

Leah Mordecai

Mrs. Belle Kendrick Abbott

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• CHAPTER XLIV.

This eBook was edited by Charles Aldarondo (www.aldarondo.net).

TO MY BELOVED UNCLE,
THE REV. J. RYLAND KENDRICK, D.D.,
WHOSE HOSPITABLE HOME I ONCE SPENT MANY HAPPY
DAYS DAYS MADE FOR EVER BRIGHT BY THE LOVE
OF HIS GREAT HEART, LOVE THAT FLOWED LIKE
A PURE STREAM FROM A CRYSTAL FOUNTAIN,
ABOUND AND ABOUT MY YOUNG LIFE
THIS BOOK IS MOST TENDERLY

INSCRIBED BY THE AUTHOR.

ATLANTA, GA, November, 1875.

CHAPTER I.

THE giant clock on the wall in the assembly-room of Madam Truxton's fashionable school had marked the hour for dismissal.

Groups of restless, anxious pupils stood about the apartment, or were gathered at the windows, watching the rain that had been falling in copious showers since morning. All were eager to go, yet none dared brave the storm.

Under the stone archway of the entrance to the assembly-hall, a group of four maidens stood chatting, apart from the rest, watching the rain, and impatient for its cessation.

"I know my father will either send my brother, or come for me himself," said Helen Le Grande, "so I need not fear the rain." Then, turning to the soft-eyed Jewess who stood by her side, she added, "When the carriage comes, Leah, you can take a seat with me. I'll see that you are safely deposited at home."

"Thank you, Helen, but it won't hurt me to walk. Nothing hurts me Leah Mordecai the despised." Then, averting her face, the young girl gazed abstractedly into the street, and began humming in a low tone.

To these words of the young Jewess there was no reply. A certain sort of emphasis in her utterance seemed to forbid any inquiry, and silence any word of censure that might arise to the lips of her companions.

"How mean of me, not to offer a seat in the carriage to Lizzie Heartwell, too," thought Helen after a moment's reflection; "but I dared not, on account of my brother, who has so repeatedly urged me to make equals only of the rich. He little knows how I love Lizzie Heartwell, and whether she be rich or poor I know not, neither do I care."

"I say, girls," at length broke the silence, as the fourth member of the group, Bertha Levy, a Jewess too, spoke out, "think how stupid I am. Mamma has promised me a small tea-party to-morrow night, and this wretched rain had well-nigh caused me to forget it; but, thank fortune, it's giving way a little, and maybe we shall all get home after awhile. I'm desperately hungry! Of course, you will all promise me to come, and I shall expect you." Then, turning to Helen, she said, "Won't you?"

Helen assented.

"And you, Leah?"

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"I will if I can. I am never sure of my movements, however."

"And you, dear Lizzie?"

"With the permission of my uncle and aunt; at any rate, I thank you for your kindness."

"Well, I shall expect you every one, and "

"There comes the carriage," shouted Helen, as the liveried coach of the wealthy judge rolled round the corner, and drove up in front of the spacious school–building. "I knew my father would not forget me yes, there is my brother."

The horses, thoroughly wet, looked dark and sleek as greyhounds, as they stood impatiently stamping the paving–stones, while a visible cloud of vapor rose from each distended nostril.

The coach door opened, and Emile Le Grande, with handsome, manly figure clad in a gray military suit, and equally handsome face, stepped out, and approached the group so impatiently watching the progress of the storm.

"Good morning, Miss Mordecai; I am happy that we meet again," said the gentleman, politely bowing.

"Thank you, sir; but your presence rather surprises us," replied Leah.

"I trust, though, I am not an unwelcome intruder upon this fair group?"

"Allow me to remind you, my brother, that my friends, Miss Heartwell and Miss Levy, are also present," said Helen rather reproachfully.

Emile acknowledged the reproof and the courtesy with an apology and a smile, and then added, "To Miss Mordecai's charms I owe the breach of politeness."

Leah's face flushed crimson, and her eye sparkled more brightly than ever at these flattering words of the young cadet; but she made no reply.

"Come, Helen, let's go," at length said the brother. "The horses are impatient. C'sar is wet, and I guess you are tired, too." Then, turning to Leah, he continued, "Miss Mordecai, will you honor us with your company till we reach your father's house, where I pledge myself to deposit you safely?"

"Oh! yes, Leah will go; I have already asked her," said Helen. Then, after a moment's preparation, the two young friends stepped into the carriage.

"Good–by again, girls," said Bertha Levy gayly, as the coach door closed; "riding is rather better than walking, such a day as this. Remember to–morrow night." Then, with a dash, the carriage was out of sight.

"Well, Lizzie," resumed Bertha, smiling significantly, for she could not but observe Helen's manifest preference in offering Leah a seat with her, "we need not stand here any longer. I see that the rain, out of consideration for us, is about to cease, and I don't think any coach is coming for me. Do you expect one?"

To this characteristic remark, Lizzie Heartwell replied smilingly, "I guess, Bertha, with umbrellas, overshoes, and care, we can reach home without serious damage."

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"But care is not a coach, you know, my friend, no matter how we turn it," said Bertha laughingly, as she donned the wrapping and overshoes. "I am as hungry as a wolf, and I fear mamma will let that young brother of mine eat all my dinner, if I am too slow in getting there. Boys are perfect cormorants, anyhow. Come, let's go at once."

The two girls stepped out into the slippery street, and turned their faces homeward. "I am glad, Lizzie," continued Bertha, as they turned corner after corner, "that our paths run together so far; having company is so much better than being alone this forlorn afternoon. And remember, I desire to know the answer to my invitation as early as possible. To-morrow is my brother Isaac's confirmation day, and we must all be promptly at the synagogue at nine o'clock."

"You shall know to-night, Bertha, and I will be with you, if possible. But here, before we part, let's stop and buy some bananas of old Maum Cinda. She is always so grateful for a fivepence dropped by a school-girl."

By this time the two girls were standing in front of the well-known fruit-stall of the old blind colored woman known far and near through the Queen City as "Maum Cinda." For years, hers had been the important market for supplying the school-children with luscious fruits, unimpeachable taffy, and ground-pea candy.

"An' bless de Lord, is it Miss Lizzie?" said the good-natured woman, as the sound of Lizzie Heartwell's voice fell upon her ear in the kindly spoken salutation.

"An' w'at will you have to-day, chile?"

"Some bananas, Maum Cinda two for me, and two for my friend here, Miss Bertha Levy."

"Oh! yes, Miss Bertha," replied the woman, courtesying, "an' maybe I have seen Miss Bertha, but it's the sweet voice of Miss Lizzie that the old blind woman remembers" handing the bananas across the wide board that protected her tempting wares from public incursions.

"You flatter me, Maum Cinda; but I hope the rainy day has not interfered much with your trade. Here" and extending her slender white hand, Lizzie dropped the jingling pennies into the aged, wrinkled one that opened to receive them.

"God bless you, chile. You neber forget His poor ones, de blind. God bless you!"

"Good morning, Maum Cinda."

"Good-by, young ladies, good-by." And the last glimpse the two receding friends had of the old woman, she was still profoundly bowing and courtesying in acknowledgment of their remembrance.

Then the friends parted for the day, each one taking the most direct course to her home, and soon both were safely sheltered from the drizzling rain and chilling wind.

CHAPTER II.

TWO pale lilies and two royal roses upon a stem, would scarcely form a more beautiful or striking group than did the four maidens standing together under the stone archway of the school-room, on that gloomy day at Madam Truxton's.

The fair hair and blue eyes of Helen Le Grande and Lizzie Heartwell distinctly contrasted with the jetty locks and eyes of Bertha Levy and Leah Mordecai the beauty of neither style being in any degree marred by such close

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contact.

The blonde beauty of the first two maidens bespoke their unmistakable Anglo–Norman blood and Christian descent, while the opposite cast of the others testified to their Jewish origin.

A casual observer even, would have decided that these four maidens were bound together by an unusual bond of friendship an incongruous friendship it might have seemed, and yet it was not such.

Helen Le Grande, the eldest of the group by a few months, was scarcely eighteen years of age, as bright and gay a maiden as one could find in all the land, and the only daughter of Judge Le Grande, a lawyer of wealth and distinction.

Of immediate French descent, Judge Le Grande possessed in an eminent degree the peculiarities of his gay, volatile ancestry. Proud of his children, and ambitious for their future, in his lavish bounty he withheld nothing he deemed necessary for their advancement in life.

Thus at eighteen, Helen Le Grande looked out upon life's opening sky as thoughtlessly as she would look upon the bright waters of the blue harbor that stretched before her father's mansion, where sky and water blended in a peaceful, azure expanse, little heeding or caring whether storms came, or sunshine rested on the deep. Bertha Levy, the little dark-eyed Jewess who stood by her side under the stone archway, was nothing more or less than a piquant little maiden, just turned seventeen, of amiable disposition and affectionate heart, but by no means partial to study, and always ready to glean surreptitiously from her books, any scraps of the lesson that might be useful, either to herself or her friends, in the ordeal of recitation.

Bertha's mother was a widow, whose circumstances allowed her children all the comforts and even many luxuries of life. She had reared them most rigidly in Hebrew faith. Lizzie Girardeau Heartwell, the next in the fair tableau, was the only member of the group who was not a native of the Queen City. It is no misstatement of fact to say that she was, indeed, the ruling spirit of Madam Truxton's entire school.

Dr. Heartwell, Lizzie's father, had lived in a distant State, and died when she was but a tender child. Her mother, a descendant of the Huguenots, was herself a native of the Queen City. But far away from her native home had Mrs. Heartwell's married life been spent, and Lizzie's young days, too, had passed in their quiet uneventful home at Melrose.

But at the age of fifteen, and three years prior to the opening of this story, under the kindly guardianship of her uncle, Lizzie Heartwell entered the popular finishing school of Madam Truxton.

Possessed of noble, heroic blood, and blessed with love that instilled into her young mind the principles of a brave, devoted ancestry, it was but natural that Lizzie Heartwell should exhibit an unusual development of heart and mind at a very tender age, and give early promise of a braver, nobler womanhood, when Time should set his seal upon her brow.

Reluctantly the heart turns to read the half-written history in the sad face of Leah Mordecai, the fourth maiden standing pictured against the stone under the archway. She was of the unmistakable Jewish type, possessing the contour of face, the lustrous eye, the massive crown of hair, that so often distinguish and beautify the Hebrew maiden, wheresoever the sun may rise and set.

In the sadness that rested upon this young girl's face, one might dimly detect the half-extinguished flame of hope, that usually burns so brilliantly in the hearts of most young girls. But why this sadness no one could tell. Its cause was a mystery even to her friends. Benjamin Mordecai was an opulent banker, who for many years lived in solitary grandeur in his bachelor home. But in the process of time, he wedded the gentle Sarah David, and brought

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her to share with him his home and fortune.

Love had led to this marriage, and peace and happiness for a time, like sweet angels, seemed to have come to dwell evermore within the home. But time brought changes. After the lapse of a year and a half, the cherished Leah was born, and from that day the mother's health declined steadily for a twelvemonth, and then she was laid in the grave.

As the mother faded, the infant Leah thrived and flourished, filling the father's heart with anxious, tender love.

Among the inmates of the Mordecai home from the time of Mrs. Mordecai's declining health, was a young woman, Rebecca Hartz, who acted as house-keeper and general superintendent of domestic affairs. She had been employed by Mr. Mordecai for this important position, not so much on account of her competency to fill it, as to bestow a charity upon her unfortunate father, who constantly besought employment for his numerous children, among the more favored of his people.

Isaac Hartz was a butcher, whose slender income was readily exhausted by a burdensome family. Rebecca, his daughter, was a good-looking young woman of twenty at the time she entered Mr. Mordecai's family. Although coarse and ill-bred, she was also shrewd and designing, often making pretence of friendship and affection to gain her ends when in reality hatred and animosity were burning in her bosom. Such was Rebecca Hartz. Such the woman to usurp the household government, when the gentle Mrs. Mordecai had passed away.

CHAPTER III.

IN Mrs. Levy's attractive drawing-room, Bertha's guests were assembled for the tea-party.

Lizzie Heartwell, the first to arrive, was ushered into the brightly lighted room, to find Mrs. Levy the only occupant.

"I welcome you gladly, Miss Heartwell," said Mrs. Levy, rising and taking Lizzie by the hand. "I have long desired your acquaintance, knowing my daughter's friendship for you. Pray be seated."

"I thank you, Mrs. Levy," replied Lizzie, "I indeed esteem it an honor to meet the mother of such a friend as Bertha."

"My daughter will be present by and by. I regret that necessity compels her non-appearance as yet. Sit nearer the fire."

Lizzie drew closer to the glowing grate, and they continued a pleasant conversation till Bertha appeared.

"What a handsome woman!" thought Lizzie, as she occasionally surveyed Mrs. Levy from head to foot during the t[^]te-...-t[^]te.

And she was a handsome woman, dressed quietly but richly in black satin, her head adorned only by the clustering curls she had worn from her girlhood. There was little change even in their arrangement, and only an occasional thread of silver here and there bespoke the touch of time. Her eyes were still beautiful, but their lustre had been dimmed by the tears of her widowhood.

Bertha bore the same cast of beauty that distinguished her mother, yet time's developing, modelling work for her was not yet completed. When the guests were duly assembled, Bertha approached her mother, who was still entertaining Lizzie, appearing quite fascinated with her daughter's friend, and said, "Mother, won't you release

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your prisoner now? Helen Le Grande wishes her to join the group over there by the window, in a game of euchre."

"Certainly, my dear. I trust Miss Heartwell will pardon me if I have detained her too long."

"Come, Lizzie, come along," said Bertha; and then added, in an undertone, "you know what I promised to show you, Lizzie. Come with me; let them make up the game without you."

"Oh! yes, that album; show it to me," said Lizzie, following Bertha to a well-filled etagère, from which she took a handsomely bound album, saying, "This is from Asher. Isn't it lovely?"

"Indeed it is," replied Lizzie.

"Mamma says I do not know who sent it to me, as there is no name anywhere. She does not wish me to think it's from Asher, but I know it is. It's just like him to do such nice things," and, bending her head closer to Lizzie, Bertha continued, "you see, Lizzie, I am awfully disappointed because mamma would not allow me to invite him here to-night. I am just as vexed as I well can be."

"Won't some of these other gentlemen answer in his stead?" asked Lizzie, smiling.

"Bosh! no; all of these, and forty more, are not equal to Asher Bernhardt, in my estimation. I love Asher, I tell you, and I mean to marry him, one of these days; do you hear me?"

"Marry! how you talk! A girl of your age presuming to say that you will marry such and such a one," said Lizzie, laughing.

"Indeed! I consider myself woman enough to decide whom I like, better than any one else, whether you call that old enough to marry, or not. But let me tell you what mamma said to-day, when she caught me kissing the album. 'Bertha Levy' and oh! she looked so straight and solemn at me that I almost trembled 'Bertha Levy, are you going to make yourself ridiculous about that strolling player, Asher Bernhardt? Tell me.' 'You know he plays the flute superbly, and that's what I like.' Then I said meekly:

"'I know that he loves me.'

"'You know nothing of that sort, and you are a very silly girl. This is the way you regard my teachings, is it, fancying strolling players at private theatricals? What! could you promise yourself to marry such a man a man whose chief recommendation is, that he can play the flute?'

"'Happiness,' I whispered.

"'Wretchedness, you mean! Well, I forbid you ever thinking of him again. I shall never, never, consent to such a thing, never while I am your mother. Remember my words now!'

"Oh! Lizzie, wasn't that awful, mamma is so hard on him! I "

"Bertha, Bertha!" called a voice from the opposite side of the room, which Bertha at once recognized as her mother's and immediately turned toward Mrs. Levy, leaving Lizzie standing alone.

"For shame, my daughter!" said Mrs. Levy, in a low tone to Bertha, "to keep Miss Heartwell standing talking all the evening about your supposed present from Asher Bernhardt! I shall not allow you company again until you improve in politeness, and I will destroy that cherished book. Do you hear me? Go at once and see that Miss Heartwell is seated."

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Bertha bowed her head, in token of obedience, and as she turned back to join Lizzie, Leah Mordecai was approaching the piano, accompanied by Emile Le Grande.

Leah Mordecai was a superb singer, yet it was only at the request of friends that her soul flowed forth in song. On this evening her music was delicious, and Emile Le Grande, always fond of the divine art, was bewitched with the beauty of her voice. When her singing ceased, the sadness still rested upon her face, and in Emile's heart there was a new-born sensation that of pleasure mingled with fear.

The evening hours wore on. The hours that bore away the Jewish Sabbath were rolling in the Christian day of rest, and Lizzie Heartwell, in obedience to her uncle's request not to "tarry at her pleasure too late," was the first to separate from the happy band.

An hour later, as the Citadel clock sounded the hour of midnight, Judge Le Grande's carriage rolled rapidly toward the mansion of Benjamin Mordecai, bearing home his beautiful daughter, escorted by Emile Le Grande.

This night, as Lizzie Heartwell was slowly disrobing for the remaining hours of slumber after her return home, she glanced into the small mirror before her, and thought audibly "Emile Le Grande seemed quite charmed to-night with Leah; he hung around her like a shadow, and part of the evening he seemed moody and almost miserable. How strange if he should fall in love with her! She's a grand girl. I don't think she could fancy Emile Le Grande. I wonder why Leah called herself 'the despised' yesterday. Well, we shall see."

Mrs. Levy's guests had departed, one by one, till the mother and daughter were left alone in the deserted room.

"Mamma," Bertha said at length, shrugging her dainty figure, and gazing thoughtfully into the fire, "I do believe that Emile Le Grande is in love with Leah Mordecai, and she with him."

"Be ashamed, Bertha, to think of such a thing! I believe you are insane on the subject of love. Have you forgotten that she is a Mordecai."

"Oh! Love's love, mamma, Mordecai or not Mordecai! I think Emile Le Grande a fine fellow."

"Would you be impudent, Bertha?" said her mother, eyeing her sharply.

"Oh! not for the world, mamma. Do forgive me, if you think so, and let us retire, for I have an awful task of study awaiting me to-morrow."

CHAPTER IV.

EMILE LE GRANDE'S DIARY.

"SATURDAY night by Jove! Sunday morning, I suppose I should write it, to be strictly truthful. And I guess that orthodox people would roll their pious eyes, and declare that I had better be in bed at this hour, instead of writing in my journal. But it makes no difference. I do not know whether it's the seventh or the first day that I should observe as a day of rest. One suits me as well as the other. So here goes for my journal.

"November 29, Saturday night. Yes, I'll write Saturday night, for the looks of the thing. Just returned from Bertha Levy's tea-party went with my sister. Would not have gone but for the hope of meeting Leah Mordecai. In the main, I hate Jews, but I must admit here, Journal, that Mrs. Levy is as elegant a woman as I have ever met; and Bertha, too, is a cunning creature, not beautiful and not my fancy exactly, but withal a taking girl.

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"But of all the beautiful women that I have seen in years, Jewish or Christian, there's not one can compare with Leah Mordecai such hair and such eyes are seldom given to woman. Helen says that her hair measures four feet in length! What a queenly poise to that elegant head!

"But I swear there's a sadness about her face that I do not comprehend. She certainly knows nothing of sorrow. It does not arise from want; for she, of all maidens in this Queen City, is farthest from that. Old Ben Mordecai has untold wealth, and there comes in the 'marrow of the nut.' Of course, he is as stingy as a Jew can be; but not with his daughter. Who has more elegant silks, velvets, and diamonds than she? Rich! rich! Ha! what a glorious thing to be said of one; but aside from old Mordecai's money, Leah is a superb woman; one need never be ashamed of such a wife. I should not be.

"I must set myself to work to ascertain the trouble that must dwell in her heart so constantly to becloud her face. I'll bribe Helen to find out for me. It may be some unfortunate love affair who knows? I think I would like to put any fellow out of the way that might be seeking her hand. I believe I would kill him, if necessary. Perhaps, dear Journal, I should not have written that terrible monosyllable, but as you tell no tales, I'll let it stand.

"Now, I must to bed, and sleep, if I can sleep away some of the tedious hours that lie between me and another sight of the fair Leah.

"Already the clock strikes two."

"And Mark was not there to-night, as I had hoped and expected," sighed Leah, as she stood before the elegant dressing-case of her bed-chamber, and laid aside the articles of her toilet, after the revel was done. "Only another disappointment! And yet, I know that Bertha invited him, and he promised me to attend. I should not have worn these ear-rings and this brooch, which were my mother's, had I known Mark would have been absent. Oh, my angel mother!"

A tear stole slowly down her face, and fell upon the shining pearls that she still clasped between her fingers. "Why did not the grave cover us both? Why was I left alone and so desolate in the world? Can it be that Mark has deceived me Mark Abrams, the only friend in the world that I implicitly trust? God only knows. I remember now, how he looked at my mother what mockery to call that woman mother! when I asked him if he would attend the tea-party. I remember furthermore, that she followed him to the door after he bade us adieu; and what words she may have let slip there, Heaven only knows! I have had a lurking suspicion for some time, that she was planning to win Mark's love from me, and secure it for my sister Sarah. What if she should succeed. Oh! how wretched I should be! It has been a year, nearly, since Mark and I secretly pledged our love, and he promised then that we should be married soon after I finished at Madam Truxton's. How fondly I have looked forward to that coming day! It has been the one single hope of my miserable life; and now that the time draws so near, is it possible that my dream must vanish into nothingness? Must this heart taste the bitterness of deception, among its other sorrows? Miserable girl that I am! Surely some evil star shone over the hour and place of my birth. But I'll hope on for the best, and still continue to look forward to the coming day, when my life shall be separated from the wretched woman who now so darkly overshadows my existence. I'll hope on, even though disappointment come at last." The soliloquy ended, Leah laid away the pearls in the velvet-lined case, and turned to slumber and dreams.

Mark Abrams, the early friend and lover of Leah, was the oldest son of a talented and highly-esteemed rabbi, who presided over the most flourishing and wealthy Jewish congregation in the Queen City; and Mark himself was highly esteemed, as a young man of unimpeachable integrity and unusual brilliancy of intellect.

CHAPTER V.

MONDAY morning came again. The great bell in the cupola of Madam Truxton's seminary had sounded, and all the pupils, large and small, were gathered to join in the opening exercises. First, the bright-eyed little girls, in tidy aprons, with hair smoothed back in modest braids, or safely gathered under the faithful comb; then, the more advanced scholars, each bearing the impress of healthful vigor and hopeful heart; and last, the big girls, or "finishing class," as Madam Truxton significantly styled them all were assembled once more on this bright Monday morning, to begin the duties of another week, and share again the joys and sorrows of school life. It was a lovely sight, this assembled school; for where is the heart that does not see with unspeakable pleasure the dawning beauty of innocent, careless maidenhood?

"Bertha, do you know the French lesson?" said Lizzie Heartwell, as the class of young ladies was passing from the assembly hall to Madam Conde's room.

"Oh, just well enough, Lizzie, to keep me from a scolding, I guess. Here, won't you please hold the book open at aimer, so I can get that muss a little straight, in case madam calls upon me to conjugate?"

Lizzie laughed.

"Oh, pshaw! of course you won't. Lizzie Heartwell, you are too conscientious; but Helen, you will, won't you?"

"Yes, if you will hold it open for me, too. I am not at all prepared in the lesson."

"Here, Leah," continued Bertha, laughing, and winking her roguish eyes at Lizzie, "how much do you know of the verb aimer?"

"More than I wish I did," was the laconic reply of the beautiful Jewess.

"I suppose so, judging from what I saw on last Saturday evening. But here we are at the lion's den, and our levity had better subside."

"Bon jour, madame!"

"Bon jour, mesdemoiselles."

And the door was closed.

At this same hour, in the large, hollow square fronting the Citadel Tower in the upper part of the Queen City, many platoons of young men, dressed in the gray military suits of the cadets, were drilling, drilling, drilling, according to custom, as a part of their daily school routine.

A passer-by would have stopped for a moment, and watched with interest this pleasing spectacle. The varied and intricate evolutions made by these gray-clad figures, as they expanded into broad platoons, and then, as if by magic, fell again into groups of two, four, or six, was, to the unaccustomed beholder, a strange and attractive performance.

The bristling bayonets shining in the bright morning sun, gave evidence of the faithful care with which their polish was preserved. And these bright polished muskets spoke loudly too, to the reflecting heart, of the wild work they might some day accomplish, when carried into the conflict by these same skilful hands that now so peacefully upheld them demon-work, that might clothe a land and people in sackcloth and desolation!

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The drilling was ended, the last evolution made, the halt commanded, and the order to disband spoken.

Like a fragile piece of potter's work, the magic ranks broke apart, and each gun fell to the ground with a heavy "thud," like an iron weight.

"I say, George, I am deuced tired of this turning and twisting, and I'll be glad when the term ends, and I am set free from this place."

"Well, I can't say that I will, Le Grande," replied George Marshall, as handsome a cadet as wore the uniform, and one highly ambitious for promotion. "I came to this institute, because I was always fascinated by military display, and I intend to make this my lifelong profession."

"Whew! how tired I am! Well, you are welcome to it. As for me, it's the last life I should choose. I like the uniform very well, especially when I go where the girls are they always give a cadet's suit a second glance but as for the 'profession of arms,' as you call it, excuse me."

"What! would you like, Le Grande, always to be playing lady's man?"

"Oh! yes; and that reminds me, George, that I have a new lady-love; she is at Madam Truxton's. To-day, at intermission, let's saunter down to the seminary, and catch a glimpse of the girls. Maybe I'll see her."

"I can't; at intermission I must study my Legendre. Look at the clock now; it's late."

"Bother the Legendre! you are the strangest fellow I ever saw care no more for the girls than a 'cat does for holidays.' Won't you go?"

"Not to-day, Le Grande. I am very busy."

The clock struck nine, and George Marshall, with the other disbanded cadets, hurried to the duties of the day to the hard task of study that awaited them within the grim walls of the citadel.

For a moment before turning to his books, George Marshall looked out of the window, far away to the blue, misty harbor. There he saw again old Fort Defiance, standing grim, stern, and dark against the morning sky the only object that marred the brightness of the blue heaven and the blue water, melting together in the distance.

"How beautiful the harbor is to-day! And yet how sullen the fort looks," said the young cadet as he surveyed the scene. "I see the flag of my country floating, and all is peaceful and quiet in the waters. Thank God for such a country! But I must hasten to my duties."

CHAPTER VI.

"LEAH, dear, what troubles you this morning? Your melancholy look distresses me. Is it any sorrow that you dare not unfold to your loving

"LIZZIE?"

These lines Lizzie Heartwell slipped into the leaves of a book that lay upon Leah's desk, while she was absent at a music recitation.

By and by the bell sounded for the half hour's release from study. Then Leah stepped across the room, and gently

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taking Lizzie by the arm, said, "Come, let's walk."

Lizzie put her arm around her friend, and the two girls walked out into the court-yard, that formed a play-ground for the younger scholars and a pleasant promenade for the older ones, and then turned aside upon the brick walk that connected the kitchen and servants' hall with the main building.

This brick walk, covered overhead by the piazza floor of the second story of the wing of the building, was securely protected in all kinds of weather. As Leah and Lizzie turned upon this promenade, Bertha Levy came skipping up to them with a merry bound, saying:

"Come girls, let's have a game of graces. Helen is willing. Here she is. What do you say?"

"Excuse me this morning, Bertha," Leah replied. "I do not feel well; my head aches, and perhaps I can walk it away!"

"Oh! yes, certainly; but you are as solemn as an owl, of late, Leah; what is the matter with you? Do you contemplate taking the veil? If so, is it the white or the black veil?"

"Our people never take the veil, Bertha. Do you forget?" replied Leah reproachfully.

"Forgive me, dear, I meant no harm. But I am in a hurry. Dame Truxton will have that old bell sounded directly, and my game of graces not even begun. I wish the old thing was still in its native ore, and not always ready to call us into trouble;" and so saying, Bertha skipped away, calling, "Here, Mag Lawton, Mary Pinckney, come and play graces."

For a moment Lizzie and Leah stood watching the group as it formed, and admiring the graceful movements of the hoops as they flew from the fairylike wands of the girls. "That game is well called," said Lizzie, as Leah caught her arm again and said:

"Come, let's walk on." Then, after a pause, she continued, "I found your note, Lizzie, and I am sorry that I have such a telltale face; but I am unhappy, Lizzie; yes, I am miserable, and I cannot conceal it. I would not obtrude my sorrow upon others, but it is my face and not my tongue that betrays me."

"Do not think, Leah, I beg you, that I would seek to pry into the secret of your heart," responded Lizzie; "but I thought if you were in trouble, maybe I might in some way comfort you."

"I thank you, dear, dear Lizzie, for your sympathy" and a tear fell from the lustrous lashes of the Jewess; "I thank you again and again," she continued, "but nothing you can do can alleviate my sorrow."

"Well, you can trust me for sympathy and love always, whether that will comfort you or not, Leah; be your trouble what it may."

"Mine is no sudden grief, Lizzie; it is a long, sad story, one that I have never felt at liberty to inflict upon any one's hearing, and yet, I have always found you so tender and so true, that when any additional sorrow comes to me my heart strangely turns to you for sympathy. I know not why. Can you tell me?"

"We always turn to those who love us, I think, in hours of darkness."

"Yes, Lizzie, but there is a peculiar yearning, in my heart for you, at times. I imagine it's akin to the feeling I should have for my mother, were she living. With this feeling at my heart, I long to look upon my mother's miniature which I once had, but which is now in my step-mother's possession, and to gaze upon the face that

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speaks such love to me, though her voice has so long been silent."

Lizzie, touched at Leah's pathetic words, turned and looked at her friend with a tender glance, and said, "Trust me, Leah, for that sympathy which you from some cause need, and unburden your aching heart to me, if you choose."

"But, there! the bell is ringing and we must go," said Leah abruptly. "Let's meet after school in the upper corridor, that overlooks the sea. I have something further to say to you."

"If you wish, dear Leah; and it's but a short two hours till dismissal. Let's go."

Cloaked and hooded, the school-girls were all ready for departure after the three long, welcome strokes of the great clock; when Leah said, "It's growing chilly, Lizzie. Wrap your shawl closely around you, for it's cold out on the corridor. Come, let's go out at the rear door before it is locked."

Ascending a spiral staircase, the two girls reached the upper corridor that ran across the south side of the end wing of the building.

"Suppose Madam Truxton should come upon us, Lizzie, what would she think?" said Leah, as the two girls crouched down closer together at the end of the corridor.

"Nothing wrong, I guess, as we have our books; and perhaps we had better look over our French a minute. What do you say?"

"So we had, as it comes first in the morning," and bending their heads together the girls were silent for a time, pretending to study. At length Lizzie closed the book, and Leah began her story. LEAH'S STORY.

"I shudder, Lizzie, when I think of unfolding the sad story of my life to you; and yet, I am impelled to do so by this hunger for sympathy that is so constantly gnawing at my heart. As I have told you before, my heart strangely turns to you in sorrow. In the three years that I have known you, and we have seen each other daily, I have never known you guilty of a single act or word that was unworthy "

"Oh! Leah "

"Do not interrupt me, Lizzie. You must hear my story now, though it shall be briefly told; and I have one request to make, my dear. It is, that you have charity for my faults, and pity for me in my many temptations." She continued:

"As you have known before, my mother died when I was a very little child, scarcely three years old. I remember her but very indistinctly. The woman who is now my father's wife, was his housekeeper in my mother's life-time. She, of course, came from the common walks of life, her father being a very poor butcher. How she ever became my father's wife, I do not know; but my old nurse used to intimate to me that it was by no honorable means. Be that as it may, he married her when I was four years of age; and from that date my miserable story begins. The first incident of my life after this second marriage which I remember most vividly was this. A year after my father's marriage to Rebecca, business of importance called him to England, and a long-cherished desire to see his aged parents took him to Bohemia, where they lived, after the business in Liverpool was transacted. How I fared while he was gone, I dimly remember; but well enough, I suppose, as I was still partially under the care and control of my faithful nurse, a colored woman of kind and tender heart.

"Poor, dear old woman, she is dead long ago!

Leah Mordecai

"This visit of my father to his parents proved to be the last, as they died a year or two afterward. Among my father's relatives in the old country, was a cousin who lived in wealth and luxury somewhere in Saxony. This cousin had been as a brother to him in his young days, and on my father's return from Bohemia, he passed through Saxony and paid this cousin a visit; He still speaks occasionally of that delightful event. I must not forget to tell you that this cousin was a baron Baron von Rosenberg. He was not born to the title; it was conferred on him for some heroic act, the circumstance of which I do not now remember, during an insurrection.

"At parting with my father at the close of his visit, the Baron made him many costly gifts; among others, one of an elegant pipe of rare and exquisite workmanship. How distinctly I recall it now! It was in the shape of an elk's head, with spreading, delicately wrought antlers. The eyes were formed of some kind of precious stones, and on the face of the elk were the Baron's initials inlaid in gold.

"The stem, I remember well, was of ebony, richly ornamented with gold. I suppose it was a magnificent thing of its kind, and prized beyond measure by my father. He used it only on rare occasions, and for the gratification of our guests. But at length an event occurred that called forth the treasured pipe from its casket, never to be returned. It was on the occasion of the third anniversary of my father's marriage to Rebecca Hartz an occasion that richly deserved sackcloth and ashes instead of feasting and merriment. But the day was one of grand demonstration, and many guests and friends were in attendance. All the articles of value and luxury belonging to the family were brought into requisition, and among the number, the treasured but ill-fated pipe. The guests ate, drank, and were merry, I suppose, till all were sated, and at a late and lonely hour they left my father's house deserted, with disorder reigning supreme in every apartment.

"'Forget not my elk's head, Rebecca,' was my father's last admonition, as he retired to his bed-chamber, after the revel was over.

"But Rebecca did not heed his command, and being fatigued herself, hurriedly retired, saying, 'I'll wait till morning.'

"Morning came, and unfortunately for me, I was the first to awaken. Hastily dressing, I thought I would explore the scene of the late festivity; and so I descended the stairs and entered the silent, deserted drawing-room. In a few moments, Rebecca herself entered the drawing-room, but partially dressed and wrapped in a crimson shawl. She had come to remove the pipe.

"'Why are you up so early, Leah?' she said confusedly, seeing that I was also in the room. And then, as she passed hurriedly around the table where the pipe lay, the treacherous fringe of her shawl caught in the delicate antlers of the elk's head and dragged it from its place upon the table. It fell to the floor with a crash, and we both looked down in dismay on the wreck at her feet. A footstep sounded in the hall at that moment, and fearing it was my father, Rebecca said boldly, and with gleaming eye:

"'What did you do that for, you wretched child?'

"'Do what?' I whispered, overawed.

"'Deny it, if you dare, and I'll break every bone in your body, you lynx! What will your father say?' she continued. 'Pick up every piece, and go and show it to him. Say you broke it, and ask his forgiveness! Do you hear me?'

"I hesitated and trembled.

"'Dare you disobey me?' she angrily exclaimed, with menacing gesture.

"'I am afraid of my father,' I whispered again, scarcely knowing whether I really did the mischief or not.

Leah Mordecai

"And well you may be," she continued fearlessly, seeing that she was gaining the mastery over me; 'but the sooner you seek his forgiveness, the sooner you will obtain it. Go at once, I tell you.'

"Oh! pity me, Lizzie! pity me, for from that fatal moment, I have been the slave, the serf, of a stronger will a will that has withered and crushed out, by slow degrees, the last trace of moral courage that might have beautified and strengthened my character; crushed it out, and left me a cowardly, miserable, helpless girl! But to return.

"Involuntarily I stooped down, and began to pick up the pieces of the fragile horns, and the eyes of the elk's head, that lay scattered around upon the soft carpet, really wondering if, indeed, I did break it.

"Now you have gathered up the pieces, go at once to your father; and mind you tell him you broke it. Do you hear me?"

"I glided out of the room, away from the presence of the woman who had so cruelly imposed upon my helplessness. Trembling with fear, and a sense of my supposed guilt, I approached my father, who was by this time comfortably seated in the family sitting-room, reading the morning paper.

"I crept to him and held out the fragments.

"The d l to pay! Who broke this?" he almost shouted in anger.

"I did,' I murmured; and the rest of my story unspoken, my father struck me a blow for the first and last time in his life. It sent me reeling against a table; the sharp corner struck my forehead and cut a terrible gash. Here, I will show it to you. It is plainly visible, and always will be."

Leah lifted the glossy dark hair from her smooth pale forehead, and displayed the long, hard scar, that was so carefully concealed by the ebon folds. "I always wear my hair combed to hide it."

"Oh! Leah, Leah," sighed Lizzie, "how dreadful!"

"At sight of the blood that flowed freely from the wound, my father caught me in his arms, and kissing my blood-stained face, exclaimed again and again:

"Fool, wretch, devil, that I am! Not for all the world would I have shed a drop of this precious blood. I beg your forgiveness, my darling a thousand times, my child!" My cries, though suppressed, brought my mother to the room. With a well-assumed air of innocence and tenderness, she sought to wipe away the blood from my face, and bind up the gash upon my forehead. I all the while abstractedly wondering if I really did break the pipe; such was my weakness, such the power that was over and around my young life, and is yet, even to this very hour.

"My father gathered up the scattered fragments of the broken treasure and cast them into the fire; and from that day to this, he has never alluded in any manner to that occurrence. Always kind and tender to me, he seems to be ever endeavoring to atone for some wrong, and his long-continued silence assures me how vividly and regretfully he remembers his violence toward me."

"Shocking!" ejaculated Lizzie with emotion.

"Yes, it is shocking, dear Lizzie; for the horrible truth is ever before me, and this hated scar is the seal of the first lie of my tender young life. I never comb my hair away from my face, so morbidly am I impressed with the fear that those who see it will read the cause of its existence. Oh! Lizzie, that falsehood, and that cruel deception imposed upon a helpless child, were terrible indeed, too terrible to be borne.

Leah Mordecai

"But I must proceed. I have dwelt thus minutely upon this first unhappy incident of my childhood, because it is a sort of guide—post to a long and dreary waste of years. It forms the headstone of my departed freedom, for, as I have said, in that evil moment when I yielded to her wicked, imperious will, I lost all moral power, and to this day, am worse than her vassal. Try as I may, I cannot shake off the habit; it has become second nature, and her influence now is so withering that I dare not make resistance; and yet, I despise myself for my weakness. Pity me, Lizzie, do not blame me! There's a moral want about me somewhere, Heaven knows, that no human agency can supply.

"My mother's assumed fondness for me led my father to believe that she loved me truly, and was tender and kind as she should be. He never dreamed of her deception. And to this day, he knows nothing of it, for I have never told him any of my trials and sorrows, since the day he struck me that undeserved blow. I love my father tenderly, and yet I cannot, dare not, unfold to his blinded vision the facts that have so long been concealed from him. No, Lizzie, I would rather suffer on as I must do, than darken his life by such a discovery.

"Thus you see something of how the years passed on. I, a helpless, ill-used orphan, growing older and stronger day by day, and yet morally weaker and weaker, with no will or power of resistance, till I wonder sometimes that I am not an imbecile indeed.

"I thank the great God for my school—days. They have been days of pleasure and benefit to me. They have taken me from that home where I withered as the dew withers before the glaring sun, and cast me among pleasant friends, who seem to love me, and at least are true and kind. True and kind! Dear Lizzie, you cannot comprehend the significance of that expression. To my starved, wretched heart, these words are the fulness of all speech. I comprehend their meaning, and regard them as I do the burning stars afar, shining dimly upon a darkened world.

"Yes; again I say, I thank the great God for these school—days, that led me to know you, Lizzie you, to whom my heart has learned to turn as a wounded, helpless bird would turn to its mother's sheltering wing for safety and protection."

Touched by Leah's story, and her protestations of love, Lizzie bowed her head in her hands, and a few tears fell through the slender fingers. Observing these tears, Leah bent forward and kissed them away, saying, "These are the first tears I ever saw fall for me." Then she continued:

"It is not necessary to dwell on the innumerable instances of cruelty and wrong that have marked my life, from the period just mentioned, on to the present. It is enough to say that many events in my home—life have left their searing impress on my heart and brain; and many, I thank God, have faded from my memory. But when I was fifteen, about the time you and I entered this seminary, an event took place, that has deeply wounded my heart, and will leave it sore forever. It was this:

"Very early on the morning of my fifteenth birthday, my father came to my chamber and congratulated me with many kisses, giving me his blessing. Then he said:

"My daughter, I have here the miniature of your mother, taken before your birth. I had it set in diamonds then, for you, my child, little dreaming she would so soon be taken from us both. I have kept it securely locked away, waiting till you were old enough properly to appreciate its value. Now to—day, on your fifteenth birth—day, I have called forth the treasure, and give it to you forever. Take it; keep it carefully, my child, for the sake of the living as well as the dead.' My father laid the miniature in my hand, and turned away with ill—disguised emotion. Softly, and with trembling hand, I opened the casket that contained the treasure, and for the first time since her death, my eyes rested upon the dimly remembered features of my angel mother.

"O Lizzie Heartwell! At the first glimpse of that sweet, but half—forgotten face, I fell, like a helpless thing that I was, to the floor, prostrate with emotion. How long I remained thus overcome by sorrow and weeping, I know

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not. I knew nothing till the old familiar voice, harsh, cold, and cruel, fell upon my ear as the door opened.

"Leah Mordecai, why are you lying there crying like a booby? What's the matter with you?" said my mother.

"Involuntarily I hushed my sobs, dried my tears, and arose to my feet.

"What have you there, baby?" she continued.

"Without a word I handed her the casket, and as she regarded the sweet, mild face with cruel scorn, she said:

"What's this you are blubbering over? Didn't you ever see a painted-faced doll before? Who gave you this?"

"My father," I replied fearfully; "and it's the picture of my mother, my own dear mother that's dead."

"My reply seemed to enrage her, and she said, "The diamonds are beautiful, but I can't say as much for the face. I suppose you consider that you have no mother now; from all this whimpering. See here, Leah," she added as a sudden thought seemed to strike her, "You are too young to keep such a costly gift as this. I'll take it, and keep it myself till you have sense enough to know what diamonds are."

"Give it back to me," I said excitedly, daring to hold out my trembling hand.

"Indeed I shall not," she angrily replied, pushing back the importunate hand.

"Your father is a fool, to have given a child like you such a valuable thing as this. I'll see if he gives my Sarah this many diamonds when she is but a child of fifteen. And now, mind you, Leah Mordecai," she continued, with a triumphant smile upon her wicked face, "if you dare tell your father I took this from you, you'll repent it sorely. Mark my warning; say nothing about it unless asked, and then say you gave it to me for safe keeping." She dropped the casket into her dress pocket, and swept coldly out of the room.

"The door closed behind her, and I was alone in my misery and my wrath. In my bitterness I cursed the woman who thus dared to crush a helpless little worm beneath her wicked foot, and, falling on my face again, I implored the great God to let me die, to take me to that mother whom I so deeply mourned.

"It's growing chilly out here, Lizzie," continued Leah after a pause; "suppose we leave the corridor, and find shelter in the hall of the wing. We can sit in the great window at the end of the hall, overlooking the sea. There we shall be secure from intrusion."

Lizzie bowed assent, and after the two girls were snugly seated in the great window, Leah continued her story:

"She has kept the miniature to this day, and for three long years, no matter how my eyes have longed for a glimpse of that sweet face, I have never dared to ask for it. Many times she has worn it, in great state, in her treacherous bosom, my father always supposing that I loaned it as a special token of affection, such, at least, was the story she told him, and I have never dared contradict her." As Leah finished this incident, her dark eye seem to kindle with a new light and a quiver ran through her frame. She added, with strange emphasis:

"One thing I would say, Lizzie, before passing from this subject, and mark my words; my spirit is not so broken nor my sense of justice so blunted but that one day I shall have that miniature again. I have sworn it, and as I live, I'll keep my vow. But I must hasten on; it is already growing late. I come now to the last and sorest trouble of my life.

Leah Mordecai

"For many years I have known Mark Abrams, the son of our rabbi. We have been children and friends together, almost from the time my mother died. He was always so gentle and kind to me in his boyhood, that I often wondered what the world would be without Mark Abrams in it. He was always the object of my childish admiration, and, indeed, the only friend I ever had who dared, or cared to show me any kindness. A year ago now; a little more than a year, he whispered to me a tender tale of love, and my poor heart thrilled with ecstasy at his words. Yes, he asked me to become his wife, when my school days should be ended, and I promised him that I would.

"No one knew at that sweet time, of his love for me. I did not dream of it myself, till he told me surprised me, with the unexpected revelation. I begged that our happiness be kept a secret until my school days were finished. This was my fatal mistake. You know our people have few secret engagements, and if I had only allowed Mark to speak to my father at first, then all would have been well. But the enemy has at last overtaken me, and I fear I am conquered and ruined forever. For some months I have thought that my step-mother suspected my secret, and have imagined that I could detect her intention to break the attachment if she found her suspicion to be correct. Her every action has betrayed this intention. I have at times vaguely hinted my trials and sorrows to Mark, but of the extent of that woman's evil designing, he has had no conception. I was ashamed to acquaint him fully with her true character. Would that I had, dear Lizzie! would that I had, long ago! My fears that Mark was being led into the subtle web of that evil woman's weaving, and would surely be taken from me, were confirmed by his absence from Bertha Levy's tea-party. He promised me to attend, and my step-mother offered some inducement that kept him away. To resist her will, one must have the strength of a Hercules.

"Lizzie! Lizzie! I cannot tell you more; the sequel of my fears is too dreadful to unfold! Even yet, my poor heart struggles to disbelieve it." Leah dropped her head for a moment, while a sigh escaped her tremulous lips, and was silent.

"Go on, dear Leah. Tell me all," said Lizzie.

And Leah continued. "For a long time I have been perplexed to know where my step-mother kept the key to a small cabinet drawer that I believed contained my long-hidden miniature. By diligent search, I found it the day after Bertha's party, and, feeling unusually unhappy, I determined, if possible, to see my mother's face once more. It was Sunday, and that night we were invited to some private theatricals at Mr. Israel Bachman's, whose daughter had just returned from school. You may remember his house on Vine street. I declined to attend. By remaining at home, I thought I could accomplish my purpose of discovering the hidden treasure.

"The cabinet was placed in the large closet attached to the sitting-room. To explore it, I must conceal myself in the closet. After the family departed, leaving me sole occupant of the house, a friend called. When her visit ended, I was interrupted again by the servant, so that it was late before I could begin my secret work. At last all was quiet, and my explorations began. First one key, and then another, was applied to the lock, but without success. I worked away hopefully, knowing the right one would come in turn if I were not interrupted. Drawer after drawer was opened and when the right keys were at last found, not one yielded up the coveted prize. I trembled with fear of disappointment. Only one remained to be opened; what if that were empty, too? Slowly and with trembling hand I applied the key to this last delicate lock. Just then I heard a sound in the hall, and footsteps approaching. What should I do? Without stopping to reflect, I closed the closet-door. As I did so, the sitting-room door was opened, and my step-mother entered, accompanied by Mark Abrams.

"Be seated," my mother said blandly; and in my covert I wondered what could be coming. Mark obeyed, and drawing his chair nearer the fire waited till she had laid aside her wrappings and seated herself in front of him. Then she said:

"It's too bad, Mark, that your love for Leah is so misplaced; but, as I have told you before as mildly as possible, there are reasons why her father would never consent reasons that are unalterable. Aside from poor Leah's

unfortunate deformity, there '

"'Deformity!' ejaculated Mark, in utter surprise, 'I would like to know how she is deformed? She, the most perfect model that was ever cast in mortal mould.'

"'Still, my friend, I feel that it is but just and proper that I acquaint you with a painful fact; dear Leah is deformed.'

"'And how?' Mark uttered hoarsely.

"'She suffers from a spinal affection, that will in time render her a hideous deformity, and perhaps a helpless, hopeless invalid.'

"'Merciful Heavens!' uttered Mark, with shocked and incredulous expression, as he sat gazing into the fire. At length he said:

"'God knows how sorry I am to hear that, for I love her, love her fondly!'

"'Quickly discerning the effect of her story, my step-mother with well-feigned feeling continued:

"'After Leah's school-term is ended, her father contemplates taking her to Europe for medical advice and skill, and in case of improvement, which is scarcely supposable or to be hoped for, he has long ago promised her hand to the son of a wealthy cousin somewhere in that country Baron von something I can't remember hard names.'

"'At length Mark looked up again and said:

"'Mrs. Mordecai, do not distress me farther. How can I credit your story? How can I believe that Miss Leah is aught but what she seems the embodiment of health and beauty? Alas! for my broken, vanished hopes! Alas! for my golden dreams of the future!'

"'Oh! don't take things too much to heart, my boy. Leah does not care for you very much anyway. It will be but a small disappointment to her, if indeed she ever thought seriously of marrying you; and I remember to have heard her say that she never intended to marry conscious of her affliction, I suppose.'

"'Mark winced under these words, and replied, 'She need not have deceived me.'

"'Oh! girls will be girls, you know; and after you get over this trouble, if you still like the name, remember, here is Leah's sister Sarah, as fine a girl as you'll find anywhere, if she is my daughter.'

"'I could love her for her sister's sake, if nothing more,' said Mark with feeling; and then he bowed his head upon the marble mantel and looked steadily into the fire without a word.

"'Then if you desire,' continued my step-mother, with a little assumed hesitation, 'after reflection, you may speak to her father on the subject. Sarah will make a fine wife.'

"'Think of me, Lizzie! Think of me, in that miniature dungeon, silently listening to the death sentence of my earthly happiness! Think of my weakness, in mutely listening to the lie that was, perhaps, to wreck my whole life! Think of me, and pity me!'" Leah brushed away a tear, the first that had fallen from her stony eyes since the beginning of her story; and then she continued:

"'If Mark heeded these last words of my step-mother, he gave no evidence of it, for he continued to stare blindly at the glowing grate, apparently oblivious of every surrounding object. At length he aroused, and said:

Leah Mordecai

"I must be going. Mrs. Mordecai, I bid you good night."

"Stay longer, I pray," rejoined my step-mother; and he replied:

"Not to-night; it's late now, and I must be alone. Alone!" he reiterated sorrowfully, and then was gone in a moment. All this time, Lizzie, I had stood shivering in my hiding-place, with my trembling hand almost benumbed by the cold granite knob, by which I held the door. I scarcely dared to breathe, for fear my presence would be revealed. The ordeal was terrible, I assure you! I thanked Heaven when I heard the library door open and close again, this time upon the receding figure of my step-mother, for then I was free again free to breathe, and to move, and to sigh, if I chose, without betraying my hiding-place, or the cause of my concealment. I need not, could not if I chose, tell you of my feelings on that occasion. I remember them but dimly, even now. But this much I do remember, and so it shall be. I resolved that Mark Abrams should be free, rather than be undeceived by any word of mine. My pride, the little that is left in my soul, and my resentment, the shadow of it that yet lingers about me, struggled for a time in a fierce contest, and as usual, I yielded up my rights, and succumbed again to a cruel fate. My heart has given up its treasure, and he will never know aught of the bitter sacrifice. I feel that I am ill-fated and despised, Lizzie; and feeling so, I do not desire to overshadow the life of Mark Abrams. I love him too much, too dearly, ever to becloud his future with my miserable life. I would rather live on and suffer in silence, as I have done for years, unloved and unloving to the end."

Here the beautiful girl ceased her story. Both friends for a time were silent. In Lizzie's soft blue eyes the tears glistened, and she looked with surprise into the cold, hard face of Leah, which had lost its gentle expression, and seemed petrified by this recital of her woes. Then she said:

"Would I could help you, Leah, by sharing your sorrow."

"No mortal being can help me, Lizzie. I am ill-starred and ill-fated, I fear."

Filled with sympathy, and with a heavy heart, Lizzie bent her head, and laid it in Leah's lap; and her silent prayer, though unheard by mortal ear, ascended to the throne of the Eternal Father, and was answered in the far-off future.

"It's late, and we must go," said Leah; "already the street lamps are being lighted, and I shall have to render some good excuse for being out so late."

"So we must; it is growing late," Lizzie replied.

"Remember now, I trust you, Lizzie," said Leah.

"Never fear; I shall never betray your confidence."

Then the two girls left the window, walked hastily through the hall and corridor, down the spiral staircase, out into the street, and turned homeward.

CHAPTER VII.

THE two friends walked side by side in silence the distance of a square, and then their paths divided.

As Lizzie Heartwell turned the corner that separated her from her companion, she drew her shawl more closely around her benumbed form and quickened the steps that were hurrying her onward to her uncle's home. Her mind was filled with sad and gloomy thoughts of the life and character of her beloved friend. The misty

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twilight seemed deepened by the tears that bedimmed her vision, as she thought again and again of the life blighted by sorrow, and the character warped by treachery and deceit.

"Alas!" thought she, "had the forming hand of love but moulded that young life, how perfect would have been its symmetry! What a fountain of joy might now be welling in that heart's desert waste, where scarcely a rill of affection is flowing."

Filled with these and like thoughts, Lizzie reached the doorway of her uncle's house, and was soon admitted beneath its hospitable roof.

Leah Mordecai, when separated from Lizzie, plodded straight forward toward her father's elegant home. The street lamps shone brightly, but the departing daylight, that was spreading its gloom over the world, was not half so dark and desolate as her poor heart. Yet Leah seldom wept her tears did not start, like watchful sentinels, at every approach of pain or joy. Only when the shrivelled fountain of her heart was deeply stirred, did this fair creature weep. Calm, placid, and beautiful in the lamp-light, the features of her young face betrayed no emotion, as she passed one and another, on beyond the din of the garrulous multitude.

At last she stood before her father's gate, and rang the bell.

"Is that you, Miss Leah?" said Mingo the porter, as he opened the door of the lodge.

"Yes, Mingo, I am late this evening. Has my father come home?"

"Has just passed in, miss."

"I am thankful for that," she murmured to herself. "Thank you, Mingo," she added aloud, as the faithful attendant closed the door.

Nervous from excitement and emotion, it was late that same night before Lizzie Heartwell could quiet herself to slumber. Leah's melancholy story still haunted her.

At length she slept and dreamed slept with the tear-stains on her cheeks, and dreamed a strange, incongruous, haunting dream, reverberating with the deadly war of artillery, and flashing with blazing musketry. The sea, too, the quiet harbor, that she always loved to look upon, was agitated and dark with mad, surging waves.

The gray old fort also stood frowning in the distance, with strange dark smoke issuing from behind its worn battlements. And amid this confusion of dreams and distorted phantasms of the brain, ever and anon appeared the sweet, sad face of Leah Mordecai, looking with imploring gaze into the face of her sleeping friend.

But at length this disturbed and mysterious slumber was ended by the morning sun throwing its beams through the window pane and arousing the sleeper to consciousness. Once awakened, Lizzie sprang from her bed, and involuntarily drew aside the snowy curtain that draped the east window. Then she looked toward the blue sea that surrounded the fort, and exclaimed, "How funny! Defiance is standing grim and dark in its sea-girt place as usual, and all is quiet in the harbor. How funny people have such strange dreams. But I fear the vision of that smoking fortress and that angry harbor will not fade soon from my memory; perhaps I have a taint of superstition in my nature. But I must hasten, or I'll be late for the morning worship. I believe I'll tell my uncle of my dream."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE month sped on. The end of Madam Truxton's year was rapidly advancing. School-friendships that had

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grown and matured within the seminary walls, now deepened and intensified as the day for final separation approached. All were studying, with a zeal commendable and necessary, too, for the final ordeal through which Madam Truxton's pupils must necessarily pass.

Since that dark, gloomy day when Leah Mordecai acquainted Lizzie Heartwell with some of the facts of her sad life, not a word further had been spoken on the subject. But they had seemed bound to each other by an indissoluble bond of love. No word harsher than a caress, and no look sterner than a smile, had Lizzie ever cast upon Leah; and as the thirsty, withered flowers drink up the dew of heaven, so this girl of misfortune received that tender, unalloyed love.

The inexorable duties of the school were pressing, forbidding long confidential talks and clandestine interviews. Each and all were impressed with the fact that they were approaching an important, and, to some, a dreaded epoch in their lives.

Leah had long since acquainted Lizzie with the consummation of her fears, informing her of the engagement between Mark Abrams and her sister Sarah. With this information this avowal of her broken heart and hopes Leah had enshrouded the subject with silence and laid it away, as we lay our treasures in the tomb. Lizzie, always compassionate and discreet, made no mention of it; and so the silence was unbroken as the days passed on.

In the Citadel Square, far above Madam Truxton's seminary, the drilling, drilling, drilling, was daily going on in these sunny days. Drilling, drilling, drilling for the coming battle of life, or for the crimson strife of war that might desolate a land. Which was it? Only the veiled years could answer this inquiry. Meanwhile, the drilling still went on.

High hopes filled manly bosoms, and ambitious hearts throbbed wildly, as the approaching end of the military year drew nigh.

Emile Le Grande sat dozing in his private chamber late one evening, at the close of a severe day's duty, seated in a capacious arm-chair, with his head dropped upon his breast. The young man was dozing over the journal that he held in his unconscious grasp. Had one stolen beside him and looked down, he might have read the following entries, beginning many months previous to this evening.

"January. I have seen the fair Leah but three times since Bertha Levy's tea-party, yet I have passed her house daily for that purpose ever since. Zounds! It's an ill fate, I swear! . . .

"February. How my heart beat to-day, as I was walking arm-in-arm with George Marshall, and we suddenly confronted the beautiful Jewess as she was turning into Prince street.

"What a magnificent face, Emile! What Hebrew maiden is that bowing to you?"

"Miss Mordecai,' I proudly replied, 'the Jewish banker's daughter, of whom you have heard me speak before.'

"Yes, certainly. Well, she is beautiful. You seem a little bewitched, boy,' he said. And I said nothing.

"March. I am more and more perplexed. The Jewess is at the bottom of it all. To-day I hinted to Helen something of my fancy for Leah Mordecai. She only laughed. I was irritated by her ridicule, and I told her I intended to marry Leah if I could. Her silly reply was, 'Well, suppose you can't?' School-girls are intolerably silly, at Helen's age! She thinks now of nothing and nobody but Henry Packard, and he's the stupidest cadet in the institute everybody knows that. I wish I had a sister that could sympathize with me. Wh-e-e-w! I am altogether out of sorts. Maybe I'll be all right to-morrow.

Leah Mordecai

"April. Prof. Brown said to-day that I was not studying hard enough, and if I did not spur up I should come out shabbily at the end of the term.

"George Marshall, too, good fellow that he is, says I think too much about the girl. Maybe I do; but I should like him to tell me how a fellow is to help it. That Jewess bewilders me! If old Mordecai was not rich, I should love her for her dreamy eyes. I'll swear, ever since she spoke to me so sweetly a week ago, and gave me a clasp of her white, slender hand, I haven't cared whether I was prompt at parade, studies, or anything else so I could always be prompt at meeting her. She looks doleful sometimes. She cannot be very happy. I wonder what my mother would think if she could read this journal. But, old book, you never tell any tales, do you?

"May. The days are growing warmer beautiful days, too. Everything is in bloom, and the old Queen City looks charming. The girls, too, Madam Truxton's and all others, swarm about the town like bees in a rose-garden. I meet them at every turn.

"My uniform is getting rather shabby; the buttons and lace are quite tarnished. I must have a new suit before long.

"I am a lucky fellow of late have seen Leah M. many times. She came home with Helen twice, and I have walked with her many times. I have told her that I love her, but she does not seem inclined to trust me. Only to-day I sent her a magnolia leaf, upon which was written, 'Je vous aime, ma belle Juive.' Helen said she smiled as she took it and said, 'Thank him, if you please.' That was favorable, I think. Yes I consider myself a lucky fellow.

"June 1. I am all out of sorts to-night. Things have not gone smoothly at the Citadel to-day. I was again reprimanded by that old bald-headed Brown. He must forget that I am a man, and not a mere boy. I don't care whether 'I pass,' or not, as the boys say.

"'Deficient in mathematics,' the professor said, gravely; and I suppose I am. I never could endure figures, and yet I must make my living by them.

"French I understand pretty well. I depend upon that to help me through.

"George Marshall will do all he can for me, I know; there's no better cadet in the institute; old Brown says that himself. I find that George was right when he told me long ago that I had too many thoughts in my head about the girls. Deuce take the thoughts! but they are there. My very proper and punctilious mother, too, has been scoring me lately. Somehow she found out my fancy. Whew! how she did scold me! Said she would like to know if I had forgotten the blood that flowed in the Le Grande veins! If I were lost to family pride and honor so far as to mingle my blood with that of the old pawnbroker, Mordecai! How she looked! How she stamped the floor with her dainty foot when I hinted at the fact that my maternal grandfather was neither duke nor lord! How she hushed my 'impertinence,' as she styled it, with such invectives as 'fool, idiot, plebeian!' Heigho! But I felt that it was unmanly in me to provoke mother so, and I begged her pardon.

"I did not promise her, though, to leave off loving Leah Mordecai. I did not tell her, either, that I had asked Leah to be my wife one of these days, when school-days were ended.

"June 5. The closing exercises of the schools have been hurried up this year, as the weather is exceedingly warm, and the Board of Health fear a return of the terrible scourge, yellow fever, that so devastated this fair city five years ago. Next week, Madam Truxton's seminary closes, and that is one week before the institute does. Invitations to Madam's levee are already out. The graduating class of cadets are invited lucky fellows!

"Helen seems really sad at the prospect of parting with her school-days and her friends. But then she is eighteen, and that's quite old enough for a girl to come out. She says, too, that of all the girls at school, Lizzie Heartwell will be the most regretted when she leaves the Queen City for her home in a distant State. She is quite a pretty

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girl, but too religious, I should judge, from what Helen says. Her mother is a widow. I guess they are poor.

"Mother is quite reconciled to me again, and spoke playfully to me last night about marrying Miss Belle Upton, who is to visit Helen next week and attend the closing of Madam Truxton's school. Well, 'we shall see what we shall see,' but I hardly think I will. She can hardly eclipse 'Leah Mordecai the beautiful,' that's the way I write it now."

CHAPTER IX.

THE examination—days at Madam Truxton's were over. The long—dreaded reviews had been passed with credit to both pupils and instructors. The certificates of scholarship, and the "rewards of merit," had been given to the fortunate competitors; the long—coveted diplomas awarded to the expectant "finishing class," and that memorable term of school life was closed forever. The hour for the event had come. The grand old drawing—rooms above the assembly hall in the spacious building were filled to repletion filled with the patrons and select guests that were honored with the fastidious Madam's courtesy. It was an elegant assembly, one characteristic of the Queen City in her days of unostentatious aristocracy, of gentle—bred men and women.

Conspicuous among the famed guests were the three—score cadets, themselves just ready to emerge from college walls and step forth with triumphant tread upon life's broad opening field.

The "finishing class" numbered more than a score of girls all young, some gifted, many beautiful whose homes were scattered far and wide through the country; young girls who, for many months, and even years, had lived and studied and loved together, with all the ardor and strength of youth. Now they were to be sundered; sundered with no prospect of future reunion.

All felt this approaching separation with more or less sorrow, according to their varying natures; and some contemplated it with deep regret.

The greetings, congratulations, and presentations were over, and Madam Truxton, in all her stately elegance, had at last relaxed her rigid vigilance, and the "finishing class" were free free to wander for the first time, and that first the last too, among the spacious halls and corridors of the old school building, as young ladies. Free to receive the smiles and addresses of the long—forbidden cadets without fear of madam's portentous frown.

At length the sound of music rose upon the air. Knotted groups here and there bespoke the preparation for the dance. Sets were forming in drawing—rooms and halls, and impatient feet were moving to the measure of the prelude.

"Miss Heartwell, may I claim your hand for the quadrille?" said George Marshall, bowing before Lizzie at the presentation of Madam Truxton herself.

"I thank you, I never dance, Mr. Marshall."

"Not dance! How's that?"

"Never learned, sir."

"That's stranger still. I supposed all of madam's young ladies danced."

"In general they do," replied Lizzie, "but from peculiar circumstances I am an exception to the general rule. If you desire a partner in the dance, allow me to present you to my friend, Bertha Levy. She dances like a fay."

Leah Mordecai

"Not just now, thank you, Miss Heartwell; if it is not impertinent, I would like to know why you do not dance."

"Well, it's a simple story, quickly told; and if you will listen a moment I'll inform you, if you desire."

"With pleasure. Go on."

"Melrose, my native home, in the State of , is a quiet little town, with little social life and less gayety. My mother, too, is a widow, who has lived in great seclusion ever since my father's death, which occurred when I was a little child. I have been her only companion in all these years of bereavement and sorrow, and it has never been her desire that I should indulge in any of the pleasures and gayeties that young people are fond of. From these causes my life has assumed a sombre tone that may seem, and indeed is, unnatural in the young. Yet, as I have known nothing else all my life, it is no trial for me to forego the pleasures that are so alluring to you, perhaps, Mr. Marshall."

George Marshall made no reply, and for a time seemed absorbed in contemplation. He had listened attentively to this simple, half-told history of her life. And as he marked the gentle expression of her spirituelle face, she became in his eyes a model of beauty. The allusion to the death of her father had recalled to his mind the time and manner of his own father's death a time when the terrible plague of yellow fever had swept over the Queen City with devastating wing. Observing George Marshall's silent, absorbed manner, Lizzie continued:

"You think me very uninteresting, I dare say. Young ladies who do not dance are generally so considered. Allow me to present you to some of my friends who will "

"I beg pardon, Miss Heartwell, for my inattention. I was thinking of the past the past recalled by your own story. Excuse my abstraction, I pray."

"But the young ladies?" said Lizzie.

"I do not care to dance now, if you will allow me the pleasure of a promenade," he replied.

"Certainly I will," replied Lizzie with a graceful bend of the shapely head; and clasping with her timid little hand the strong arm of the manly cadet, she passed with him from the lower drawing-room across the hall to the library.

"There's more room in the corridor than here," said Lizzie; "suppose we go there?"

"First let me ask a question, suggested by the musical instrument I see standing in the library. Do you sing? Do you sing with the harp?"

"I do."

"Will you not sing for me?"

"I will, with pleasure, if you will make room in the library," she replied with unaffected simplicity. The library was occupied by a number of matronly ladies and elderly gentlemen all of the guests who were not participating in the dance. Lizzie bowed her head slightly, and passed to the harp, now silent in one corner. Without hesitation she seated herself before it, and the slender fingers grasped the strings of the instrument with a masterly touch, running through a soft, sweet prelude of tender chords. Her voice at last trilled forth in the charming strains of the old Scotch ballad, "Down the burn, Davy, love."

Leah Mordecai

Concluding this old favorite air, she sang again, with sweetness, the witching song, "I know a bank whereon the wild thyme blows."

Then rising from the harp, she said, with sweet accent and sweeter smile, "Now that I have bewitched you with my music, Mr. Marshall, I am ready for the promenade on the corridor."

These words so lightly spoken by the girl, were but the utterance of a truth of which she had no suspicion. George Marshall was indeed bewitched, and bowing a silent assent, he offered his arm to the enchantress, and soon Lizzie found herself among the dancers, who were seeking temporary relaxation from the exercise, scattered in groups here, there, and everywhere about the spacious building.

Out into the long balcony, where the silvery moonlight lay softly as dew upon the flowers, George Marshall led the way, with the young girl clinging timidly to the brave strong arm, that for months had known no tenderer touch than the cold, cruel steel of the musket, the constant companion of the cadet in the military course just closing.

They passed in silence through the corridor, and at last stood at the eastern end that overlooked the sea, stretching her arms around the child of her bosom, the devoted Queen City.

George Marshall, always taciturn, was now painfully silent. His brain, always quick and clear to comprehend a problem in Legendre, now seemed beclouded and sluggish. At length, embarrassed by the oppressive silence, Lizzie endeavored to arouse her companion by remarking,

"Are you fond of the sea, Mr. Marshall?"

Still gazing eastward over the deep, he replied abstractedly:

"Do you mean, am I fond of sea-life? If so, I answer most emphatically, No. There's but one life in this world that attracts me" and here his manner grew constrained as he continued "but one, and that's the life of a soldier. I love military life and service, and when my course is finished which time is near at hand if I am successful, as I hope to be, I shall offer myself to my country, and await impatiently her refusal or acceptance of my humble services. But I beg your pardon, if my enthusiasm has led me away from your inquiry. I only like to look upon the sea; its grandeur in a storm, and the peaceful repose that follows, excite my admiration, but that's all. It's something too treacherous to love."

"You fear the water, then," asked Lizzie smiling.

"Look to-night, if you please," was the answer, "at the soft silver sheen that covers its beautiful blue bosom, and imagine, if you can, such peaceful water engulfing a hapless bark within its silent depths! Oh no; I only admire the sea as a part of God's wonderful creation. But, Miss Heartwell, there's something just visible in the hazy distance that I do love; it's old Defiance. You see the lights of the old fort twinkling far off on the water? They stir within me the martial spirit, and seem to beckon me on to an unknown, but longed-for destiny. It may be fancy, yet there has been a peculiar feeling toward that old fort ever since I first became a cadet at the Citadel. Why do you frown? Do you object to my enthusiasm?"

"By no means," replied Lizzie quickly; "but, strangely as it seems to fascinate you, it has always repelled, and even terrified me. It's the only object of the beautiful harbor that has ever cast a shadow across the loveliness of the sea. I hate it; and I have often wished the sea would draw it silently into its hungry depths, and leave no trace of it behind."

George laughed.

Leah Mordecai

"Your fancy amuses me," he said. "It would never do to obliterate old Defiance, for then the enemy, should they ever come, would find easy access to the Queen City, and ruin and destruction might follow."

"Well, I guess my wishes will be unavailing in the future, as they have been in the past; and as I leave the Queen City to-morrow, old Defiance will fade from my sight though not from my memory, for a long, long time. So for the present I wish it no ill."

"Indeed," replied George Marshall in surprise, "do you leave the Queen City to-morrow so soon?"

"Yes, I go by steamer by the Firefly, that leaves to-morrow for the port of , in my native State, and from there to Melrose, where I live."

"At what hour does the steamer leave?" inquired the young man thoughtfully.

"At six P.M., uncle tells me."

"And you leave so soon six P.M. to-morrow?" he asked. "Maybe I am selfish in monopolizing you so long, Miss Heartwell. I have two friends you must know before the evening closes Edwin Calhoun and Emile Le Grande. Have you met them? The dancing has ceased again, and we'll look them up."

"Thank you."

"Before we leave this moonlit spot, however, Miss Heartwell, I beg that you make friends with old Defiance, for my sake, and recall that cruel wish concerning him," he said playfully, and with an arch smile.

Lizzie replied, "For your sake, I will, and for yours only;" and throwing a kiss across the silvery sea, she said, "Take that, old fort, as a peace-offering."

The winds sighed and the sea murmured as they turned to rejoin the revellers, and that sportive kiss was borne away on the wandering breeze.

The revelry must end. Madam's love-bound pupils must be separated. The adieus must be spoken, but there must be no tears; that were a weak and indecorous manifestation of feeling, in madam's estimation. Blandly bowing her stately head, and kindly congratulating each upon having "finished," and finished well, madam gracefully waved them out of her presence, into the future, with a gentle motion of her jewelled hand.

"I shall see you to-morrow, Lizzie," whispered Leah Mordecai, as she passed from the seminary escorted by Emile Le Grande.

"Certainly, at any hour, and do not disappoint me. Remember it's the last day."

All were gone. The stars twinkled faintly in the sky. Every light in madam's great house was extinguished, and all sound of that evening's revel hushed forever.

CHAPTER X.

THE morning sun threw its ruddy beams, warm almost to tropical heat, through the half-closed casement of Leah Mordecai's apartment, and the intrusive light opened the dark, dreamy eyes to consciousness. The hour was late. Toil-worn and languid from hard study and the relaxing climate, Leah rested in her bed reluctant to arise.

Leah Mordecai

"It's all over now; school—days are ended, and I am acknowledged a young lady, I suppose," thought Leah half—consciously, as she aroused at length from slumber. Then the thought came that it was the last day of Lizzie Heartwell's sojourn in the Queen City; and Leah sprang from her repose with a new and powerful impulse. "I shall spend these last hours with her," she muttered articulately, as she hastily performed the morning's simple toilet. "Yes, I'll tell her my secret, too, though to no living soul have I breathed it yet," she continued audibly, as she adjusted a pin here and there among the dark braids of her hair. At last, smoothing the jetty bands across the fair, oval forehead, she glanced back again to see that the scar she hated, dreadful scar was hidden. Then placing a knot of scarlet ribbon amid the delicate lace—work of her snowy morning dress, she languidly descended the stairs and entered the library, where her father sat awaiting her appearance.

Mr. Mordecai was proud of Leah; proud of her attainments at school, gratified with her grade of deportment, and delighted that she had "finished," and with so much credit. As she entered the library, he arose, and clasping her in his arms, imprinted first a good—morning and then a congratulatory kiss upon her face.

"I am proud of my daughter," he said; "proud that no one at Madam Truxton's excelled my own Leah. I am proud of your example to your sisters, and trust they will strive to emulate it."

"Thank you, father. I hope I shall never cause you shame," she replied with tenderness.

During this brief dialogue, the evil—eyed mother had sat an attentive listener, her jealous nature stirred to its depths. Then she said:

"If you are so proud of Leah now, what will you feel when Sarah is through school?"

"Additional happiness, I trust; and following her sister's example, she cannot disappoint papa," said Mr. Mordecai, stroking Sarah upon the head softly, as he arose and led the way to the breakfast table.

The morning repast was finished with more than becoming haste, for Mr. Mordecai had waited to welcome his daughter, and would consequently be late at his bank.

"It's real late," said Leah, as she followed her father from the house. "I hear the Citadel clock striking ten. I must spend the morning with Lizzie." Then donning the light Leghorn hat that gave her a gypsy—like appearance, she started forth toward Rev. Dr. Heartwell's unpretentious house. As she passed block and square that marked the distance, her heart was heavy and her thoughts were sorrowful. She realized that it was perhaps her final leave taking of her most cherished friend. Her path led past the walls of the dark, gray citadel, and as she cast a glance up toward its turreted heights, and its prison—like windows, she sighed a deep—drawn, heart—felt sigh. And why?

The gentle sea—breeze had arisen, and though it sported with the helpless ribbon upon her bosom, and kissed again and again the crimson cheeks, it could not cool the fires of anxiety and sorrow that burned within her heart. She felt that she was losing much in losing Lizzie Heartwell. And the fear was not an idle one.

Trembling with fatigue and deep—hidden emotion, Leah at length stood at the door of Dr. Heartwell's house, awaiting the answer of the porter.

The door opened. "M—m—miss L—l—lizzie s—s—says c—c—come right u—up stairs, M—m—iss M—m—ordecai," stammered out the polished black Hannibal who attended the door, known throughout the large circle of Dr. Heartwell's friends and acquaintances as a most accomplished servant and a most miserable stammerer.

"Very well; please show me the way," replied Leah, repressing a smile.

Leah Mordecai

Up two flights of stairs she followed the dark guide, and when they arrived at Lizzie's room, whose door stood ajar, he said, with a flourish of his right hand; "M-m-iss M-m-mordecai, M-m-iss L-l-lizzie."

"Well, Hannibal, why don't you tell me?" said Lizzie playfully; and Hannibal retreated below stairs, grinning and rubbing his head in confusion. The girls were left alone. Lizzie was busy packing trunks and arranging boxes, while every description of feminine paraphernalia was lying about the room in disorder.

"Now let me help you, dear," said Leah, "and then we can have a long talk."

"Thank you, so we will. I'll first tumble these things into that trunk quick as a flash, for Aunt Rose will not come up to inspect them, I guess; and when I get home my mother will give them a good overhauling. I am tired and worn out from hard study and excitement, and my good mother will excuse my disorder, this time. Cram them in. Here goes the shawl, now comes my dress, the muslin I wore last night. Don't let me crush that. I'll fold it carefully, for the sake of the compliment it secured me last night," said Lizzie, smiling as she turned the snowy garment about, folding it for the trunk.

"What was that?" said Leah.

"George Marshall said I looked like a pearl, my dress was so gauzy. How does that sound to-day? It sounded very well last night. I scarcely made him a reply. I don't know how to reply to such speeches, but I thought if I did look like a pearl in my gauzy robes, it was owing to my mother's good taste and skilful fingers, for no professional modiste touched or contrived my dress."

"It's as handsome as any Madame Aufait turns out, I think," said Leah.

"Not as handsome as yours, Leah; but then my mother has to consider the cost in everything, and you do not."

These words of Lizzie's, this kind and loving allusion to her mother's tenderness and never-wearying care, fell upon the heart of Leah as the cold, cruel steel falls upon the unoffending dove. She looked out of the window and brushed a tear from the fringed eyelids, that Lizzie might not see it.

Lizzie continued, "I must take care of this dress, Leah; I don't know when I shall have a new one again. Maybe, dear, the next time you hear from me, I'll be playing school ma'am, and such robes will not be often brought into use. How would you like to be my pupil, Leah?" she said, with a forced attempt at pleasantry.

Leah looked seriously at her friend a moment, and said, "You haven't any idea of teaching, really, Lizzie?"

"Yes, dear, I may teach. My mother is a widow, you know, and by no means wealthy. I am the oldest child. She has educated me at great sacrifice, with my dear uncle's assistance, and it would be wrong in me not to show my gratitude by at least endeavoring to maintain myself, if nothing more. Oh yes, love, by and by I shall be an angular school ma'am, unless" and she laughed a roguish, merry laugh "unless I get married."

"Dear me! how the wind blows!" said Leah, as the white muslin curtain flapped backward and forward in the playful breeze, ever and anon covering her beautiful head and face.

"Yes, Leah, this same sweet sea-breeze will soon waft me far from you, when to meet again, God only knows. I am about through this packing now, and we must have our talk our last, long, confidential chat, for many, many days." "Maybe years," Leah added sorrowfully.

"Here goes old trunk number one. Books, and everything pertaining to school-days, are tucked away in you;" and she turned the key. "This one, number two, I shall not close till Aunt Rose makes a little deposit in it of something

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for my mother so she requested me." Then stooping down, Lizzie drew forth from its hiding-place a carefully wrapped little bundle, and handing it to Leah, said:

"Here, dear, is a scarlet silk scarf, fringed with gold, that I desire to give you as a keepsake. It is something I prize, as it was brought from Greece by an uncle of mine, some years ago. Its colors will contrast beautifully with your sweet face; take it."

"Keep it yourself, Lizzie. I need nothing, I care for nothing, for personal adornment. You tell me I am beautiful, but that does not satisfy the heart that has suffered so from cruel wrong-doing. I care only for that of which I receive so little human sympathy and love. Take it back."

"No; keep it as a memento of my love, if you never care to wear it," said Lizzie.

Leah laid her arms around Lizzie's neck at these words, and bending her head kissed her again and again.

"Now I am done, let's sit here by the window that looks out toward the sea, and have our chat."

CHAPTER XI.

"TO-DAY you leave me, Lizzie," Leah began; "leave poor Leah with no one " then she stopped.

"Why do you hesitate? Is there something that troubles you?" Lizzie asked, observing Leah's hesitation.

"Yes," Leah said faintly, "there is something that troubles me something that I fear to tell even you, dear Lizzie."

"Can't you trust me?"

"Not that, Lizzie; but I am ashamed to tell you, and afraid too. But," she continued, "you know what I suffered about Mark Abrams, and how his love was taken from me and secured for another. Well" she hesitated again. "The secret I am about to disclose now, does not concern Mark Abrams, or any other Hebrew under the sun."

"Is it some love-affair with a Gentile?"

"Yes," whispered Leah, "and it greatly perplexes me. It is something that has been forced upon me, and tremblingly I come to you for advice."

"Whom does it concern?"

"One that tells me he loves me, and swears eternal devotion one whose name I hardly dare to mention."

"I hope he is worthy of you, whoever it may be."

"Have you not suspected me, Lizzie? Has not my tell-tale face betrayed me before? Can't you think who it is to whom I refer?"

"Can it be Emile Le Grande?" said Lizzie, after a moment's reflection, with a look of astonishment.

"Yes," faltered Leah, "he is the one that tells me he loves me."

"And do you love him, Leah?" said Lizzie, with some hesitation. The curtain that continued fluttering with

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renewed force was wafted full into the face of the young Jewess, and veiled the crimson blushes that overspread it. As gently as it came, the curtain floated back, and Lizzie detected the traces of Leah's sudden emotion. Without waiting for further inquiry, Leah continued:

"I determined I would tell you all, Lizzie, before we parted, and ask your advice. Yes, I think I do love Emile love him, because he says he loves me. Last night he urged me again to become his wife. I trembled like a frightened bird; I felt that I was listening to dangerous words, yet I had not courage to break away from him."

"Did he say anything else I mean about your being a Jewess?"

"Oh, yes; much. He said he cared nothing about that difference, if I did not; but I told him I did. I assured him that I had been reared a Hebrew of the straightest sect, and that my father would never consent to my marrying a Christian. At my remarks he laughed, and replied that he would take care of the opposition, if I would only marry him. He urged and pleaded with me to promise him, but I steadfastly refused. He is very fascinating though, and I think a dangerous man to come in the way of a poor, irresolute, unhappy girl like myself."

"Did he say much about the difference in religion, Leah?"

"He said something, not a great deal; said he was not religious himself; that one faith was about as useful to him as another, as he did not know positively which was the true one. He said he would as soon marry a Jewess as a Christian, so he loved her, and the religion might take care of itself."

"Did you ask if his parents knew of his love for you?"

"Yes. He replied that Helen knew of it, but he had not troubled himself to tell his parents. I did not like that remark; and I replied that they would doubtless object to my being a Jewess, should he tell them. He laughed at the bare suggestion, and I upbraided him a little for this apparent disregard of his parents."

"You might have referred him to the fifth commandment with propriety, Leah, I think."

"So I might, but did not think of it. I have told you about all now, Lizzie, and I want your opinion of such intermarrying. The subject stirs me deeply, and I have no other friend to whom I would dare confide it. I trust no one as I do you." Leah looked seriously and steadily into her friend's face, and Lizzie began:

"What I say now, Leah, is not intended as advice to you in regard to marrying Emile Le Grande, but only my opinion in general about marriages where such material differences exist. In the first place, a man who confesses that he has no religious faith, is to be pitied, if not despised. And I think an unbelieving Christian far worse than the most unbelieving Jew. It argues such an utter want of consistency and fidelity. I should fear to trust a man that could make such a confession. The Le Grandes are an irreligious family, and Emile's education has necessarily been neglected in that most important respect. In consequence of their want of religious principles, they are notoriously proud, haughty, and vain silly even of their family distinction. I imagine that Mrs. Le Grande could scarcely receive a deeper wound to her family pride, than from Emile's marrying a Jewess, no matter how lovely or high-born. All she knows or remembers of the Mordecais is, that the banker was once a poor, despised pawnbroker. No years of honest endeavor, or successful attainment, could wipe this fact from her retentive memory. It would be a misnomer, Leah, to call such a woman a Christian. She is an utter stranger to the sweet principles of faith and love embraced by true Christians, and practised by those who believe that they have 'passed from death unto life.'

"Then, your people, too, are unrelenting in their views on such unnatural marriages. Suppose you were to marry this man, in the face of the unyielding opposition of the parents on both sides there's little hope that they could be reconciled. You see at once how you might be considered an outcast from your people and his too. Your children

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would be neither Jew nor Christian; for all the external rites and ceremonies of the earth cannot transform a Christian into a Jew, or a Jew into a Christian. Accursed be the nominal Christian that would allow his children, by ceremony or rite, to be made nominally Jews. Such a one is worse than an infidel; and has denied the faith. God made the Hebrews a great and glorious people his own chosen children. But between Christians and Hebrew there is a wide, wide difference; and God made that, too.

"No; Leah, if I were advising a Jewess to marry a Gentile, which I am not doing, I would say, Select a man deeply rooted in religious principle, and clinging humbly to his Christian faith. Such a man would rarely, if ever, deceive or ill-use you."

"I see that you are right, Lizzie," interrupted Leah, apparently aroused by her companion's words. "I'll heed your teaching, and never listen to another word of love from the one who might lead me into temptation, and perhaps into a fatal snare. Alas!" she continued, with her dark eyes flashing, "but for a terrible lie, a cruel deception, I should still be the affianced of Mark Abrams, and happy in the hope of becoming his wife not an unhappy, disappointed girl, open to the flattery and fascinations of another man."

"Keep your resolve, Leah, if you can; and may the all-wise Father give you strength," replied Lizzie.

"God helping me, I will; but you know I am a weak and helpless creature, and when you are gone, my only bosom-comfort and faithful friend will have departed. Promise me that you will never cease to love me, and remember with pity the heart that loves you and will ever yearn to be with you."

Lizzie made no reply; the swelling heart choked down the utterances that struggled to escape her lips; and drawing Leah close to her bosom, she embraced her in a silent, warm, and tender clasp. "Trust me, even unto death," at length she whispered softly; and the reply came:

"I will."

At the sound of footsteps ascending the stairs, Lizzie said, "There comes Aunt Rose. You will be at the wharf this evening, Leah, to see me off, and to bid me God-speed with one of your bright smiles, that I may hope for a safe arrival at my destined port?"

"Well, we have had our talk without interruption, and so I'll leave you," said Leah. "Your aunt will certainly want you to herself awhile. I'll meet you at the wharf in time. Till then, good-by."

As Mrs. Heartwell entered Lizzie's room, Leah passed out; and a sweeter, sadder face Mrs. Heartwell said she had rarely seen.

CHAPTER XII.

THE hours stole on, and the one for Lizzie's departure was at hand. As the sun sank slowly down to rest, on that memorable sunny June day, clouds of crimson, purple, and gold, blended in fantastic shapes, overspread the broad horizon, and attracted the most casual observer by their wondrous beauty. Toward the eastern horizon the sky was blue and cloudless, blending with the water in a vast azure immensity.

The cool, crisp sea-breeze had dissipated the intense heat of the day, and crowds of gay pedestrians, and scores of liveried vehicles, were passing and repassing upon the fashionable boulevard, where the wealth and beauty of the Queen City daily gathered after the heat of the day was over.

The Firefly, laden with her burden, was ready at the pier, awaiting the signal to depart. Lizzie Heartwell's friends

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still lingered upon the inviting deck, reluctant to speak the parting word that must so surely come. Dr. and Mrs. Heartwell, her uncle and aunt, Judge Amity and his daughter, her Sabbath-school teacher, Bertha, Helen, and Leah, the remaining ones of the "indissoluble quartette," as the school-girls termed these friends, were assembled on the deck, and with them Emile Le Grande and her newly formed friend, George Marshall. In compliance with his promise he had come to speed the parting vessel with good wishes, and watch its receding form till it was lost from view upon the trackless waters.

As the citadel gun fired its sunset signal, the planks were ordered in, friends rushed on shore, and then the Firefly moved from her moorings, to plough the deep again. As George Marshall spoke his last adieu, he slipped a tiny billet-doux into the hand of the departing girl, who half heeding the action, dropped it into her pocket, and sat down in loneliness upon the deck, to watch the slowly vanishing shore. Fainter and dimmer grew the speck upon the deep to the friends who watched on shore, fainter and dimmer in the gathering twilight, till the bark rounded old Defiance, and was divided by distance and darkness from their vision.

When Lizzie Heartwell, attended by the kind captain, descended below deck, she remembered the little missive, and drawing it from its hiding-place, read:

"Miss HEARTWELL: What would you think, if my wanderings should lead me, some day, to Melrose?
"Regretfully, "G.M."

"Think I should like to see you," uttered the young girl, with a smile, as she folded the note again out of sight.

As the last glimpse of the Firefly faded from the vision of the sad-eyed watchers, they turned slowly from their lookout of sorrow, and bent their steps homeward.

"It's growing late, Miss Leah," said Emile, who stood near the young Jewess. "May I see you safely home?"

"Thank you, but it is not too late for me to go alone," she replied; "besides, my walk will lead to my uncle Jacob's, where I may spend the night; that's not very far, you know."

Determined not to be baffled in his purpose to escort Leah, he replied:

"'The longer the walk, the shorter the way,' with you, Miss Leah. Allow me to attend you, I pray." His pertinacity prevailed; and falteringly she replied, "As you like, Mr. Le Grande," resolving in her heart though, that this should be the last time. "Only this morning," thought she, "what did I promise Lizzie? And before the day is ended, I have broken that promise. What an irresolute creature I am! But this shall be the last. I vow it again."

"You will miss Miss Heartwell, I judge," began Emile, as he walked forward by her side. "From your sorrowful expression, one might think she had died, instead of vanished from sight in a vessel. I trust there are yet some friends in the Queen City; at least one, who will be kindly remembered in the absence of Miss Heartwell."

"Yes, Mr. Le Grande, I have some friends, a few, I trust, left behind; but no one, not a soul, that can supply her place in my affections. She has been more than a school-friend to me; she has been a counsellor, a sister; one who above all others comprehends my nature and sympathizes with and appreciates my character," said Leah, warmly.

"Indeed, Miss Heartwell is to be envied in possessing so much of your affection, and yet I think you speak unjustly in attributing to her alone the heart of love and sympathy you do. Have I not told you of my attachment and devotion to you? And do you still require other protestations to confirm the sincerity of my confession?"

At these words—unwelcome words to Leah—she colored deeply, and turning her dark, burning eyes full upon Emile, said:

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"Mr. Le Grande, I pray you never let me hear you utter such a sentiment as that again. We are friends, and, if you choose, may always be; but, in all truthfulness I say it, more than friends we can never be. I confess frankly that your society is very agreeable to me, your manner fascinating, your style attractive; but I am a Jewess of the strictest sect, and you a Christian, and not a strict one; and these facts alone form an insurmountable barrier in the way of our being more than friends. A great gulf lies between us, over which even love cannot securely go. You cannot come to me, and I dare not cross to you. It is dishonor to God and disobedience to parents, to think of such a step. Mr. Le Grande, I beg you, forget this passion you profess; crush it out if it exists, and remember Leah Mordecai, the Jewess, as only a friend. Do you promise?" she said, trembling from head to foot, for it had required all the moral strength of her yielding nature to utter these words—words that could instantly quench the only taper of hope that still burned in her soul.

"Do I promise?" he replied with haughty emotion. "No! I swear I will not! So long as you are free I will love you; and so long as your maidenhood gives the opportunity, I shall tell you of that love. Give you up? I, who love you with a mad and foolish devotion? I promise not to love you? No! no! Never, never, never, while hope lasts. What care I if you are a Jewess? It's the shrine of beauty where I bow, and because a Jewess breathes therein, shall I withdraw my homage? Never while I live. I swear it!"

Frightened at her desperate lover's words, Leah walked on in silence, almost regretting that her courage had permitted her to speak her mind so freely. After a time she said, "Do not be angry with me, Mr. Le Grande, I did not mean to offend you."

"It's worse than offence, it is death," he replied.

Ascending the steps of her uncle's house, by this time reached, Leah extended her hand and said, "Good—by. I'll tarry here to—night." Claspng her soft hand, he said, "I shall see you soon. Good—night."

A week after Madam Truxton's school closed, the term of the military academy ended. The drilling, drilling, drilling, was stopped, the graduating class of cadets had either won or lost the honors for which they contested; and the roll of candidates for military honors was handed to the world. Conspicuous among the names crowned with well—won distinction was that of George Marshall. A nobler, braver spirit never stepped from college walls upon life's crowded highway, or one with firmer, truer tread than he.

CHAPTER XIII.

TIME rolled on. Months had melted into months until they were calendared by years, since we bade adieu to Madam Truxton's finishing class on that departed June day 185—, and watched with regretful eye the last well—executed drill of the graduating cadets of the same year.

Sunny twelvemonths only had so far passed over these sundered friends, many of whom still clung to each other with the old love of school days, and maintained by frequent correspondence a thorough knowledge of each other's lives and doings. It is worth mentioning that these years had brought some changes to the lives and fortunes of three of the four firm friends at Madam Truxton's, and to others who were once sworn friends at the institute.

In her quiet home at Melrose, Lizzie Heartwell was confronting daily the stern duties of life amid a bevy of bright—eyed little scholars, wearing with easy grace the dignity of school—mistress.

Helen Le Grande, a bright fresh blonde in school days, had blossomed into a fair, beautiful, fashionable belle, as devoted to society as society was devoted to her.

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Bertha Levy, roguish and merry-hearted as ever, had been sent abroad to complete her education in Berlin "To sober her down, and try and break her spirit," as she wrote in a letter to Lizzie.

It was only the life of Leah Mordecai that apparently was marked by no change. She was older by a few years—that was all the world saw of change in her life. To strangers' eyes, she was still pursuing the even tenor of her life, still wearing the melancholy expression, and still envied by many for her wealth and beauty. The eyes of the world could not read the impoverished heart that throbbed within her bosom.

On first leaving college, Emile Le Grande intended to study law, and for months endeavored to concentrate his mind upon the prosaic, practical teachings of Blackstone. The effort proved unsuccessful, and then procuring employment in a well-established banking house, he applied himself to business with commendable assiduity. Yet alive in his heart was the passion so long nourished for the beautiful Jewess. He still lost no opportunity of assuring her again and again of his unchanging devotion, and constantly endeavored, by tenderest utterances of love, to gain the promise of her hand.

This persistent homage, though avoided long by Leah, became in time not unwelcome; and as month after month passed on, she often whispered to herself, "Struggle as I may against it, I do love him. Love wins love, always, I believe."

George Marshall, realizing the fulfilment of his long-cherished dream, was in the active service of his country, a captain in the regular army. Though he was removed from his native State, no one who knew him could doubt that he stood firmly, bravely at his post of duty, ready to do his country's work at her bidding.

CHAPTER XIV.

"MY son," said Mrs. Abrams, in low, gentle tone to Mark one day, as she looked into the small library where he sat busily at work upon something half-concealed in his hand, "come here a minute, won't you?"

"Are you in a hurry, mother?" he replied, lifting his black eyes, bright with an expression of determination, and resting them full upon his mother's face.

"No, not exactly, if you are busy; but what are you doing?"

"I'll tell you when I come in, and not keep you waiting long either."

Mrs. Abrams quietly withdrew, and returned to the bedside of her little daughter Rachel, who lay suffering from pain and burning with fever.

"What can mamma do for her darling now?" said the fond mother, as she bent her head over her child and smoothed back the fair hair from the heated brow; "does your arm still hurt, my lamb?" The child's moan was her only answer.

"What a pity! How cruel that your dear little arm should have been so torn by that savage dog!" continued Mrs. Abrams, as she wet the bandage again with the cooling lotion, and brushed away the tears that she could not repress at the sight of her little daughter's suffering.

The sound of footsteps, and Mark stood in the doorway, holding in his hand a small, dark object, and said:

"Mother, do you see this? Well, I've got it ready "

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"O Mark!" interrupted his mother in horror. "When did you get that deadly thing: I beg of you, put that pistol up at once; the very sight of it terrifies me."

Mark laughed and replied, "I'll fix old Dame Flannagan's dog, mother, and then I'll put it away. She hid the dog from the police, but she can't keep it hid always. I shall kill it on sight, and go prepared to do so. I have vowed I would."

"Let the dog alone, son, you may get into trouble if you do not," replied his mother.

"Indeed, I will not let the dog alone," replied Mark indignantly, as he drew nearer to the bed whereon the suffering little sister lay, with lacerated arm and burning brow. "To think of this dear child, as she was innocently trundling her hoop along the side-walk, being attacked by that savage brute, and her life so narrowly saved! Indeed, I'll not let it alone. I'll shoot it the first time I set eyes upon it, and the old hag had better not say anything to me after I have done it. Poor little darling!

"What shall brother Mark bring his little sister today?" continued the fond brother, stooping over and kissing the child again and again, before leaving for the office of the shipping firm, of which he had just been made a partner.

"Yes, mother," he continued, slipping the weapon of death into the inner pocket of his coat, "I am not a warlike man, as you know, but I'll carry this," pointing to the pistol, "till I kill that dog, sure;" and adjusting his coat and hat he passed out of the house.

Rabbi Abrams did not reside among the palatial residences of the Queen City. A rather restricted income compelled him to find a more unpretentious home than was perhaps in keeping with his avocation and position in life. Yet, carrying into practice the teaching he set forth, to "owe no man anything," and never live beyond one's income, he established his home in a portion of the city that was rather characterized by low rents than aristocratic abodes. However, they were respectable, and comfortably situated withal. Immediately adjoining the rabbi's house lived a garrulous old Irish woman, at once the aversion and dread of the neighborhood. Old Margery O'Flannagan needed no protection against the incursions of depredators, beyond the use of her own venomous tongue; still, she further strengthened her ramparts by the aid of a dog of most savage and ferocious propensities, that she dignified by the ominous name of "Danger." Between her and Danger there existed the strongest bond of friendship, if not affection. In an unexpected manner, this savage dog had assaulted the little daughter of the rabbi, and when the father demanded the life of the dog at the hands of the police, she hid him away out of reach, and swearing like a pirate, threatened to kill any man that dared molest Danger.

CHAPTER XV.

LEAH MORDECAI sat alone in her bed chamber. A bright fire glowed within the grate, and the gas-light overhead added its mellow brightness to the apartment. Arrayed in a comfortable crimson silk wrapper, the girl sat before the fire, with her slippered foot upon the fender, and gazed steadily and thoughtfully into the fantastic coals. Without, the world was cold and bright, for a pale, tremulous moon filled the world with its beauty. The wind came in across the sea, and mingling with the murmur of the waters, produced a weird and ghost-like sound, as it swept through half-deserted streets, penetrating rudely the abodes of poverty, and whistling around the mansions of the rich. This sound Leah heard faintly, as it sought ingress at her windows, and down the half-closed chimney. She shuddered; yet it was not an unusual or a frightful sound, and not half so saddening as the sound that floated up the stairs: the sound of low, sweet singing—Mark Abrams singing with flute-like voice to her sister Sarah, who was soon, very soon, expected to become his wife. Leah had heard that voice before, had listened to its melody, attuned to other words, and as she recalled the vanished time, she trembled, shuddered, with an indefinable terror.

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As the sound of the music ceased, she arose and walked to the window. With both hands pressed closely beside her face, so as to exclude every gleam of light from within, she looked steadily out of the window. All without was bright, and cold, and beautiful. White fleecy clouds drifted about the heavens, like so many phantom barks upon the deep blue sea.

"It's cold without and cold within," she muttered, and then, as if startled by some sudden resolve, she turned from the window back to a small escritoire, saying:

"Yes, I'll delay no longer. I must answer Lizzie's letter and tell her all. My duties for the coming week will be pressing, allowing me no opportunity for writing, equal to that of the present."

Then she wrote: "QUEEN CITY, January 20, 185—.

"MY OWN CHERISHED FRIEND: To—night from my casement I looked out upon the cold, bright world, wrapped in moonlight, and as I gazed at the far—off misty horizon, the distance called to mind my far—off friend at Melrose recalled to mind, too, the fact that your last welcome letter has for an unwonted length of time remained unanswered. Your letter that came on the new year, came as the flowers of spring, always fresh and beautiful. It has been neglected from the inevitable press of circumstances by which I have been surrounded, which neglect, I feel assured, you will appreciate and forgive, when I have detailed the following facts.

"My sister Sarah is to be married in a week. This approaching event has been the cause of my restricted time, pressing out of sight, and even out of memory, all letter—writing.

"Yes, dear Lizzie, the long—expected nuptials are actually about to be celebrated, and all our household, except myself, are in a fever of excitement and delight.

"My step—mother is ecstatic over the success of her scheming, and even condescends to be kind to me,—to me, Lizzie, whom she has so long and so faithfully despised.

"My father, too, seems happy over this alliance, knowing Mark's excellent character and business qualifications, and appreciating the connection with the rabbi's family. Mark himself appears happy in the hope of securing Sarah for his wife. But as to Sarah, I can scarcely divine her feelings; she is too young and light—hearted fully to comprehend the step before her. She seems delighted with the occasion that bestows upon her so many handsome presents; and beyond this I think she scarcely casts a thought. The marriage will be solemnized at the synagogue, and the reception held here at home. Mark has given Sarah some elegant gifts, gifts that should be mine. Is it wrong to write those words words that contain so much meaning? It may be; but as you know all, dear Lizzie, I shall not erase them. And this reminds me of something I must tell you, of another piece of double—dealing and treachery imposed upon me by Rebecca. Some weeks ago, my father's cousin, Baron von Rosenberg, hearing of Sarah's approaching marriage—I have told you of this cousin before—sent over a box of valuable presents for the children, all of us, including Sarah, of course. Among the articles sent, were an elegant crimson velvet mantle, and a diamond brooch. 'These,' wrote the baron, 'are for your eldest daughter—Leah I believe.'

"My father gave the letter to his wife, supposing, of course, that I would be allowed a perusal of it. But instead she secreted the letter, and in disposing of the gifts, said to me 'Here, Leah, is a handsome necklace, sent to you by the baron, and this elegant velvet mantle and diamond brooch are for your sister Sarah—wedding presents. How kind of the baron to remember her so substantially!' 'Yes,' said I, 'it was kind, and thoughtful too. I am glad that he has been so generous. I certainly thank him for his remembrance of me.' I had no dream but that she was telling me the truth, nor should I have suspected the deception, but, unfortunately, I overheard my father one day say, 'Rebecca, how did Leah like the mantle and brooch the baron sent her?'

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"Oh, she thought them beautiful, as they are,' was the quick reply; 'but like a generous girl—there are few such—she begged her sister to keep them, as suitable bridal gifts from her, as well as tokens of her love.'

"She's a dear unselfish creature,' replied my father, with the credulity of a child; 'I never saw another young person just like her. She's so deep and hidden in her nature, one cannot easily read her thoughts. I wish sometimes she was more open and confiding; but she is a darling, for all her reticence.'

"Yes, and loves Sarah to idolatry,' was the smooth, well-put rejoinder.

"This much I heard, dear Lizzie, of the conversation, and then, with a horrified, sickening sensation, I flew away—flew away to solitude, and communion with myself.

"I dared not undeceive my father; and as to the gifts my heart cried out, 'Go, vain baubles, go? What are diamonds and velvet to a desolate soul? Go, as Mark Abrams, and many other things rightfully mine, have gone from me through treachery and fraud.'

"At this dreadful discovery, dear Lizzie, I longed for your true heart, so warm with sympathy, but it was far, far away, and no medium of communication between us but the soulless, tearless pen. That was inadequate then; now, the feeling has passed.

"But I crave your pardon for consuming so much time and space upon myself and my woes. Forgive me.

"When the wedding is over I'll write you a full and detailed account of it all.

"Did I tell you in my last of Bertha Levy? She is cultivating her voice in Berlin, and promises to become a marvellous singer, they say. Would you ever have thought she could be sober long enough to sing even a short ballad? What a girl Bertha was!—real good and kind though, despite her witchery.

"Oh, me! do you ever wish, Lizzie, you were a school-girl again at Madam Truxton's? I do. I often recall the song: "'Backward, turn backward, O Time, in your flight,' and am always sorrowful that my cry is unheeded by this swift-footed monarch.

"I see Madam Truxton occasionally. She is always engrossed, as you know, and the pressing duties to the new pupils exclude from her mind all remembrance of the old ones. Yet I love her, and always shall.

"I think I hear you asking, 'What of Emile?' and in a few brief words I can reply. I still see him occasionally, and he still professes his unchanging love for me. Forgive me, Lizzie; pardon what may seem in me a weakness, but I must confess it, I believe I love Emile. Firmly as I once promised you to shut my heart against his overtures of love, I have slowly but surely yielded my resolution, and now I can but frankly confess it. I do not think I shall ever marry him. I have told him so again and again, and I believe I shall never surrender this resolve. I have never told my father of Emile's devotion to me. I have not deemed it necessary, as I do not intend to marry him; and, then, I have been afraid to tell him. I only meet Emile by chance, and but rarely. I know you would advise me not to see him at all, and maybe I will not in the future. *Nous verrons.*

"Since I wrote to you last, Kitty Legare has died. She has been fading, as you know, for a long time with consumption. Dear girl, now she is at rest; and, I think, to be envied.

"But dear friend, I am drawing my letter to a tedious length. The stillness of the hour admonishes me to seek repose. So, hastily and with everlasting love, I bid you good night. "Your own "LEAH."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE days passed on, and the night before the wedding hung its cold, starless gloom over the Queen City—hung as the sable pall above the dead.

"My dear," said Mrs. Abrams, as Mark on this evening was preparing to leave his house for that of his affianced, to make the last necessary arrangements for the coming ceremony, "I wish you could be with me to—night. A mother's heart calls for the last evening of her son's free life, claims the last moments of the time when she can call him exclusively her own. To—morrow, dear boy, you are no longer mine. I shall have only a secondary claim upon your love and companionship, and must in the future console myself with the knowledge, that in losing a mother my son has gained a wife."

"O mother," replied Mark, with a troubled look, "don't speak so. I am compelled to be at Mr. Mordecai's a little while to night, and also to call at Crispin's, and see that my boot is stretched, and then I'll hasten back. Tight boots on a wedding day, mother, will not do at all, you know," added Mark playfully, as he stroked the soft hair that waved back from the oval Jewish face—a pale, gentle face it was. "I'll be back very soon."

"Brother Mark, isn't you glad my arm is so well? Mother says I may go to the synagogue, too, to—morrow, and see you married," said the innocent little sister, whose lacerated arm still hung in the snowy bandage around her neck.

"Yes, dovey, indeed I am," replied Mark, bending down beside the fair child, and tenderly caressing her. "If my little Rachel could not be there, brother Mark would not consider himself well married. I am only sorry that I haven't had a peep at that vicious dog that hurt my darling so. Never mind, I am still ready and waiting for his reappearance, and then I'll have revenge. Good—night, dear mother, I must go; a sweet good—night to you and little Rachel—till I come back." The young man stepped out into the cold, dark night, and turned his face toward the elegant home of the Jewish banker.

"Umph! umph! dis is a hard night for old Peter—cold wind, and no stars. People ought to 'preciate de old carrier," grunted out rather than spoke, a rather short, slightly bent old negro, as he stood peering curiously out of the window of the dimly lighted, misty old printing—office of the "Queen City Courier." Then turning around he shuffled toward the door, ejaculating, "Bad night on my rheumatiz;" and continuing, as he descended the well—worn stairs, "de boss just give me a little of de w'iskey bitters—w'iskey bitters mighty good for de rheumatiz. Maybe when dey warm me up good, I won't feel so stiff, and de cold won't pinch so dreadful. Umph! umph! umph! ward number two comes fust," and clutching the bundle of papers more tightly, and gathering again the folds of the well—worn gray blanket around him, the old carrier struck out, as briskly as the cold and his stiffened limbs would allow, on his accustomed beat.

It was three o'clock in the morning, and for an hour he trudged on and on, past block and square, casting the welcome household visitor, "The Courier," right and left as he went. Suddenly he stopped a moment to listen. "Dere, it's four o'clock," he said, as old St. Luke's rang out the hour. "I'll soon be through dis ward, an' in time for the up—town gentry too, as dey takes breakfast late. Old Peter has a long round, but he don't mind dat, so he gits de money. Den all de quality knows old Peter, and how de hats come off and de ladies smile when de New Year comes round again. Humph! Jingo! How stiff dis knee! When old Peter dead and gone, nebber find anodder carrier like him. Peter nebber stop for nuffin, de rain nor de shine, de northers nor de anything—umph! not even de rheumatiz." Here the old man cut short his soliloquy, stooping down to rub the afflicted member that so retarded his progress, and whose pain was an ever—present reminder that his agility and youth were gone forever. Erecting himself, he began again, "Dis bin a putty hard winter on mos' anybody, 'specially on de rheumatiz. But for de w'iskey bitters of de boss, old Peter wouldn't be as spry is he is. Boss says, 'W'iskey bitters mighty good for anything,' an' I believe him. Here it's Jinnivery, an' the winter mos' gone, an' the rheumatiz will work out of me by next winter, an' then I'll be as good as new again." By this time the old carrier stood over against the Citadel

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Square, and halting for a moment in his hobbling march, he looked right and left, backward and forward, and then said, "Guess I'll save a block in going to Vine street, by cutting through the Citadel Square—so I will. The gates are always locked at this hour, but I know where I can slip through under a loose plank, papers and all." So saying, he hobbled across the street, found the opening, and doubling himself up, went through it in a trice. Then trudging on, he bethought himself again of the sovereign remedy for all his ailments, "rheumatiz" especially, and he continued with evident delight:

"Next winter w'iskey bitters will be good too, and de boss will be shure to have 'nuff for us both. I 'spec' the boss teched wid de rheumatiz. I'll—Hallo! w'at's dat? Jes' git out ob my way, ole grunter. Dis ole Peter."

"Oh, God! help me! come here!" groaned a half audible voice. "Come to me! help me! help me!"

"O Lordy!" exclaimed old Peter as he jumped back in sudden fright. "Who's dat? What you want? W'at's de matter? I don't like spirits. You can't trick me. I'm the carrier ob de Courier dese five an' twenty year. What you want?"

"O Lord! help me! Come to me, Peter. I know you. I can do no harm. Come, I implore! Come quickly! Reassured by the faint, but importunate words, old Peter approached the dark object that lay upon the ground, scarcely discernible in the dim twilight of approaching day.

"Bend down close to me, Peter. I am dying. I am cold and faint, and wish to say a few words to you."

"Good God!" and the old negro shuddered as he bent down over the prostrate form before him.

"Don't you know me, Peter?"

Peter bent closer down.

"Mass' Mark Abrams, is dis you? What's de matter wid you? Who did it? Who killed you? Tell me; tell me for God's sake."

"Listen to me, Peter; listen. I am dying—shot in the breast with a pistol."

"Who did it? Who did it? For Heaven's sake, who did it?"

"No one, Peter; be calm; listen to me. It was accidental. I had in the inside pocket of my coat a small pistol. In passing through here about eleven o'clock, walking hastily homeward from Crispin's, I stumbled by some chance, and as I fell the pistol was discharged and has killed me. Here, take the pistol quick, and run for my father. Be quick, man, quick, that I may, if possible, say farewell. Take the pistol with you. I am not strong enough to reach it. Be quick."

Horrified, the old carrier groped on the ground for it, and accidentally dipped his hand into the pool of blood near the wounded man.

"The devil? I hate blood? Dis is bad, bad, bad! Mass' Mark! Mass' Mark!" No reply.

"Mass' Mark! I b'lieve he's dead. I feared so. Mass' Mark!" Still no reply.

"O Lordy! I'll get away from here. De poor child's dead, an' if I'm seen 'bout here dey may 'cuse me of murder. I can't go an' tell nuffin. Ole Peter's 'fraid. I must git away;" and gathering up his papers and the blanket again, he left the scene of the tragedy as rapidly as his disabled limbs would allow, feeling as if some fearful ghost were in

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close pursuit. Unconsciously, he carried the pistol with him, and was many squares away before he sufficiently collected his bewildered and terrified faculties, to observe the deadly weapon in his grasp. "What should he do with it?" at once flashed through his brain, and as the brightening daylight prevented his returning it to its place beside the victim, he resolved to keep it. He dared not cast it from him.

As old Peter was too much frightened to reveal the truth concerning the tragedy, he resolved at once to keep the secret forever within his own breast, and as he was guilty of no crime, he had no fears of the mystery being revealed. So he went on in the advancing morning, on his long, tedious round of duty, and no single reader that day missed the "Courier" or suspected the secret that lay hidden in the carrier's breast. A few hours after the columns of the "Courier" had been carefully scanned, on this January morning, an "Extra" flashed from the press, and flooded the Queen City with consternation and many hearts with woe and lamentation. It ran thus:

"Fearful tragedy! Mysterious assassination! Bridal day turned into a day of mourning and bitter disappointment!

"This morning at an early hour the body of young Mark Abrams was discovered, dead, and lying in a pool of blood near the centre of the Citadel Square. How he came to his death is still a mystery, but it was undoubtedly by the hand of an assassin. The most terrible fact connected with this sad calamity, is, that the day of the unfortunate man's death was to have been his wedding day. He was to have married the second daughter of Benjamin Mordecai, Esq., banker. His body has been removed to the house of his father, the worthy rabbi of Maple Street Synagogue. The burial will take place this afternoon, at the hour appointed for the wedding ceremony. Seldom has the Queen City been so shocked; and many heavy hearts will to-day join in the wail of woe that goes up from the stricken family."

Thus the bulletin ran, and surmise, consternation, and sorrow, were upon the lips of many men, women, and children in the Queen City.

CHAPTER XVII.

MELROSE, Lizzie Heartwell's home, was a manufacturing village in the northern part of a Southern State. A more picturesque or inviting spot is seldom found. It crowned the summit of one of a range of long, sloping hills, that stretched back from a river, as a diadem crowns the brow of a monarch. The snowy houses, nestled amid the clustering foliage, and the carefully trimmed hedge-rows, imparted to the place an English air of aristocratic seclusion. The clear silver river, too, which turned the spindles of the far-famed factories, encircled this romantic village as a mother the child of her love. These factories, that had been in successful operation for nearly a quarter of a century, gave employment to scores of honest, industrious people, that otherwise might have gone scantily clad and miserably fed, perhaps have perished.

Mr. Caleb Schuyler, the superintendent and proprietor of these factories, was a large-hearted New Englander, who had brought to this Southern State his native thrift and enterprise, and had spent a useful and comparatively long life in the work of building up and improving Melrose. Enough intelligence and wealth had gathered there to make the religious and educational advantages desirable, if not superior. The houses were all well kept and attractive, and Melrose was a charming place to live in, although remote from railways or steamboats.

In the eastern part of the village, where the winding road began its gentle descent to the river, stood a plain, but comfortable and commodious school-room. It was erected years ago for a "Yankee school teacher"; now it was occupied by Lizzie Heartwell, who had been a favorite scholar of that same teacher years before, when she was a very little girl. Consumption had long since laid that teacher to rest, and time had brought that fair-haired little girl to fill her place.

Over the bevy of factory-children, and those gathered from the wealthier families too, Lizzie Heartwell now

presided with great dignity and grace, as school-mistress. In this sphere of life, her faculties of mind, soul, and body, found full scope for perfect development. Fond of children, loving study, happy always to help those desiring knowledge, glad to enlighten the ignorant, Lizzie Heartwell was happy, and useful too, in the work in which she was employed. It was now more than three years since Lizzie left Madam Truxton's, and she was now ending the second year of her teaching. It was September. The woods were dying earlier than usual, in the golden Indian summer. The days were sweet and delicious, and Melrose was as attractive in its autumn loveliness as it had been in the freshness of spring. It was toward the close of one of those charming September days, when Lizzie Heartwell stepped to the door of her school-room to watch the descending sun, and to see if she were detaining the children too long. Instantly her attention was arrested by the rumbling of the tri-weekly stage-coach, toiling up the hill before her. For a moment she stood watching its slow approach, apparently unmindful of the class that was already "in line" upon the floor, eagerly awaiting the last recitation, which would set them free. And yet the school-mistress gazed at the stage-coach, which had at last reached the top of the hill, and the horses, as if under new inspiration, were jogging along in a brisk trot, and were rapidly approaching the school-house. Suddenly the face of the young school-mistress grew pale, and then crimson, as she caught a glimpse of a face that leaned wearily beside the coach-door and looked out—a face not unfamiliar, and yet not well-remembered; a handsome, manly face, overshadowed by a military cap—and like a sudden flash came the thought that she had seen that face before. Regaining her self-possession, Lizzie turned from the door, examined the spelling-class as calmly as ever, commended all for their perfection in recitation, and with a blessing dismissed the eager little band for the day.

"Who was it?" she muttered, as she slowly donned the jaunty hat and her mantle, and mechanically drew on her kid gauntlets, preparatory to starting homeward. "I have seen that face before, I think, and yet I am not sure. Can it possibly be George Marshall?" she said slowly. "If so, time has changed him, yet only to improve, I think. How the thought of ever seeing George Marshall again startles me! But I am foolish, very foolish, to imagine such an absurd thing. Oh, no, he will never come to Melrose. I wish he would," and she began singing a low love-ditty half-unconsciously, half-fearfully, as she trudged homeward.

An hour later, and a perfumed billet-doux bore to the widow's cottage the compliments of Captain George H. Marshall, U. S. A. He had, indeed, come to Melrose at last.

Obtaining a limited leave of absence from the army, he had come home to visit his kindred, and his friend at Melrose. The time was necessarily short. Only one week could he spend at Melrose—one short seven days—days crowned with a golden halo in the after years. To the young school-mistress these were days bright with hope and happiness, bright as the effulgent sun that ushered them in, one by one. Days, too, that she parted with regretfully, as each one's sun went down. Six of these golden days were passed—passed in pleasant converse, in singing, in reading, in hoping, and the seventh was drawing nigh.

"Mr. Marshall," said Lizzie, on the evening of the sixth day, "will you leave Melrose without seeing my school, and telling me what you think of my avocation?"

"Certainly not, if you will allow me the pleasure, and to-morrow is the only time I have left," he replied.

"Well, then, come to-morrow if you like, and see me enthroned in my kingdom. My school opens at eight o'clock, for in this country we teach a long, honest day. Our people know nothing of the five-hour system," she replied merrily.

"Then, Miss Heartwell, if you will grant me the pleasure, I'll call early in the morning, and we'll stroll by the river-side. I must tell you further of my coming to Melrose, and then I'll see you in your field of labor. Will you grant me this last request?" the young man demanded nervously.

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"I will, with pleasure," she replied. "I'll be ready by seven o'clock, and I'll show you the place where tradition says an Indian maiden jumped from the bluff into her lover's waiting skiff below, to elude her angry father's pursuit, and lost her life on the rocks."

"That was sad! 'Love's sacrifice' indeed, at a terrible cost!" replied the young man thoughtfully. "I trust I'll be more successful some day than the Indian lover was."

Lizzie trembled, and turning her eyes upon a vase of wild-flowers that adorned the simple table, replied confusedly, "Poor Wenona! hers was a sad fate."

"To-morrow, at ten o'clock, the stage-coach leaves. I can see you a while in the morning, can I? So I'll bid you good night," and George Marshall arose and extended his hand.

"Good night!" murmured Lizzie, with a sinking sensation at her heart, and a dimness of vision that almost betrayed tears.

Night passed, and morning came—bright, clear, fresh morning; and the young girl was awake with the dawn.

"Ah me!" she sighed, as she arranged the shining curls before her simple mirror, "this is the last day. I am almost sorry he ever came to Melrose. I was so interested in my school before; now, I fear I'll be always thinking of the army. Yes, I'll put on this blue ribbon—he likes blue, he admired the blue 'forget-me-not' I wore at Madam Truxton's the first night I ever met him. And these violets I'll pin on my bosom, they are blue too. I am a silly girl, I fear; and yet there is a strange aching at my heart. Can it be Alas! I cannot speak it. Seven o'clock! He's coming! yes, he is here! I hear him on the step."

George Marshall looked pale and troubled, as he bade adieu to Mrs. Heartwell and stepped forth from her neat white cottage on this cool September morning, accompanied by the young school-mistress. His thoughtful face bore the impress of a sleepless night, and he was taciturn and abstracted. By his side Lizzie chatted away, as though bribed to dispel the gloom and silence that threatened to surround them—chatted as though no other feeling than gayety filled her own fearful heart—chatted till a curve in the white sandy road brought them in view of the river, and under a cluster of wide-spreading water-oaks that overshadowed a broken mass of stone.

"Miss Heartwell," said George abruptly, "sit here beside me, on these moss-covered rocks, before we go any farther, and let me tell you something I've kept unspoken long enough. Will you?"

Lizzie made no reply, but timidly followed where he led, and sat beside him on the lichen-covered stones. As George Marshall looked up, a tear stole from her true blue eyes, and moved by this evidence of emotion, he said with deep-toned pathos:

"Miss Heartwell, I love you, and you know it. If it were not a sin against the great God, I would say I adore you. May I not hope that those crystal tears betray the existence of a kindred love for me? Nothing but love, unalloyed and pure, love for yourself, ever brought me to Melrose. May I go away with the assurance that my love is returned, and bearing in my heart the hope to come again some day, and claim you as my wife? May I?"

The tears still flowed from the pure fountain of Lizzie's innocent, tender heart, and her head bowed as gently as a lily in the gale, but she answered firmly, sweetly, truly, "Yes, I love you too, and I promise, with God's blessing, one day to become your wife."

"Wipe away those tears then, and let me see, in the depth of your innocent eyes, that your promise is solemn and unchanging."

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"As my soul is undying, I am in earnest; and as Heaven is true, I shall be faithful to your love. Never doubt me. Here, take these innocent flowers, modest children of the wild-wood—these violets, as a pledge of my unfeigned love;" and unclasping the golden brooch, she let the delicate flowers fall into the open hand of her lover.

Gathering up the offerings of affection, George Marshall clasped the slender hand that gave them, and imprinting a fervent kiss upon it, said, "God bless you, my darling, and take this as the seal of my benediction."

When the tri-weekly coach rolled out of Melrose on that charming autumn day, and passed the schoolhouse of the maiden, the sigh she cast after it was not without hope, and the one the lover wafted back breathed a promise to come again some day, not far off, and take her away from that school-room forever.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE terrible tragedy that had filled so many hearts with consternation, the untimely and mysterious death of Mark Abrams, had long since been numbered with the events of the past. In the Hebrew burial ground, in a suburb of the Queen City, his mortal remains were at rest. Months ago, the grass had sprung, and the flowers of affection blossomed above his pulseless bosom. Upon the seventh day of every week since that dreadful January, the unhappy father and mother had turned their faces devoutly toward the city of their fathers, and offered their fervent prayers. Yet no abatement of sorrow had time brought to the mother's wounded, bleeding heart. Wearily, and often despairingly, she longed for that untried, unknown life beyond, where she dimly hoped for a reunion with her lost son.

Sarah Mordecai, young, thoughtless, volatile, in the death of her lover was disappointed, but not heartbroken. Recovering from the shock of her sorrow with the buoyancy and elasticity of youth, her repinings scarcely reached beyond the period that brought blossoms to the resting-place of the dead. Let no one censure this young heart that, by reason of its nature, could not sit enshrouded in gloom and sorrow, nor shudder at the thought that when the summer came, with warmth and brightness, she was as light of heart as the birds that carolled in the garden around her spacious home.

Not such the mourning of her disappointed mother. From day to day, since the failure of her cherished hope, regret and disappointment had rankled in her bosom with consuming force. She despised the fate that foiled her plans and purposes, and left the object of her hatred still uncrushed. Leah, with her beauty and unaffected grace, was again to be triumphed over. Again she might not be so successful. Rebecca was cold, cruel, and false—Leah fearful, dispirited, and miserable. Alas! poor Leah Mordecai. EMILE LE GRANDE'S DIARY.

"August 15.—So sure as my name is Emile, I believe I shall succeed in my endeavor to marry the Jewess. She is beautiful! She receives my attentions more kindly now than she ever did before, and she confesses that she loves me truly. That's 'half the battle.' She seems very unhappy at times, yet only once did she ever hint to me that her life was aught but a summer's day for brightness. I once thought she loved Mark Abrams, and I hated him for it; but that's of no use now. 'Dead men tell no tales.'

"August 20.—Whew! how mother did rave to-day when I intimated that I might possibly marry Leah Mordecai! She asked indignantly what I 'designed to do with Belle Upton, a girl of eminent respectability and an equal of the Le Grande family?' I mildly suggested that I could not love such a 'scrap of a woman as Belle Upton was; and if she was in love with me, it was without a cause.' I have paid her some attention, but only to please mother and Helen. She's too effeminate, if she is so very aristocratic—not half so handsome as 'ma belle Juive.' Oh! those dreamy eyes! They haunt me day and night. I believe I am sick with love!"

"August 30.—This has been a memorable month to me. Last night, in the starlight, as I walked home with Leah from the Battery, she promised to marry me; yes, actually to marry me! Said she was unhappy at home—I wonder

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why—and would marry me in self–defence, if from no other cause. A tear stood in her dark eyes as she said, with stern, hoarse voice, 'If you love me, Emile, truly love me, and will be faithful to me, I will forsake all others and marry you.' Then she made me swear it there, in the face of the blue heavens and the glittering stars. I tremble when I think of my parents' displeasure, but then I love the girl, and shall fulfil my vow, even unto death. In a month I shall be twenty–five years old, and before another birth–day rolls around, after this one, I shall be a married man—married to the girl I love, Leah Mordecai, the Jewess. I wonder what the world will say. But I don't care; love knows no barriers. When my plans are a little more defined, I shall mention the matter seriously to my father. Mother will not hear to it, I know. And then; if he is willing, all well; if he is not willing, all well still. I shall marry her."

CHAPTER XIX.

LEAH MORDECAI sat alone in the southern balcony of her father's house one night in this same memorable August, the events of which were so fully recorded in Emile's diary—sat alone enjoying the warm silver moonlight that flooded all the world about her—sat alone, thinking, dreaming, fearing, vaguely hoping. Suddenly the sound of her mother's voice reached her from an adjoining room, and arrested her attention. Involuntarily she listened. "Yes, dear husband, Leah is anxious to go—unhappy even, at the fear of being denied."

"You surprise me, Rebecca," replied the fond husband and father; "I never dreamed that Leah desired to visit Europe. She has never mentioned it to me."

"No, nor will she ever. She fears your displeasure, shrinks from betraying a desire to be separated from you, even for a short period of time; but still she longs to go. Ever since Bertha Levy went to Berlin, she has cherished a secret desire to go, too. You well know that music is the passion of her soul, and Leah longs for culture which she cannot obtain in this country."

"Dear child!" exclaimed the father, "she shall be gratified in her desires, and study in the fatherland as long as she chooses. She has always been a good, obedient, loving daughter, and deserves to be rewarded." Then he added, after a moment's pause, and with ill–concealed emotion, "Yes, my daughter is always obedient and kind, yet a shade too sober for one so young; but her mother was always thoughtful, dear woman, and I suppose it's the child's inheritance." Mr. Mordecai sighed. And Rebecca, discerning the drift of his thought, recurred quickly to the subject, saying:

"Well, my husband, what arrangement can you make for Leah's going? Of course you cannot accompany her."

"That's easily done," he replied. "Every week there are persons going direct to Europe from this very city; and, by the way, my friend Solomon Stettheimer expects to go soon to Wirtemberg, to look after an estate of a deceased relative, and I could safely intrust Leah to his care. I shall write at once to my cousin, the baron, and have her placed under his care."

"That's a wise plan, my husband, and will give Leah great joy. Make it known to her as though it was only a pleasant surprise you were offering her, not mentioning the fact that I acquainted you with her wishes."

"So I will, kind little heart, good little woman that you are," replied Mr. Mordecai affectionately, as he stroked Rebecca on the arm.

Leah heard no more. Shocked and terrified at this treacherous plotting, she stole softly from the balcony, passed through the side garden, entered the house by the rear door, and hastened away to her own chamber up stairs.

"Merciful Heaven! what a lie, to deprive me of my father's love, and send me from my home, among unknown

friends, so far away! I cannot, cannot go; I cannot leave my father, even though it kill me to remain," gasped the young girl, in tears and bitterness of heart, as she sank helpless and hopeless upon the snowy bed that stood, a monster ghost, in the moonlit chamber. For hours she lay in silence and in sorrow, and when sleep came at length, the spoken words of her slumber but revealed the burden of her heavy heart in the oft-repeated words, "I cannot, cannot, will not go."

CHAPTER XX.

A WEEK passed. No word concerning the projected journey had been spoken by her father, and the young girl was beginning to hope that it might have been only the burden of an idle conversation, not a project really determined upon by either parent. But early one morning, as Mr. Mordecai caught the sound of music floating out from the drawing-room—such tender music—he laid aside the paper he was reading, and slipped softly toward the room whence came the sounds. This sudden and unusual manifestation of musical skill, this morning outburst of melody, astonished the father, and his approach to the drawing-room was as much from surprise as for the pleasure of a nearer enjoyment of his daughter's skilful performance. Unconscious of any approaching footstep, Leah sat, pale and statuesque, at the elegant instrument, and drew forth, at intervals, strains of witching melody. The absorbed expression of her emotionless face told plainly that music was the one channel through which the pent-up feelings of her heart found an outlet. How often is this divine art the unsyllabled expression of a miserable, or an overjoyed heart.

"My daughter," at length said Mr. Mordecai tenderly, after standing for some moments unobserved behind Leah.

"Is it you, father?" she replied, turning suddenly around, "I did not hear you come in."

"No, my love, I came softly that I might not disturb you; came to thank you for the sweet music that in this early morning sounds—so heavenly, I will say. Play me something else, as sweet and tender as the sonata you have just finished, and then come here and sit beside me; I have something to tell you."

"With all my heart, father," Leah replied, rising and turning through a mass of music. "Shall it be a song, father?"

"By all means, my dear."

And drawing forth the well-worn pages of Beethoven's "Adelaide," the young girl reseated herself, and sang.

The tender words of her father, as well as the ominous ones, "I have something to tell you," startled Leah, and caused the chords of love and fear to vibrate wildly within her bosom. Yet she concealed her deeper feelings, and sang—beautifully, bravely, sweetly—the tender, ravishing love-ditty which she knew was her father's favorite. The melody died away, the chords relaxed and hushed their sweetness, and Leah turned toward her father, awaiting the words of commendation that he always awarded to her performances. But he was silent. Seated upon a divan near by, Mr. Mordecai presented a striking appearance, which Leah at once observed. He was attired in his crimson morning-gown, adorned with golden bordering, and wore a becoming scarlet cap carelessly adjusted upon his head; a golden tassel hung from the cap beside the thoughtful face, and the half-snowy beard which spread like a silken fringe upon his bosom. His head was half-averted, and the sharp black eyes seemed to rest immovably upon some central figure on the luxurious tapestry. He was so absorbed that he heeded not the cessation of the music, nor was he aroused from his abstraction till Leah seated herself beside him and said:

"Now, father, I am ready to hear you."

"Forgive me, daughter, if I seem unmindful of your charming song; but thoughts for your welfare filled my reverie."

Leah Mordecai

"What thoughts, father?" Leah asked fearfully.

"Well, listen to me. I have planned for you, my daughter, a most delightful and profitable journey. Assured that you possess musical talent of the highest order, I desire that talent to be most highly cultivated. The culture you need cannot be obtained in this country; so I have written to my cousin, Baron von Rosenberg, to have you become a member of his distinguished family for a time. Under his care and direction, your studies can be pursued to the greatest advantage. What do you think of the arrangement?"

As Mr. Mordecai was unfolding what he supposed would be a pleasant surprise to his daughter, he marked the serious, even pained expression of her face, and wondered at it.

Leah was silent. Then, with an air of surprise and disappointment, her father repeated the inquiry. "What do you think of my plan? You cannot possibly dislike it, my daughter!"

"Saxony is a great way off from you, dear father—I believe the baron lives in Saxony. I do not think I could be happy so far away from you, the only living human being who loves me truly in this cold world." The last words were spoken bitterly.

"Your words astonish me, my child; they savor of ingratitude, and are strange words for your lips. What can you mean?"

Leah trembled that so much had escaped her hitherto silent lips, betraying even faintly the true feeling of her heart; and repressing the words that would have followed had her father not offered his rebuke, she replied quickly:

"Forgive me, dear father, if I seem ungrateful; perhaps I do not appreciate the love I enjoy; but I do not wish to go so far away from you. And you will not send me, will you?"

"Never trouble about me, my daughter; go and stay a year, if no longer; that's a short period of time, when it is past. Go for the improvement you will get. Go and become distinguished, my child;" and the ambitious parent's eye kindled with a new light at the thought.

Leah made no reply, and the father, releasing the delicate hand he had so tenderly held, said again and again, "Never mind me, child, never mind me; a year's a short time. Go and become distinguished."

The banker went to his counting-house that day, elated with the project for his daughter's pleasure and improvement, little dreaming where, or for what purpose, this plan was conceived; and Leah spent its lonely hours in sorrow and in tears.

CHAPTER XXI.

LE GRANDE'S DIARY.

"October 3.

"I HAVE been in such a maze of suspense and bewilderment for a month, dear Journal, that I have neglected you; to-night I'll recall, if I can, some of my lost days. No, I can't. It makes no difference; they were only days of trouble. I am perplexed to death to know the result of the baron's letter. He wrote, of course, and urged that Mr. Mordecai send Leah at once to him. And the preparations are going rapidly forward for her departure. Every day I say, 'Darling, stay with me,' and her father says, 'Daughter, you must go.' 'We shall see, in the end, what the end

will be.'

"October 15.—To—night, dear Journal, I make the most triumphant record of my life. Tell it not, breathe it not, to a mortal soul! Leah, my darling, has promised to marry me, and not go to Europe, as her father had determined. She told me last night, when I met her in the park, that her mind was made up. She would not go. She did not wish to go, and to marry me was her only alternative. She loves me, though, and we shall be happy, I am sure. My parents are bitterly opposed, and hers will be, to such a union, but we will be married, for all that. Helen alone is in my confidence; she has none of that pride that revolts at Leah's being a Jewess. To—morrow I leave for Havana, where I go with papers from our banking house to a branch house in that city. If I am successful in making my business arrangements, as I feel assured I shall be, then all will be well. I can only remain two days, as the day for Leah's embarkation is not a fortnight off. My mother and father know nothing of the business that takes me away, yet I have not deceived them. But, Journal, good night.

"October 28.—Home again from Havana—home with bounding heart and glowing hopes. I admire that fine City of the Antilles almost as much as I do my beloved, native Queen City. I shall enjoy my new home, I know. How could I do else than enjoy it? With a satisfactory salary in our branch house, and a lovely young wife, a heathen might well be happy. Now, old Mordecai can keep his gold, if he likes, and my father can do the same. The opposition has driven me to rely more implicitly upon myself, thank the fates. I shall be able to 'paddle my own canoe.' Leah looks something like those Spanish beauties, only she's a trifle sadder in expression. I trust she'll be happy in her new home, amid Cuban bloom and under azure skies. Heaven grant her an unclouded life. I am delirious with joy; and for fear of committing too much to your keeping, Journal, I'll stop writing. Adieu."

CHAPTER XXII.

"AUNT BARBARA," said Leah, the day before the proposed departure of the vessel that was to bear her away, "will you tell Mingo to leave the key of the lodge hanging just inside the inner door to—night. I may be coming in, or going out late, and he need not be disturbed, if he will do that." These words were addressed to a middle—aged colored woman, who, with high—turbaned head, moved busily about Leah's apartment, folding garments and packing trunks, and sighing, ever and anon, as though enduring heart—felt grief at the prospect of the approaching parting.

"Yes, dear chile, I'll tell him, if you wish. Dere is not many more times for your dear feet to pass in and out of de lodge;" and accompanying these simple, pathetic words was an outburst of honest tears, that fell upon the tidy white apron which the kind soul held to her eyes.

"Will you miss me, Aunt Barbara, when I am gone?" said Leah, deeply moved by the old colored woman's manifestation of sorrow.

"Law, chile, God only knows how ole Aunt Barbara will miss you. But I'll pray de good Lord to keep you safe from harm, when you are so far away, and bring you back to us again, one day."

"Suppose I never come back, Aunt Barbara; will you ever forget me?"

The old woman made no reply, but her ponderous frame shook convulsively, with excessive emotion. Leah then approached this faithful friend, and laying her arm around her neck, said tenderly, "Don't cry so, Aunt Barbara, but cheer me with the hope that some day I'll come back to you." The sound of approaching footsteps in the hall dried Aunt Barbara's tears, and when she opened the door in response to a gentle tap, her face was as placid as a summer lake.

"Is it you, father? Come in," said Leah, looking up to meet her father's eye.

Leah Mordecai

"Yes, my daughter. Are you ready? Are the trunks packed? Can I do anything more for you?" replied Mr. Mordecai, almost in one breath.

"Nearly ready, father. Aunt Barbara has about finished the last one, and I am ready to leave you."

These words, so full of feeling, so sorrowfully spoken, too, struck deep into the father's heart, and filled him with unspeakable regret.

"Ready to leave me, daughter," he reiterated, half petulantly, "I fear that you do not appreciate, or rather that you misinterpret my motive in sending you on so grand a journey. How many girls there are who vainly wish, from day to day, for such advantages as I am offering you!"

To these words Leah made no reply. And Mr. Mordecai, walking backward and forward with restless step across his daughter's bed-chamber, secretly regretted that he had ever considered the project for a moment. Then he said, half apologetically, "You shall only stay a year, my daughter; that is not such a very long time."

"Maybe I shall never come back, father. But you will love me always, won't you?"

"Hush! hush! child. I do not like your words. They distress me! A year is a short time, you know; so don't be foolish. Come, braid up your hair, arrange your dress, and come down at once into the drawing-room. I must have some music to-night."

"With pleasure, dear father," answered Leah, as cheerfully as the swelling emotion at her heart would allow. Then, in an undertone to herself, she added, "It may be the last time I shall have the privilege of playing for him in my life. If I were to go to Europe, that wretched woman would devise some plan to keep me there, and so I'll stay with " the last word she uttered was spoken in a whisper, and scarce escaped her lips. Hastily obeying her father's summons, after arranging a becoming toilet, Leah descended to the drawing-room, where Mr. Mordecai awaited her. "Father," said Leah abruptly, as she was turning to her music, "to-day, in looking over a package of papers, I came across the cards of cousin Hannah Stuyvesant; I had not thought of her for ever so long. Who was it she married?"

"Oh! A Christian dog! A renegade. Somebody named Bliss, I believe."

"Did they prosper, father?"

"I'll venture to say not, but I do not know positively. I've known nothing of her since she so far renounced her people as to marry a Christian. Neither have I desired to know anything of her."

At these words of Mr. Mordecai—significant words—Leah stationed herself at the instrument, and, with mind absorbed, and thoughts far away from the music, she performed mechanically piece after piece, as her father would request. The tea-bell at last summoned the family to the evening meal, and encircling his daughter with his arm, Mr. Mordecai led the way to the waiting repast. This was the last evening meal of the banker's family, unbroken. Yet who could have said so on that memorable evening in the long ago?

CHAPTER XXIII.

NIGHT gathered around the Queen City with dark and sombre fold, after the chilly October day previous to the one appointed for Leah Mordecai's departure for Europe—a night whose ominous gloom seemed to pervade the innermost apartment of the banker's home. It was late before Mr. Mordecai could spare his daughter from his presence, and give the good-night kiss, his usual benediction before they separated for slumber. Even the wily

Leah Mordecai

Rebecca said good night now in a tender tone, and gave Leah a gracious smile as she ascended the stairs for the last time. "It is the last," thought she, "for many a long day, maybe forever, and I can smile in sincerity. Once gone, I'll see to it that she never comes again. Aha! I am happy now, and can smile in joy and truth."

Once more within her quiet chamber, Leah locked the door and stood a moment with frightened face gazing furtively around the room. All was silent. The beating of her own wild heart was all the sound she heard. Then sinking down from actual weakness, she sat a moment as if summoning the last spark of courage in her timid, fearful soul and said, "Yes, it is a dreadful alternative, but I am driven to it. If I obey my father, and go to Europe, I know I shall not return for many years, if ever. If I am to be separated from my father, it shall not be by that woman's scheming. She has devised this plan to send me from my home, and she shall be disappointed. I am assured that Emile loves me, yet I should never have married him had I not been forced to do so—simply because he is not a Jew. But as it is, I take the step deliberately, firmly resolved to abide the consequences, be they good or evil. Yes, I am resolved to take this first step in disobedience to my father's wishes. I cannot help it. It has caused me terrible suffering to reach this decision, but circumstances press me to it. Now, it is irrevocable. God forgive me, if I cause my father sorrow! He knows how I love and serve him, and Heaven knows how cruelly I have been dealt with. But time is passing. I must write a last, fond letter to my dear Lizzie; tell her of this final, desperate step in my life, and beg that her love, so long tried, may follow me still through the untried life that lies before me, be it a life of sunshine or of shadow.

"Oh! the thought is dreadful. Let me see. Now the hour is eleven. Emile will come at twelve. I must hasten;" and rising from her recumbent posture, Leah replaced the watch within her bosom, and seating herself at the escritoire, wrote a last, loving letter to the friend of her school—days. This she dropped into her pocket, that she might post it at the lodge. Then she wrote, with trembling hand and faltering heart, a farewell message to her beloved father; and she was done. In a small portmanteau she had carefully packed the few things requisite for her clandestine journey. The well—filled trunks were safely locked, and the keys hanging idly upon the ring in her work—basket. "These trunks," she murmured to herself, as she glanced around the room preparatory to leaving it, "will descend to my sister, or go to Europe, or, maybe, will be destroyed. I shall never use their contents. Dear Aunt Barbara's careful packing was all to no purpose, had she only known it. Kind Aunt Barbara! Now, one thing more remains to be done. I must have my mother's miniature before I quit my father's house, perhaps forever. Aunt Barbara has secured the key of the cabinet for me, and it lies secreted in one of the drawers. Yes, Rebecca has kept it from me for nearly five years. How I burn with anger yet, to think of the cruel lie that took from me the only gift I ever valued in my life! That perfidious bosom shall never feel the pressure of that precious, jewelled face again. No, in heaven's name, I will not leave without it!"

"Hush! the citadel clock strikes the quarter to twelve! Dear old room! Chair, bed, books, pictures—all, farewell!"

The house below was silent. The lights had been darkened for an hour. With stealthy step along the upper hall, and silent footfall on the stairway, the cloaked and hooded figure of Leah approached the sleeping apartment of her father and his wife. The sound of heavy breathing betokened heavy slumber, as she silently turned the door—knob and stood within the chamber. Reassured by this sound, she glided toward the cabinet, and noiselessly adjusting the key, turned it gently in the lock. The white, delicate finger stole softly about the first smoothly polished drawer, to find it empty. Then one and another underwent, in quick succession, the same noiseless inspection, till the fourth and last drawer was reached; and that one yielded up the coveted treasure. Hastily placing it in her bosom, she closed the drawer, and then glided out as softly as she had glided into the room. On the threshold she cast back one fond, lingering look at the dimly outlined figure of her father, as he lay before her in unconscious slumber. "Heaven ever shield him," she whispered softly; and passed on—on and out beyond the heavily—bolted front door—out forever! In the starlight, chill and faint, she found herself, with trembling limbs and trembling heart, and for a moment sat down on the cold stone step to rally her failing strength and courage before she sought the lodge. At the sound of approaching wheels she arose, and walked with rapid step to the lodge, reaching it just as a coach drew up before it.

Leah Mordecai

"Is it you, Emile?" said Leah softly, as the lodge door opened and a manly form appeared.

"Yes, darling. Thank fortune, your courage has not failed you. I have been feverish with anxiety and impatience for hours. Are you ready, dear?"

At these words Leah trembled, and faltered "Yes."

"Well, I thought it best to bring the minister with me, and so my friend Bishop Leveret is in the carriage. Suppose we have the ceremony performed here; then there can be no possible disappointment or danger. Are you afraid?"

"What have I to fear now, when I have gone so far? I abide now by your wishes in all matters, henceforth and forever. I am ready."

In a moment the bishop was summoned. By the light of a dimly burning lantern, he drew forth the Prayer Book, and read the impressive marriage ceremony of his church. The responses were solemnly uttered, the benediction invoked, and at that midnight hour, in the stillness of the porter's lodge, Emile Le Grande and the young Jewess were pronounced "man and wife." Driving quickly to the vessel that was ready to depart for the tropical port with the first appearance of the morning sun, Emile soon safely ensconced his bride in the comfortable cabin, and with a feeling of joy, tinged only with a shadowy apprehension, he bade adieu to the kind bishop, who had accompanied them thither.

As the morning sun rose, bright and ruddy, from its eastern bed, the vessel's gun, giving the signal for departing, sounded beyond the foaming bar, and the newly wedded lovers were adrift, alike upon the ocean of life and upon the blue expanse that surrounded them—adrift to suffer a dismal shipwreck, or to anchor safely within some remote harbor of love and security.

CHAPTER XXIV.

ANXIOUS and nervous from the expected sorrow of the coming day, Mr. Mordecai rose early from his couch of restless slumber. Restlessly he walked the library floor backward and forward, awaiting the appearance of his daughter Leah. At length he said to his wife, as she summoned him to the morning meal, "It's very late. I wonder why Leah does not come down. I'll just step to her room, and see if she is ready; fatigue and anxiety may have caused her to sleep later than usual this morning. I'll join you in the breakfast-room in a moment."

After a moment had elapsed, Mr. Mordecai stood gently tapping at his daughter's chamber door. There was no response. He gently opened it. The room was vacant. Not a sound or a voice greeted his entrance. Stiff and well-arranged, the elegant furniture stood mutely against the cold, cheerless walls. The ominous tidiness of the deserted bed-chamber bespoke a fearful story. The father stood for a moment in amazement, silently surveying the apartment, his heart half trembling with a vague fear; then he said, in a hoarse, frightened tone, "Leah, my daughter, where are you?" There came no reply, but the faint echo of his whispered words, "Where are you?"

Stepping forward softly into the room, he paused again, and then with slow, uncertain step approached the casement that looked out upon the front garden. There was nothing without but the sunshine and the breeze, and the passing crowd already beginning to throng the streets. Again he turned, with anxious heart, away from the crowd without, to the deserted room within. "Where's my daughter? Leah, dear Leah, where are you?" A folded scrap of paper upon the escritoire caught his eye, and springing forward he seized it, half hopefully, half fearfully, and tremblingly unfolded it. These are the words it contained:

"OWN DEAREST FATHER: Can you, will you ever forgive your disobedient Leah? I shudder when I think of you, reading these lines in the morning, when I shall be far away from your loving embrace! But, dear father, you

Leah Mordecai

know I did not desire to go to Saxony, so far away from you; fearing, yes, even knowing that circumstances would arise to prevent my return. I cannot explain my meaning, dear father, for fear of imperilling your happiness. I prefer to live on, as I have done for years, with the secret of my sorrow—the secret that impels me to this act of disobedience—hidden in my heart. I fear your wrath, and yet, dear father, I cannot go. I prefer to remain and marry the one whom, next to yourself, I love above all mankind—Emile Le Grande. Yes, dear father, when your eyes peruse these lines, I shall be his wife, and far away on my journey to our distant home. He loves me, and I love him, yet more than once have I refused his love, in deference to your teachings, that 'to deny my people and my faith, by marriage with a Christian, was worse than death, and an everlasting disgrace.' Can I hope, then, for your forgiveness, even though I seek it on bended knees, dear father? Had I been allowed to remain at home, I never should have married him, certainly not in the clandestine manner I propose. I flee to the love and protection of Emile, as an alternative to a dreadful fate. Oh! pity and forgive me, father; love me, even though I bring sorrow to your tender, loving heart. In my new home, I shall watch and wait for some tidings, some missive like a white-winged dove, bearing me a single word of love and remembrance from my beloved father. If it comes not, alas! ah me! you may always know there's a sorrow in my heart that no amount of happiness or prosperity can ever eradicate—a darkness that no sunshine can ever dispel.

"And now again, and lastly, my father, I pray that the blessing of the great God of Israel may ever rest upon your venerable head; and will you not, too, invoke His blessing to descend upon the head of your unworthy and unhappy child? Dear, dear, precious father, now adieu, a long tearful adieu, till I receive your blessing. "Sorrowfully, your own "LEAH."

Stupefied and amazed, Mr. Mordecai scarcely realized the import of the words that his flashing eye devoured, till the familiar signature was reached. Then, as if a flood of light had burst upon his blinded vision, came the dreadful revelation; involuntarily he exclaimed, "Eternal God! It cannot be! It is not possible, that my child has fled from me! Gone with a Christian dog, to become his wife; seduced by his honeyed words from the embrace of my love to that of his faithless heart! Torn from my home to follow the wanderings of a villain! Oh, God! Oh, heaven! It cannot be! It must not be! I swear, by Israel, it shall not be! Oh my child! my daughter, my own precious Leah? Where art thou? Where hast thou fled, my daughter?"

In frenzy Mr. Mordecai smote his breast, tore his silvery locks, and bowed in grief as the fatal letter fell from his trembling hand. The depths of his sorrow were stirred, and the tears that flowed from his burning heart left the fountain dry and shrivelled. Then, as the calm succeeds the storm, so, when this fierce tempest of emotion was passed, Mr. Mordecai regathered his strength, summoned the forces of his pride, revenge, and hatred, dispelled all traces of his sorrow, steeled himself for the duty before him, and with a heart of stone in a bosom of adamant, took up the letter and descended the stairs to the waiting family below. Untasted before them was the morning meal. With wild look and emphatic step Mr. Mordecai entered the breakfast-room, and stood before the family holding the letter aloft in his trembling hand. "See here," said he, with a ringing voice, "read here the story of a child, that sought to break an aged father's heart. But hear me first. Hear this my oath. This heart shall not break, I swear it shall not! Leah has gone—fled with a Christian dog, to become his wife. Read it for yourselves when I am gone; but hear me, you that remain. Sarah and Frederick. My blessing shall never rest upon her, living or dying. As she has chosen to bring sorrow upon the gray hairs of her father, so may God rain trouble upon her disobedient head. May her children wander, uncircumcised dogs, friendless, and neglected—as she has neglected me—upon the face of the earth, ever seeking bread, yet feeling constant hunger! Despised of her people, and rejected of her people's God, may she ever feel the need of a friend, and yet find none! Her disobedience is cursed forever, so I swear it by the God of Israel! Mark my words, and remember my wrath!" he concluded, looking fiercely into the eyes of the two children who sat silent before him. "Read this for yourselves; and then burn it, and scatter the ashes to the winds." No one made reply to that outburst of implacable, burning rage, that so consumed the father's heart. They had never seen him in such a frenzy before. Mr. Mordecai then hurriedly left the house, and passing Mingo, at the porter's lodge, went out without a nod of recognition. Urbanely bowing and smiling, Mingo let his master pass, wondering at this singular breach of his accustomed politeness.

Leah Mordecai

As the lodge door closed after Mr. Mordecai had passed out, Mingo bethought him of something, and hastily pursuing his master, said:

"Here, master, is this your yours?"

"What?" asked the master morosely.

"This book, sir; I found it in the lodge."

Mechanically, Mr. Mordecai took it from the servant, and placed it in the inner pocket of his coat, and then passed on without a word. In the house, all were startled, all dismayed, at the disclosure in the letter; all, save Rebecca, were filled with sadness. She felt no regret. The brother and sister moved silently and sorrowfully about the house, and in and out of the vacated chamber, hardly realizing that their gentle sister had indeed gone.

CHAPTER XXV.

MR. MORDECAI had scarcely passed a square from his home, when suddenly he retraced his steps, and stood again before the lodge.

"Mingo," he said sharply, "tell your mistress to send me that cursed letter. Be quick."

With a dash the nimble slave obeyed the command, and in a moment stood before his master, the letter in his hand, bowing and smiling with his usual politeness.

Taking the letter, Mr. Mordecai crushed it in his hand, then placed it in his breast pocket, as he again started forward toward his banking-house. If he passed man, woman, child, friend, acquaintance, or kinsman in that morning's walk, he knew it not; for the tumult of passion that stirred his soul obliterated for the time every recollection but that of the terrible sorrow that had befallen him. In due time he reached the dingy brown banking-house, and stood irresolutely for a moment upon the well-worn stone steps. He placed the ponderous key within the lock, but the hand seemed powerless to turn its massive bolt; and for a moment he stood with thoughtful, determined eye resting upon the pavement. A moment more, and then he quickly withdrew the key, dropped it into his pocket, and briskly retraced his steps for square after square, and then abruptly turned into the well-known street where stood the office of the distinguished Le Grande.

It happened that Mr. Mordecai approached the office from one direction, as Judge Le Grande himself approached it from another, riding in the light single phaeton in which he usually drove to and from his office.

"Good-morning, Mr. Mordecai. How goes it with you, my friend, this fine morning?" said the judge pleasantly, as he alighted and threw the lines to Cato, the driver. "Tell your mistress she need not send for me till five o'clock. I shall be very busy to-day." Then turning to the banker he looked for a reply.

"It's no good-morning to me," replied the banker fiercely. "The night has brought devilish work to my home."

"What do you mean, my friend?" was the judge's quiet reply. "What has the night done?"

"Played the devil! Don't you try to trifle with my sorrow. That son of yours has already wrought me injury enough. Don't you attempt to mock me. I warn you, Le Grande, I warn you!"

Astonished by these mysterious words of the Hebrew, Judge Le Grande gravely assured Mr. Mordecai that he knew nothing of the trouble that had befallen him, and repeatedly asked, "What has my son done?"

Leah Mordecai

"Done? Alas! he has done that which would to God I could undo!" was the reply, uttered angrily and savagely. "But as I cannot undo it, I shall curse it—curse it from the depths of my soul! He has married my daughter? Stolen her—taken her away in secret from my house, and they have wisely fled from my presence!"

"Married your daughter!" ejaculated the judge, the truth faintly dawning on him. "Surely that's a mistake."

"Indeed it is a wild mistake; I would to God it were otherwise."

"By what authority do you make this assertion?" continued Judge Le Grande, evidently aroused by the dawning truth.

"By the confession of my daughter, left in her room, and written a short time before her flight."

"Where is that confession? Let me see it."

"Here," replied the banker, drawing the crumpled missive from his pocket. "There, read the mischief for yourself."

With trembling hand Judge Le Grande smoothed out the crushed paper, and eagerly, fearfully, scanned the contents that were to crush his hopes, as they had crushed those of the banker. Silently, carefully, he read it, read it till the story was told, and then, brushing away a tear from his eye he said, with emotion:

"Mordecai, forgive her! Forgive her, as I shall forgive him; and now that it is done, let us make the best of it."

"Forgive!" hissed the banker; "forgive such an act of disobedience as that? Such disgrace to my name and people? Never, while there is a drop of Hebrew blood in Benjamin Mordecai's veins, will I forgive it!"

"It's no more a disgrace to your name and people than it is to mine; but I consider that people are fools, who make disgrace of family troubles, by obstinately parading them before the world."

"Then I shall delight in being a fool, if so you deem it," replied Mr. Mordecai, with kindling emotion.

"Alas! I had great plans for Emile," said Judge Le Grande sadly, as he turned away from Mr. Mordecai; "and his mother too; she had fondly hoped he would marry Belle Upton. Now, all is disappointment. I do not know how she will bear it. As for myself, I shall make the best of it. I hope they may be happy.—I say, Mordecai," looking steadily at the banker, "they have my forgiveness and my blessing too. You may do as you please."

"Well, I curse them," the banker answered bitterly; "and I swear they shall never see my face again, living or dying. Not one dollar from my purse shall they ever receive, even though want and beggary come upon them. Think not I can ever change, Judge Le Grande. As my people and my people's God, the Eternal Father, are unchangeable, so is my purpose concerning these disobedient children. Good morning." Mr. Mordecai then turned slowly from the office, and as the judge beheld the receding form, and remembered the fierce flash of his dark eye, he unhesitatingly exclaimed, "Poor old man! I pity you. And," he added after a moment's pause, "Heaven pity us both!"

As a bird floats safely upon the bosom of the blue sky and finds at last her leafy home, so the little vessel that bore the fugitive lovers, found safe and speedy anchorage in the quiet harbor of the sea—girt isle that was to be their future home. The young, ardent husband, and the fair, gentle wife, gazed with delight upon the cloudless skies and bright waters, and thought hopefully of the future. Only one shadow darkened their horizon. It was a fearful thought, to Leah, that her father's anathema might ever rest upon her. But the future was veiled, and the voice of Hope whispered, "his blessing may come by and by. Wait."

CHAPTER XXVI.

TWO years rolled away—two short, bright years of individual and national prosperity, and then came a change. To use the words of the immortal Dickens, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times; it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness; it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness; it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair; we had everything before us, we had nothing before us; we were all going direct to heaven, we were all going direct the other way." These utterances of inspiration so fittingly describing the period that ushered in the bloody French Revolution, may be applied with equal truth and force to the years that inaugurated the war between the States in fair America.

Did not prosperity bud and blossom in every vale and hamlet of this fair domain? And yet were a people ever more unmindful of, or more ungrateful for their blessings? Bickering and strife, dissension and hatred, grew fiercer with the growth of the nation's grandeur. Slavery, on one hand said, "I will," and Freedom, on the other, "You shall not." So the war—cloud, "the size of a man's hand" only at first, appeared upon the dim horizon of the future. Wisdom sought to devise plans for averting war, but Folly shook her locks tauntingly, and said mockingly, "Ha! ha! War is pleasant pastime." So the culmination was reached, and a misguided people, clamorous for war, sounded the tocsin that caused rivers of blood to flow from brothers' hearts, and enshrouded a grand and happy people in desolation and disgrace.

At the time when the war—cloud of fratricidal conflict was rolling dark and broad over the land, a treacherous enemy on the border were menacing and even destroying many of our country's peaceful citizens. Upon the broad frontier at the Far West it became the duty of the government to hold these wily foes in check by a strong and reliable armed force. To this north—western outpost of service Captain Marshall had been ordered by the voice of his country. Not ordered there as to a holiday excursion, but ordered into actual bloody conflict, and to an ordeal that would have tried the bravery and courage of a veteran. At the head of his command, Company A, 3d Regiment U. S. Regulars, Captain Marshall reached this post of danger in the hour of its most imminent peril. But for this timely arrival of troops, the peaceful little town of Minneopoli might have been laid waste, and its defenceless inhabitants cruelly butchered or carried away captive. But the premeditated destruction of the town was averted, the treacherous "red—skins" disappointed, and Captain Marshall's bravery demonstrated beyond a peradventure.

It was the night after the attack of the Indians, and the bloody repulse. All was quiet. The troops were reassembled in camp. The usual garrulity of the soldiers was checked by the recollection of their dead comrades, so recently laid to rest in soldiers' graves. All, too, remembered the danger through which they had passed, and many were moody and silent. At length a bright—faced, light—headed young recruit spoke out, seeing the silence and sadness around the camp—fire. "I say, captain, that was a wretched red—skin of a chief that you hauled in yesterday. He looked more like the Prince of Darkness than the chief of a tribe. I thought once, cap'n, he had you; and I was just ready to pick him off, when I saw you were safe."

"Yes, Carlos, that was a close place, and but for a kind fate, I should be sleeping with those brave fellows who have left us. Peace to their resting—places."

"I was sorry you did not kill him; he deserved death. But how quick he did surrender, when he saw you close in on him with your sword! Ha! ha!"

"Yes, Mico is a bad, bad Indian, and has caused more trouble to this settlement than all the other Indians combined. I guess he will enjoy his freedom, when he gets it again. Confinement and chains are worse than death to him."

"I tell you, cap'n, they are cowardly devils. They can't stand gunpowder. At the very smell of it they run out from

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their hiding-places, like so many rats from a burning building. I hated to see one of them taken alive. It's not like fighting civilized people; is it, cap'n? I am in favor of the black flag in a fight with these red devils."

"War is war, Carlos, and brutalizes the most intelligent people on earth, if they indulge in it. I trust our troubles are ended here, for a long time, if not forever, now that Mico is our prisoner. At any rate, I hope all will remain peaceful and tranquil till I go home and return. For a month I have a leave of absence, to visit my native State."

"Going home, captain, to see your mother?" spoke up a fair-haired young boy, scarcely eighteen, who had sat a silent listener to the conversation between Carlos and his commander.

"Ah! Franco, I have no mother; she died long ago," replied the captain; "but I am going back to my native State. My father and a brother and sister live there."

"It has been many a long day," said Franco, "since I saw my native hills, and heard my mother's gentle voice, as she went singing about our humble home. I often wonder how she could sing so, with so much poverty and care constantly about her. Maybe I shall never see her again ;" and a shade of sorrow crept over the fair young face of the French recruit.

The captain replied, "I trust that you may, Franco, though you are now so many leagues away. What brought you away from her, Franco?"

"Poverty, captain, poverty; and unless I can lighten the burden of my mother's life by returning, I shall never go back!"

Silence at length settled upon the camp, and one by one the groups of comrades disbanded. The campfires were extinguished, and at an early hour sleep tenderly enfolded these guardians of their country's peace and security.

CHAPTER XXVII.

THE spring had come again, and a little more than its first month had elapsed when, early one morning, as the sun was stealing up softly from the east, and before it had brought the hour for the slumbering troops to be aroused by another reveille, or had gilded the hills and valleys with its light, Captain Marshall, accompanied by his faithful orderly, Franco, entered the half-slumbering town of Minneopoli and turned toward the inn, whence the coach was soon to leave for the nearest railway station.

"Lieutenant Styles will be in command, Franco, till I return, you know, and I fear he will form a dangerous substitute, with his affable nature," said the captain, as the hour of parting drew near.

"Well, never mind that, captain; no matter how affable, we boys do not wish a new commander just now," returned the true-hearted boy.

"Take care of your scalps, Franco. Don't let the 'red-skins' surprise you while I am gone. There, I see the coach is ready. I must soon bid you adieu."

"If I remember the bravery of my captain, the red devils won't get my scalp, I'll wager. But I hope they are settled for a time. Come back as soon as you can, captain, and in your absence think occasionally of Franco, will you? There comes the coach. The horses are fine and gay."

"Rest assured, Franco, I will think of you, and often too. How I would like to take you with me! But take care of yourself. A month's absence is not such a long time, after all. Good-by, my dear fellow, good-by;" and seating

himself in the waiting coach, Captain Marshall waved an adieu to his sorrowful young companion, and at the same moment the coach driver hallooed, "All ready!" and gave a sharp crack of the whip; the horses dashed forward, and recruit and captain were soon separated—separated forever. In less time than a fortnight, Captain Marshall had accomplished his long and troublesome journey, and was safe once more within his native State.

"I tell you, Fred," said the captain, one day when he was visiting a friend in the Queen City, "the agitated, portentous state of affairs in this section distresses and alarms me. I had no dream of the warlike aspect of this quiet Queen City of the Sea. I fancied we had all the trouble with us, in the north—west, among those wretched savages. I came home for a month of recreation and pleasure, and " he uttered with slight hesitation "for the fulfilment of my plighted troth; for the realization of the bright dream of a love that has brightened my heart for nearly two years. Yes, Fred, and if it were not for the business that takes me to fair Melrose, I should regret that my coming home had been just at this time. I tell you, my good fellow, the future portends evil, if not bloodshed."

"Well, Marshall, bloodshed is inevitable, unless as a section we are allowed our constitutional rights; and I, for one, say, if it must, let it come, even with the fury of a storm. I am for State rights, and the Palmetto State forever!"

"Not bloodshed, Fred, if we can avert it," replied the young officer to the enthusiastic outburst of the impetuous young Pinckney, the beloved friend of his boyhood. "I am just from the gory field, where I saw my brave men fall beneath the treacherous blows of the Indians. I have seen bloodshed, and desire to see no more of it. I have always loved military life, you know, Fred; but I tell you it tries the heart of a man to see his men shot down like dogs."

"Oh, yes; you are for the Union, I see," replied young Pinckney with impatient gesture. "Your service in the regular army has weaned your heart from your native State, I fear."

"Oh! yes; I am for the Union just now—the union of hearts, at least; and as you go with me to Melrose, you shall see that the union is maintained."

"O bother! Marshall; you can think of nothing now but matrimony. I am for the union of hearts myself; but the union of States as it has existed, I detest. Peaceable secession, you see, we cannot have; and if it must come in bloodshed, why, in the name of mankind, let it come! I am ready for the issue of my State's action."

"I pray your blood may never be required as the price of forcible secession, my dear Fred. But the condition of the country appals me! I—whom duty calls to one place, and whom ties of affection bind to another—I am placed in no enviable position. Yet I still hope the trouble will soon clear up, and all will yet be bright."

"Your duty is plain before you, Marshall. It's for or against us now, and no equivocation."

"Well, we'll not fall out about our country's troubles. They may be better and they may be worse than we anticipate. I'll hope for the best, though evil come. Let's talk of Melrose, and the fair flower that blooms there. Eh, Fred?"

Fred replied smiling, "So we will, dear boy; here, take this cigar. Let's have a smoke, and if you like we'll stroll down to the Battery and see the encampment."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE rosy month of May succeeded the chilly April in that memorable year when the war—cloud of civil contest overshadowed the land so darkly. It came with unwonted verdure, freshness, and beauty, filling the hearts of the despondent with hope, and the hopeful with rejoicing. It was scarcely a month from the time the coach dashed out

of the half-roused town of Minneopoli in the chilly April morning, when a similar vehicle, one evening, toiled slowly up the long hill whose summit was crowned by picturesque Melrose. Among the passengers were Captain Marshall and his friend Fred Pinckney. The former had come to Melrose to claim the hand of his affianced, Eliza Heartwell, and to take her away as his wife. In that sweet May-time, no heart was happier than George Marshall's, and no voice gladder, as it rang out in unrestrained laughter at the droll jokes and facetious comments of his witty friend Fred.

"I say, George, this is undoubtedly the beautifullest country I ever saw. Do see. Such honeysuckles and such dog-wood blossoms never grew before. Maybe if the fates are propitious, I'll come back here to this picturesque country to get me a wife, after the war is over. Who knows? Then I'll be a laurel-crowned hero, having whaled out the Yankees to a frizzle, and all the fair ones will be sighing for my hand and heart! Umph! I am impatient for the conflict. George, you know the Yankees won't fight!"

"Well, we will see. At any rate, from my acquaintance with them, I shall not go to battle against them armed only with a broom-stick. But here we are in Melrose. Don't, for love's sake, talk of war. My heart's in a flutter. Cupid's conflict is worse than the Indians, Fred."

"Yes, I see you have surrendered unconditionally; yet your captivity is by no means galling, I observe. Well, you are a lucky fellow, George. Prosperity attend you."

Fatigued from the long journey, so much of it accomplished by tiresome, lumbering stage-coaches, these two travelling companions gladly alighted at the Melrose Tavern, and eagerly sought the refreshments its simple hospitality afforded.

CHAPTER XXIX.

IN the quiet little parlor of Widow Heartwell, in the early May morning, the tender breeze stole in and out of the window, fluttering the muslin curtain and filling the apartment with delicious perfume. In the same parlor a few chosen friends were assembled, to witness the solemn ceremony that was to deprive them of the pride and favorite of the village. As the dial upon the delicate face of the little bronze clock on the mantel marked the hour of eight, the flutter of robes and the rustling of footsteps ushered in the expectant pair, and at once all the guests arose.

Pale and trembling, Mrs. Heartwell took her place beside her daughter, as she stood before the venerable minister. For years the Rev. Mr. Pratt had been their pastor and spiritual adviser, and his heart was filled with deep emotion as he pronounced the solemn words that bound this child of his love and watchful care to her husband, to be "His servitor for aye." Amid smothered sobs, he invoked Heaven's benediction upon their wedded hearts, praying that, as love had directed this union, so love might attend them, even unto death.

Amid sighs and tears, the congratulations were received, and when at length Fred Pinckney found a moment to whisper in George Marshall's ear, he said, with characteristic drollery, "By Jupiter? I'll be glad when the coach comes. I can't stand so much crying; it's more like a funeral than a wedding. If they are obliged to blubber this way when a fellow marries, I think I shall back out."

Another hour and the bridal party had departed. The fair flower of Melrose was gone, changed from a lonely maiden to a happy, hopeful bride; gone to follow the footsteps of a true, brave-hearted husband,—gone from Melrose, leaving many aching hearts behind; leaving, too, a vacancy that no succession of years could ever quite fill.

A fortnight after the quiet wedding in Melrose, late one afternoon, George Marshall and his wife were walking slowly along the ever-thronged battery of the Queen City, whither they had come on a visit to Captain Marshall's

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uncle, Dr. Thornwell. A serious expression rested upon the young captain's face, as he surveyed the long lines of tents that dotted the open square and bordered the broad street—so serious indeed, that he scarcely heeded the passers—by who were bowing salutations to him and his fair bride.

"George, you seem so abstracted; you scarcely noticed Frank Brewster as he passed just now in the brett with Florence Dale. What's the matter, dear?"

"I'm troubled, perplexed, pondering, my dear. Yet I did not mean to be so abstracted. I must beg your forgiveness, as well as that of my friends."

"Oh! never mind me, George; only tell me what troubles you."

"Nothing more than the perplexing question that has harassed me ever since I came home, and saw beyond a doubt that we should have war—the question that I must soon decide, whether I shall desert my State in time of peril, or my country. In either course of acting, I shall be branded as a traitor, or a rebel. It's a serious dilemma to be placed in, dear Eliza, and I must act wisely, and like a man. My heart is dreadfully divided: duty calls me to my country, and love calls me to my home. My forebodings, too, whisper that this war will be no trifling affair."

"Well, for my part, George, and you already know it, I am opposed to secession. Fred Pinckney says it's on account of the Whig blood that flows in my veins. I told him that my father, and my grandfather before him, were uncompromising Whigs. It may be so; I don't know. I abhor the idea of bloodshed, and as yet, I think we have had little cause to declare war."

"You are a sage little woman, and your argument sound, but these sentiments won't do to promulgate in the Queen City. Remember, I am still a commissioned officer in the United States army. Be careful."

"Oh! I am not afraid of my sentiments, or of being deemed traitorous. Only this morning, Colonel Legare asked me if I would present the Palmetto Rifles with the new flag he had made for them. But to return. War is war, George, and should be entered into with caution."

"Yes; you are right. I feel at times as though I could not fight against the flag of my country; and then, on the other hand, I would not fight against my home and kindred. There seems but one alternative left to me—to resign my commission in the army and not take up arms at all," replied the young officer sadly.

"Well, cheer up. Don't grow despondent. I hope wisdom will direct your decision; and remember, if the thought will give you any comfort, that I have sworn to follow your footsteps and your fortune, wheresoever they may lead, be it from craggy Maine to wild Colorado," said the young wife with forced pleasantry.

"Bravo! what a lucky fellow I am! Surely no evil will befall me. Your cheering words decide my choice; wisdom, you say, will direct the decision. It shall be made. We will once more make the charming round of this inviting boulevard, and then I'll tell you my decision. There goes Fred Pinckney on horseback. How handsome he looks in that uniform! He belongs to the Palmetto Rifles, I believe."

"Yes, so he does. Fred's a gallant, handsome fellow, a little too hot-blooded, though," replied the young wife, thoughtfully.

Once again the gay promenade was traversed, and as the sun's last ray was faintly dying, the young wife stopped, and leaning gently on the railing with eye turned toward the sea, she said, "Now, George, tell me your decision." And he replied quickly, "I shall resign my commission in the army, and cast my lot with my people and my State. Alas! I may never see Franco again!"

"I trust you have acted wisely," replied the young wife, thoughtfully. "But, oh, George, see Defiance. See how the dying sun gilds the flag, the new flag that has risen above the old one that floated there when I was here a school-girl. Somehow I love the old flag, the Stars and Stripes—'Whig blood,' I suppose; but Defiance always looked so grim and terrible to me, even when I was a school-girl, in peaceful days, and now it appears a terrible monster of horror!"

"Oh! Defiance bears you no ill-will, my darling. It's a quiet old fort, that will protect us from our enemies. Long live the memory of the man who surrendered it only at the mouth of cannon! But come, let's be going. It's late; already pedestrians and vehicles are turning homeward."

How sad, that time so far has furnished no historian or biographer truthfully and charitably to chronicle the terrible struggle of many noble-souled men, who sacrificed the love of country for the love of State in that unhallowed civil war! Yet there is the truth that the great Searcher of human hearts has His record on high; and in the unfolding hereafter, many souls that here were branded as traitors, will there receive the rewards of patriots. Scores who were here despised for cowardice, will there receive the plaudits that await the brave. Legions who have perished in ignominious cells, will there be found crowned heroes. For who knows the yet unwritten record of the horrible war between the States, but the heroes who perished here and passed on beyond?

CHAPTER XXX.

SIX months rolled by—six memorable months, that sadly blasted a nation's hopes, and overturned the plans and purposes of countless individuals. The war-cloud had darkened and deepened, till the sky of many a happy home was already obscured by its fearful gloom. At the first bugle-note of conflict, a peaceful, happy people was transformed, as if by magic, into a warlike host. The war-tide rushed on with an impetuosity that bore all things before it. Willing or unwilling, men must be soldiers. Cities, towns, and villages were astir with excitement. Forgetting the ordinary interests of life, people talked enthusiastically, madly, of war. Months ago had the accustomed serenity of the Queen City given place to noisy military life. Its by-ways and suburbs were dotted with tents, the phantom homes of soldiers. Men who yesterday were gentlemen, were to-day only vassals, whose existence was marked by the morning reveille and the evening tattoo. The drilling, drilling, drilling, still hourly went on; but not that peaceful exercise the inhabitants had been wont to observe in Citadel Square in days ago. Marching, guarding, countermarching, watching, were the order of the day. Some hearts were wild with enthusiasm, others dark with despair. Already the tide of brothers' blood had crimsoned the sod of more than one State. Blood, blood, was flowing—crimson blood, that might have been a libation to a nobler, holier cause.

Old Defiance, standing dark and warlike in the harbor of the Queen City, had now a new commander. The guns, as usual, turned their deadly mouths to the open sea, but the gunners and the commander did not wear the uniform of the old troops once garrisoned there. George Marshall, impelled by the love of State, and moved by the importunities of friends, had accepted the position of commander at Defiance, and was now Colonel instead of Captain Marshall. With regret, with tears even, he folded away the regimentals of the old army, and said with a sigh, as he laid them out of sight, "I shall never need them again." Blame him, if you dare, you who have never stood the test of such a trial. Censure him for a traitor, if you must, you that have only dallied on the outskirts of your country's danger. In that book on high, thank God, angels read his record aright.

"George," said Eliza one morning to her husband, in a soft October day, as he was about leaving her for the fort, "I am sorry you ever took command of Defiance. I have always had a strange horror of that monster of the sea. I hate to think of your being there."

"Well, you are foolish in that fear, my love. It's much better for you than if I were in the field. If I were at the head of a regiment, I should be ordered here and there, Fate only knows where, and maybe not see you for months, perhaps years. When you become more acquainted with the old fortress, my dear, you will cease to regard it with

such terror."

"Maybe I shall, George, but I fear not. It stands like some terrible apparition, ever before me, waking or sleeping," she replied, half sadly, half fearfully. "Oh! this terrible war! It has begun, but it is not yet ended," she added with a shudder.

"You must be more hopeful; your words are not encouraging to a soldier-husband. Come, cheer up, and go with me over to the fortress this evening. What do you say? Go, and beard the lion in his den, as it were."

"I shall be most happy to do so, if it will tend to dispel my prejudice, or rather, my dread of the place. At what hour?"

"At six P. M. precisely, the Sea-Foam leaves pier number three for the fort. I'll return in time for us to leave at that hour. Be ready. Adieu. I must hasten!" He kissed her, and was gone.

When Eliza was once again alone in her quiet chamber, the skilful fingers were busy with her work, and the perplexed brain was busy with its thoughts. At length she said, half audibly, "I may be foolish. God only knows how dreadfully I feel about this wretched war."

At the appointed time George Marshall returned, to find his wife awaiting him; and without delay they sought the Sea-Foam's pier. As the young colonel walked beside his wife, so modestly yet becomingly attired in simple white muslin, with a blue scarf round her faultless figure, he thought her a paragon of beauty, and passed on in silent admiration, till the pier was reached.

"What does this embarkation recall to your mind, George?" said the young wife pleasantly, as her husband seated himself beside her on the deck of the Sea-Foam.

"Nothing in particular, that I remember. What is it?"

"Oh, I was vain enough to suppose it might recall to you an occasion that has ever been memorable to me," she replied archly. But I see you have forgotten that sunny June evening, five years ago, when I embarked, from this very pier-embarked, leaving you behind, and thinking I should never see you again."

"Oh, forgive my want of memory and sentimentality. The war has well-nigh crushed the latter out of my nature. I thank God though, that we have now embarked together on the ocean of life, with no fear of separation, and with the hope, too, that storms, if they come, may not wreck our bark. Isn't the sea lovely? And how delicious the breeze!"

"Yes, the flags float airily; but the fort, though seemingly so near, is yet quite far away. How deceptive is water!" The boat sped on toward the fortress like a feather on the breeze.

"Here we come," said the colonel, "nearer, nearer, nearer, to the huge pile of sea-washed brick and mortar; nearer to your dreaded enemy, my love; slower, slower, slower, to the land. Here we are!" And the Sea-Foam safely cast her anchor once again.

CHAPTER XXXI.

EVENT crowded upon event as the first two long years of the war glided by-years that seemed to calendar twenty-four, instead of twelve months each. The strife hadn't yet reached its climax, but blood was flowing fearfully. From Maine to the Gulf was one vast beleaguered sea-coast, for at every sea-port city, grim monsters

of war stood guarding the entrance to the harbor. Already the central, though despised Queen City, was feeling the fire of a fierce and cruel bombardment. Refugees were flitting hither and thither about the country, seeking peace and security, but finding none. Want and privation were even now beginning to menace a once luxurious people, and gloom and despair to enshroud the hopes of those who had fondly dreamed of a successful dismemberment of the Union. Such was the record of the years preceding the memorable seven days' fighting at "Merry Oaks."

These battles form the half-way stone in the long period of our civil war. It was the day after the dreadful conflict. The forces had retired to re-gather their strength, and the wounded, dying, and dead, were left upon the field. Early in the morning, as the heat of the summer sun was streaming down, a horseman rode slowly and carefully about this field of death. Here and there, lying thickly, as they fell, were the dead of both forces, easily distinguished by the different colors they wore, while gathered in groups, under the grateful shade-trees, could be seen the wounded whose strength was sufficient to drag them thither. This field was a shocking spectacle. And as the horseman rode slowly along the desolate track, peering curiously and sadly into the upturned faces of the dead, a casual observer might have detected the melancholy expression on his face, and marked the glittering tear that bedewed his eyes. For brave, true, noble George Marshall, was never ashamed to weep over the woes of humanity! Imperative business had called him from his post of duty to the seat of war, just in time to be within ear-shot of that memorable seven days' carnage. And as he rode, on that quiet summer morning, strange, painful emotions filled his heart. Around and about him, before and behind, lay grim and ghastly faces cold in death-faces of soldiers who were brothers in country, and many of them brothers in name-brothers in actual consanguinity, brothers in destiny, brothers in everything, save love. There they were, peaceful now, side by side, the last conflict ended, the last spark of animosity extinguished; there, side by side-dead. No wonder George Marshall wept. The wonder is that there ever throbbed a human heart that could refrain from weeping over such a scene.

At length, George Marshall suddenly drew his rein, and lifting his hand to his forehead so as to shade his eyes, gazed curiously forward for a moment toward an object lying not very far distant. Then, quickly alighting, he stepped cautiously toward the object of his scrutiny. It was the dead body of a soldier. The dark blue uniform told to which army he belonged. The stocking, turned back from a slender ankle, fell carelessly over the heavy army shoe. The head was half-averted, and the open eyes, though sightless, were still bright with God's own azure.

"Creeping gently through his slender hand, as though it loved the cold caress of death, was a wild vine whose tiny blossoms would have shrunk at the touch of a wild bee's foot." By the side of his face was the worn cap that had fallen from his head as he fell.

Fearfully, timidly, with an air of dread, Colonel Marshall approached the silent figure and bent over the recumbent form.

"Great God! it is Franco! I thought I knew the poor fellow from afar! Poor, poor boy! Poor fair-haired Franco!" he exclaimed in a breath. Then gently turning the soiled cap, he read "Third Regiment United States Regulars." "My old command, my old command," he murmured. "Alas! poor Franco! I thank God we did not meet in deadly conflict. Your true, kind heart wished no one ill, yet an unkind fate has brought you to a mournful end, and I, for one, shall mourn your hapless lot. Alas! poor boy, you'll never see your vine-clad France again, and your kind mother's peasant home will ever be darkened by your absence."

Then kneeling for a little time beside the dead boy, the kind-hearted colonel dropped a tear and bowed his head in deep reflection. Then, arising and looking eagerly about him, he said at length, "There, in the end of that entrenchment, by the side of that shattered tree, I can lay his body, in lieu of a better grave. There it will at least be safe from the vultures and the horrible fate that awaits the unburied dead of a defeated army."

Then tenderly and sadly he laid the young soldier away in his peaceful grave, covering his face with his smoke-stained cap, and folding his pulseless hands upon his bosom. At last, covering the mound upon which his

tears had fallen, with some evergreen boughs, he patiently carved upon a rude board, that he set up to mark the grave, the words:

"POOR FRANCO. Aged 20."

CHAPTER XXXII.

THE bombardment of the Queen City continued. With unprecedented stubbornness did she resist the enemy's fierce demands, and stand firm amid the death-dealing blows of shot and shell. Many of the inhabitants had fled from their homes at the first boom of the shelling guns, but many, too, had remained; and among the latter number was Mr. Mordecai's family. But now the moment had arrived when farther exposure to danger seemed to the banker a reckless disregard of life. So they were going—going, as many others had gone, leaving behind the palatial home, with its comforts and luxuries, for the privations, hardships, discomforts, of a refugee life. Articles of value were being removed to places of greater security, some to be sold, others given to remaining friends, who could not get away, and some left uncared for. It was the day before the proposed departure. The house wore the aspect of a dismantled castle. In the room formerly the library, but now well filled with trunks, boxes, bundles, and so on, Rebecca and her faithful attendant were busy with the packing, unpacking, and repacking of their household goods. "Here, Barbara," said Rebecca, turning to the woman nearest her, as she pushed aside an old worn portmanteau, "you can take this. It's an old valise that my husband sent up from the bank the other day, among his rubbish from there. Here, give me the papers out of it, and I'll lookover them, while I sit here to rest a moment. Here, pour them into my apron." Obeying this command, Barbara emptied the contents into the large apron that the mistress upheld to receive them, and she sat down to the examination. One by one the papers fell from her fingers to the floor as valueless trash, and she pushed them with her foot toward the open fire-place. Suddenly she descried upon the floor a dark brown paper, loosely folded, that had fallen from her lap unobserved. Picking it up, she drew from it a small book, bound in Russia leather, the size of a man's hand. Upon the outer cover, in dim, well-worn, and mold-covered letters was the word "Journal." "What can this be?" she murmured curiously, holding it tightly in her hand. Slowly unfastening the slender clasp, she read with astonishment the words written upon the first page: "Emile Le Grande's Diary."

Amazed at what her eyes beheld, Rebecca hastily secreted the book in her dress pocket and retired from the room. Once securely out of sight, she eagerly began her scrutiny of the ill-fated little book that had fallen so mysteriously into her possession. Record after record was read with greedy eye. Soon her eye rested upon the name, "Leah Mordecai." No vulture ever devoured its unfortunate prey with more rapacity than did this wicked woman the contents that followed, day after day. Her eye gleamed with delight, and her jewelled hands trembled for joy, as she turned leaf after leaf of the unfortunate book. At length she stopped suddenly, and exclaimed half-wildly, "Aha! I know it now! At last the truth has come to light, the terrible mystery is revealed," as she read the unfortunate yet idle record of young Le Grande's, made on the night of Bertha Levy's tea-party, the foolish record: "If I knew that she loved Mark Abrams, I would kill him."

"You are mistaken, my bird," Rebecca continued to soliloquize; "he did not love Leah Mordecai as fondly as you supposed, but you dared to kill him from jealous hatred when you well knew you were destroying the hopes and future of my child. Well, I'll see to it that revenge comes. My young eagle, you are not so far away, but justice can find you. Though the water of a dozen oceans rolled between us, I think my revenge could reach you. Rest on in your fancied security while you may, young villain; the storm is gathering for your destruction. Rest on. Rebecca Mordecai will never, never forget you. I will keep this secret to myself till my plans are matured; then I will act. Now, we must fly, and then—well, never mind what then, so I keep this treasure safe in my grasp." So saying, she stowed the journal away in her bosom, and with a cruel laugh, busied herself again with her preparations for departure. The removal was made. The mansion of the banker was vacated, and the Queen City left to the mercy of the spoiler. In all these days of agitation and confusion, the little journal lay safe in the bosom of its possessor. She intended to have the way clear, before unfolding her secret and her purpose. And so it was.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

IN their quiet little sea-girt home, where the skies were bright and blue, and the breezes balmy and soft, Emile Le Grande and his young wife had dwelt in peace and happiness for nearly five years. Not a line had ever come, amid all Leah's hopeless longing and vain expectation, to assure her of her father's forgiveness and continued love. So, weary from this continued disappointment, she had settled down into the confident assurance, that his blessing now would never come, and she must find happiness alone in her husband's love. Long, long ago, Emile's parents had written, expressing kindest wishes for their welfare, and tendering to Leah a daughter's welcome. Mrs. Le Grande, although disappointed and chagrined that Belle Upton was not the choice of her son's love, soon quieted down, and accepted the alternative with astonishing and commendable resignation. So, despite Leah's bitter disappointment, she was happy; for, aside from Emile's love, she soon drew hope and happiness from the life of the dark-eyed little daughter that had come to bless her home. Emile had yielded to Leah's wishes, and, following the custom of her people, she had called her little daughter, Sarah, in memory of her mother, whose death she had so long and deeply mourned.

The event of this little grandchild's birth had never reached Mr. Mordecai's ears, for he had regarded Leah as dead, ever since that dreadful morning when he discovered that she had clandestinely married a "Christian dog." He desired to know naught of her welfare; he avoided knowing anything.

In the interior of the State, about two hundred miles distant from the Queen City, was a cosy, sequestered little settlement, called Inglewood. To this little shelter of peace and security, many refugees had found their way, and taken temporary homes. Many Hebrew families from the Queen City had fled thither, and among them those of Rabbi Abrams and Mr. Mordecai.

It was some weeks after Mr. Mordecai's removal to Inglewood, when one day Rebecca requested her husband to accompany her to the house of the rabbi. Mr. Mordecai gladly assented. They found the rabbi, as usual, engrossed with his books in the temporary library that was a necessary feature of his home. Mrs. Abrams still bore on her pale, calm face the marks of sorrow that had rested there since the terrible and mysterious death of her son. Without delay, and by dint of that skilful management which was characteristic of Rebecca, she approached the dreadful subject of Mark's death. Then, after a pause, looking straight at the rabbi, she said suddenly, with terrible emphasis, "I know the guilty man—the one who did the dreadful deed." The rabbi, his wife, and Mr. Mordecai looked aghast.

"What do you mean," at length spoke out the rabbi, in fearful bewilderment.

"I mean that I know who assassinated Mark," she replied, with flashing eye and ringing voice.

"Know who killed my son!" he ejaculated hoarsely, "for Heaven's sake, who was it?"

"You know the dark villain, Rebecca, who did that bloody deed! By Israel, who was it?" said her husband, almost in the same breath.

"It was Emile—Le—Grande!" she replied slowly. "He and none other."

"That's a dreadful accusation," said the rabbi; "by what authority do you make such a statement?"

"By the authority of his own words," she replied triumphantly. "Here, you can read the confession for yourself." She drew forth the little journal and pointed to the records.

"There, read first: 'If I thought Mark Abrams loved her, I would kill him.'"

Leah Mordecai

"Great God!" gasped the rabbi, looking again at the record as though he thought his eyes had deceived him.

"Here again, see here," said Rebecca, pointing to one other record: "'Dead men tell no tales.' Was that not some deed of his foul doing that he did not wish discovered?" she continued, as she turned onward through the book.

"He shall die!" exclaimed Mr. Mordecai, quivering with rage and astonishment, while the stricken father turned and walked sadly across the floor, exclaiming, "Ah me! ah me! Alas! my poor boy?" while the mother's wounded heart bled afresh.

"See here again," said Rebecca, pointing with her finger to another record that bore upon the mystery.

"Enough! enough!" exclaimed the father, averting his head and waving her to silence with his hand. "I have seen enough; the mystery is plain, the truth at last revealed. O God, the dreadful truth!"

Mr. Mordecai stamped his foot, clenched his hands, and muttering half audibly, "This villain has ruined you, has broken my heart, and destroyed the hopes of my child; and he shall die!"

"But, poor Leah, my husband," said Rebecca, half timidly, and with a semblance of deep feeling.

"Leah!" he angrily repeated, "dare you even, now, speak that name to me? Would to God she were dead! Never insult me again with the utterance of that name?"

"Forgive me, dear husband; in the excitement of this sad discovery I forgot your commands. I'll obey you in future." And turning again to the subject, in order to appease her husband's displeasure, she added, "By what means can you hope to reach Emile now, dear husband? You know he's far away, and the guns of a blockading fleet intervene."

"Though the guns of a dozen fleets intervened, I should bring him to justice," he replied sharply.

"Think what my dear Sarah has suffered—is suffering still, from the work of his bloody hand, dear husband," said Rebecca, affecting to weep, as she covered her face with her hand.

Well-nigh aroused to frenzy, Mr. Mordecai said fiercely, "Promise me, Rabbi Abrams, promise me, Rebecca, that you will lend me your aid in bringing this fugitive to justice; and I swear by Jerusalem, he shall be punished. I have gold, and that will insure me success. Yes, I have gold he coveted, but—aha! that he has never received. Pledge me, promise me, both of you, that good allies you will be!" And they pledged him.

"But, tell me, Rebecca," said the rabbi, suddenly stopping in his agitated walk. "How did you come into possession of that book?"

"Indeed, Rabbi Abrams, that is a mystery. In packing and unpacking, preparatory to leaving the Queen City, I accidentally found this Journal in an old portmanteau that my husband sent up from his bank one day, among a lot of rubbish. It had lain there a long time, I judge. Can you clear up the mystery, my husband?" she said, turning to Mr. Mordecai.

"Let me see it," he replied; and taking the Journal from her hands, he held it in his grasp as though it were a deadly thing, while he eyed it strangely from side to side.

"I think, I think," he said slowly, as though abstracted and confused; "I think this is the book Mingo gave me the morning after " Then he was silent. "Well, he found it in the lodge, I guess," he continued. "I remember his giving me a small book that morning, and I laid it away somewhere, to look at when my mind was less agitated. I

had forgotten it."

"A kind fate has preserved it, husband, so that we might be avenged," said Rebecca.

"Keep it securely then, as it will be needed in the future. You are a wise, good woman, a wise little wife," added the husband, with all trace of displeasure toward her banished from his face.

Her mission accomplished, Rebecca, leaving the distressed family to find solace for their sorrow as best they could, returned home to gloat on the perfection of a scheme that would bring sorrow and desolation to the happy Cuban home.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

THE war still raged. The whole world, one might dare to say, was more or less agitated by this conflict. Vigilance, tightening its grasp here, redoubling its blows there, watching the inlets and outlets everywhere, had taught a once happy people that war was no holiday sport. But the great end must be reached, the end of the "War of the Rebellion" with the government intact. To accomplish this, every means was deemed fair and honorable. Blockading, starvation, destruction of property, the torch—yea, any and every appliance that would tend to subdue a hostile people, was brought into requisition to maintain the Union.

So, before the third year of the memorable civil war had run its bloody course, want almost stalked abroad in this fair Southern land. But for the successful, though occasional ventures of some friendly vessel, that succeeded in running the blockade, bringing stores necessary for the comfort of a war-worn people, dire want might have reigned supreme in many a household, where wealth and luxury once dwelt. So much for the good accomplished by those bold adventurers of the sea. And yet there were blockade-runners—a few, a very few, thank Heaven—who were but a set of human vultures, preying upon their fellow-beings, and who, for a sum of gold, would lend their hand to any deed of darkness. To this latter class belonged Joe Haralson, the well-known captain of the *Tigress*, the most successful blockade-runner on all the southern coast. Haralson himself was a native of one of the fertile cotton islands off the coast of the Palmetto State, and, in an hour of danger, had deserted his country, and fled to the West Indies. There he equipped a vessel for blockade-running, and being familiar with much of the southern coast, he was always successful in eluding the guns of the blockading fleets, and entering safely with his cargo. The supplies of merchandise, and the munitions of war that he occasionally landed, were exchanged for cotton, which he sold for gold at a fabulous profit.

It was the summer after the removal of Mr. Mordecai's family to Inglewood. In the month of June, Joe Haralson anchored the *Tigress* safely within the port of Havana. New Providence was his usual harbor of refuge; but now, other business than the successful disposal of his cargo of cotton had brought him thither. One soft, sweet morning, in this land where spring and summer alternate, Leah had been out driving with her husband, enjoying the early morning breeze, and hoping that it would benefit the delicate little Sarah, then in her second summer. They drew near the Plaza de la Mar, and Emile remarked, as he surveyed the endless rows of shipping:

"There, Leah, see the countless numbers of flags."

"Yes, all but the flag of our struggling country," she replied. "I wonder if that will ever become a recognized flag among nations?"

"I fear not," Emile replied gravely. "But there! our darling has fallen asleep! We must hasten home."

On reaching home, Emile kissed his wife, and softly kissed his sleeping baby too, before alighting from the light volante; and then, throwing the lines to Petro, the slave, who was awaiting their return, he said, "Take care of the

pony, Petro;" and turning to his wife "You take care of my wee lamb, Leah, till I come again," and left them.

An hour later, and a thick-set, rough-visaged man entered the banking-house of Gardner Company, and asked, in faltering English, "Is Señor Le Grande in?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Gardner. "Here, Mr. Le Grande, this man wants to see you." Emile approached, and looking curiously at the stranger, observed that he was clad partly in sailor's, partly in citizen's clothes. "What will you have, sir?" demanded Emile.

"Señor," replied the strange man, whose broken English betrayed his Spanish tongue, "Dere is at da w'arf Blanco Plaza, a 'Merican vessel from da States. A seik frien' wish to see señor Le Grande, very quick, very quick, señor."

"From what State does the vessel come?" asked Emile in astonishment.

"From da Soutern State, señor, da Pa'metto State."

In a moment Emile conjectured that it was some blockade-runner, and supposed some friend or relative had arrived, and, being unable to come on shore, had indeed sent for him. Without waiting to consider, and without further explanation, he accompanied the strange guide, who led the way to the wharf. The flags were floating free and gay, yet as this nameless cicerone pointed out the Tigress, that lay before them with flag staff bare, Emile Le Grande thought, "The captain is afraid to show his colors; well he may be."

"Captain Haralson, Señor Le Grande," said the guide, in broken accents, as he entered the ship's cabin, where the captain awaited his return. "I told cap'n you I would bring him," he continued, with a savage grin upon his features.

"Who is it would see me?" demanded Emile. "Where is my sick friend?"

"You are a prisoner, sir," replied the captain fiercely, "a fugitive from justice, and your State calls for your return."

"By what authority do you utter those words, you scoundrel?" replied Emile, in bewildered indignation.

"By the authority of those you have injured, and who have sent me to bring you back."

"Who, and where are my accusers?" asked Emile angrily. "Let them dare confront me!"

"Then follow me," said the captain, as he passed along to a small apartment, a kind of saloon, at the end of the vessel. He gave three sharp, quick raps at the door, then turned the bolt and entered. Emile followed. Seated before them upon a ship-lounge, with a book lying idly in her lap, was Rebecca Mordecai!

"Aha! and you have come at last, captain," she said. Arising from her seat and turning her eyes upon Emile, she continued, "Mr. Le Grande, we meet again, securely as you deemed yourself beyond the reach of justice. You see oceans and shell-guns are no barriers in the way of the accomplishment of my ends. You fled from your country, thinking your foul crime would never come to light; but 'murder will out,' and now, you are my prisoner. Justice will yet be avenged."

"What do you mean, woman? your tongue contains the poison of asps. If I did not know your face, I would swear you were some escaped inmate of a madhouse. Tell me your meaning, lunatic," replied Emile, in wrathful astonishment.

Leah Mordecai

"Call me lunatic, if you dare, you miserable felon. Deny my words, if you please, but your own written confession is in my hands."

"Confession of what?" shouted Emile, stamping his foot in indignation. "Never, never, am I your prisoner! I'll leave this cursed place, "

"Not so fast, my friend," said Joe Haralson menacingly, as Emile made an attempt to leave the room. "Not so fast! I am promised much gold, if I bring you alive to your native State; and that gold, my friend, I shall have."

"Release me! release me!" shouted Emile, "I am an innocent man. This woman "

"Hush, my friend, or I'll stow you away where your cries will not reach any human ear. Be quiet, my lad."

Emile saw that resistance was useless; and he said calmly, turning again to Rebecca "Of what crime am I guilty, that you thus hunt me as you would a wild beast?"

"Would you know?" she replied, with a scornful, cruel laugh. "Would you know even half the crimes that are scored against you in your native State?"

"You can tell me of none," he replied sullenly, regretting that he had again spoken to this merciless woman, into whose snare he had so unwarily fallen.

"Perhaps you think we have not yet discovered who murdered Mark Abrams; but, sir, we have."

"Who was it?" indignantly inquired Emile.

"It was—Emile—Le—Grande," she replied slowly, her fierce eye marking every emotion of his face.

"Great Heavens. What an atrocity!"

"Deny it if you dare, I have the proof."

"Prove it, if you can. I dare you to prove it. But I must leave this place. Such nonsense shall not detain me longer. I know that you are mad.—Captain, release me. Do not heed the ravings of that woman any longer."

"I am pledged, sir, on the accusation of this woman, to convey you safely back to the State, and back you must go. I can allow you no opportunity to escape."

"I must see my wife first. I cannot go without it."

"The vessel is ready to start. It will be impossible for you to see her. If you are quiet and obedient, you shall not be manacled; if you resist, we shall stow you away in security. Be wise now, and be silent."

"But my wife "

"In an hour the Tigris will be out of port, sir, and you cannot see her."

"Alas! alas!" groaned Emile. "In Heaven's name, why has this evil befallen me?" and quickly sinking down upon a cabin stool, he said, "Keep me from the presence of this wretched lunatic, captain, if I must go. Yes, if I must be stolen in this cowardly way, from a peaceful home, and taken from a loving wife and innocent, helpless child, I can but submit; but keep that wretched woman out of my presence, I implore you."

Leah Mordecai

"My friend, you may stay in here," replied the relentless captain, "till we are out of port;" and opening the door of a small room that contained only a port-hole of a window, he locked Emile in, and then busied himself with preparations for a speedy departure. Once shut in, Emile drew from his pocket a slip of paper, and addressed a line to Gardner Company, urging his friend to go for his wife, and come to him at once. From his diminutive window he spied a slave near by, and quickly summoning him, said, "Here's my watch, boy; take this note quick to Gardner Company, and my watch shall be yours." Then he threw the slip of paper out of the window. Distressed and dismayed, he sank down again, nervous and miserable, for fear the Tigress would depart before his wife and Mr. Gardner should arrive.

RECEIVING Emile's mysterious note, Mr. Gardner went with all possible speed to the young man's home, and informed Leah of what had transpired. "I do not understand this note," he said; "there is certainly a mystery about this summons. The man who came for Le Grande had a strange, mean-looking face; but we must hasten."

Leah, so long accustomed to sorrow, evinced no unusual emotion at these apprehensive words of Mr. Gardner; but calmly asked:

"Do you suppose any harm has come to my husband?"

"I cannot say, madam; I trust not."

"What motive could that man have had for deceiving Emile?"

"Mercy knows, but it will not do to trust these treacherous Spaniards too far. Still his story may have been a truthful one. He was undoubtedly a sailor. We will at least go and see. The pony and chaise are ready."

"Take care of my darling, Margarita," said Leah, as she kissed her sleeping child, and stepped out to the waiting volante.

"Now drive fast, Mr. Gardner. My heart misgives me."

Without replying, Mr. Gardner urged forward the fleet pony, and they did not slacken their speed until street after street had been traversed, corner upon corner turned, and they were in sight of the Plaza de la Mar, with its myriads of ships' masts and flags in view. Then, driving more slowly, Mr. Gardner turned upon the dock of pier number three, and looked eagerly forward. There was no ship there. Alighting from the chaise, Leah and Mr. Gardner approached a party of ship-hands at work there, and asked:

"Is not this pier number three, where an American vessel has been anchored?"

"Yes, señor, but the American vessel has been out of port an hour."

"Out of port an hour!" repeated Leah, in dismay. "Where is my husband, then?"

Mr. Gardner shook his head dubiously, and said, "He may have gone with them."

"Gone with them?" said Leah wildly. "Gone!" she uttered again, and then sank helpless upon the wharf.

Mr. Gardner, deeply moved, lifted her again into the chaise, with the assurance that her husband in all probability had returned to his place of business.

Once more at the bank, Mr. Gardner was disappointed to find that Emile had not returned, but instead, another scrap of paper was awaiting him, bearing these dreadfully significant words:

Leah Mordecai

"They have stolen me away, to take me back to my native State, to answer for a fiendish crime of which I am not guilty. Send my wife after me as soon as "

Here Emile had stopped for want of time. He had thrown the note into the hands of the same slave who had carried the first one.

"Take that to Gardner Company, and they will pay you," he said, as the Tigress pushed from shore.

The ship had started; and Emile, alone in darkness and despair, tried vainly to conjecture whence this mysterious trouble had come, and what would be its probable result.

The captain of the Tigress, as has been said, was a mercenary and rapacious man, caring no more for a bleeding country than does a bird of prey for a bleeding dove. So long as he obtained the gold of his impoverished countrymen, and eluded the grasp of the blockading fleet that so vigilantly guarded every important port, he was contented. To the care of this man, this iron-hearted captain, Rebecca Mordecai had committed herself, in her endeavor, as she said, "to recall Emile Le Grande to the bar of justice."

"If you land me safely there, captain, I will give you gold. If you bring me safely back with the culprit, I will give you more."

Haralson, aware that the coffers in the Mordecai vault were well-filled with the coveted ore, pledged himself, and swore a terrible oath, that his ocean wanderer should accomplish this trip, even at the cost of the last drop of his heart's blood. How successful he was in landing and treacherously inveigling his victim into the ship, has been seen. Then, after two days of rather tempestuous sailing in a tropical sea, dodging here and there, for fear of being pounced upon by the maritime monsters he sought to elude, Haralson landed, at length, at an inlet, obscure but well-known to him, upon the low, sandy shore of the Palmetto State. With downcast heart, Emile once more set foot upon his native soil, and at the bidding of his captor followed sullenly in the way she led. Chagrined, stung, maddened almost, he trod the devious way that led him back once more—back, back, to the Queen City. Not back to his father's comfortable home, for that, alas! was unoccupied, and the family refugees in a foreign land. But back again, in a felon's manacles, to find lodgment in a felon's cell—back to solitude and despair, when at length, the grim old turnkey turned the grating bolt upon him, and he was left alone in prison.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

THE war still raged. Everywhere in all the beleaguered land, the tide of brothers' blood flowed apace. Bitterness grew with every hour, and not one heaven-toned voice was heard above the din of carnage, saying, "Stay the madness, and let the blood stop flowing." The end was not yet reached, the great problem of this unnatural conflict not yet solved. The bombardment of the Queen City still continued, though with little hope of its surrender. But the shelling went on, as though this murderous rain of death were but a merry pastime, on those summer days. The fort was now deemed impregnable; and yet the hope of its surrender was one that could not die in the hearts of the beleaguers. Day after day, they assaulted and reassaulted, and day by day were filled with disappointment.

At last, one bright June day was ushered in by a terrific boom, and then, as if summoning the last spark of hope and determination, the grim mouths of the cannon belched forth, for many hours, such a rain of shot and shell as will ever be remembered. The sky was blackened early with the cloud of smoke that rolled up from the sea—the sulphurous smoke that pervaded every nook of the city, and was borne away upon every hurrying breeze to the far-off hills and valleys. One might well imagine the scene a very inferno; so terrible was the conflict. Stern, dark, and resolute, Defiance stood for hours—not a gun dismantled, not a man dismayed. But the day grew late, and still the booming cannons roared. The heavens above were overcast, as though nature were ready with a flood

Leah Mordecai

of tears to weep over the deeds of humanity. The lightning flashed, and the guns flashed, and here and there and everywhere the dreadful shells fell thick and fast.

At length one fell upon the ramparts of Defiance and exploded—exploded with a crash of fury that said to every listening ear, "Some dreadful deed is done."

Alas! alas! The wild crash sounded the death—knell of one brave, noble heart, and crushed countless hopes as George Marshall's soul went out. The murderous fragment of a shell penetrated his brain, and his life was ended in a flash.

Let nothing more be told of the sad story; nothing but simply this: he was killed, and the troops left in dismay and disorder—killed and borne to the last embrace of the wounded heart that knew no after years of healing—killed at Defiance, the place of weird, mysterious terror to the widowed heart from the days of her sunny girlhood—killed and buried away under the magnolia shade, among the hundreds of brave hearts that perished in the same unhappy cause.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

TIME stole along. Many months had slipped into the past since the day of the lamented Colonel Marshall's death—months of which this narrative has little to record, save that they were months of blood.

Returning to the desolate wife, left by an adverse fate alone in her Cuban home, we find her sadly changed. As sudden and unexpected as had been the separation of Emile from his family, so shocking and violent had been the affect of this trouble upon Leah's delicate nature. From the hour when Mr. Gardner informed her of her husband's mysterious disappearance, Leah sank down, overwhelmed with grief. Then for many weeks she lingered through an almost hopeless illness, to recover at length and find herself still alone.

The hope of gaining strength to follow her husband was the one hope that cheered her hours of convalescence, and stimulated the efforts of nature in the work of recovery. At last, time brought relief, and after many months of weary waiting, hoping, watching, the opportunity was at hand for Leah to start in pursuit of her husband. Committed to the care of a kind-hearted man, himself the captain of a blockade-runner, the anxious wife hoped to reach the shores of her native State in safety. Unlike the treacherous Joe Haralson, the captain of the Cotton States, the vessel upon which Leah embarked, was not familiar with the sea—coast of many of the blockaded States; but, urged by her importunities, the kind captain determined, if possible, to land her in safety upon the coast of her native State. In this attempt, however, he was disappointed. It was late one afternoon as the Cotton States was about to anchor safely in an obscure harbor of a small island near the main-land, when the captain discovered, far off on the sea, the dark form of a pursuing gun-boat. Immediately he put to sea, and fortunately, the gathering shades of night obscured the pursued vessel in time to prevent capture. The next day, the Cotton States ran ashore on a lone, sparsely inhabited coast, and, anchored at Sandy Bar, a place known to but few as a possible port of entry.

In this obscure port of entry, the Cotton States was the only vessel that had ever cast anchor. Here, erected on the shore, was a rude, commodious warehouse, built by the speculators who owned this adventurous craft, and designed for the reception of the cotton that was taken out and the cargoes that were brought in by it. The care of this depot of supplies and unlawful merchandise was committed to a rather decrepit, but trustworthy old man, called familiarly "Uncle Jack Marner." In a rude hut, near by this cache above ground, lived old Uncle Jack and his wife. Scipio, a trusty negro, was also employed by the company to assist Uncle Jack in watching the depot, and was usually detailed to inform the owners of the vessel as soon as a cargo was landed. In this obscure harbor—the White Sandy Bar, as it was known to Uncle Jack, the captain, and the company—the Cotton States was anchored and ready to deposit her cargo.

Leah Mordecai

"Madam," said the captain to Leah, "I have done the best I could. I tried to land you nearer your home, but could not; I trust you will bear me no ill-will."

"I can never forget your kindness, sir; once on land, no matter how far from the Queen City, I know I can find my way there. I feel assured my husband is there, if living, and thither I shall go at once."

"Not alone?"

"Oh, yes; alone, if necessary."

"Don't you fear the scouts and straggling soldiers that so infest the land?"

"I fear nothing, captain. I am in search of my husband, and I shall seek him, though I perish in the effort."

"Well, madam, I shall intrust you to the care of Uncle Jack Marnier, and go away again knowing that you will be well cared for. There's the old man, and Scipio, at work with the hands unloading. I'll take you to his hut."

Leah thanked him kindly, and taking her child in his arms, the captain led the way to the humble home of Uncle Jack, and introduced Leah to his wife.

Without delay the Cotton States unloaded; loaded again; and was soon once more out at sea in safety.

"It's a mighty weakly lookin' child, madam," said kind Uncle Jack, when he returned to the hut, after the work on the ship was ended. "Is the little creetur sick?"

"No; but she is not very strong, Uncle Jack," was Leah's reply.

"Teethin', maybe? Teethin' ginerally goes hard with the little ones."

"Yes," Leah answered, "teething has made her delicate."

"La, chile, the cap'n tells me you are bound for the Queen City; ain't you afeerd to go thar now, sich a power of shellin' goin' on thar?" And without waiting for a response, he continued, "I think, though, the war-dogs are gittin' tired, and will soon haul off. It's no use tryin' to shell and batter down that fine old city. She never was made to surrender to any furrin' power; and surrender she never will. I'll bet on that. But, my chile, I should be afeerd to go thar now, strong and supple a man as I am, much less a poor, weakly lookin' woman like yerself."

"No, Uncle Jack, I am not afraid. The soldiers would not molest me, and the shells cannot strike me, so I go undaunted. I am seeking my husband, and must find him. How far is it, Uncle Jack, to the Queen City?"

"More'n a hundred mile, chile."

"Can I obtain any conveyance about here to take me part of the way, at least?"

"Chile, thar's not a critter in twenty miles of this place, as I knows on. Nobody lives hereabouts, but me an' the old woman, and Scipio and Toby—that's the company's mule, you know; and Scipio rides Toby to , when the vessel gits in safe, to tell the company. Scipio must start to-morrow to let the company know the boat is in agin, and when he gits back I'll take you part of the way to the Queen City. You kin ride Toby and I kin walk. I tole the cap'n I'd see you on your way as far as I could."

"When will Scipio return?" inquired Leah timidly.

"Mebbe in a week, mebbe sooner."

"Oh! I cannot stay here a week. I cannot stay a day. I am so impatient to get on. If my husband is living, I must reach him."

"But how can you go, chile?"

"Go alone, Uncle Jack. I assure you I am not afraid."

By Jupiter! Jack Marner let a weakly lookin' woman like you start alone from his house, with no strong arm to pecture you? Never, never, never!" exclaimed the kind old man with emphasis, as he shook his gray locks.

"But there is no one to go with me, Uncle Jack; and as I cannot tarry, I must go alone. I assure you I fear nothing."

The old man continued to shake his head, though he made no reply; and then, handing little Sarah to her mother, he went out of the cabin for some wood, that was needed to prepare the evening meal.

Night passed, and morning came soft and bright; and Leah, refreshed from her slumber, expressed the determination to pursue her journey at once.

"If you will go, the Lord go with you, chile; but I fears you will never git thar. Twenty miles from here, you may find lodgings, and you may not; what then?"

"Oh, I can take care of that; only give me the proper directions, if you can."

"Keep nigh the coast as possible, an' if nothin' devours you, you'll find the Queen City after awhile; but it's more'n a hundred mile, remember. I hate to see you go, I do."

"Do not detain me, Uncle Jack. I cannot, must not stay."

"Well, if go you must and will, I'll go with you till we reach the open road; but I say again, you are welcome to stay here in my cabin, if you will. It's humble, I know, but old Jack Marner has had a sight better home than this, in his day. Yet I thank the Lord I have this one left;" and the old man brushed away a tear with his trembling hand, as he assisted the old woman in preparing some food for Leah's lonely journey. At an early hour they were ready to start. Uncle Jack took little Sarah in his arms, and Leah bade adieu to the kind old wife, and following Uncle Jack, stepped out upon the sandy beach and turned her face toward the far-off, hidden road.

For an hour or more, the pedestrians trudged slowly along, Uncle Jack endeavoring the while to amuse the child in his arms, who would ever and anon stretch out its little arms and cry, "Mamma." With downcast eye and heart, Leah moved steadily forward, heeding nothing, save the occasional cry of her child. Uncle Jack, as he walked along, had broken a green bough from a swamp-myrtle, and gathered a spray of blue winter berries, which he bound together as a nosegay for the child. With these he charmed its baby fancy, and foiled every endeavor to reach its mother's arms. At length the trail was ended, and the open road reached.

"Now," said Uncle Jack, "we are here at last. This is the road that leads to Sheltonville, the only place that lies in your way to the Queen City. Keep it straight, chile, an' mebbe you'll reach thar at last; mebbe not; I don't know. Here, let's rest a minit under this water-oak. Sit down on the log; I'll warrant there's no snakes under it."

Leah slightly smiled as she obeyed this command, and sat down on the crumbling, moss-grown wood, saying:

"Uncle Jack, are there any rivers in my way to the Queen City?"

Leah Mordecai

"None, chile, but the Little Black, and you kin cross that at Sheltonville. It's a wonder those dev'lish soldiers hain't destroyed the bridge, 'fore this; but they hadn't, the last I heered from Sheltonville."

"Oh, I can get across, I guess," replied Leah cheerfully. "Rivers, nor mountains either, can keep me from my husband now. If he is in the city, I shall find him." Here little Sarah began to cry, and show signs of weariness. In vain Uncle Jack flourished the wild nosegay, whistled, sang, chirruped; the little creature would find lodgment in its mother's arms, and sleep on her faithful bosom.

The sun was getting toward the half-way morning hour, when the little child awoke, and clinging around her mother's neck she cunningly averted her face from Uncle Jack, as if to say, "You shall not have me again. I am tired of your wild nosegay."

"Well now," said Uncle Jack, "the little creetur is awake agin, and as spry as a cricket. Come to Uncle Jack, won't ye?"

"I must be going," said Leah. "It's getting late." And rising with the child in her arms, she drew the small bundle of food and clothing that she carried closer to her, and said, "I am ready. Good-by. Keep straight ahead, must I?"

"Yes, chile," replied Uncle Jack in a tremulous voice, "straight ahead, and the good Lord be with ye."

Leah was gone. She followed the sandy road pointed out by Uncle Jack's trembling finger, followed it till a small morass, thick with swamp-growth, hid her from his view; and then the old man said, as he turned sorrowfully back toward his cabin, "Poor chile, she seems to have a lot o' trouble in this troublesome world. And she's so young and purty, too. I thank the Lord there's a world up yonder" and he cast his tear-dimmed eyes above "where no more trouble will never come; an' may ole Jack Marner be lucky enough to git thar."

For ten long, weary days, Leah pursued the way that lay straight and unobstructed before her, every step bringing her nearer and nearer to the city of her childhood. Scarcely able, much of the time, to obtain food by day, or lodging by night, still she undauntedly pursued her way, and kept her eyes straight forward toward the end. Foraging parties, and straggling soldiers, passed occasionally, yet not one syllable of disrespect or insult was offered to the lonely woman as she passed along, the living impersonation of unfriended helplessness.

At length, in pain, in weariness, in tears, the journey was almost accomplished, and the evening of the tenth day was closing in. The stars were stealing, one by one, into the blue heavens above, and the bright lights of a hundred camp-fires, far and near, announced the welcome fact that the Queen City was near at hand. The stray shot, too, of some vigilant sentinel, reminded her that, without passports, one could not easily find ingress to the once peaceful, hospitable city. As this thought came, Leah trembled; but she passed forward undaunted to the dreaded sentry line that stretched itself across her pathway. She was too weary to weep, too bewildered to think, too anxious to do aught but look forward toward the advancing city, with its myriad lights, and then down again at the innocent child asleep on her bosom. Upon the breeze that came to greet her, as if in kindly welcome, she caught the note of the old familiar music of the chimes of St. Angelo. "Home, Sweet Home" rang out upon her weary ear with all the sweetness and familiarity of by-gone days.

"How changed is everything here; and, alas! how changed am I," said she; and tottering beneath the burden of her child and the awakened weight of memories, she would have fallen exhausted to the earth, but for a sharp, ringing voice, that said:

"Halt! Who comes there?"

Recalled to a sense of her true situation by this unexpected inquiry, Leah summoned the remnant of her strength and courage, and replied, "Only a woman, weak and tired. In heaven's name let me pass."

"Advance, and give the countersign."

"I cannot! indeed I cannot! But in mercy's name, give me rest and food within the City this night," she replied with a despairing voice.

"Whence do you come?"

"From Sandy Bar, some hundred miles away, and I have walked the whole distance. I bring you no ill, or good news. I am nothing but a poor, helpless woman, faint and famishing. I pray you, in the name of pity, let me pass, kind sentinel."

Touched by these imploring words, the sentry looked furtively around him, and replied softly, "Woman, be quick. Go on; and mind, if you say that I passed you without the countersign, my head will pay the forfeit. Go on, for Tom Marbray hasn't the heart to say no to such a looking woman as you are."

"God bless you!" murmured Leah; "bless you a thousand-fold;" and she hurried forward, and was soon lost in the winding streets of the city, that was now overshadowed by the darkness of night.

Once more within the familiar limits of the old city, she paused, and leaning against the angle of a shop, looked curiously about her, as if endeavoring to define certain localities. At length she said softly:

"Yes, I see the Citadel, and Christ Church spire. But I must rest. I'll enter yonder inn." She stepped forward toward a shabby looking tavern a few doors off, where a crowd of garrulous soldiers were grouped about the door. Too weary to observe any one, Leah staggered into the forlorn, miserably furnished reception-room of the Good Cheer House, and called for food and lodging for herself and child for the night.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE ruddy beams of an October sun shone through the one window of the little rudely furnished room that Leah occupied in the inn. Weary from her long, toilsome journey, she still slept. Though tired nature for a time resisted the intrusion of the garish sunlight, the chirruping of her little child at length aroused Leah to consciousness. The tiny, dimpled hands were tangled in the long black hair that hung about the mother's shoulders in dishevelled grace, and the merry child laughed gleefully as the mother awoke.

"Is my bird always ready to sing?" said Leah tenderly, as she beheld the innocent, happy child by her side. "May you never know a note of sadness, my love; sing on, while you may." Then Leah sadly turned her eyes upward to the cracked, stained wall overhead, and faintly murmured, "Here I am at last, alone-alone in the Queen City, friendless and penniless-alone in the place where I once possessed thousands-alone in my search for the only being who loves me, in this wide world-alone, with nothing to cheer me but my own faithful, resolute heart. When that fails me I shall find rest. Poor, beloved Emile!"

Overcome by weariness, anxiety, and fear, Leah covered her face with the coarse brown coverlet of her bed, and wept and sobbed in very bitterness of heart. At length, astonished at the withdrawal of its mother's smile, the child cried; and ceasing to weep, Leah clasped the helpless creature to her bosom in a fond, impassioned embrace. "God keep you, blessed one!" she said with deepest pathos. "Heaven shield you, my angel, from such sorrow as now fills your mother's heart! But I must be up and doing. Weeping will not accomplish the end and object of my coming."

Arising resolutely, she hastily performed their simple toilets, and descended the narrow stairway to the breakfast-room.

Leah Mordecai

The plain repast was soon over, the coarse, garrulous inmates of the inn departed, and Leah with her child sat alone in the ill-furnished reception-room. She had sent a wiry-looking little negro boy for the proprietor, and was awaiting his appearance. Suddenly a thump, thump, thump, sounded along the narrow entry, and a short, red-faced, bald-headed, pompous looking old man, with a wooden leg, stood before her.

"Madam," he said, bowing obsequiously, "is it yourself that desired my presence? Cricket told me—we call that limber-looking little nigger Cricket—that a lady desired to see me in the drawing-room."

"Whom have I the honor of addressing?" said Leah, with difficulty repressing a smile excited by the grotesque appearance of the man. "I desired to see the proprietor."

"Exactly so, madam, and my name is Michael Moran, the proprietor of the Good Cheer House these twenty years."

"And have you remained in the Queen City during all these dreadful months of shelling?" said Leah, whose heart was at once brightened by the hope that she might gather some desired information from him.

"Oh, yes, child—beg pardon, madam, but, really, you look like a child. Michael Moran is not the man to desert the post of duty in times of danger. You see, madam" and he pointed to the wooden stump "you see, I had the misfortune to lose a member in the Mexican war. That wooden stump speaks yet of Michael Moran's bravery, and I am the same brave man to-day that I was in 'forty-seven, always ready to serve my country."

"Yes," replied Leah, "but you are too old to do much for your country now."

"Yes; that is to say, I am not able to take up arms, but then I have done valiant service by furnishing a very comfortable, thoroughly respectable wayside home for my country's unfortunate children. You see, madam, the Good Cheer House is known far and near as the place to find good food and lodging, at very reasonable prices. The soldiers—alas! I know what a soldier's life is," and the old man laid his fat, plump hand on his heart, "the soldiers, I say, find out the house of Michael Moran, and enjoy the good cheer he dispenses."

The old man, once started, would have continued his remarks ad infinitum, had not Leah bravely interrupted him by asking:

"Can you tell me, sir, if any of the refugees have yet returned?"

"A good many, madam. You see this infernal old shelling, although it's pretty pesky business, hasn't done much harm, after all. It battered down a few fine houses, and killed some men, but then I don't believe the Queen City will never surrender; and by Erin I hope it never will. If the soldiers, to a man, possessed the heart of Michael Moran, they would stand out till "

"Can you tell me anything of the Le Grande family—Judge Le Grande, I mean?" again interrupted Leah bravely.

"The judge? Oh, yes; I think they went to France some months ago," replied Michael, with an air of profound satisfaction at possessing some slight acquaintance with so distinguished a man as the judge; and patting his knee with his plump hand, he continued, "You see the judge was not particularly a war man, and "

"Do you know anything of the Levys?" again cut short the old inn-keeper's volubility.

"The Levys? Oh, yes; they fled long ago, and are now roving the face of the earth. The bombs well-nigh tore down old Levy's house, and I guess that will about kill him, as he is as stingy as a man well can be. If he had stayed by his suffering city, as Michael Moran has "

Leah Mordecai

"But Mrs. Levy was a widow," interrupted Leah, seeing that the old man was coining his information as he went, for the purpose of his own exaltation. "Her husband has been dead these many years."

Determined not to be baffled in this quiet way, Michael replied, "Well, this was another man, madam," and fearing Leah might discredit his fabricated story, he added, "I swear by Erin it was another man."

"Well, sir, can you tell me anything of the Mordecai family—Mr. Benjamin Mordecai?" said Leah, with a slightly tremulous voice.

The old man's eye brightened up, and he slapped his fat hand upon his knee with renewed force and rapidity, and replied, with an inquisitive squint in his face, "Are you a Jew?"

"I am a Jewess, sir," she said softly. "I feel an interest in my people. What can you tell me of the Mordecais."

"Well, child, then listen to me again. I say emphatically madam, now. Well, old Ben Mordecai he was a mighty rich man, had a bank many, many years, and lots and piles of gold. In fact, he was my banker at one time in my life, and to-day he can testify as to whether Michael Moran was or wasn't a thrifty man and the Good Cheer House a paying institution. Some years ago though, I moved my business to another bank, ahem!" Here the old man eyed Leah sharply, to see if these hints respecting his pecuniary status did not impress her profoundly. Then he continued, "Well, I was about stating—Well, where was I?" he said, with a puzzled look of regret, as though he had lost, or was about to lose, some cherished remark, so bewildering had been the thought in reference to his money matters, "where was I?"

"You were speaking of Mr. Mordecai's having left the Queen City," kindly suggested Leah, seeing the old man's embarrassment.

"Oh yes; my head gets a little muddy sometimes," said the inn-keeper apologetically, as he rubbed his rosy hand, this time briskly across the bald, sleek surface of his head. "Well, the Mordecais went away, and I am told a poor family moved into the old man's house to protect it. But the other week, a shell came whizzing into the city and tore off one corner of his fine house. I tell you, madam, the old man had a fine house, sure. And, madam, old Mordecai had a fine guirl once, and a few years ago she ran away and married some fellow, and it well-nigh broke the old man's heart. They ran away, and went somewhere; I think it was to the Island of Cuby. My banker told me this. You see, madam, my resources are yet such, that my banking business is quite burdensome to me. The Good Cheer House is a fine paying institution, sure, and "

"But what of the unfortunate daughter?" inquired Leah faintly.

"Well, as I was about remarking, they went away to Cuby, and some months ago, perhaps a year or so, they caught the scamp out there, and smuggled him to this country, to be punished for a murder he committed some years ago, long before he was married."

Leah's heart throbbed wildly in her bosom, and every limb trembled like an aspen; but the old man did not detect her emotion, and continued:

"He will soon be tried here. I hear the friends of the dead man and the Mordecais are pushing up the trial. When the trial comes off, I guess the banker's family will come back."

"Is the unfortunate man confined in the old city prison here?" inquired Leah, with a faltering voice.

"Yes, madam. At one time a shell struck the old prison, and some of the inmates came nigh escaping, but they have had it repaired, and now it's pretty full, sure. If a bomb could strike it, and finish all the inmates at once, I

Leah Mordecai

guess that would suit them. I don't know why else they keep that jail full of thieves and murderers. I am too busy with my wayside house, giving cheer and comfort to my unfortunate countrymen, to bother much about the jail-birds. Yes, Michael Moran is too busy for that."

"What is my bill, sir?" said Leah faintly, oblivious of the wordy Michael's harangue, and thinking only of the prison—the dim, dark prison, where her husband was languishing. "I have no money but gold," she continued; "how much do I owe you for my food and lodging?"

"Gold!" repeated Michael with eager emphasis; and then, as if fearing to betray his characteristic love of the shining ore, he added with an air of indifference, "well, I guess, as you have nothing else, gold will do. you owe me " and he named a certain sum. "Remarkable low price. Michael Moran hasn't the heart to be hard on a woman; and I know you'll be sorry, to your dyin' day, that you had to quit the Good Cheer House so soon."

Leah made no reply and evinced no regret, as she handed out, from her low supply of money, the amount demanded. Hurrying away from the inn, with the child in her arms, she hastened forward toward the dismal jail that, as she well remembered, was many streets away.

On the same bright October morning that opened the eyes of Leah in the Queen City, Emile Le Grande was pacing to and fro in his prison cell at an early hour. The confinement of so many long, weary months had left its impress on every feature; and pale and emaciated he scarcely resembled his former self. Before him, on a tin platter, was the coarse prison breakfast, as yet untasted. Restless and miserable, he trod backward and forward within the narrow limits of his cell, now glancing up at the sunlight that streamed through the narrow window so far above his head, then turning his ready ear to catch the sound of every human footstep that trod the corridors, or moved in the adjoining cells of this wretched place.

Despair had settled upon him, and death was a coveted visitor. "Is it myself," he muttered, as he convulsively ran his fingers through his hair, grown long from neglect, "or is it some other unfortunate wretch? Have I a wife and child on a far-off foreign shore, or is this thought a horrid, hideous nightmare, that comes to harrow my brain? O birds of the air, I envy you! O breezes that wander, I envy you! O sunlight, that streams through my window, give me my freedom, my freedom, I pray!"

Overpowered by these thoughts, the wretched man, enfeebled in mind as well as body, sank down upon the hard pallet, when the sound of footsteps was again heard along the corridor, coming nearer, nearer, nearer to his cell door. Startled, Emile heard the bolt draw back once more and the door open, and the jailer stood before him.

"Le Grande," he said, "there's a woman below says she must see you—a beggar; shall I bring her up?"

"Yes, man, in the name of mercy, bring her up. I'd see a dog that would come to me in this lonely place. Bring her up, beggar or not, though I have nothing to give her."

The jailer withdrew, and Emile's heart beat wildly from the strange announcement that even a beggar wished to see him in his wretchedness now.

Again the footsteps resounded in the corridor, coming nearer, nearer, nearer, to the cell.

Emile had risen from his pallet, and searching in his pocket said, "I haven't even so much as a fourpence for the poor old soul."

The cell door opened. Emile saw the jailer, and a woman with a child. His eye flashed bright, his heart leaped to his throat. The woman's face grew paler, and tottering forward she fell upon the prisoner's bosom, and gasped, "My husband!"

He said, "Thank God. My wife! my wife! my child!"

CHAPTER XXXIX.

IT were impossible to chronicle the half that transpired in the eventful days of those eventful years. Days seemed months, and months seemed years, in their sad, slow progress. When the heart is happy, Time's wing is light, but as every soul was sorrowful in those dark days, so the progress of the years was slow and dreary.

To none was the time so dark, and hopeless, as to Emile while he languished in prison, and to Leah, as she waited for an uncertain reunion. But the hopeless days had passed, and in unutterable joy the husband and wife clasped each other again. Now, she was never to leave him till the stern fiat of the law should decide his guilt or innocence. In an obscure abode, within the very shadow of the jail, Leah obtained a temporary home. The inadequacy of her means would have forbidden her more comfortable accommodations. But she desired only to dwell in obscurity, and be near, and with her husband, in his loneliness and misfortune. Without comment or observation, she passed in and out of the jail as frequently as the stern prison-law would allow. The jailer was a man who had occupied a higher position in life, and had sought this place to evade the merciless grasp of conscription. Often had he wondered at the pale, lovely face of this unhappy wife, and marked her tenderness toward the child that never seemed to weary the faithful arms that bore it so constantly about. "That woman has a history," the jailer often said to himself.

But the days passed, and ere Leah had been a month within the Queen City, the trial was at hand. Pressing measures in these awfully chaotic times, Mr. Mordecai was about to bring his culprit to justice, from fear that delay would prove dangerous, if not disastrous, to his purposes.

"My darling," said Emile to his wife, the day before the proposed trial, "I desire that you shall not be present during the investigation of to-morrow. I fear you may be subjected to insult and indignity which I cannot resent, being in bonds. Besides, dear, you can do me no good."

"Will my father be there, Emile?"

"I suppose that he will."

"Then I cannot be present. I feel that I could never meet my father's eye, unless I knew I had his forgiveness and his love still. But how can I leave you?"

"Remain quietly, dear, at your boarding-place, and await, hopefully, the end. I trust it will all be right. I know I am innocent," said Emile, with a forced effort at cheerfulness.

"Heaven grant they may find you guiltless! But oh! Emile, I fear, I fear, I fear something—I cannot tell you how it is, but from the day you were taken from our happy Cuban home, not a ray of hope has illuminated my heart."

"You must be brave, Leah, your sadness will weigh me down, and I cannot, must not go into the presence of my accusers with aught but a look of defiant innocence. Be brave, be cheerful, for my sake, and the sake of our innocent child."

"Can I see you during the trial?"

"I suppose not; but as it will consume but a few days at most, you can remain quietly at your lodgings till the end."

Leah Mordecai

"The twilight is gathering in your window, Emile," said Leah, after a thoughtful silence. "I should have gone an hour ago; your supper will be late to-night, dear; but oh! I fear to leave you! It seems as though you were going to your burial, to-morrow. What will become of me? What will become of our helpless darling?"

Distracted by the plaintive words and agonized look of his wife, Emile said:

"Would you madden me, Leah? Have I not asked you to be brave, even unto the end? If you falter now, I am lost. My health and my strength are already gone. Only the consciousness of innocence sustains me. Leave me now. Sheer me with the hope of acquittal, and be brave as only a woman can be."

"Forgive me, Emile; forgive my weakness; and when we meet again, may the sunshine of a brighter, happier day, dawn over us. Good-by, my own Emile, my own beloved husband," and the wretched wife laid her head upon the true, innocent heart of Emile, and wept her last burning tears of sorrow.

CHAPTER XL.

FROM the day that Leah first found her husband in the prison, and observed the coarse, uninviting fare that was served to the prisoners, she had daily prepared his food herself, and supplied it, too, from her scanty purse. By the permission of the jailer, this food was received twice a day from the hands of a trusty negro woman, known to many of the prison inmates as Aunt Dinah.

On this same evening when Leah parted so sadly from her husband, she went at once to her lodging place, and quickly prepared the tempting evening meal. After she had gone, Emile, once more alone, crouched down in a corner of his shadowy cell, and was lost in sorrowful reverie, till the jailer, unheeded, opened the cell-door and handed in a basket, saying:

"Le Grande, here's a supper for a king. Cheer up, man, and eat it. Old Dinah brought it from your wife, and she says the bread is 'perticklar fine.'"

"I want no supper to-night, jailer. But I'll keep it, for my wife's sake."

"Old Dinah said you must eat, whether you craved food or not; said you must eat to be strong." The jailer deposited the small basket that contained the tempting brown buns and some cold slices of ham, and departed.

For a moment Emile still remained crouched in his corner, and listened to the dying footsteps of the retreating jailer; then rousing himself, he moved forward, and lifting up the basket, said:

"For love's sake, I'll taste the bread, not from hunger. Heaven knows when I shall feel hunger again." The daylight was nearly gone, but enough light penetrated the dismal cell to reveal the contents of the basket. Taking up a soft brown loaf, he turned it in his hand, then laid it down. Again he picked it up, and said, "It is so nice, for love's sake I'll taste it." Then he broke it gently, and there fell into his hand from it a small piece of brown paper. Astonished, he opened it, and read these words:

"An unknown friend wishes to help you. Meet me at midnight at the prison gate. I'll save you. Skeleton keys and wires will enable you to escape, Find them in the buns. As you value your life and liberty meet me."

"What means this?" said the terrified prisoner. "Is Heaven kind at last?" and then he curiously and cautiously opened the bread that, sure enough, yielded up the secreted appliances for effecting his escape. In astonishment, even terror, Emile held these unlawful little contrivances in his hand for a time, eyeing them curiously, and then half-fearfully tucked them away in his bosom.

Leah Mordecai

"Who is this unknown friend, I wonder, that so desires my escape?" pondered Emile, as he watched the darkening twilight as it withdrew the last vestige of daylight from his cell. "Can it be Leah who has done this, my own desolate Leah? Can she save me at last? She upon whose heart I have innocently brought such sorrow and disappointment? Alas! alas! dear heart! But should it prove some one else, how can I leave my wife and child? What if it should prove to be an enemy trying to betray me into further trouble? And yet I do not fear. This dreary cell has made me tired of life, and death were welcome if it comes in the struggle for freedom! No, I cannot stay; I'll leave this cursed place, though I be betrayed again—leave it, though my escape may take me heaven knows where—leave it, and hope a brighter future is bringing me prosperity and a peaceful reunion with those who are so dear to me. Stay I cannot, I dare not. My tormentors are insatiable, my innocence disbelieved, my friends gone; money I have none. I shrink from the coming ordeal. The promise of freedom is offered me. I accept it.

"The clock is striking midnight. It is dark, very dark, little keys; but perhaps you will not fail me. Now I leave this cursed place; yes, leave it, I hope, to walk the earth again in freedom. Blast my accusers!" whispered the excited prisoner as he softly applied the mysterious, slender-looking key to the heavy lock. "Ha! how the lock yields to this delicate spring! Softly! softly! or I may disturb some sleeping inmate! God knows how many weary vigils are kept in this wretched abode. I'll tread this narrow corridor no more, I hope. Heavens! The outer bolt, too, withdraws, and God's blue dome and bright stars are above me! I am free from these cursed walls! Now the gate yields, too! I am free! free! Thank God, free once more!"

As Emile emerged from the prison-gate, and it swung noiselessly back to its place, he gazed anxiously about, and at once descried a dark, half-bent figure of a man approaching him. His heart trembled.

"Mars' Emile," said a low voice, as the unknown figure approached close to him, "Mars' Emile Le Grande, don't you know me? I am here as I promised."

Affrighted at this seeming apparition, Emile shrank back, saying, "Stand back, man or devil, whatever you may be! Who are you? What do you want?" he continued, as the unknown figure essayed to lay hold of his arm.

"Hush! hush! We may be overheard. Don't be afraid. I come to befriend you. Mars' Emile, don't you know me?" said the little old man, as he pushed back the slouched hat from his face, and peered into Emile's eyes. "Don't you know old Peter Martinet?"

"What! old Uncle Peter, who carried the 'Courier' so long ago?" said Emile in astonishment.

"De very same, Mars' Emile. I'se de same old darkey now dat I was years ago, only not quite so spry. You see I'se crippled wid de rheumatiz a little. But come along wid me, man; don't wait here any longer; we may be found out."

"Is my wife with you?" whispered Emile eagerly.

"La, no, man; your wife knows nuffin ob dis plot. We must hurry."

And can I not see her, Peter?"

"No, man, if you wish to escape de bloodhounds dat are on your track. You had better be quick, too."

"I must see my wife."

"Be brave, man; be brave. Why did you leave de jail, if you didn't wish to 'scape? Come along faster."

"But where are you going?" replied Emile, as he mechanically followed the hobbling guide.

Leah Mordecai

"Here, this way, follow me. I'll tell you by'mby;" and then halting within the shadow of a protecting building, the old man stooped to rub the afflicted limbs, and said softly, "You see, Mars' Emile, I'se kept my eye on you, eber since dey brought you here to jail. I'se nebber left the Queen City, and nebber will, an' I 'tended all de w'ile, dat you should git away, if you wanted to. I'se made plan after plan, and dey would not work, but at last I got help from inside, an' den I got de keys; den I knew you was safe, if you could only git 'em. So I hired ole Dinah to make some extry bread and slip into your basket after your wife had fixed your supper. Dat was all I could do. I heard de trial was to come off to-morrow, and but for de rheumatiz, de keys would have been ready a week ago. You know, Mars' Emile, old Peter part Affikin, and what he can't do, no udder nigger need try. He, he, he!"

"But where are you going?" interrupted Emile.

"Well, Mars' Emile, der's a blockader lying off de Bar. I'se gwine to take you to it." Emile shuddered.

"Nebber fear. If you stays on land, dey'll git you, shure, an' I knows ebry foot ob de harbor as well as I do de city. Ain't Peter Martinet been here eber since the Revolution War? No man here knows de harbor better dan me, tripedoes or no tripedoes. Dey can't blow me up, dat's shure. Come, let's go, be quick, and be sly too."

Emile followed as one in a dream. Not daring, or caring, to question his guide, until they were safely on the edge of a pier that was several feet above the sea.

"What now?" he said.

"All right. I have a bateau tied down da, waitin' for us. Her's de rope to slide down. But as you'se afeerd, mebbe I'd better go down fust. Here goes! I'se afeerd of nuffin, 'specially in de harbor." Emile peered over the edge of the pier, and shuddered, as he saw the dark figure disappear below.

"All right agin, safe and sound. Come on. Mind yer hold. Be brave, man, don't lose yer courage now, or you may be a jail-bird de rest of yer days. He, he, he!"

Stimulated to action by this stinging remark of old Peter, Emile seized the rope, glided slowly down the wall, and landed safely in the boat below.

"Now I guess we's safe; no one can git us now," chuckled old Peter, as he grasped the oars and rowed away.

Emile made no reply, and for a time the plash of the oars was the only sound that broke the stillness.

"Do you know that they'll receive me?" at length said Emile, as he saw the shore receding.

"Oh, yes; more'n once have I carried men to the blockaders—some who didn't want to fight, and some who had friends on the udder side. Dey allus paid ole Peter well, and he nebber fail to git 'em away safe. He, he, he."

"Why did you do this for me, Peter? For me who had scarcely a friend in the world; for me, who can repay you in nothing but gratitude?" asked Emile with emotion.

"Oh, old Peter don't always work for money; sometime he do for love. It's for love this time, Mars' Emile."

"How far is the vessel away, Peter?"

"Five mile from de pier; you see de lights ob de vessel yonder, sir."

Leah Mordecai

Emile was silent, thinking of the desolate wife and unfortunate child whom he was leaving farther behind at every stroke of the oars.

"I must send a letter back by you, Peter; promise me that my wife shall get it."

"I promise, Mars' Emile. But be brave, man, be brave; remember you'se a free man now; freedom mighty sweet, Mars' Emile. I'se ben free dese twenty years, eber sence old Marster Martinet died. He gin me freedom. Ship ahoy, here we are," said the old negro, as he came alongside of the grim iron-clad, that stood like a huge rock in mid-ocean. Then the old man blew a shrill whistle through his hands that penetrated to the inmost recess of the man-of-war.

"Halloo! Is it you, Peter?" screamed back the mate, as he swung a huge lantern over the side of the vessel and looked down into the water below. "What brings you now, old humpback?"

"A friend, a man, a recruit to your sarvice, if ye wish. Take him, an' do as you please."

"Won't you come aboard, old Peter?" added the jolly tar, aroused to receive the escaping prisoner. "It's been so long since we saw you, we did not know but a shell had picked you up. Come aboard, General, we'll show you some more bombs."

"Not this time, cap'n, my rheumatiz is rather bad for so much climbin.' I'll jes' wait down here for a letter. Ole Peter Martinet ain't feered of fishes. He, he, he!"

Emile's letter was written and handed to old Peter, who was soon again steering landward. When the sun shone again in the Queen City, old Peter was hobbling along his daily round of duty, singing occasionally in his own peculiar way, and wearing an expression as innocent as though the night-time had been an undisturbed season of peaceful repose and beautiful dreams.

A letter found upon the door-way of Leah's lodgings, addressed to her, was picked up and handed to her about the hour that the jail was thrown into a tumult of consternation over the discovery that Emile Le Grande had escaped.

How and whence this letter came was ever a mystery. "U. S. BLOCKADER "THUNDERBOLT." "Two o'clock A. M.

"BELOVED LEAH: The die is cast, that divides us again. Fate, that has so long seemed cruel, has again been kind. Unlooked-for, unhopd-for aid reached me in my prison-cell, and enabled me to escape. I know I am innocent of crime; Heaven knows it; but I feared my tormentors. Those who sought me on a foreign shore, would certainly move earth and sky to prove my guilt. I hope for a brighter day, when we shall be reunited in peace and happiness. I could do nothing for you, were I to stay and brave the storm that awaits me. It might engulf me. I go, with the hope of a bright future yet. Whither I shall go I know not. Maybe to France, where my father has gone. I have nothing to remain in this country for but yourself; and I cannot, and dare not stay near you. Heaven shield and keep you and my child till I can send you succor! If I live, it will come, though it cost my life to obtain it. I dare not look ahead; but be hopeful and brave, faithful, loving Leah, and patiently await a brighter day. When this wretched war is ended, if I cannot come to you, you shall come to me. Living, longing, hoping, for that coming time, with a thousand embraces I am, and shall ever be,

"Your devoted EMILE.

"My time is short, I can write no more."

Leah Mordecai

Bravely, calmly, Leah read this fatal letter; and then, with a fortitude and heroism peculiar to her own glorious people, she folded it, and placed it upon her heart, so torn by sorrow and suspense. After the first shock of disappointment was over, she turned her thoughts to the formidable question, how she should earn bread for herself and her child; and when once her plans were made, she carried them out resolutely, in poverty, weakness, and obscurity. Of the days, months, and years that passed over her heroic head, with their trials, struggles, disappointments, tears, heart-aches, and agonies, before death brought relief, this record, in pity, is silent.

CHAPTER XLI.

THE war-cloud rolled away. The dark, wild, sanguinary cloud, that had swept with such devastating fury over a land where war was deemed impossible, was passed. The roar of cannon ceased, the rattle of musketry was no more heard in the land. Again the nation was at peace, undismembered, triumphant. Once more its proud flag floated, unmolested and gay, from every rampart and flag-staff in the wide domain. On the one hand, there were bonfires and pealing bells, huzzahs, greetings, congratulations, rejoicings over the termination of the conflict, while on the other, sorrow and mourning, lamentation and despair, filled the homes of a people, whose hearts were bleeding, and whose hopes were crushed. All, all was gone. Only the cypress wreath was left, to remind of loved ones slain, and beggary, want, and famine to point with ghastly fingers to the past. The sweet sunshine fell lovingly again upon that worn section of the land, to find its fertile fields deserted, its homes destroyed, and its people cast down. Here and there, everywhere, far and wide, in many States, where the tread of the monster War was heaviest, only the silent chimneys and the neglected gardens gave token that the spot was once the homestead of a happy, happy family. Deem this no sensational record to elicit sympathy from stranger hearts. Only the sympathy of heaven avails in man's extremity; and that sympathy, thank God, his war-worn people have had.

This same memorable time that brought peace to the nation with such unexpected suddenness, found hundreds, even thousands of people, still refugees. Then many, regathering their shattered hopes and courage, sought their former homes. Many, alas! dispirited by loss of friends and fortune, dared not turn their sorrowful eyes backward, but chose rather to remain quietly where the final crash had found them. Refugee! O reader, kind or careless reader, think not lightly or scornfully of the word.

So far as possible, the scattered denizens of the Queen City had returned to their scarred homes. Many who at the time of their departure counted their thousands, and even millions, came back in comparative beggary. Yet back, back, back, they came, who could, to this mutilated Mecca of their hearts.

Mr. Mordecai again occupied his palatial home, which had survived the wreck of bombardment, and, unlike hundreds of his unfortunate fellow-citizens, he was unimpoverished. Aside from the good fortune that had attended his financial arrangements in this country during the period of conflict, he had also a banking connection in England, that would alone have made him a rich man.

So back to his home Mr. Mordecai came, not in poverty and want, not in sackcloth and mourning for the slain, and yet not in joy or contentment. From the fearful day when he lost his beautiful daughter, his heart had been darkened and his hopes destroyed, and through the eventful years that had slipped on since he last beheld her face, a feeling of unrelenting bitterness had possessed his soul. Always angry with Leah and with the man who had led her into disobedience, he now felt still more bitter toward him, as he deemed him a felon, a murderer, unpunished and unforgiven. The change of place and scene, the rushing and hurrying of events during the years of refugee life, had tended somewhat to crowd from his mind the thoughts of his lost daughter; but now that he was back again, back in the old home, where every niche and corner, flower and shrub, were associated with her memory, the father was miserable indeed—miserable because he well knew that somewhere upon the broad earth, Leah, if living at all, was living in loneliness and dreariness, in poverty and sorrow.

CHAPTER XLII.

THE first spring of peace gave place to summer, a summer memorable for its intense heat. One afternoon, toward the latter part of July, clouds dark and angry overcast the sky, and peals of thunder and flashes of lightning threatened a terrific storm. Pedestrians hurried homeward, and man and beast sought safety under shelter. The waters of the quiet harbor, tossed by rude winds, grew angry and rose in white-capped breakers, that broke against the wharves, piers, and fortresses, as far as the eye could see. Sea-gulls screamed and flew wildly about at this ominous appearance of the heavens, while the songsters of the woods, and the pigeons of the barn-yard, sought shelter from the approaching tempest. At night-fall the rain descended in torrents.

Safely sheltered in his comfortable home, Mr. Mordecai sat for an hour or more, watching, from his library window, the fury of the storm. The tall, graceful cedars and olive trees that adorned the front and side gardens of his home, were swaying in the wind which rudely snatched from their trellises the delicate jessamine and honeysuckle vines that lent such delicious odor to the evening winds. It tore the flowers from their stems, and the rain pelted them into the earth in its fury. Leaves were whisked from their branches, and blown out of sight in a twinkling. A weak-hinged window-shutter of the attic was ruthlessly torn away and pitched headlong into the street. All this Mr. Mordecai watched in amazement, and then, as if some sudden apparition of thought or of sight had appeared before him, he turned from the window with a shudder, and said:

"This is a devilish wild night. I'll drop the curtain."

Seating himself then, by a brightly-shining lamp—the Queen City gas works had been destroyed by the shelling guns—he clasped his arms across his breast, and looked steadily up toward the ticking clock upon the mantel. Thus absorbed in reverie, he sat for an hour; and was only disturbed then by a loud rapping at the front door.

"By Jerusalem! who can be out this wild night?"

The rapping sounded again, louder than before.

"Mingo!" he exclaimed involuntarily. "Ah! the dog is free now, and only answers my summons at his will. Good boy, though."

The rapping was repeated.

"I must go myself. Who can be so importunate, on this dark, wretched night? No robber would be so bold!" and grasping the lamp, he glided softly toward the front door. He turned the bolt cautiously, and opening the door a little, peered out.

"Come, Mordecai, open the door," said a friendly voice without. "Do you suspect thieves this foul night? No wonder."

Mr. Mordecai opened the door wider and saw Rabbi Abrams, and a man so disguised that he could not tell whether it was any one he knew.

"What do you want, my friend?" he said kindly.

"Want you to go with us, Mordecai," replied the rabbi, drawing closer his cloak, which the wind was trying to tear away.

"Go where?" asked Mr. Mordecai in consternation. "Only the devils themselves could stand, such a night as this."

Leah Mordecai

"Come, be quiet, my friend. I am summoned by this unknown friend, to go with him to see a certain person who must see me, must see you, too. That's all I know. Come along."

"Don't wait, my friend, time is precious," said the muffled voice of the unknown man.

Mr. Mordecai frowned and shrugged his shoulders dubiously.

"Fear no evil, my friend, but come with me," continued the stranger in a reassuring tone.

"The storm will not destroy us, Mordecai; I have tried its fury so far," said the rabbi. "Come on."

Reluctantly Mr. Mordecai obeyed, and hastily preparing himself for the weather, turned out into the darkness and the storm, with the rabbi and the guide.

Onward they went, struggling against the wild wind and rain, and few words were uttered by either as they proceeded on their unknown way. At length the guide stopped suddenly, at the corner of a lonely, obscure street, and said:

"There, gentlemen; in that low tenement opposite, where a light gleams from the window, you will find the person who desires to see you. Hasten to him. I shall be back before you leave. Ascend the stairway and turn to the left. Open the door yourself; there will be no one inside to admit you." Having uttered these words, the guide disappeared in the darkness, and Mr. Mordecai and the rabbi were left alone.

"What can this mean, Rabbi Abrams?" said Mr. Mordecai in a low voice, greatly excited; "suppose it should prove some plot to decoy us into trouble? I shall not go a step farther; we may be robbed or even murdered in that miserable place. You know this is Dogg's Alley, and it never was a very respectable locality. What say you?"

"I feel no fear, Friend Mordecai, though I admit the summons is mysterious. If you will follow, I will lead the way. My curiosity impels me onward."

"But there's no watchman on this lonely beat, on this wild night, that we could summon in a moment of necessity; no street-lamp either, you see. It's dark, fearfully dark! Had we not better wait till to-morrow?"

"No, come on. I am fond of adventure. Let's see a little farther into this mystery;" and so saying, the rabbi boldly crossed the slippery street, Mr. Mordecai following timidly behind. They were soon standing in the narrow door-way that led up the stairs. They ascended slowly, and turning to the left, they discerned through the crevice beneath the door, a faint light. To this chamber they softly groped their way, and tapped gently on the door. No reply.

"Shall we go in?" whispered the banker. "This is an awfully suspicious place."

"Yes, come on; I do not feel afraid."

Gently turning the bolt, they opened the door; the lamp upon the table by the window revealed the contents of the apartment.

In a corner, upon a rude bed, lay a man, a negro, evidently sick, whose widely glaring eyes were turned upon the door, as if in expectation of their coming. Slowly lifting his hand as they entered, the sick man beckoned the gentlemen toward him. They drew near.

Leah Mordecai

"Sir," he said, and so faintly that his voice did not rise above a whisper, "I'm glad you come. I was 'feerd the rain would keep you away." Then he grasped the hand of the rabbi with his cold, clammy fingers, and with an intense gaze of the wild eyes, said again, "Do you know me, Marster Abrams? Tell me, do you know me?"

The rabbi looked earnestly at him and after a moment's pause said dubiously:

"Is it old Uncle Peter Martinet, the carrier of the 'Courier'?"

"De-same-marster, de-werry-same. But-de-end-ob-ole-Peter-is-nigh- at-hand, marster-wery nigh-at-hand! Las'-winter-was hard-an'-w'en de-work-ob de-Curyer-stop-it-went-mighty-hard-on-ole-Peter. De-rheumatiz-marster! De rheumatiz? Bref-so-short! Doctor-say-it's-de-rheumatiz on-de-heart now. Mebbe so-marster-but-ole-Peter-mos'-done-now."

"Can I do anything for you, Peter?" asked the rabbi kindly. "What will you have?"

At these words, the dying man, for he was dying, extended his other hand to Mr. Mordecai, and clasping his, said:

"Yes, marster-I want-somethin'. I-want-you-and-Mr. Mordecai-to-listen-to me; listen-to-me-a-moment. I-have- something-to-to-tell-you."

"Certainly we will," they replied gently, observing with pain the difficulty of the dying man's utterance. "What do you wish to say?"

"You-see, Marster-Abrams, I-am-dying. Ole-Peter-mos-done. I-can-not- go-before God with-the-sin-upon-my-soul-that-now-distresses-me. I must tell it-for-I die."

Here the old man strangled, from the effort made to communicate his story, and the rabbi, gently raising his head, administered a spoonful of water. Then, after a moment's pause, he continued:

"Ise-been-a-great-sinner, to keep my-mouf-shut-so long; but-I could not-help it. Ole Peter-was feered-but now-I'se feered-no more. Soon-I'll be wid-de great God-who has-know'd my secret too-an' I feel-He will-forgive me-if-I-'fess it-'fore-I die. I know-he-will, marster-de Spirit has-tole'-me so."

"Confess what?" inquired the rabbi softly, supposing that the old man's utterances were but the ravings of delirium.

"A secret-marster; a secret-dat-I have-kep'-so long-it has become-a sin-an awful sin-dat has burnt-me in here," placing his feeble hand on his heart, "like coals-of-fire. Listen to me."

"I knows-how-Mars'-Mark-Abrams got-killed, an'-has-known it-ever since-dat-dark-Jinnewary-night-w'en he-was-shot "

"Merciful "

"Hush! listen-to-me-my-bref-werry-short," he said, motioning the rabbi to silence, who had turned pale with consternation at the mere mention of his son's name.

"Hush! Mars'-Mark-was not-murdered-as-everybody-thought-but-was- killed-by-de pistol-he-carried-in his-pocket. It-was-werry dark dat-night-as you-may-remember. He-was-passin'-tru'-de-Citadel Square-to cut-off de walk-comin'-from Crispin's-he said, an'-in-de dark-he-stumble-an' fall-an' de-pistol-go-off-an' kill him. In de-early-morning-jus-'for-day-as-I was-hurryin'-aroun' wid-my-paper, I was-carryin' de Curyer

Leah Mordecai

den-bless-de-Lord, I came-upon-him-an' 'fore God-he was-mos' dead. He call-me-and tell me-how he-was-hurt, an' beg-me to run-for his-father, for-you, Marster-Abrams. He ask-me-to pick up-de-pistol-an' run for-you-quick. W'en I foun'-de pistol-I ask-him-another question. He-said-nothin'. I knew-he-was-dead. I was-skeered- awful-skeered-an'-somethin'-tole me-to-run-away. I did run-as-fast as-I-could-an' w'en-I was-many-squars-off, I foun' de-pistol-in my-hand. Dat-skeered me-agin. I stop-a minit-to think. I-was-awful skeered-marster-an' den I 'cluded I jus' keep-de secret, an' de-pistol-too-for-fear-people-might-'cuse-me ob de-murder. An'-so I has-kept both-till now. See-here's de pistol-an' I'se-told you-der truth;" and the old man felt about under his pillow for the weapon.

With difficulty he drew it out, and handing it to the rabbi, said:

"Take it-it's-haunted-me long-enough. It's jes' as I found-it-dat-night-only-it's-mighty rusty. I'se had-it-buried-a long time-for-safe-keepin'.

W'en-Mars'-Emile-Le Grande-was-here in-prison-'cused of-dis-crime,-I often-wanted to tell-my-secret den-but-was-still-afeerd. I-knew he-was-not guilty-an' I determined-he should-not be-punished. So I helped-him-to 'scape-jail. I-set-him-free. I take-him-in de night time-to one-of de-blockade-wessels-off de Bar. W'ere-he go from dere, God knows-Ole Peter-don't. Now, Marster Abrams, I'se done. Before-God-dis is-de truf. I'se told-it-at-las'. Tole all-an' now-I die-happy.

"A-little-more-water-Marster Abrams-if you-please, an' den Ole-Peter-will-soon-be-at-rest."

Silently granting this last request, the rabbi turned suddenly to observe the entrance of the guide, who by this time returned.

Not a word was spoken a he entered.

By the side of the table, where lay the pistol, the rabbi and Mr. Mordecai both sat down, each in turn eyeing the deadly weapon with unuttered horror.

The dying negro's confession had filled them both with sorrow and amazement. The earnestness of his labored story impressed them at once with its undeniable truth; and with hearts distressed and agitated, they sat in silence by the bed-side, till a struggle arrested their attention. Looking up once more they both caught the voiceless gaze of the earnest eye, which seemed unmistakably to say, "I have told the truth. Believe my story. Farewell." Then the old carrier's earthly struggles were forever ended.

CHAPTER XLIII.

THE strange, almost incredible, and yet evidently truthful confession of old Peter, fell upon the heart of Mr. Mordecai with a weight that broke its stubbornness, and at once softened his wrath toward his unhappy and unfortunate daughter.

The thought that she was alone in the world, alone since the mysterious disappearance of her husband from his Cuban home-alone and undoubtedly struggling with life for existence, grew upon him with maddening intensity. His heart became tender, and he resolved to seek her face, and once again assure her of his love. Immediately carrying out this good resolve, he sought her, first in Cuba, but did not find her; and to his bitter disappointment, all his subsequent efforts proved unavailing. Months passed, and grieving from day to day over the unfilled hope of meeting her and atoning for his severity by a manifold manifestation of tenderness, Mr. Mordecai lived on in sorrow as the months slowly passed by.

Leah Mordecai

He little dreamt that, not many leagues from his door, his lovely daughter was performing, in weakness, in sorrow, even broken-hearted, the wearisome task that gave daily bread to herself and child.

And yet Leah had often seen her father, so changed by sorrow since she last embraced him; seen him only to creep away into deeper obscurity, dreading to confront his anger, and determined not to meet his coldness. And so changed indeed was she, that not a single soul among the scores she often passed, and who were once friends, had ever suspected her identity. Such were the workings of sorrow and misfortune.

In quiet Bellevue street in the Queen City, still stood the only monument erected there during the war, that was worthy of perpetuation. It was the Bellevue Street Home for the Friendless. During the war, this institution was known as the Bellevue Street Hospital, and there many brave soldiers perished, and many recovered from ghastly wounds under the kindly care and attention of its efficient managers.

After the first shock of her grief was passed, Eliza Heartwell Marshall had been called to the position of matron in this institution of mercy.

It should be mentioned that, by the death of a maternal uncle during her married life, this noble woman had inherited a handsome estate, consisting largely of valuable lands upon some of the fertile islands adjacent to the coast.

Much of this land the government had appropriated to its own uses, during the war; but upon the restoration of peace, by dint of skilful negotiation the rightful owner had regained possession of the confiscated property.

Thus Mrs. Marshall was enabled to carry on her noble work of charity, after the carnage had ceased and the hospital was no longer needed for the soldiers. So, endowing the Bellevue Hospital from her own private funds, she transformed it at once into a Home for receiving those who, by reason of misfortune, were unable to help themselves.

Here, during the two years of peace that had smiled upon the desolate waste left by the war, she had toiled, prayed, and wept over the sufferings of humanity, till she was deemed, and rightly so, an angel of mercy.

Time passed on. Though the Queen City had not regained its former prosperity the Home prospered. Its charitable walls were full, crowded even to their utmost capacity; its business pressing, its necessities great.

"Miss Lizzie," said Maum Isbel one day, as the vigilant matron was performing her accustomed round of duty, "Mrs. Moses, de lady who do de small washin', have sent word that she is sick an' can't do it dis week. De chile who came said she were wery sick, an' would like to see you."

"Do you know where she lives, Maum Isbel?"

"No. 15 Market street, ma'am, de chile said; please remember."

"Get me another woman, Maum Isbel, to fill her place; the work cannot stop. I will go at once to see her. Poor creature! She has looked pale and delicate ever since she sought work at the Home."

Without delay, Mrs. Marshall hurried out on her mission of charity, and tarried not until she stood confronting a low, miserable looking tenement house on Market street. Her knock at the designated door was answered by an untidy, rough-looking woman, who came into the narrow dingy entry, and after eyeing the matron sharply, said coarsely:

"What do you want?"

Leah Mordecai

"Does Mrs. Moses live here?"

"Yes; but she's very poorly to-day; ain't been up at all. Indeed she's been poorly for a week or more."

"Can I see her?"

"Yes, come in; she's in thar," pointing to a small room cut off from the end of the narrow hall-way.

Mrs. Marshall approached the small room, and answered the summons of a feeble voice that said, "Come in."

On entering the room, she found the woman prostrated on a low, comfortless bed; pale, feeble, and exhausted. By the bed-side, on a chair, were a phial and a Hebrew prayer-book.

"I am so glad you have come," said the sick woman, "I am so weak this morning. You see I coughed all night. I felt that I must see you. I hope it gave you no trouble to come."

"None whatever. Why have you not sent for me before?"

"I hoped, from day to day, to be strong enough to do the washing for the Home again. But instead of growing better, I have grown worse daily. Heaven only knows what I'll do when I cannot work."

"Where is your little daughter?"

"Gone to the baker's, to get me a warm bun. She fancied I could eat one, dear child!"

Touched by these surroundings of poverty and distress, Mrs. Marshall could scarcely repress her tears; but said:

"If you will allow me, I'll give you some brandy; that will revive you."

"Indeed, I have none; I used the last drop yesterday."

"Then I beg that you will allow me to remove you to the Home till you are recovered. There, under Dr. Gibbs's kind care, you may convalesce rapidly. Here, you are suffering for every comfort, and cannot hope to recover soon. I beg you to go."

For a moment, the sick woman made no reply, but her lips trembled with emotion, and at length she said sadly:

"I fear I shall never be well again."

"Oh, yes; be cheerful. I promise that you shall want for nothing at the Home."

"Can my child go with me there?"

"Yes, you will need her there, as you do here."

"But I have no money."

"There is none needed. Just promise to go, and I'll see that you are removed at once."

Reluctantly and tearfully Mrs. Moses at last yielded to the matron's entreaties, repeatedly assuring her that she would endeavor to pay her, when she should regain her health and strength.

Mrs. Marshall remained a while, awaiting the return of the little child. At length she came bounding in with a bright, happy face, holding aloft the coveted bun, and exclaiming wildly, "See, mamma! here it is, nice and warm. Eat it, mamma!"

The matron then departed, promising to make immediate preparations for the mother's speedy removal.

CHAPTER XLIV.

IT was only two months after the kind matron of the Bellevue Home had the invalid Mrs. Moses removed to its hospitable walls, before she saw, with regret, that the life she sought to save was fast passing away. The delicate frame was rapidly yielding to the devastation of consumption. All the skill and attention of kind Dr. Gibbs had proved unavailing. It was too evident that she must soon die.

On the afternoon of a soft June day, succeeding a terrible night with the invalid, Mrs. Marshall had withdrawn for a moment's rest from the fatigue of watching and nursing. Her slumber was soon broken, however, by Maum Isbel, who, unceremoniously thrusting her head into her chamber, said in an excited tone:

"Miss Lizzie! Miss Lizzie! Mis' Moses says she would like to see you at once. She seem werry bad to me, ma'am, werry bad indeed; she's so weak!"

"Hasn't the doctor come yet, maum Isbel? I have been expecting him this hour," replied Mrs. Marshall, arising and preparing to go at once to her patient.

"Not yet, ma'am."

"If he comes, send him in at once; but I feel sure he can do the poor woman no good now. Her life is nearly done." Maum Isbel sighed, and dropped a tear at these ominous words; and then she shambled along into ward number two, to inspect the washing that Mark Antony Briggs, a colored man of her acquaintance, was doing there. There she grew garrulous over the demerits of the work, and soon forgot her emotion and her sympathy for the invalid. In the meantime, Mrs. Marshall hastened to the sick-room, and softly entered.

By the bedside sat the pale-faced little child, holding her mother's hand, and bestowing upon it kiss after kiss of fervent love.

"Mamma, here is good Mrs. Marshall come in again. Mamma! mamma! wake up," said the little girl as Mrs. Marshall entered.

Startled by the sound, the sick woman roused from her uneasy slumber, and turned her heavenly dark eyes, so lustrous and bright, full upon the face of the matron. Her eyes for an instant flashed, then filled with tears, and dropped again. There was a strange, mysterious expression in that one gaze, that thrilled the heart of Eliza, and filled it with sorrow. "What can I do for you now, dear Mrs. Moses?" she said with feeling. "The doctor will be here soon."

Lifting her emaciated arms, her body shaking convulsively, the invalid said, in a tone shrill with emotion, "Come here! Come near to me, Lizzie Heartwell! Come to these dying arms of mine! I can hold out no longer!" Confounded at these singular words, and the more singular demonstration of an undemonstrative woman, Mrs. Marshall shrank back, and the invalid continued, "Come to me; nearer! nearer! I can hold out no longer. God knows how hard I've struggled! Lizzie Heartwell, don't you know me? Have you never suspected your long-lost Leah? Have my disgrace and degradation wiped out my identity? In Heaven's name, is there not one trace of resemblance left to the friend who loved you so much in our happy school days? O Lizzie Heartwell, I am indeed

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your long-lost Leah! Your unfortunate, heart-broken Leah! Your forsaken, despised Leah! Your dying, dying Leah Mordecai! Is there no trace left, not one? Here, see this-this hated scar. Do you know me now, dear Lizzie?"

Lizzie, who, terrified at these startling words, had stood like a statue, sprang forward when the pale hand pushed back the hair and revealed the scar, exclaiming:

"Is it you, my long-loved Leah, my own Leah Mordecai? In pity's name, why this disguise? Why this cruel deception upon me, upon your faithful Lizzie, whose heart, like your own, has been wounded and bleeding so long? Tell me, dearest, tell me while you can; tell Lizzie Heartwell again of your sorrows."

"Am I not dying, Lizzie?" inquired Leah with a shudder, "I fear I cannot tell you all. My time is so short. But I could not die without one uttered word of thankfulness, without one kiss of recognition and love! This, Lizzie dear, is the end of my unhappy life; this the end of the wrong-doing of others; this the end of disobedience-the bitter, bitter end. It's been a hard, hard struggle, Lizzie, between pride and love, for me to throw off my disguise; but love has at length triumphed, love for this sweet child," she said, laying her hand tenderly upon her little daughter's head. "I could not die, and leave her entirely to strangers. When I have told you all I can of my story, then I shall hope for mercy from you for this child. It has seemed so dark and fearful to me, this untried, unknown life into which I must so soon enter! God knows how I tremble in His presence."

"Have you tried to pray, dear Leah?"

"Yes, dear; but still all was dark, dark, dark-is dark yet."

"Be calm, dear, and let me listen to the story of your life. Tell me what steps have led you at last to this strange end. Be calm, and tell me slowly. I would know it all."

"Be patient then, and listen. I'll keep nothing back. If God gives me strength to tell it, I'll tell you all." Then faintly she began her sad narrative, and unreservedly unfolded the story of her life, from the unfortunate day of her marriage, on through each succeeding year of sorrow, till she came at last, tremulously, to its sad close. Calmly she told how her father had discarded her; of the removal of her husband's father to France, where his family still remained; of Emile's misfortune, persecution, and forced desertion, of his innocence; of her hopeless longing to see him; of her despair as the conviction settled upon her that she could not hope to hear from him again; of the harrowing suspense that had slowly eaten out her life; of her penury and want "and now, thank God," she said, "you will see the end."

Lizzie wept at the story, and when it was ended, she said lovingly,

"Leah, dear, let me send for your father? I know he would come."

"Alas! the chillness of death is upon me, and the thought of dying without his forgiveness is terrible! Would not his blessing dispel this awful gloom, dear Lizzie? Ah! a soul in the presence of its God is a helpless, pitiable thing!"

"Our Father is a God of love and mercy, Leah; trust His goodness."

"I prayed last night from my prayer-book, but still all was dark. Won't you pray, dear Lizzie? Pray for my father to come, with forgiveness, and that his blessing may banish this gloom-this mysterious gloom. Pray for me, Lizzie, pray for me now; and then you may send for him. But stop! My child! Lizzie, my child! What will become of her? Will you not take her? Will you not keep her? Will you not love her for my sake? I could not give her to another. Tell me, dear. It's growing-oh! so chilly!"

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Eliza softly murmured, "Before Heaven, Leah, I solemnly promise to deal with your child as I would have others deal with mine. Give yourself no further sorrow for her, Leah."

"Thank God! and now, you may pray for me; pray that the gloom may be dispelled, and this death-chamber brightened by my father's forgiveness. Here, clasp my hands. Kneel close to me. I would catch every word. A shadow seems to hang upon everything! Now."

Thrilled with emotion, Eliza sank upon her knees, and with one arm embracing the sobbing child, the other hand clasping the dying woman's, she prayed:

"Eternal God, our Heavenly Father, in weakness, in darkness, and yet in confidence, we appeal unto Thee for succor. In life, as in death, we are dependent upon Thy mercy and love, and yet, ever unmindful of Thy goodness, we must constantly implore Thy forgiveness.

"Grant now, dear Father—now, in this dark hour of dissolving nature—a clear and sustaining view of Thy goodness and mercy.

"Draw very near, compassionate God, with assurances of Thy full and free pardon. Dispel with Thy brightness the darkness of death that now enshrouds a helpless soul; and take it, in Thy boundless love, into everlasting rest. Manifest Thy forgiveness, O God, for the deeds done in the body, and sanctify this soul for the habitation of Thy Saints. As earth has been dark and sorrowful, may heaven be bright and blessed; and may faith be given now, in this hour of awful extremity—faith to dispel the gloom that now veils Thy goodness, mercy, and power.

"Give light, light, O God, for darkness and terror, and peace and joy for apprehension and mourning. Eternal, ever-blessed, unchangeable God, send now Thy Spirit and manifest Thy forgiveness. O Father, let Thy sacrifice avail! Pity, too, the helpless orphan, compassionate Father, and like a mantle wrap Thy love about it. Guide its footsteps with wisdom, direct its way with love, and may it live to Thy honor and glory. Hear us in our weakness, helplessness, and sinfulness, and to Thy eternal Being be everlasting honor and glory. Amen."

Releasing the little child, and unclasping the dying hand, Eliza rose and said:

"Now, Leah, I'll send for your father."

"Well. Be quick!" and as a seraphic smile overspread her face, she added, "Leave me alone till he comes, Lizzie, but be quick. I would see him now, now; all is light, light, light! Joy, love, peace—at last."

An hour later, Mr. Mordecai—in answer to a message saying that his daughter was dying at the Bellevue Home, and wished to see him—came tottering into the hall—way, his face expressive of the deepest sorrow; his head had grown venerable and gray, his form was bent beneath a weight of grief that might have crushed a heart of stone. Not a word was spoken, as he silently took the hand of Mrs. Marshall, who met him at the threshold, and led the way to Leah's chamber. The expression of his face told the anguish of his heart. Noiselessly entering the room, they found that the little child had fallen asleep on the foot of its mother's bed, exhausted with weeping. The coverlet was drawn carelessly over Leah's face, concealing her features. Softly approaching her, Lizzie tremblingly turned the coverlet back. Alas! she was dead.

On the bosom of the dead, as she was being prepared for burial, was found the miniature of her mother, the birth-day gift of years ago. The jewels were gone. One by one they had been removed from their places, to answer the imperative demands of hunger and want. But the face, the beloved face of the mother, had ever been pressed to the heart of the unhappy daughter. And now, it was not to be removed, even by death itself; for the agonized father, beholding the evidence of Leah's devotion, said, "As she kept it in life, so shall she keep it in death. Place it again on her bosom. Thank God, I shall soon sleep beside her in the quiet burying-ground of my

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people; and may the eternal God forgive my sin toward her."

THE END.