the forest, and purple tints of the heather setting off the bright female groups in their delicate summer gaities. Vehicles of all degrees—smart barouche, lengthy britzscha, light gig, dashing pony carriage, rattling shanderadan, and gorgeous wagon—were drawn up in treble file, minus their steeds; the sounds of well-known tunes from the band were wafted on the wind, and such an air of jocund peace and festivity pervaded the whole, that for a moment he had a sense of holiday-making ere he sighed at the shade that he was bringing on that scene of merriment.

Reaching the barrier, he paid his entrance-money, and desiring the carriage to wait, walked rapidly down the hill. On one side of the road was the gradual sweep of open heath, on the other was a rapid slope, shaded by trees, and covered with fern, growing tall and grand as it approached the moist ground in the hollow below. Voices made him turn his head in that direction. Aloof from the rest of the throng, he beheld two figures half way down the bank, so nearly hidden among the luxuriant wing-like fronds of the Osmond royal which they were gathering, that at first only their hats were discernible—a broad grey one, with drooping feather, and a light Oxford boating straw hat. The merry ring of the clear girlish voice, the deep-toned replies, told him more than his first glance did; and with one inward ejaculation for self-command, he turned aside to the descent.

The rustling among the copsewood caught the ear of Phoebe, who was the highest up, and, springing up like a fawn in the covert, she cried,—“Robin! dear Robin! how delicious!” but ere she had made three bounds towards him, his face brought her to a pause, and, in an awe-struck voice, she asked, “Robert, what is it?”

“It does not concern you, dearest; at least, I hope not. I want Owen Sandbrook.”

"Then it is *she*. O Robin, can you bear it?" she whispered, clinging to him, terrified by the agitated fondness of his embrace.

"I know nothing of *her*," was his answer, interrupted by Owen, who, raising his handsome, ruddy face from beneath, shouted mirthfully—

"Ha! Phœbe, what interloper have you caught? What, Fulmort, not quite grilled in the Wulstonian oven?"

"I was in search of you. Wait there, Phœbe," said Robert, advancing to meet Owen, with a gravity of countenance that provoked an impatient gesture, and the question—

"Come, have it out! Do you mean that you have been ferreting out some old scrape of mine?"

"I mean," said Robert, looking steadily at him, "that I have been called in to baptize your sick child. Your wife is dying, and you must hasten if you would see her alive."

"That won't do. You know better than that," returned Owen, with ill-concealed agitation, partaking of anger. "She was quite recovered when last I heard, but she is a famous hand at getting up a scene; and that mother of hers would drive Job out of his senses. They have worked on your weak mind. I was an ass to trust to the old woman's dissent for hindering them from finding you out, and getting up a scene."

"They did not. It was by accident that I was the person who answered the summons. They knew neither me nor my name, so you may acquit them of any preparation. I recognised your name, which I was desired to give to the child; and then, in spite of the wasting, terror, and deadly sickness I knew the mother. She has been pining under low nervous fever, still believing you on the Continent; and the discovery that she had been deceived, was such a shock as to bring on a violent attack, which she is not likely to have strength to survive."

"I never told her I was still abroad," said Owen, in a fretful tone of self-defence. "I only had my letters forwarded through my scout; for I knew I should have no peace nor safety if the old woman knew where to find me, and preach me crazy; and I could not be going to see after her, for, thanks to Honor Charlecote and her schools, every child in Whittingtonia knows me by sight. I told her to

be patient till I had a curacy, and was independent; but it seems she could not be. I'll run up as soon as I can get some plea for getting away from the Holt."

"Death will leave no time for your excuses," said Robert. "By setting off at once, you may catch the five o'clock express at W——."

"Well, it is your object to have a grand explosion! When I am cut out, you and Cilly may make a good thing of it. I wish you joy! Ha! by Jove!" he muttered, as he saw Phœbe waiting out of earshot. And then, turning from Robert, who was dumb in the effort to control a passionate reply, he called out, "Good-bye, Phœbe; I beg your pardon, but you see I am summoned. Family claims are imperative!"

"What is the matter?" said the maiden, terrified not only at his tone, but at the gestures of her brother of fierce, suppressed menace towards him, despairing protection towards her.

"Why, he has told you! Matter enough, isn't it? I'm a married man. I ask your compassion!" with a bitter laugh.

"It is you who have told her," said Robert, who, after a desperate effort, had forced all violence from his voice and language. "Traitor as you consider me, your secret had not crossed my lips. But no—there is no time to waste on disputes. Your wife is sinking under neglect; and her seeing you once more may depend on your not loitering away these moments."

"I don't believe it. Canting and tragedy queening. Taking him in! I know better!" muttered Owen, suddenly, as he moved up the bank.

"O Robin, how can he be so hard?" whispered Phœbe, as she met her brother's eyes wistfully fixed on her face.

"He is altogether selfish and heartless," returned Robert, in the same inaudible voice. "My Phœbe, give me this one comfort. You never listened to him."

"There was nothing to listen to," said Phœbe, turning her clear, surprised eyes on him. "You couldn't think him so bad as that. O Robin, how silly!"

"What were you doing here?" he asked, holding her arm tight.

"Only Miss Fennimore wanted some Osmunda, and Miss

Charlecote sent him to show me where it grew ; because she was talking to Lady Raymond."

The free simplicity of her look made Robert breathe freely. Charity was coming back to him.

At the same moment Owen turned, his face flushed, and full of emotion, but the obduracy gone.

"I may take a long leave ! When you see Honor Charlecote, Fulmort ——"

"I shall not see her. I am going back with you," said Robert, instantly deciding, now that he felt that he could both leave Phœbe, and trust himself with the offender.

"You think I want to escape !"

"No ; but I have duties to return to. Besides, you will find a scene for which you are little prepared ; and which will cost you the more for your present mood. I may be of use there. Your secret is safe with Phœbe and me. I promised your wife to keep it, and we will not rob you of the benefit of free confession."

"And what is to explain my absence ? No, no, the secret is one no longer, and it has been intolerable enough already," said Owen, recklessly. "Poor Honor, it will be a grievous business, and little Phœbe will be a kind messenger. Won't you, Phœbe ? I leave my cause in your hands."

"But," faltered Phœbe, "she should hear who ——"

"Simple child, you can't draw inferences. Cilla wouldn't have asked. Don't you remember her darling at Wrapworth ? People shouldn't throw such splendid women in one's way, especially when they are made of such inflammable materials, and take fire at a civil word. So ill, poor thing ! Now, Robert, on your honour, has not the mother been working on you ?"

"I tell you not what the mother told me, but what the medical man said. Low nervous fever set in long ago, and she has never recovered her confinement. Heat and closeness were already destroying her, when my disclosure that you were not abroad, as she had been led to believe, brought on fainting, and almost immediate delirium. This was last evening, she was worse this morning."

"Poor girl ! poor girl !" muttered Owen, his face almost convulsed with emotion. "There was no helping it. She would have drowned herself if I had not taken her with me—quite capable of it ! after those intolerable women at Wrap-

worth had opened fire. I wish women's tongues were cut out by act of parliament. So, Phœbe, tell poor Honor that I know I am unpardonable, but I am sincerely sorry for her. I fell into it, there's no knowing how, and she would pity me, and so would you, if you knew what I have gone through. Good-bye, Phœbe. Most likely I shall never see you again. Won't you shake hands, and tell me you are sorry for me?"

"I should be, if you seemed more sorry for your wife than yourself," she said, holding out her hand, but by no means prepared for his not only pressing it with fervour, but carrying it to his lips.

Then, as Robert started forward with an impulse of snatching her from him, he almost threw it from his grasp, and with a long sigh very like bitter regret, and a murmur that resembled "That's a little angel," he mounted the bank. Robert only tarried to say, "May I be able to bear with him! Phœbe, do your best for poor Miss Charlecote. I will write."

Phœbe sat down at the foot of a tree, veiled by the waving ferns, to take breath and understand what had passed. Her first act was to strike one hand across the other, as though to obliterate the kiss, then to draw off her glove, and drop it in the deepest of the fern, never to be worn again. Hateful! With that poor neglected wife pining to death in those stifling city streets, to be making sport in those forest glades. Shame! shame! But oh! worst of all was his patronizing pity for Miss Charlecote! Phœbe's own mission to Miss Charlecote was dreadful enough, and she could have sat for hours deliberating on the mode of carrying grief and dismay to her friend, who had looked so joyous and exulting with her boy by her side as she drove upon the ground; but there was no time to be lost, and rousing herself into action with strong effort, Phœbe left the fern brake, walking like one in a dream, and exchanging civilities with various persons who wondered to see her alone, made her way to the principal marquee, where luncheon had taken place, and which always served as the *rendezvous*. Here sat mammas, keeping up talk enough for civility, and peeping out restlessly to cluck their broods together; here gentlemen stood in knots, talking county business; servants congregated in the rear, to call the carriages; stragglers gradually streamed

together, and "Oh! here you are," was the staple exclamation.

It was uttered by Mrs. Fulmort as Phœbe appeared, and was followed by plaintive inquiries for her sisters, and assurances that it would have been better to have stayed in the cool tent, and gone home at once. Phœbe consoled her by ordering the carriage, and explaining that her sisters were at hand with some other girls, then begged leave to go home with Miss Charlecote for the night.

"My dear, what shall I do with the others without you? Maria has such odd tricks, and Bertha is so teasing without you! You promised they should not tire me!"

"I will beg them to be good, dear mamma; I am very sorry, but it is only this once. She will be alone. Owen Sandbrook is obliged to go away."

"I can't think what she should want of you," moaned her mother, "so used as she is to be alone. Did she ask you?"

"No, she does not know yet. I am to tell her, and that is why I want you to be so kind as to spare me, dear mamma."

"My dear, it will not do for you to be carrying young men's secrets, at least not Owen Sandbrook's. Your papa would not like it, my dear, until she had acknowledged him for her heir. You have lost your glove, too, Phœbe, and you look so heated, you had better come back with me," said Mrs. Fulmort, who would not have withstood for a moment a decree from either of her other daughters.

"Indeed," said Phœbe, "you need not fear, mamma. It is nothing of that sort, quite the contrary."

"Quite the contrary! You don't tell me that he has formed another attachment, just when I made sure of your settling at last at the Holt, and you such a favourite with Honor Charlecote. Not one of those plain Miss Raymonds, I hope."

"I must not tell, till she has heard," said Phœbe, "so please say nothing about it. It will vex poor Miss Charlecote sadly, so pray let no one suspect, and I will come back and tell you to-morrow, by the time you are dressed."

Mrs. Fulmort was so much uplifted by the promise of the grand secret that she made no more opposition, and Maria and Bertha hurried in with Phœbe's glove, which, with the peculiar fidelity of property wilfully lost, had fallen into their hands while searching for Robert. Both declared they

had seen him on the hill, and clamorously demanded him of Phœbe. Her answer, "he is not in the forest, you will not find him," was too conscious fully to have satisfied the shrewd Bertha, but for the pleasure of discoursing to the other girls upon double gangers, of whom she had stealthily read in some prohibited German literature of her governess's.

Leaving her to astonish them, Phœbe took up a position near Miss Charlecote, who was talking to the good matronly-looking Lady Raymond, and on the first opportunity offered herself as a companion. On the way home, Honor, much pleased, was proposing to find Owen, and walk through a beautiful and less frequented forest path, when she saw her own carriage coming up with that from Beauchamp, and lamented the mistake which must take her away as soon as Owen could be found.

"I ventured to order it," said Phœbe; "I thought you might prefer it. Owen is gone. He left a message with me for you."

Experience of former blows taught Honora to ask no questions, and to go through the offices of politeness as usual. But Lady Raymond, long a friend of hers, though barely acquainted with Mrs. Fulmort, and never having seen Phœbe before, living as she did on the opposite side of the county, took a moment for turning round to the young girl, and saying with a friendly motherly warmth, far from mere curiosity, "I am sure you have had news for Miss Charlecote. I see you cannot speak of it now, but you must promise me to send to Moorcroft, if Sir John or I can be of any use."

Phœbe could only give a thankful grasp of the kind hand. The Raymonds were rather despised at home for plain habits, strong religious opinions, and scanty fortunes, but she knew they were Miss Charlecote's great friends and advisers.

Not till the gay crowd had been left behind did Honor turn to Phœbe, and say gently, "My dear, if he is gone off in any foolish way, you had better tell me at once, that something may be done."

"He is gone with Robert," said Phœbe. "Bertha did really see Robert. He had made a sad discovery, and came for Owen. Do you remember that pretty schoolmistress at Wrapworth?"

Never had Phœbe seen such a blanched face and dilated

eyes as were turned on her, with the gasping words, "Impossible! they would not have told you."

"They were obliged," said Phœbe; "they had to hurry for the train, for she is very ill indeed."

Honor leant back with folded hands and closed eyes, so that Phœbe almost felt as if she had killed her. "I suppose Robert was right to fetch him," she said; "but their telling you!"

"Owen told me he fancied Robert had done so," said Phœbe, "and called out to me something about family claims, and a married man."

"Married!" cried Honora, starting forward. "You are sure!"

"Quite sure," repeated Phœbe; "he desired me to tell you. I was to say he knew he was unpardonable, but he had suffered a great deal, and he was grieved at the sorrow you would feel."

Having faithfully discharged her message, Phœbe could not help being vexed at the relenting "Poor fellow!"

Honor was no longer confounded, as at the first sentences, and though still cast down, was more relieved than her young friend could understand, asking all that had passed between the young men, and when all had been told, leaning back in silence until, when almost at home, she laid her hand on Phœbe's arm, and said, "My child, never think yourself safe from idols."

She then sought her own room, and Phœbe feared that her presence was intrusive, for she saw her hostess no more till tea-time, when the wan face and placid smile almost made her weep at first, then wonder at the calm unconstrained manner in which her amusement was provided for, and feel ready to beg not to be treated like a child or a stranger. When parting for the night, however, Honor tenderly said, "Thanks, my dear, for giving up the evening to me."

"I have only been an oppression to you."

"You did me the greatest good. I did not want discussion; I only wanted kindness. I wish I had you always, but it is better not. Their uncle was right. I spoil every one."

"Pray do not say so. You have been our great blessing. If you knew how we wish to comfort you."

"You do comfort me. I can watch Robert realizing my

visions for others, and you, my twilight moon, my autumn flower. But I must not love you too much, Phœbe. They all suffer for my inordinate affection. But it is too late to talk. Good-night, sweet one."

"Shall you sleep?" said Phœbe, wistfully lingering.

"Yes: I don't enter into it enough to be haunted. Ah! you have never learnt what it is to feel heavy with trouble. I believe I shall not dwell on it till I know more. There may be much excuse; she may have been artful, and at least Owen dealt fairly by her in one respect. I can better suppose her unworthy, than him cruelly neglectful."

In that hope Honor slept, and was not more depressed than Phœbe had seen her under Lucilla's desertion. She put off her judgment till she should hear more, went about her usual occupations, and sent Phœbe home till letters should come, when they would meet again.

Both heard from Robert by the next post, and his letter to Miss Charlecote related all that he had been able to collect from Mrs. Murrell, or from Owen himself. The narrative is here given more fully than he was able to make it. Edna Murrell, born with the susceptible organization of a musical temperament, had in her earliest childhood been so treated as to foster refined tastes and aspirations, such as disgusted her with the respectable vulgarity of her home. The pet of the nursery and school-room looked down on the lodge-kitchen and parlour, and her discontent was a matter of vanity with her parents, as a sign of her superiority, while plausibility and caution were continually enjoined on her rather by example than precept, and she was often aware of her mother's indulgence of erratic propensities in religion, unknown either to her father or his employers.

Unexceptionable as had been her training-school education, the high cultivation and soundness of doctrine had so acted on her as to keep her farther aloof from her mother, whose far more heartfelt religion appeared to her both distasteful and contemptible, and whose advice was thus cast aside as prejudiced and sectarian.

Such was the preparation for the unprotected life of a schoolmistress in a house by herself. Servants and small tradesfolks were no companions to her, and were offended by her ladylike demeanour; and her refuge was in books that served but to increase the perils of sham romance, and in en-

thusiastic adoration of the young lady, whose manners apparently placed her on an equality, although her beauty and musical talents were in truth only serving as a toy.

Her face and voice had already been thrust on Owen's notice before the adventure with the bargeman had constituted the young gentleman the hero of her grateful imagination, and commenced an intercourse, for which his sister's inconsiderate patronage gave ample opportunities. His head was full of the theory of fusion of classes, and of the innate refinement, freshness of intellect, and vigour of perception of the unsophisticated, at least so he thought, and when he lent her books, commenting on favourite passages, and talked poetry or popular science to her, he imagined himself walking in the steps of those who were asserting the claims of intelligence to cultivation, and sowing broadcast the seeds of art, literature, and emancipation. Perhaps he knew not how often he was betrayed into tokens of admiration, sufficient to inflame such a disposition as he had to deal with, and if he were aware of his influence, and her adoration, it idly flattered and amused him, without thought of the consequences.

On the night when she had fainted at the sight of his attention to Phoebe, she was left on his hands in a state when all caution and reserve gave way, and her violent agitation fully awakened him to the perception of the expectations he had caused, the force of the feelings he had aroused. A mixture of pity, vanity, and affection towards the beautiful creature before him had led to a response such as did not disappoint her, and there matters might have rested for the present, but that their interview had been observed. Edna, terror-stricken, believing herself irretrievably disgraced, had thrown herself on his mercy in a frantic condition, such as made him dread exposure for himself, as well as suspense for her tempestuous nature.

With all his faults, the pure atmosphere in which he had grown up, together with the tone of his associates, comparatively free from the grosser and more hard-hearted forms of vice, had concurred with poor Edna's real modesty and principle in obtaining the sanction of marriage, for her flight with him from the censure of Wrapworth, and the rebukes of her mother. Throughout, his feelings had been chiefly stirred up by the actual sight of her beauty, and excited by her fer-

vid passion. When absent from her, there had been always regrets and hesitations, such as would have prevailed, save for his compassion, and dread of the efforts of her desperation, both for her and for himself. The unpardonable manner in which he knew himself to have acted, made it needful to plunge deeper for the very sake of concealment.

Yet, once married, he would have been far safer if he had confessed the fact to his only true friend, since it must surely come to light some time or other, but he had bred himself up in the habit of schoolboy shuffling, hiding everything to the last moment, and he could not bear to be cast off by the Charterises, be pitied and laughed at by his Oxford friends, nor to risk Honor Charlecote's favour, perhaps her inheritance. Return to Oxford the victim of an attachment to a village schoolmistress! Better never return thither at all, as would be but too probably the case! No! the secret must be kept till his first start in life should be secure; and he talked to Edna of his future curacy, while she fed her fancy with visions of lovely parsonages and "clergymen's ladies" in a world of pensive bliss, and after the honeymoon in Ireland, promised to wait patiently, provided her mother might know all.

Owen had not realized the home to which he was obliged to resign his wife, nor his mother-in-law's powers of tongue. There were real difficulties in the way of his visiting her. It was the one neighbourhood in London where his person might be known, and if he avoided daylight, he became the object of espial to the disappointed lodgers, who would have been delighted to identify the "Mr. Brook," who had monopolized the object of their admiration. These perils, the various disagreeables, and especially Mrs. Murrell's complaints and demands for money, had so much annoyed Owen, who felt himself the injured party in the connexion, that he had not only avoided the place, but endeavoured to dismiss the whole humiliating affair from his mind, trying to hinder himself from being harassed by letters, and when forced to attend to the representations of the women, sending a few kind words and promises, with such money as he could spare, always backed, however, by threats of the consequences of a disclosure, which he vaguely intimated would ruin his prospects for life.

Little did the thoughtless boy comprehend the cruelty of his neglect. In the underground rooms of the City lodging-

house, the voluntary prison of the shamefaced, half-owned wife, the overwrought headache, incidental to her former profession, made her its prey; nervous fever came on as the suspense became more trying, and morbid excitement alternated with torpor and depression. Medical advice was long deferred, and that which was at last sought was not equal to her needs. It remained for the physician summoned by Owen, in his horror at her delirium, to discover that her brain had long been in a state of irritation, which had become aggravated to such a degree that death was even to be desired. Could she yet survive, it could hardly be to the use of her intellect.

Robert described poor Owen's impetuous misery, and the cares which he lavished on the unconscious sufferer, mentioning him with warmth and tenderness that amazed Honor, from one so stern of judgment. Nay, Robert was more alive to the palliations of Owen's conduct than she was herself. She grieved over the complicated deceit, and resented the cruelty to the wife with the keen severity of secluded womanhood, unable to realize the temptations of young-manhood.

"Why could he not have told me?" she said. "I could so easily have forgiven him for generous love, if I alone had been offended, and there had been no falsehood; but, after the way he has used us all, and chiefly that poor young thing, I can never feel that he is the same."

And, though "the heart that knew no guile had been saved from suffering, the thought of the intimacy that she had encouraged, and the wishes she had entertained for Phoebe, filled her with such dismay, that it required the sight of the innocent, serene face, and the sound of the happy, unembarrassed voice, to reassure her that her darling's peace had not been wrecked. For, though Owen had never overpassed the bounds of the familiar intercourse of childhood, there had been an implication of preference in his look and tone; nor had there been error in the intuition of poor Edna's jealous passion. Something there was of involuntary reverence that had never been commanded by the far more beautiful and gifted girl who had taken him captive.

So great was the shock that Honora moved about mechanically, hardly able to think. She knew that in time she should pardon her boy; but she could not yearn to do so till

she had seen him repent. He had sinned too deeply against others to be taken home at once to her heart, even though she grieved over him with deep, loving pity, and sought to find the original germs of error rather in herself than in him.

Had she encouraged deceit by credulous trust? Alas! alas! that should but have taught him generosity. It was the old story. Fond affection had led her to put herself into a position to which Providence did not call her, and to which she was, therefore, unequal. Fond affection had blinded her eyes, and fostered in its object the very faults most hateful to her. She could only humble herself before her Maker for the recurring sin, and entreat for her own pardon, and for that of the offender with whose sins she charged herself.

And to man she humbled herself by her confession to Captain Charteris, and by throwing herself unreservedly on the advice of Mr. Saville and Sir John Raymond, for her future conduct towards the culprit. If he were suffering now for her rejection of the counsel of manhood and experience, it was right that they should deal with him now, and she would try to bear it. And she also tried as much as possible to soften the blow to Lucilla, who was still abroad with her cousin.

CHAPTER IX.

A little grain of conscience made him sour.—TENNYSON.

"A PENNY for your thoughts, Cilly," said Horatia, sliding in on the slippery boards of a great bare room of a lodging-house at the celebrated Spa of Spitzwasserfitzung.

"My thoughts? I was trying to recollect the third line of

'Sated at home, of wife and children tired,
'Sated abroad, all seen and naught admired.'

"Bless me, how grand! Worth twopence. So good! how Shakspeare, as the Princess Ottilie would say!"

"Twopence for its sincerity! It is not for your sake that I am not in Old England."

"Not for that of the three flaxen-haired princesses, with religious opinions to be accommodated to those of the crowned heads they may marry?"

"I'm sick of the three, and their raptures. I wish I was as ignorant as you, and that Shakspeare had never been read at the Holt."

"This is a sudden change. I thought Spitzwasserfützung and its princesses had brought halcyon days."

"Halcyon days will never come till we get home."

"Which Lolly will never do. She passes for somebody here, and will never endure Castle Blanch again."

"I'll make Owen come and take me home."

"No," said Rashe, seriously, "don't bring Owen here. If Lolly likes to keep Charles where gaming is man's sole resource, don't run Owen into that scrape."

"What a despicable set you are!" sighed Lucilla. "I wonder why I stay with you."

"You might almost as well be gone," said Ratia. "You aren't half so useful in keeping things going as you were once; and you won't be ornamental long, if you let your spirits be so uncertain."

"And pray how is that to be helped? No, don't come out with that stupid thing."

"Commonplace because it is reasonable. You would have plenty of excitement in the engagement, and then no end of change, and settle down into a blooming little matron, with all the business of the world on your hands. You have got him into excellent training by keeping him dangling so long; and it is the only chance of keeping your looks or your temper. By the time I come and stay with you, you'll be so agreeable you won't know yourself——"

"Blessings on that hideous post-horn for stopping your mouth!" cried Lucilla, springing up. "Not that letters ever come to me."

Letters and Mr. and Mrs. Charteris all entered together, and Rashe was busy with her own share, when Lucilla came forward with a determined face, unlike her recent listless look, and said, "I am wanted at home. I shall start by the diligence to-night."

"How now," said Charles. "The old lady wanting you to make her will?"

"No!" said Lucilla, with dignity. "My brother's wife is very ill. I must go to her."

"Is she demented?" asked Charles, looking at his sister.

"Raving," was the answer. "She has been so the whole morning. I shall cut off her hair, and get ice for her head."

"I tell simple truth," returned Cilla. "Here is a letter from Honor Charlecote, solving the two mysteries of last summer. Owen's companion, who Rashe would have it was Jack Hastings——"

"Ha! married, then! The cool hand! And, verily, but that Cilly takes it so easily, I should imagine it was her singing prodigy—eh? It was, then?"

"Absurd idiot!" exclaimed Charles. "There, he is done for now!"

"Yes," drawled Eloïsa; "one never could notice a low person like that."

"She is my sister, remember!" cried Lucilla, with stamping foot and flashing eye.

"Cunning rogue!" continued Horatia. "How did he manage to give no suspicion? Oh! what fun! No wonder she looked green and yellow when he was flirting with the little Fulmort! Let's hear all, Cilly—how, when, and where?"

"At the Registrar's, at R——, July 14th, 1854," returned Lucilla, with defiant gravity.

"Last July!" said Charles. "Ha! the young donkey was under age—hadn't consent of guardian. I don't believe the marriage will hold water. I'll write to Stevens this minute."

"Well, that would be luck!" exclaimed Rashe.

"Much better than he deserves," added Charles, "to be such a fool as to run into the noose and marry the girl."

Lucilla was trembling from head to foot, and a light gleamed in her eyes; but she spoke so quietly, that her cousins did not apprehend her intention in the question—

"You mean what you say?"

"Of course I do," said Charles. "I'm not sure of the law, and some of the big-wigs are very cantankerous about declaring an affair of this sort null; but I imagine there is a fair chance of his getting quit for some annual allowance

to her; and I'll do my best, even if I had to go to London about it. A man is never ruined till he is married."

"Thank you," returned Lucilla, her lips trembling with bitter irony. "Now I know what you all are made of. We are obliged for your offered exertion, but we are not inclined to become traitors."

"Cilly! I thought you had more sense! You are no child!"

"I am a woman—I feel for womanhood. I am a sister—I feel for my brother's honour."

Charles burst into a laugh. Eloïsa remonstrated—"My dear, consider the disgrace to the whole family—a village schoolmistress!"

"Our ideas differ as to disgrace," said Lucilla. "Let me go, Ratia; I must pack for the diligence."

The brother and sister threw themselves between her and the door. "Are you insane, Cilly? What do you mean should become of you? Are you going to join the *ménage*, and teach the A B C?"

"I am going to own my sister while yet there is time," said Lucilla. "While you are meditating how to make her a deserted outcast, death is more merciful. Pining under the miseries of an unowned marriage, she is fast dying of pressure on the brain. I am going in the hope of hearing her call me sister. I am going to take charge of her child, and stand by my brother."

"Dying, poor thing! Why did you not tell us before?" said Horatia, sobered.

"I did not know it was to save Charles so much *kind trouble*," said Lucilla. "Let me go, Rashe; you cannot detain me."

"I do believe she is delighted," said Horatia, releasing her.

In truth she was inspirited by perceiving any door of escape. Any vivid sensation was welcome in the irksome vacancy that pursued her in the absence of immediate excitement. Devoid of the interest of opposition, and of the bracing changes to the Holt, her intercourse with the Charleses had become a weariness and vexation of spirit. Idle foreign life deteriorated them, and her principle and delicacy suffered frequent offences; but like all living wilfully in temptation, she seemed under a spell, only to be broken by

an act of self-humiliation to which she would not bend. Longing for the wholesome atmosphere of Hiltonbury, she could not brook to purchase her entrance there by permitting herself to be pardoned. There was one who she fully intended should come and entreat her return, and the terms of her capitulation had many a time been arranged with herself; but when he came not, though her heart ached after him, pride still forbade one homeward step, lest it should seem to be in quest of him, or in compliance with his wishes.

Here, then, was a summons to England—nay, into his very parish—without compromising her pride or forcing her to show deference to rejected counsel. Nay, in contrast with her cousins, she felt her sentiments so lofty and generous that she was filled with the gladness of conscious goodness, so like the days of her early childhood, that a happy dew suffused her eyes, and she seemed to hear the voice of old Thames. Her loathing for the views of her cousins had borne down all resentment at her brother's folly and Edna's presumption; and relieved that it was not worse, and full of pity for the girl she had really loved. Honor's grieved displeasure and Charles's kind project together made her the ardent partisan of the young wife. Because Honor intimated that the girl had been artful, and had forced herself on Owen, Lucilla was resolved that her favourite had been the most perfect of heroines; and that circumstance alone should bear such blame as could not be thrown on Honor herself and the Wrapworth gossipry. Poor circumstance!

The journey gave her no concern. The way was direct to Ostend, and Spitzwasserfitzung contained a "*pension*" which was a great resort of incipient English governesses, so that there were no difficulties such as to give her enterprising spirit the least concern. She refused the escort that Rashe would have pressed upon her, and made her farewells with quiet resolution. No further remonstrance was offered; and though each party knew that what had passed would be a barrier forever, good breeding preferred an indifferent parting. There were light, cheery words, but under the full consciousness that the friendship begun in perverseness had ended in contempt.

Horatia turned aside with a good-natured "Poor child! she will soon wish herself back." Lucilla, taking her last

glance, sighed as she thought, "My father did not like them. But for Honor, I never would have taken up with them."

Without misadventure, Lucilla arrived at London Bridge, and took a cab for Woolstone Lane, where she must seek more exact intelligence of the locality of those she sought. So long had her eye been weary of novelty, while her mind was ill at ease, that even Holborn in the August sun was refreshingly homelike; and begrimed Queen Anne, "sitting in the sun" before St. Paul's, wore a benignant aspect to glances full of hope and self-approval. An effort was necessary to recall how melancholy was the occasion of her journey, and all mournful anticipation was lost in the spirit of partisanship and patronage—yes, and in that pervading consciousness that each moment brought her nearer to Whittingtonia.

Great was the amaze of good Mrs. Jones, the house-keeper, at the arrival of Miss Lucy, and equal disappointment that she would neither eat nor rest, nor accept a convey to No. 8, Little Whittington Street. She tripped off thither the instant she had ascertained the number of the house, and heard that her brother was there, and his wife still living.

She had formed to herself no image of the scenes before her, and was entirely unprepared by reflection when she rang at the door. As soon as she mentioned her name, the little maid conducted her down-stairs, and she found herself in the sitting-room, face to face with Robert Fulmort.

Without showing surprise or emotion, or relaxing his grave, listening air, he merely bowed his head, and held out his hand. There was an atmosphere of awe about the room, as though she had interrupted a religious office; and she stood still in the solemn hush, her lips parted, her bosom heaving. The opposite door was ajar, and from within came a kind of sobbing moan, and a low, feeble, faltering voice, faintly singing—

"For men must work, and women must weep,
And the sooner 'tis over, the sooner to sleep."

The choking thrill of unwonted tears rushed over Lucilla, and she shuddered. Robert looked disappointed as he caught the notes; then placing a seat for Lucilla said, very

low, "We hoped she would waken sensible. Her mother begged me to be at hand."

"Has she never been sensible?"

"They hoped so, at one time, last night. She seemed to know him."

"Is he there?"

Robert only sighed assent, for again the voice was heard—"I must get up. Miss Sandbrook wants me. She says I sha'n't be afraid when the time comes; but oh!—so many, many faces—all their eyes looking; and where is he?—why doesn't he look? Oh! Miss Sandbrook, don't bring that young lady here—I know—I know it is why he never comes—keep her away——"

The voice turned to shrieking sobs. There were sounds of feet and hurried movements, and Owen came out, gasping for breath, and his face flushed. "I can't bear it," he said, with his hands over his face.

"Can I be of use?" asked Robert.

"No; the nurse can hold her;" and he leant his arms on the mantelpiece, his frame shaken with long-drawn sobs. He had never even seen his sister, and she was too much appalled to speak or move.

When the sounds ceased, Owen looked up to listen, and Robert said, "Still no consciousness?"

"No, better not. What would she gain by it?"

"It must be better not, if so ordained," said Robert.

"Pshaw! what are last feelings and words? As if a blighted life and such suffering were not sure of compensation. There's more justice in Heaven than in your system!"

He was gone; and Robert, with a deep sigh, said, "I am not judging. I trust there were tokens of repentance and forgiveness; but it is painful, as her mother feels it, to hear how her mind runs on light songs and poetry."

"Mechanically!"

"True; and delirium is no criterion of the state of mind. But it is very mournful. In her occupation, one would have thought habit alone would have made her ear catch other chimes."

Lucilla remembered with a pang that she had sympathized with Edna's weariness of the monotony of hymn and catechism. Thinking poetry rather dull and tiresome, she had little guessed at the effect of sentimental songs and

volumes of L. E. L., and the like, on an inflammable mind, when once taught to slake her thirsty imagination beyond the S. P. C. K. She did not marvel at the set look of pain with which Robert heard passionate verses of Shelley and Byron fall from those dying lips. They must have been conned by heart, and have been the favourite study, or they could hardly thus recur.

"I must go," said Robert, after a time; "I am doing no good here. You will take care of your brother, if it is over, before I return. Where are you?"

"My things are in Woolstone Lane."

"I meant to get him there. I will come back by seven o'clock; but I must go to the school."

"May I go in there?"

"You had better not. It is a fearful sight, and you cannot be of use. I wish you could be out of hearing; but the house is full."

"One moment, Robert—the child?"

"Sent to a nurse, when every sound was agony."

He stepped into the sick room, and brought out Mrs. Murrell, who began with a courtesy, but eagerly pressed Lucilla's offered hand. Subdued by sorrow and watching, she was touchingly meek and resigned, enduring with the patience of real faith, and only speaking to entreat that Mr. Fulmort would pray with her for her poor child. Never had Lucilla so prayed; and ere she had suppressed her tears, ere rising from her knees, Robert was gone.

She spent the ensuing hours of that summer evening, seated in the arm-chair, barely moving, listening to the ticking of the clock, and the thunder of the streets, and at times hearkening to the sounds in the inner chamber, the wanderings feebler and more rare, but the fearful convulsions more frequent, seeming, as it were, to be tearing away the last remnant of life. These moments of horror-struck suspense were the only breaks, save when Owen rushed out unable to bear the sight, and stood, with hidden face, in such absorption of distress as to be unconscious of her awe-struck attempts to obtain his attention, or when Mrs. Murrell came to fetch something, order her maid, or relieve herself by a few sad words to her guest. Gratified by the eager sisterly acknowledgment of poor Edna, she touched Lucilla deeply by speaking of her daughter's fondness for Miss Sandbrook,

grief at having given cause for being thought ungrateful, and assurances that the secret never could have been kept had they met the day after the *soirée*. Many had been the poor thing's speculations how Miss Sandbrook would receive her marriage, but always with confidence in her final mercy and justice; and when Lucilla heard of the prolonged wretchedness, the hope deferred, the evil reports and suspicions of neighbours and lodgers, the failing health, and cruel disappointment, and looked round at the dismal little stifling dungeon where this fair and gifted being had pined and sunk beneath slander and desertion, hot tears of indignation filled her eyes, and with fingers clenching together, she said, "Oh that I had known it sooner! Edna was right. I will be the person to see justice done to her!"

And when left alone she cast about for the most open mode of proclaiming Edna Murrell her brother's honoured wife and her own beloved sister. The more it mortified the Charterises the better!

By the time Robert came back, the sole change was in the failing strength, and he insisted on conducting Lucilla to Woolstone Lane, Mrs. Murrell enforcing his advice so decidedly that there was no choice. She would not be denied one look at the sufferer, but what she saw was so miserably unlike the beautiful creature whom she remembered, that she recoiled, feeling the kindness that had forbidden her the spectacle, and passively left the house, still under the chill influence of the shock. She had tasted nothing since breakfasting on board the steamer, and on coming into the street the comparative coolness seemed to strike her through; she shivered, felt her knees give way, and grasped Robert's arm for support. He treated her with watchful, considerate solicitude, though with few words, and did not leave her till he had seen her safe under the charge of the housekeeper; when, in return for his assurance that he would watch over her brother, she promised to take food and go at once to rest.

Too weary at first to undress, and still thinking that Owen might be brought to her, she lay back on the couch in her own familiar little cedar room, feeling as if she recalled the day through the hazy medium of a dream, and as if she had not been in contact with Edna, nor Owen, nor Robert, but only with pale phantoms called by those names.

Robert especially! Engrossed and awe-stricken as she had been, still it came on her that something was gone that to her had constituted Robert Fulmort. Neither the change of dress, nor even the older and more settled expression of countenance, made the difference; but the want of that nameless, hesitating deference which in each word or action formerly seemed to employ her favour, or even when he dared to censure, did so under appeal to her mercy. Had he avoided her, she could have understood it; but his calm, authoritative self-possession was beyond her, though as yet she was not alarmed, for her mind was too much confused to perceive that her influence was lost; but it was uncomfortable, and part of this strange, unnatural world, as though the wax which she had been used to mould had suddenly lost its yielding nature and become marble.

Tired out, she at last went to bed, and slept soundly, but awoke early, and on coming down, found from the housekeeper that her brother had been brought home at two o'clock by Mr. Fulmort, and had gone to his room at once. All was over. Lucilla, longing to hear more, set out to see Mrs. Murrell before he should come down-stairs.

While the good woman was forced to bestir herself for her lodgers' breakfasts, Lucilla could steal a solitary moment to gaze on the pallid face to which death had restored much of its beauty. She pressed her lips on the regal brow, and spoke half aloud, "Edna, Edna Sandbrook, sister Edna, you should have trusted me. You knew I would see justice done to you, and I will. You shall lie by my mother's side in our own churchyard, and Wrapworth shall know that she, whom they envied and maligned, was Owen Sandbrook's wife and my cherished sister."

Poor Mrs. Murrell, with her swimming eyes and stock phrases, brought far more Christian sentiments to the bed of death. "Poor, dear love, her father and I little thought it would end in this, when we used to be so proud of her. We should have minded that pride is not made for sinners. 'Favour is deceitful and beauty is vain;' and the Lord saw it well that we should be cast down, and slanderous lips opened against us, that so we might feel our trust is in Him alone! Oh, it is good that even thus she was brought to turn to Him! But I thank—oh, I thank Him, that her father never lived to see this day!"

She wept such tears of true thankfulness and resignation, that Lucilla, almost abashed by the sight of piety beyond her comprehension, stood silent, till, with a change to the practical, Mrs. Murrell recovered herself, saying, "If you please, ma'am, when had I best come and speak to the young gentleman? I ought to know what would be pleasing to him about the funeral."

"We will arrange," said Lucilla; "she shall be buried with my mother and sister in Wrapworth churchyard."

Though gratified, Mrs. Murrell demurred, lest it might be taken ill by the "family" and by that godly minister whose kindness and sympathy at the time of Edna's evasion had made a deep impression: but Lucilla boldly undertook that the family *must* like it, and she would take care of the minister. Nor was the good woman insensible to the posthumous triumph over calumny, although still with a certain hankering after Kensal Green as a sweet place, with pious monuments, where she should herself be laid, and the Company that did things so reasonable and so handsome.

Lucilla hurried back to fulfil the mission of Nemesis to the Charterises, which she called justice to Edna, and by the nine o'clock post despatched three notes. One containing the notice for the *Times*—"On the 17th instant, at 8, Little Whittington Street, St. Wulstan's, Edna, the beloved wife of Owen Charteris Sandbrook, Esq.;" another was to order a complete array of mourning from her dressmaker; and the third was to the Reverend Peter Prendergast, in the most simple manner requesting him to arrange for the burial of her sister-in-law, at 5 p. m. on the ensuing Saturday, indicating the labourers who should act as bearers, and ending with, "You will be relieved by hearing that she was no other than our dear Edna, married on the 14th of July, last year."

She then beguiled the time with designs for grave-stones, until she became uneasy at Owen's non-appearance, and longed to go and see after him; but she fancied he might have spent nights of watching, and thought sleep would be the best means of getting through the interval which appalled her mind, unused to contact with grief. Still his delay began to wear her spirits and expectation, so long wrought up to the meeting; and she was at least equally restless for the appearance of Robert, wanting to hear more from him, and above all certain that all her dreary cravings and vacancy

would be appeased by one dialogue with him, on whatever topic it might be. She wished that she had obeyed that morning bell at St. Wulstan's. It would have disposed of half an hour, and she would have met him. "For shame," quoth the haughty spirit, "now that has come into my head, I can't go at all."

Her solitude continued till half-past ten, when she heard the welcome sound of Robert's voice, and flew to meet him, but was again checked by his irresponsive manner as he asked for Owen.

"I have not seen him. I do not know whether to knock, lest he should be asleep."

"I hope he is. He has not been in bed for three nights. I will go and see."

He was moving to the door, without lingering for a word more. She stopped him by saying, "Pray hear first what I have settled with Mrs. Murrell."

"She told me," said Robert. "Is it Owen's wish?"

"It ought to be. It must. Every public justice must be paid now."

"Is it quite well judged, unless it were his strong desire? Have you considered the feelings of Mr. Prendergast or your relations?"

"There is nothing I consider more. If Charles thinks it more disgraceful to marry a Christian for love than a Jewess for money, he shall see that we are not of the same opinion."

"I never pretend to judge of your motives."

"Mercy, what have I gone and said?" ejaculated Lucilla, as the door closed after him. "Why did I let it out, and make him think me a vixen? Better than a hypocrite, though! I always professed to show my worst. What's come to me, that I can't go on so contentedly? He must hear the Charteris's sentiments, though, that he may not think mine a gratuitous affront."

Her explanation was at her tongue's end, but Robert only reappeared with her brother, whom he had found dressing. Owen just greeted his sister, but asked no questions, only dropping heavily into a chair, and let her bring him his breakfast. So young was he, still wanting six weeks to years of discretion; so youthful his appearance in spite of his size and strength, that it was almost absurd to regard him as a widower, and expect him to act as a man of mature age and

feeling. There was much of the boy in his excessive and freely-indulged lassitude, and his half-sullen, half-shy reserve towards his sister. Knowing he had been in conversation with Robert, she felt it hard that before her he only leant his elbows on the table, yawned, and talked of his stiffness, until his friend, rising to leave them, he exerted himself to say, "Don't go, Fulmort."

"I am afraid I must. I leave you to your sister." (She noted that it was not "Lucy.")

"But, I say, Fulmort, there are things to settle—funeral, and all that," he said in a helpless voice, like a sulky schoolboy.

"Your sister has been arranging with Mrs. Murrell."

"Yes, Owen," said Lucilla, tears glistening in her eyes, and her voice thrilling with emotion: "it is right and just that she should be with our mother and little Mary at home; so I have written to Mr. Prendergast."

"Very well," he languidly answered. "Settle it as you will: only deliver me from the old woman!"

He was in no state for reproaches; but Lucilla was obliged to bite her lip to restrain a torrent of angry weeping.

At his urgent instance, Robert engaged to return to dinner, and went, leaving Lucilla with nothing to do but to watch those heavy slumberings on the sofa and proffer attentions that were received with the surliness of one too miserable to know what to do with himself. She yearned over him with a new awakening of tenderness, longing, yet unable, to console or soothe. The light surface-intercourse of the brother and sister, each selfishly refraining from stirring the depths of the other's mind, rendered them mere strangers in the time of trouble; and vainly did Lucy gaze wistfully at the swollen eyelids and flushed cheeks, watch every peevish gesture, and tend each sullen wish, with pitying sweetness; she could not reach the inner man, nor touch the aching wound.

Towards evening, Mrs. Murrell's name was brought in, provoking a fretful injunction from Owen not to let him be molested with her cant. Lucilla sighed compliance, though vexed at his egotism, and went to the study, where she found that Mrs. Murrell had brought her grandson, her own most precious comforter, whom she feared she must resign "to be bred up as a gentleman as he was, and despise his poor old

granny; and she would say not a word, only if his papa would let her keep him till he had cut his first teeth, for he had always been tender, and she could not be easy to think that any one else had the charge of him." She devoured him with kisses as she spoke, taking every precaution to keep her profuse tears from falling on him; and Lucilla, much moved, answered, "Oh! for the present, no one could wish to part him from you. Poor little fellow! May I take him for a little while to my brother? It may do him good."

Cilly had rather have ridden a kicking horse than handled an infant. She did not think this a prepossessing specimen, but it was passive. She had always understood from books that this was the sure means of "opening the sealed fountains of grief." She remembered what little Mary had been to her father, and in hopes that parental instinct would make Owen know better what to do with her burden than she did, she entered the drawing-room, where a little murmuring sound caused Owen to start up on his elbow, exclaiming, "What are you at? Don't bring *that* here!"

"I thought you might wish to see him?"

"What should I do with him?" asked Owen, in the same glum, childish tone, turning his face inwards as he lay down. "Take it away. Ain't I wretched enough already to please you?"

She gave up the point, much grieved and strongly drawn to the little helpless one, rejected by his father, misused and cast off like his mother. Would no one stand up for him? Yes, it must be her part. She was his champion! She would set him forth in the world, by her own toil if need were!

Sealing the promise with a kiss, she returned him to his grandmother, and talked of him as so entirely her personal concern, that the good woman went home to report to her inquiring friends that the young lady was ready to "hact very feeling, and very 'andsome." Probably desirous to avoid further reference to his unwelcome son and heir, Owen had betaken himself to the solace of his pipe, and was pacing the garden with steps now sauntering with depression, now impetuous with impatience, always moving too much like a caged wild beast to invite approach. She was disconsolately watching him from the window, when Mr. Fulmort was admitted. A year ago, what would he not have given for that

unfeigned, simple welcome, as she looked up with eyes full of tears, saying, "Oh, Robert, it is so grievous to see him!"

"Very sad," was the mournful answer.

"You may be able to help him. He asks for you, but turns from me."

"He has been obliged to rely on me, since we came to town," said Robert.

"You must have been very kind!" she warmly exclaimed.

But he drew back from the effusion, saying, "I did no more than was absolutely necessary. He does not lay himself open to true comfort."

"Deaths never seemed half so miserable before," cried Lucilla. "Yet this poor thing had little to live for! Was it all poor Honor's tender softening that took off the edge to our imaginations?"

"It is not always so mournful!" shortly said Robert.

"No; even the mother bears it better, and not for want of heart."

"She is a Christian," said Robert.

"Poor Owen! It makes me remorseful. I wonder if I made too light of the line he took; yet what difference could I have made? Sisters go for so little; and as to influence, Honor overdid it." Then, as he made no reply, "Tell me, do you think my acquiescence did harm?"

"I cannot say. Your conscience must decide. It is not a case for me. I must go to him."

It was deep mortification. Used to have the least hint of dawning seriousness thankfully cherished and fostered, it was a rude shock, when most in need of *épanchement du cœur* after her dreary day, to be thrown back on that incomprehensible process of self-examination; and by Robert, too!

She absolutely did not feel as if she were the same Lucilla. It was the sensation of doubt on her personal identity awakened in the good woman of the ballad when her little dog began to bark and wail at her.

She strove to enliven the dinner by talking of Hiltonbury, and of Juliana's marriage, thus awakening Owen into life and talkativeness so much in his light ordinary humour, as to startle them both. Lucilla would have encouraged it preferable to his gloom, but it was decidedly repressed by Robert.

She had to repair to solitary restlessness in the drawing-

room, and was left alone there till so late that Robert departed after a single cup of tea, cutting short a captious argument of Owen's about impossibility of proof, and truth being only true in a sense.

Owen's temper was, however, less morose; and when his sister was lighting his candle for him at night, kindly said, "What a bore I've been all day, Lucy."

"I am glad to be with you, dear Owen; I have no one else."

"Eh? What's become of Rashe?"

"Never mention her again!"

"What? They've cut you?"

"I have cut them."

She related what had passed.

Owen set his face into a frown. "Even so, Charlie; doltishness less pardonable than villainy! You were right to cut the connection, Lucy; it has been our curse. So now you will go back to poor Honor, and try to make it up to her."

"I'm not going near Honor till she forgives you, and receives your child."

"Then you will be very ridiculous," said Owen, impatiently. "She has no such rancour against me as you have against her, poor dear; but it is not in the nature of things that she should pass over this unlucky performance."

"If it had been such a performance as Charles desired, I should have said so."

"Pshaw! I hadn't the chance; and gloss it as you will, Lucy, there's no disguising it, she *would* have it, and I could not help it, but she was neglected, and it killed her!" He brought his hand down on the table with a heavy thump, which together with the words made his sister recoil. "Could Honor treat me the same after that? And she not my mother, either! Why had not my father the sense to have married her? Then I could go to her and get rid of this intolerable weight!" and he groaned aloud.

"A mother could hardly love you more," said Lucy, to her own surprise. "If you will but go to her, when she sees you so unhappy."

"Out of the question," broke in Owen; "I can't stay here! I would have gone this very night, but I can't be off till that poor thing—"

"Off!"

"Ay, to the diggings, somewhere, anywhere, to get away from it all!"

"Oh, Owen, do nothing mad!"

"I'm not going to do any thing just now, I tell you. Don't be in a fright. I shan't take French leave of you. You'll find me to-morrow morning, worse luck. Good night."

Lucilla was doubly glad to have come. Her pride approved his proposal, though her sisterly love would suffer, and she was anxious about the child; but the dawning confidence was at least a relief.

Next morning, he was better, and talked much too like his ordinary self, but relapsed afterwards for want of employment; and when a letter was brought to him, left by his wife to be read after her death, he broke down, and fell into a paroxysm of grief and despair, which still prevailed when a message came in to ask permission for Mr. Prendergast. Relieved to be out of sight of depression that her consolations only aggravated, and hoping for sympathy and counsel, Lucy hastened to the study with outstretched hands, and was met with the warmth for which she had longed.

Still there was disappointment. In participation with Owen's grief, she had lost sight of his offences, and was not prepared for the commencement. "Well, Cilla, I came up to talk to you. A terrible business this of Master Owen's.

"It breaks one's heart to see him so wretched."

"I hope he is. He ought to be."

"Now, Mr. Prendergast."

The curate held up both hands, deprecating her coaxing piteous look, and used his voice rather loudly to overpower hers, and say what he had prepared as a duty.

"Yes, yes, he is your brother, and all that. You may feel for him what you like. But I must say this: it was a shameful thing, and a betrayal of confidence, such as it grieves me to think of in his father's son. I am sorry for her, poor thing! whom I should have looked after better; and I am very sorry indeed for you, Cilla; but I must tell you that to bury the poor girl next to Mrs. Sandbrook, as your brother's wife, would be a scandal."

"Don't speak so loud; he will hear."

His mild face was unwontedly impatient as he said, "I

can see how you gave in to the wish ; I don't blame you, but if you consider the example to the parish."

"After what I told you in my letter, I don't see the evil in the example ; unless it be your *esprit de corps* about the registrar, and they could not well have requested you to officiate."

"Cilla, you were always saucy, but this is no time for nonsense. You can't defend them."

"Perhaps you are of your Squire's opinion—that the bad example was in the marrying her at all."

Mr. Prendergast looked so much shocked that Lucilla felt a blush rising, conscious that the tone of the society she had of late lived with had rendered her tongue less guarded, her cheek less shamefaced than erst, but she galloped on to hide her confusion. "You were their great cause. If you had not gone and frightened her, they might have philandered on all this time, till the whole affair died of its own silliness."

"Yes, no one was so much to blame as I. I will trust no living creature again. My carelessness opened the way to temptation, and Heaven knows, Lucilla, I have been infinitely more displeased with myself than with them."

"Well, so am I with myself for putting her in his way. Don't let us torment ourselves with playing the game backwards again—I hate it. Let's see to the next."

"That is what I came for. Now, Cilla, though I would gladly do what I could for poor Owen, just think what work it will make with the girls at Wrapworth, who are nonsensical enough already, to have this poor runaway brought back to be buried as the wife of a fine young gentleman."

"Poor Edna's history is no encouragement to look out for fine young gentlemen."

"They will know the fact, and sink the circumstances."

"So you are so innocent as to think they don't know ! Depend upon it, every house in Wrapworth rings with it ; and won't it be more improving to have the poor thing's grave to point the moral ?"

"Cilla, you are a little witch. You always have your way, but I don't like it. It is not the right one."

"Not right for Owen to make full compensation ? Mind, it is not Edna Murrell, the eloped schoolmistress, but Mrs. Sandbrook, whom her husband wishes to bury among his family."

"Poor lad, is he much cut up?"

"So much that I should hardly dare tell him if you had refused. He could not bear another indignity heaped on her, and a wound from you would cut deeper than from any one else. You should remember in judging him that he had no parent to disobey, and there was generosity in taking on him the risk rather than leave her to a broken heart and your tender mercy."

"I fear his tender mercy has turned out worse than mine; but I am sorry for all he has brought on himself, poor lad!"

"Shall I try whether he can see you?"

"No, no; I had rather not. You say young Fulmort attends to him, and I could not speak to him with patience. Five o'clock, Saturday?"

"Yes; but that is not all. That poor child—Robert Fulmort, you, and I must be sponsors."

"Cilla, how can I answer how it will be brought up?"

"Some one must. Its father talks of leaving England, and it will be my charge. Will you not help me? you who always have helped me. My father's grandson;—you cannot refuse him, Mr. Pendy," said she, using their old childish name for him.

He yielded to the united influence of his rector's daughter and the memory of his rector. Though no weak man, those two appeals always swayed him; and Lucilla's air, spirited when she defended, soft when she grieved, was quite irresistible; so she gained her point, and felt restored to herself by the exercise of power, and by making her wonted impression. Since one little dog had wagged his little tail, she no longer doubted 'If I be I;' yet this only rendered her more nervously desirous of obtaining the like recognition from the other, and she positively wearied after one of Robert's old wistful looks.

A *tête-à-tête* with him was necessary on many accounts, and she lay in wait to obtain a few moments alone with him in the study. He complied neither eagerly nor reluctantly, bowed his head without remark when she told him about the funeral, and took the sponsorship as a matter of course. "Very well; I suppose there is no one else to be found. Is it your brother's thought?"

"I told him."

"So I feared."

"Oh! Robert, we must take double care for the poor little thing."

"I will do my best," he answered.

"Do you know what Owen intends?" said Lucilla, in low, alarmed accents.

"He has told you? It is a wild purpose; but I doubt whether to dissuade him, except for your sake," he added, with his first softening towards her, like balm to the sore spot in her heart.

"Never mind me, I can take care of myself," she said, while the muscles of her throat ached and quivered with emotion. "I would not detain him to be pitied, and forgiven."

"Do not send him away in pride;" said Robert, sadly.

"Am not I humbled enough?" she said; and her drooping head and eye seemed to thrill him with their wonted power.

One step he made towards her, but checked himself, and said in a matter-of-fact tone, "Currie, the architect, has a brother, a civil engineer, just going out to Canada to lay out a railway. It might be an opening for Owen to go as his assistant—unless you thought it beneath him."

These last words were caused by her uncontrollable look of disappointment. But it was not the proposal; no; but the change of manner that struck her. The quiet indifferent voice was like water quenching the struggling spark, but in a moment she recovered her powers. "Beneath him! Oh, no. I told you we were humbled. I always longed for his independence, and I am glad that he should not go alone."

"The work would suit his mathematical and scientific turn. Then, since you do not object, I will see whether he would like it, or if it be practicable, in case Miss Charlecote should approve."

Robert seized this opportunity of concluding the interview. Lucy ran up stairs for the fierce quarter-deck walking that served her instead of tears, as an ebullition that tired down her feelings by exhaustion.

Some of her misery was for Owen, but would the sting have been so acute had Robert Fulmort been more than the true friend?

Phoebe's warning, given in that very room, seemed engraven on each panel. "If you go on as you are doing now, he does not think it would be right for a clergyman."

Could Lucilla have looked through the floor, she would have seen Robert with elbows on the window-sill, and hands locked over his knitted brows; and could she have interpreted his short-drawn sighs, she would have heard, "Poor child! poor child! It is not coquetry. That was injustice. She loves me. She loves me still! Why do I believe it only too late? Why is this trial sent me, since I am bound to the scheme that precludes my marriage? What use is it to see her as undisciplined—as unfit as ever? I know it! I always knew it. But I feel still a traitor to her! She had warning! She trusted the power of my attachment in spite of my judgment! Fickle to her, or a falterer to my higher pledge? Never! I must let her see the position—crush any hope—otherwise I cannot trust myself, nor deal fairly by her. Heaven help us both!"

When they next met, Robert had propounded his Canadian project, and Owen had caught at it. Idleness had never been his fault, and he wanted severe engrossing labour to stun pain and expel thought. He was urgent to know what standard of attainments would be needful, and finding Robert ignorant on this head, seized his hat, and dashed out in the gaslight to the nearest bookseller's for a treatise on surveying.

Robert was taken by surprise, or he might have gone too. He looked as if he meditated a move, but paused as Lucy said, "Poor fellow, how glad he is of an object!"

"May it not be to his better feelings like sunshine to morning dew?" said Robert, sighing. "I hear a very high character of Mr. Currie, and a right-minded, practical, scientific man may tell more on a disposition like his——"

"Than parsons and women," said Lucilla, with a gleam of her old archness.

"Exactly so. He must see religion in the world, not out of it."

"After all, I have not heard who is this Mr. Currie, and how you know him."

"I know him through his brother, who is building the church in Cecily Row."

"A church in Cecily Row! St. Cecilia's? Who is doing it? Honor Charlecote?"

"No; I am."

"You! Tell me all about it," said Lucilla, leaning forward to listen with the eager air of interest which, when not half so earnest, had been always bewitching.

Poor Robert looked away, and tried to think himself explaining his scheme to the Archdeacon. "The place is in frightful disorder, filled with indescribable vice and misery, but there is a shadow of hope that a few may be worked on if something like a mission can be organized. Circumstances seemed to mark me out as the person to be at the cost of setting it on foot, my father's connection with the parish giving it a claim on me. So I purchased the first site that was in the market, and the buildings are in progress, chapel, schools, orphanage, and rooms for myself and two other clergy. When all the rest is provided for, there will remain about two hundred and fifty pounds a year—just enough for three of us, living together."

He durst not glance towards her, or he would have seen her cheek white as wax, and her eye seeking his in dismayed inquiry. There was a pause; then she forced herself to falter—"Yes. I suppose it is very right—very grand. It is settled?"

"The Archdeacon has seen the plans, the Bishop has consented."

Long and deep was the silence that fell on both.

Lucilla knew her fate as well as if his long coat had been a cowl.

She would not, could not feel it yet. She must keep up appearances, so she fixed her eyes steadily on the drawing her idle hands were perpetrating on the back of a letter, and appeared absorbed in shading a Turk's head.

If Robert's motives had not been unmixed, if his zeal had been alloyed by temper, or his self-devotion by undutifulness; if his haste had been self-willed, or his judgment one-sided, this was an hour of retribution. Let her have all her faults, she was still the Lucy who had flown home to him for comfort. He felt as if he had dashed away the little bird that had sought refuge in his bosom.

Fain would he have implored her pardon, but for the stern resolution to abstain from any needless word or look, such as might serve to rivet the affection that ought to be withdrawn; and he was too manly and unselfish to indulge

in discussion or regret, too late as it was to change the course to which he had offered himself and his means. To retract would have been a breach of promise—a hasty one, perhaps, but still an absolute vow publicly made; and in all his wretchedness he had at least the comfort of knowing the present duty.

Afraid of last words, he would not even take leave until Owen came in upon their silence, full of animation and eagerness to see how far his knowledge would serve him with the book that he had brought home. Robert then rose, and on Owen's pressing to know when he might see the engineer, promised to go in search of him the next day, but added that they must not expect to see himself till evening, since it would be a busy day.

Lucilla stood up, but speech was impossible. She was in no mood to affect indifference, yet she could neither be angry nor magnanimous. She seemed to have passed into a fresh stage of existence where she was not yet at home; and in the same dreamy way she went on drawing Red Indians, till by a sudden impulse she looked up and said, "Owen, why should not I come out with you?"

He was intent on a problem, and did not hear.

"Owen, take me with you; I will make a home for you."

"Eh?"

"Owen, let me come to Canada, and take care of you and your child."

He burst out laughing. "Well done, Cilly; that beats all!"

"Am I likely to be in play?"

"If not, you are crazy. As if a man could go surveying in the backwoods with a woman and a brat at his heels!"

Lucy's heart seemed to die within her. Nothing was left to her: hopes and fears were alike extinct, and life a waste before her. Still and indifferent, she laid her down at night, and awoke in the morning, wishing still to prolong the oblivion of sleep. Anger with Robert would have been a solace, but his dejection forbade this; nor could she resent his high-flown notions of duty, and deem herself their victim, since she had slighted fair warning, and repelled his attempts to address her. She saw no resource save the Holt, now more hopelessly dreary and distasteful than ever, and

she shrank both from writing to Honor, or ending her tantalizing intercourse with Robert. To watch over her brother was her only comfort, and one that must soon end.

He remained immersed in trigonometry, and she was glad he should be too much engrossed for the outbreaks of remorseful sorrow that were so terrible to witness, and carefully guarded him from all that could excite them.

Mrs. Murrell brought several letters that had been addressed to him at her house, and as Lucilla conveyed them to him, she thought their Oxford post-marks looked suspicious, especially as he thrust them aside with the back of his hand, returning without remark to A B and C D.

Presently a person asked to speak with Mr. Sandbrook; and supposing it was on business connected with the funeral, Lucilla went to him, and was surprised at recognizing the valet of one of the gentlemen who had stayed at Castle Blanch. He was urgent to see Mr. Sandbrook himself; but she, resolved to avert all annoyances, refused to admit him, offering to take a message. "Was it from his master?"

"Why, no, ma'am. In fact, I have left his lordship's service," he said, hesitating. "In point of fact, I am the principal. There was a little business to be settled with the young gentleman when he came into his fortune; and understanding that such was the case, since I heard of him as settled in life, I have brought my account."

"You mistake the person. My brother has come into no fortune, and has no expectation of any."

"Indeed, ma'am!" exclaimed the man. "I always understood that Mr. Owen Charteris Sandbrook was heir to a considerable property."

"What of that?"

"Only this, ma'am,—that I hold a bond from that gentleman for the payment of £600, upon the death of Miss Honora Charlecote, of the Holt, Hiltonbury, whose property I understood was entailed on him." His tone was still respectful, but his hand shook with suppressed rage, and his eye was full of passion.

"Miss Charlecote is not dead," steadily answered Lucilla. "She is in perfect health, not fifty years old, and her property is entirely at her own disposal."

Either the man's wrath was beyond control, or he thought it his interest to terrify the lady, for he broke into angry

complaints of being swindled, with menaces of exposure, but Lucilla, never deficient in courage, preserved ready thought and firm demeanour.

"You had better take care," she said. "My brother is under age, and not liable. If you should recover what you have lent him, it can only be from our sense of honesty. Leave me your address and a copy of the bond, and I give you my word that you shall receive your due."

The valet, grown rich in the service of a careless master, and richer by money-lending transactions with his master's friends, knew Miss Sandbrook, and was aware that a lady's word might be safer than a spendthrift's bond. He tried swaggering, in the hope of alarming her into a promise to fulfil his demand uninvestigated; but she was on her guard; and he, reflecting that she must probably apply to others for the means of paying, gave her the papers, and freed her from his presence.

Freed her from his presence! Yes, but only to leave her to the consciousness of the burden of shame he had brought her. She saw why Owen thought himself past pardon. Speculation on the death of his benefactress! Borrowing on an inheritance that he had been forbidden to expect. Double-dyed deceit and baseness! Yesterday, she had said they were humbled enough. This was not humiliation, it was degradation! It was far too intolerable for standing still and feeling it. Lucilla's impetuous impulses always became her obstinate resolutions, and her pride rebounded to its height in the determination that Owen should leave England in debt to no man, were it at the cost of all she possessed.

Re-entering the drawing-room, she found that Owen had thrust the obnoxious letters into the waste-basket, each unopened envelope, with the contents, rent down the middle. She sat down on the floor, and took them out, saying, as she met his eye, "I shall take these. I know what they are. They are my concern."

"Folly!" he muttered. "Don't you know I have the good luck to be a minor?"

"That is no excuse for dishonesty."

"Look at home before you call names," said Owen, growing enraged. "Before you act spy on me, I should like to know who paid for your fine salmon-fly gown, and all the rest of it?"

"I never contracted debts in the trust that my age would enable me to defraud my creditors."

"Who told you that I did? I tell you, Lucilla, I'll endure no such conduct from you. No sister has a right to say such things!" and starting up, his furious stamp shook the floor she sat upon, so close to her that it was as if the next would demolish her.

She did not move, except to look up all the length of the tall figure over her into the passion-flushed face. "I should neither have said nor thought so, Owen," she replied. "I should have imputed these debts to mere heedless extravagance, like other people's—like my own, if you please—save for your own words, and for finding you capable of such treachery as borrowing on a *post obit*."

He walked about furiously, stammering interrogations on the mode of her discovery, and, as she explained, storming at her for having brought this down on him by the folly of putting "that thing into the *Times*." Why could she not have stayed away, instead of meddling where she was not wanted?

"I thought myself wanted when my brother was in trouble," said Lucilla, mournfully, raising her face, which she had bent between her hands at the first swoop of the tempest. "Heaven knows, I had no thought of spying. I came to stand by your wife, and comfort you. I only learnt all this in trying to shield you from intrusion. Oh, would that I knew it not! Would that I could think of you as I did an hour ago! O, Owen, though I have never shared your fondness for Honor Charlecote, I thought it genuine; I did not scorn it as fortune-hunting."

"It was not! It never was!" cried the poor boy. "Honor! Poor Honor! Lucy, I doubt if I could have felt for my mother as I do for her. Oh, if you could guess how I long for her dear voice in my ears, her soft hand on my head—" and he sank into his chair, hiding his face and sobbing aloud.

"Am I to believe that, when—" began Lucilla, slowly.

"The last resource of desperation," cried Owen. "What could I do with such a drain upon me; the old woman for ever clamouring for money, and threatening exposure? My allowance? Poor Honor meant well, but she gave me just enough to promote expensive habits without supplying them.

There was nothing to fall back on—except the ways of the Castle Blanch folk.”

“ Betting ? ”

He nodded. “ So when it went against me, and people would have it that I had expectations, it was not for me to contradict them. It was their business, not mine, to look out for themselves, and pretty handsomely they have done so. It would have been a very different percentage if I had been an eldest son. As it is, my bond is—what is it for, Lucy ? ”

“ Six hundred.”

“ How much do you think I have touched of that ? Not two ! Of that, three-fourths went to the harpies I fell in with at Paris, under Charles’s auspices—and five-and-twenty there ”—pointing in the direction of Whittington street.

“ Will the man be satisfied with the two hundred ? ”

“ Don’t he wish he may get it ? But, Lucy, you are not to make a mess of it. I give you warning I shall go, and never be heard of more, if Honor is applied to.”

“ I had rather die than do so.”

“ You are not frantic enough to want to do it out of your own money ? I say, give me those papers.”

He stooped and stretched out the powerful hand and arm, which when only half-grown had been giant-like in struggles with his tiny sister ; but she only laid her two hands on the paper, with just sufficient resistance to make it a matter of strength on his side. They were man and woman, and what availed his muscles against her will ? It came to parley. “ Now, Lucy, I have a right to think for you. As your brother, I cannot permit you to throw your substance to the dogs.”

“ As your sister, I cannot allow you to rest dishonoured.”

“ Not a whit more than any of your chosen friends. Every man leaves debts at Oxford. The extortion is framed on a scale to be unpaid.”

“ Let it be ! There shall be no stain on the name that once was my father’s, if there be on the whole world beside.”

“ Then,” with some sulkiness, “ you won’t be content without begging me of my trumpery twenty-five hundred as soon as I am of age ? ”

NEW PUBLICATIONS

OF

D. APPLETON AND COMPANY,

346 and 348 BROADWAY.

Any of our Publications will be sent by mail, free of postage, to any part of the United States, on receipt of price.

The Eighteen Christian Centuries. By the Rev. JAMES WHITE, author of a "History of France." With a Copious Index. From the second Edinburgh Edition. 1 vol. 12mo. 538 pages. \$1 25.

This is a striking and peculiar contribution to historical literature. It is the historical spirit of each one of the Eighteen Christian Centuries seen through the medium of a master mind. The history of each century, from the first of our era, is reviewed and generalized, grasped as a whole: its prevailing purpose or idea individualized, and its result, as a century, given to the reader. The work is singularly original, comprehensive, clear, and masterly. It will give the general reader a clearer idea of the general history of Christendom than can be obtained in many months of study, and will prove beyond question a welcome and valuable remembrancer to many especial students of history. It has been the general complaint against history itself, that it is too much a collection of mere dates, and such a complaint is the highest eulogy of this book, which dispensing with any but the largest divisions of time, except, indeed, when a date may serve to explain or illuminate some act or event, eliminates by its spirit entirely the prevailing lesson of history.

Fiji and the Fijians. By THOMAS WILLIAMS and JAMES CALVERT, late Missionaries in Fiji. Edited by GEORGE STRINGER ROWE. Illustrated with numerous colored Drawings and Wood Engravings. 1 vol. 8vo. Cloth, \$2 50.

"The story of their missionary labors and results possesses the deepest interest to all who believe in the redemption of the human race."—PORTLAND TRANSCRIPT.

"This is a book of great interest and value. Its 550 pages contain such a fund of information, with regard to the Fijians and their island country, as has perhaps never before been placed between the lids of any English book."—HOME JOURNAL.

On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection; or, THE PRESERVATION OF FAVORED RACES in the STRUGGLE FOR LIFE. By CHARLES DARWIN, M. A. 1 vol. 12mo. 432 pages. \$1 25.

"Readers of his delightful book, 'Voyage of a Naturalist,' will recognize in this new work his power as a writer, whatever may be the scientific verdict on his theories."—N. Y. OBSERVER.

"The conclusions at which he aims are so startling, that they cannot fail to meet with considerable opposition. Mr. Darwin himself is far from anticipating that they will be generally received. But he has certainly a right to demand that they shall be opposed only in the same spirit of candor and moderation by which his advocacy of them is so eminently distinguished."—LONDON LITERARY GAZETTE.

The Path which Led a Protestant Lawyer to the CATHOLIC CHURCH. By PETER H. BURNETT. 1 vol. 8vo 741 pages. \$2 50.

"I was once a Protestant, and I became a Catholic. The main reasons which led to the change will be found substantially stated in the work."

* * * * *

"In the prosecution of this design, I procured all the works, on both sides, within my reach, and examined them alternately side by side. The investigation occupied all my spare time for about eighteen months. I examined carefully, prayerfully, and earnestly, until I was satisfied, beyond a doubt, that the old Church was the true, and the only true Church."—EXTRACT FROM PREFACE.

Reynard the Fox, after the Version of Goethe. By THOS. J. ARNOLD. With 60 Illustrations from the Designs of Wilhelm Von Kaulbach. 1 vol. 8vo. Cloth, gilt, \$3 50; Mor., \$5.

"This excellent translation of the well-known German Poem is presented in a beautiful form, with illustrations on every page, which tell the tale as plainly as the verse does."—BOSTON ADVERTISER.

Great Facts; a Popular History and Description of the MOST REMARKABLE INVENTIONS during the Present Century. By FREDERICK C. BAKEWELL. 1 vol. 12mo. Illustrated. \$1.

CONTENTS:—PROGRESS OF INVENTION; STEAM NAVIGATION; STEAM CARRIAGES AND RAILWAYS; THE AIR ENGINE; PHOTOGRAPHY; DISSOLVING VIEWS; THE KALEIDOSCOPE; THE MAGIC DISC; THE DIORAMA; THE STEREOSCOPE; THE ELECTRIC TELEGRAPH; ELECTRO-MAGNETIC CLOCKS; ELECTRO-METALLURGY; GAS LIGHTING; THE ELECTRIC LIGHT; INSTANTANEOUS LIGHT; PAPER-MAKING MACHINERY; PRINTING MACHINES; LITHOGRAPHY; AERATED WATERS; REVOLVERS AND MINNIE RIFLES; CENTRIFUGAL PUMPS; TUBULAR BRIDGES; SELF-ACTING ENGINES.

Evenings at the Microscope; or, Researches among the MINUTER ORGANS and FORMS of ANIMAL LIFE. By PHILLIP HENRY GOSSE, F. R. S. 1 vol. 12mo. 480 pages. \$1 50.

"The object of this volume is to open the path to the myriad wonders of creation that are hidden from the unassisted human eye, and most successfully does it accomplish the purpose."—PRES. BANNER.

Leaves from an Actor's Note Book, with Reminiscences and Chit-Chat of the Green Room and the Stage, in England and America. By GEORGE VANDENHOFF. 1 vol. 12mo. \$1 00.

"There are no reminiscences more entertaining than those of actors, and Mr. Vandenhoff, who is a fine scholar as well as a fine actor, has succeeded in presenting his in a peculiarly agreeable and attractive form."—NEW ORLEANS DELTA.

The History of Herodotus. A new English Version, edited with COPIOUS NOTES and APPENDICES, illustrating the History and Geography of Herodotus, from the most recent sources of information; and embodying the chief results, historical and ethnographical, which have been obtained in the progress of Cuneiform and Hieroglyphical Discovery. By GEORGE RAWLINSON, M. A., late Fellow and Tutor of Exeter College, Oxford, assisted by Col. SIR HENRY RAWLINSON, K. C. B., and Sir J. G. WILKINSON, F. R. S. 4 vols. 8vo. \$10.

"The delightful old story-teller, who has been reverently styled the father of history, has never been presented to the readers of the English language in so satisfactory a manner as in the present valuable edition. Though commenced only about seven years since, great portions of the work have been rewritten, in order to incorporate, in a proper manner, the remarkable Assyrian discoveries which have shed light upon the obscurity of the past."—N. W. CHRIS. ADVOCATE.

Parties and their Principles : a MANUAL of POLITICAL INTELLIGENCE, Exhibiting the growth and character of National Parties, with an Appendix containing valuable, general, and statistical information. By ARTHUR HOLMES. 1 vol. 12mo. Cloth, \$1.

"No book yet published, relating to the subject, contains so much valuable information in brief space, so convenient for reference."—EVENING POST.

"The work was one greatly needed, especially to writers and politicians, and we think the author has succeeded admirably in his undertaking."—LYNCHBURG VIRGINIAN.

"As a hand-book it will doubtless be found useful by all interested in National politics, and that includes all good citizens."—ALBANY ARGUS.

Loss and Gain ; or, Margaret's Home. By ALICE B. HAVEN. 1 vol. 12mo. Cloth, 75 cents.

"'Margaret' is just such a character as Alice Haven can create—no unnatural heroine is she, but an humble girl, striving amidst poverty, and discouragement and toil, to do right and meet the smile of Heaven."—GAZETTE, CHILICOTHE.

"This story has all the grace and freshness of the earlier writings of Alice Neal, refined and purified by a pure morality and Christian sentiment."—MILWAUKEE SENTINEL.

Re-Statements of Christian Doctrine, in Twenty-five SERMONS. By HENRY W. BELLOWS. 1 vol. 12mo. 434 pages \$1 25.

"His exposition of his faith is manly, eloquent, and full of earnest sincerity ; and those who differ from him in sentiment will at least agree that he speaks out honestly what seems to him to be the doctrine of the Bible."—PROVIDENCE JOURNAL.

"The volume will naturally be sought for by even many out of Mr. Bellows' denomination, who are curious to know more of the opinions of a man who has been accused of tendencies in the most widely diverse directions in his thelogy."—SPRINGFIELD REPUBLICAN.

Here and There ; or, Earth and Heaven Contrasted
1 vol. 12mo. 25 cents.

"The idea of this little brochure is to set in contrast texts of Scripture on the same page, the first relating to 'Here,' and portraying the sorrows of our earthly pilgrimage ; and the second, 'There,' telling the joys of Heaven."—BUFFALO COMMERCIAL.

Martha's Hooks and Eyes. 1 vol. 18mo. 38 cents.

"This little book overflows with pathetic sentiment, expressed in language whose quiet quaintness wins its way to the reader's heart, and both story and style combine to form a literary tit-bit of the daintiest sort."—BOSTON POST.

The Probable Fall in the Value of Gold. Translated from the French of MICHEL CHEVALIER. 1 vol. 8vo. \$1 25.

"The questions embraced in the theme which M. Chevalier proposed for discussion are among the most important that can engage the attention of commercial minds, for they affect the temporal welfare of every producer and consumer."—LOUISVILLE CHRIS'N UNION.

The Tin Trumpet: or, Heads and Tails for the Wise and WAGGISH. A New American Edition, with alterations and additions. 1 vol. 12mo. \$1 25.

"This is a book, indeed, that every Lady must have for a hand-book, and of which no diner-out can afford to deprive himself—and it is also inevitable to that ubiquitous being, 'the general reader.'"

Memoirs of the Empress Catherine the Second of RUSSIA. Written by Herself. With a Preface, by A. HERZEN 1 vol. 12mo. \$1 00.

"The fact that it purports to have been written by the Empress herself, invests it with decided interest at once."—DEMOCRAT AND AMERICAN.

"It is a sketch of the life of a woman as noted for her talents as for her follies—not to say crimes."—PITTSBURG GAZETTE.

Life of James Watt. With Selections from his CORRESPONDENCE. By JAMES PATRICK MUIRHEAD. 1 vol. 12mo. \$1 25.

"Of all men, living or dead, no one has done more, probably, to extend the empire of man,—to subject brute force to his control."—PITTSBURG GAZETTE.

The Roman Question. By E. ABOUT. 1 vol. 12mo. 50 cts.

"The book before us, although written by a Parisian, and privately, has the approbation of the French Government, yet is under the public displeasure of the same Government, and its printing and circulation is forbidden in France."—NEWARK ADVERTISER.

"This is a 'slashing' work—replete with facts, wit, and satire."—RURAL NEW YORKER.

WORKS OF FICTION.

Miss Sewell's Works.

<i>The Earl's Daughter.</i>	12mo.....	Cloth, \$	75
<i>Amy Herbert. A Tale.</i>	12mo.....	Cloth,	75
<i>Gertrude. A Tale.</i>	12mo.....	Cloth,	75
<i>Lancton Parsonage. A Tale.</i>	3 vols. 12mo.....	Cloth,	2 25
<i>Margaret Percival.</i>	2 vols.....	Cloth,	1 50
<i>Experience of Life.</i>	12mo.....	Cloth,	75
<i>Walter Lorimer, and Other Tales.</i>	12mo. Illus.....	Cloth,	75
<i>Katharine Ashton.</i>	2 vols. 12mo.....	Cloth,	1 50
<i>Journal Kept for the Children of a Village School.</i>	12mo.....	Cloth,	1 00
<i>Ivors. A Story of English Country Life.</i>	2 vols... 12mo...	Cloth,	1 50
<i>Ursula. A Tale of Country Life.</i>	2 vols. 12mo...	Cloth,	1 50
<i>Cleve Hall. A Tale.</i>	12mo.....	Cloth,	1 25

Emile Souvestre's Works.

<i>The Attic Philosopher in Paris.</i>	12mo.....	50
<i>Leaves from a Family Journal.</i>	12mo.....	75

Alice B. Haven's Works,

<i>Loss and Gain; or, Margaret's Home.</i>	75
<i>The Coopers; or, Getting Under Way</i>	75

Miss Yonge's Works.

<i>Heir of Redclyffe.</i>	2 vols. 12mo.....	Cloth,	1 50
<i>Heartsease.</i>	2 vols. 12mo.....	Cloth,	1 50
<i>The Daisy Chain; or, Aspirations.</i>	2 vols. 12mo.....	Cloth,	1 50
<i>The Castle Builders.</i>	12mo.....	Cloth,	75
<i>Richard the Fearless.</i>	12mo.....	Cloth,	63
<i>The Two Guardians.</i>	12mo.....	Cloth,	75
<i>Kenneth; or, the Rear Guard.</i>	12mo.....	Cloth,	75
<i>Lances of Lynwood.</i>	12mo.....	Cloth,	75
<i>Dynevor Terrace; or, The Clue of Life</i>	2 vols.....	Cloth,	1 50
<i>Beecherof.</i>	12mo.....	Cloth,	75
<i>Hopes and Fears.</i>	(In press.)		

WORKS OF FICTION.

Grace Aguilar's Works.

<i>The Mother's Retompense.</i>	12mo.....	Cloth, \$0 75
<i>Home Influence.</i>	12mo.....	Cloth,
<i>Women of Israel.</i>	12mo.....	Cloth, 1 50
<i>Vale of Cedars.</i>	12mo.....	Cloth, 75
<i>Woman's Friendship.</i>	12mo.....	Cloth, 75
<i>The Days of Bruce.</i>	12mo. 2 vols.....	Cloth, 1 50
<i>Home Scenes and Heart Studies.</i>	12mo.....	Cloth, 75

Mrs. Cowden Clarke.

<i>The Iron Cousin. A Tale.</i>	12mo.....	1 25
---------------------------------	-----------	------

Mrs. Ellis' Works.

<i>Hearts and Homes; or, Social Distinctions.</i>	1 vol. 8vo.....	1 50
---	-----------------	------

Julia Kavanagh's Works.

<i>Adele: a Tale.</i>	1 thick vol. 12mo.....	Cloth, 1 25
<i>Women of Christianity, Exemplary for Piety and Charity.</i>	12mo.....	Cloth, 75
<i>Nathalie: a Tale.</i>	12mo.....	Cloth, 1 00
<i>Madeleine.</i>	12mo.....	Cloth, 75
<i>Daisy Burns.</i>	12mo.....	Cloth, 1 00
<i>Grace Lee.</i>		Cloth, 1 00
<i>Rachel Gray.</i>	12mo.....	Cloth, 75

Miss Macintosh's Works.

<i>Woman in America.</i>	12mo.....	Cloth, 62
<i>Two Lives; or, To Seem and To Be.</i>	12mo.....	Cloth, 75
<i>Aunt Kitty's Tales.</i>	12mo.....	Cloth, 75
<i>Charms and Counter Charms.</i>		Cloth, 1 00
<i>Evenings at Donaldson Manor.</i>	12mo.....	Cloth, 75
<i>The Lofty and Lowly.</i>	2 vols. 12mo.....	Cloth, 1 50
<i>Meta Gray; or, What Makes Home Happy.</i>		Cloth, 75

BOOKS

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "THE HEIR OF REDCLYFFE."

- I. **THE HEIR OF REDCLYFFE.** 2 vols. 12mo., paper cover, \$1; cloth, \$1 50.
- II. **DYNEVOR TERRACE;** or, the Clue of Life. 2 vols. 12mo., paper, \$1; cloth, \$1 50.
- III. **HEARTSEASE;** or, the Brother's Wife. 2 vols. 12mo., paper cover, \$1; cloth, \$1 50.
- IV. **KENNETH;** or, the Rear Guard of the Grand Army. 1 vol. 12mo., paper, 50 cents; cloth, 75 cents.
- V. **THE CASTLE BUILDERS.** 1 vol. 12mo., paper, 50 cents; cloth, 75 cents.
- VI. **THE TWO GUARDIANS;** or, Home in this World. 1 vol. 12mo., paper cover, 50 cents; cloth, 75 cents.
- VII. **BEECHCROFT.** 1 vol. 12mo., paper cover, 50 cents; cloth, 75 cents.
- VIII. **RICHARD THE FEARLESS.** 1 vol. 12mo., 62 cents.
- IX. **THE LANCES OF LYNWOOD.** 1 vol. 16mo., 75 cents.
-

Extract from a review of "The Heir of Redclyffe," and "Heartsease," in the North American Review for April.

"THE FIRST OF HER WRITINGS WHICH MADE A SENSATION HERE WAS THE 'HEIR,' AND WHAT A SENSATION IT WAS! REFERRING TO THE REMAINS OF THE TEAR-WASHED COVERS OF THE COPY AFORESAID, WE FIND IT BELONGED TO THE 'EIGHTH THOUSAND.' HOW MANY THOUSANDS HAVE BEEN ISSUED SINCE BY THE PUBLISHERS TO SUPPLY THE DEMAND FOR NEW, AND THE PLACES OF DROWNED, DISSOLVED, OR SWEEP AWAY OLD COPIES, WE DO NOT ATTEMPT TO CONJECTURE. NOT INDIVIDUALS MERELY, BUT HOUSEHOLDS—CONSISTING IN GREAT PART OF TENDER-HEARTED YOUNG DAMSELS—WERE PLUNGED INTO MOURNING. WITH A TOLERABLE ACQUAINTANCE WITH FICTITIOUS HEROES (NOT TO SPEAK OF REAL ONES), FROM SIR CHARLES GRANDISON DOWN TO THE NURSERY IDOL CARLTON, WE HAVE LITTLE HESITATION IN PRONOUNCING SIR GUY MORVILLE, OF REDCLYFFE, BARONET, THE MOST ADMIRABLE ONE WE EVER MET WITH, IN STORY OR OUT. THE GLORIOUS, JOYOUS BOY, THE BRILLIANT, ARDENT CHILD OF GENIUS AND OF FORTUNE, CROWNED WITH THE BEAUTY OF HIS EARLY HOLINESS, AND OVERSHADOWED WITH THE DARKNESS OF HIS HEREDITARY GLOOM, AND THE SOFT AND TOUCHING SADNESS OF HIS EARLY DEATH—WHAT A CAUTION IS THERE! WHAT A VISION!"









