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DAWN.

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DAWN.

CHAPTER I.

They sat together in the twilight conversing. Three years, with their alternations of joy and grief had swept over their married life, bringing their hearts into closer alliance, as each new emotion thrilled and upheaved the buried life within.

That night their souls seemed attuned to a richer melody than ever before; and as the twilight deepened, and one by one the stars appeared, the blessed baptism of a heavenly calm descended and rested upon their spirits.

"Then you think there are but very few harmonious marriages, Hugh?"

"My deep experience with human nature, and close observations of life, have led me to that conclusion. Our own, and a few happy exceptions beside, are but feeble offsets to the countless cases of unhappy unions."

"Unhappy; why?" he continued, talking more to himself than to the fair woman at his side; "people are only married fractionally, as a great thinker has written; and knowing so little of themselves, how can they know each other? The greatest strangers to each other whom I have ever met, have been parties bound together by the marriage laws!"

"But you would not sunder so holy a bond as that of marriage, Hugh?"

"I could not, and would not if I could. Whatever assimilates, whether of mind or matter, can not be sundered. I would only destroy false conditions, and build up in their places those of peace and harmony. While I fully appreciate the marriage covenant, I sorrow over the imperfect manhood which desecrates it. I question again and again, why persons so dissimilar in tastes and habits, are brought together; and then the question is partly, if not fully answered, by the great truth of God's economy, which brings the lesser unto the greater to receive, darkness unto light, that all may grow together. I almost know by seeing one party, what the other is. Thus are the weak and strong--not strength and might--coupled. Marriage should be a help, and not a hindrance. In the present state of society, we are too restricted to know what marriage is. Either one, or both of

those united, are selfish and narrow, allowing no conditions in which each may grow."

"Do I limit you, Hugh?"

"No, dearest, no; I never meant it should be so, either. When I gave you my love, I did not surrender my individual life and right of action. All of my being which you can appropriate to yourself is yours; you can take no more. What I take from you, is your love and sympathy. I cannot exhaust or receive you wholly."

"But I give you all of myself."

"Yet I can only take what I can absorb or receive into my being. The qualities of a human soul are too mighty to be absorbed by any one."

"What matters it if I am content in your love that I wish for none other?"

"I have often feared, dear Alice, that your individual life was lost in your love for me."

"What matters it, if you give me yourself in return?"

"It matters much. If we are not strong for ourselves, we are not strength to each other. If we have no reserve force, we shall in time consume each other's life. We can never be wholly another's."

"Am I not wholly yours, dear Hugh?" she said, raising her eyes tenderly to his, in that summer twilight.

"Not all mine, but all that I can receive."

"It may be true, but it seems cold to me," she replied, a little sadly.

"Too much philosophy and not enough love for your tender woman nature, is it not, darling?"

"I think you have explained it. I feel as though you were drifting away from me, Hugh, when you talk as you do to-night. Although I dearly love progress and enlarged views of life, I do not like many of the questions that are being agitated in reference to marriage."

"Because you do not take comprehensive views of the matter. I can, I think, set you clear on the whole subject, and divorce from your mind the thought that liberty is license. Liberty, in its full, true meaning, is the pure action of a true manhood, in obedience to the laws of the individual. For a simple illustration, look at our neighbors, Mr. and Mrs. Danforth. She, as you well know, is an ambitious woman; smart, and rather above the majority of her neighbors, intellectually, but not spiritually. Her husband is a kind-hearted man, content to fill an ordinary station in life, but

spiritually far her superior. His nature is rich in affection; her nature is cold and intellectual. He knows nothing of other woman's views, consequently has no standard by which to form an estimate of those of his wife. If she was wise, as well as sharp, she would see that she is standing in her own light; for the man whom she wishes to look upon her, and her only, will soon be a pure negation, a mere machine, an echo of her own jealousy and selfish pride. Now, freedom, or his liberty, would give him the right to mingle and converse with other women; then he would know what his wife was to him, while he would retain himself and give to her his manhood, instead of the mere return of her own self. At present he dare not utter a word to which she does not fully subscribe. She talks of his 'love' for her; it should be his 'servility.' They live in too close relation to be all they might to each other. I have heard her proudly assert, that he never spent an evening from home! I think they are both to be pitied; but, am I making the subject of freedom in any degree clear to your mind, my patient wife?"

"Yes, I begin to see that it is higher and nobler to be free, and far purer than I supposed."

"Yes, dear one," he said, drawing her close to his heart, "we must at times go from what we most tenderly love, in order to be drawn closer. The closest links are those which do not bind at all. It is a great mistake to keep the marriage tie so binding, and to force upon society such a dearth of social life as we see around us daily. Give men and women liberty to enjoy themselves on high social planes, and we shall not have the debasing things which are occurring daily, and are constantly on the increase. If I should take a lady of culture and refinement to a concert, a lecture, or to a theatre, would not society lift up its hands in holy horror, and scandal-mongers go from house to house? If men and women come not together on high planes, they will meet on debasing ones. Give us more liberty, and we shall have more purity. I speak these words not impulsively; they are the result of long thinking, and were they my last, I would as strongly and as fearlessly utter them."

"I feel myself growing in thought, to-night, Hugh, and O, how proud I feel that the little being who is soon to claim our love, if all is well, will come into at least some knowledge of these things."

In a few weeks she expected to become a mother, and was looking hopefully forward to the event, as all women do, or should, who have pleasant homes and worthy husbands.

"I, too, am glad that we can give it the benefit of our experience, and shall be proud to welcome into the world a legitimate child."

"Why, Hugh! what do you mean? All children are legitimate, are they not, that are born in wedlock?"

"Very far from it. In very many cases they are wholly illegitimate."

His wife looked eagerly for an explanation.

"All persons who are not living in harmony and love, are bringing into the world illegitimate offspring. Children should be born because they are wanted. A welcome should greet every new-born child, and yet a mere physical relation is all that exists between thousands of parents and children, while thousands who have not given physical birth are more fitted by qualities of heart and soul to be the parents of these spiritual orphans than the blood relations, who claim them as their own. I often think that many in the other life will find, even though they may have had no offspring in this, that they have children by the ties of soul and heart-affinity, which constitutes after all the only relationship that is immortal."

Ten days after the above conversation, the eventful period came. All night she lingered in pain, and at daybreak a bright and beautiful daughter was laid at her side. But, alas! life here was not for her. Mother and babe were about to be separated, for the fast receding pulse told plainly to the watchful physician that her days were numbered. Her anguished husband read it in the hopeless features of the doctor, and leaning over the dear one he loved so well, he caught from her these last words,--

"Call her DAWN! for is she not a coming light to you? See, the day is breaking, Hugh,"--then the lips closed forever.

"Come back, come back to me, my loved, my darling one," broke from the anguished heart of the stricken husband, and falling on his knees beside the now lifeless form, he buried his face in his hands, and wept.

But even grief cannot always have its sway.

A low, wailing cry from the infant moved his heart with a strange thrill, he knew not whether of joy or pain, and rising from the posture in which grief had thrown him, he went and bowed himself over the silent form.

One gone, another come.

But the little being had her life in its veins, and slowly he felt himself drawn earthward by this new claim upon his love and sympathy.

A strange feeling came over him as the nurse took the little child, and laid upon the bed the robes its mother had prepared for it.

It was too much, and the heart-stricken man left the room, and locking himself in his library, where he had spent so many happy hours with his lost one, gave full vent to the deep anguish of his soul. He heard the kind physician's steps as he left, and no more. For hours he sat bowed in grief, and silent, while sorrow's bitter

waters surged over him.

No more would her sweet smile light his home; no more her voice call his name in those tender tones, that had so often been music to his ears; no more could they walk or sit in the moonlight and converse. Was it really true? Had Alice gone, or was it not all a troubled dream?

Noon came, and his brow became more fevered. But there was no soft hand to soothe the pain away. Night came, and still he sat and mourned; and then the sound of voices reached his ears. He roused himself to meet the friends and relations of his dear departed one, and then all seemed vague, indefinite and dreamlike.

The funeral rites, the burial, the falling earth upon the coffin lid; these all passed before him, then like one in a stupor he went back to his home, and took up the broken threads of life again, and learned to live and smile for his bright-eyed, beautiful Dawn. May she be Dawn to the world, he said unto himself, as he looked into her heaven-blue eyes; then thanked God that his life was spared to guide her over life's rough seas, and each day brought fresh inspirations of hope, new aspirations of strength, and more confiding trust in Him whose ways are not as our ways.

CHAPTER II.

Dawn grew to be very beautiful. Every day revealed some new charm, until Hugh feared she too might go and live with the angels. But there was a mission for her to perform on the earth, and she lived.

Each day he talked to her of her mother, and kept her memory alive to her beautiful traits, until the child grew so familiar with her being as to know no loss of her bodily presence, save in temporal affairs.

A faithful and efficient woman kept their house, and cared for Dawn's physical wants; her father attending to her needs, both mental and spiritual, until she reached the age of seven, when a change in his business required him to be so often away from home, that he advertised for a governess to superintend her studies and her daily deportment.

"What was mamma like?" asked Dawn of her father one evening as they sat in the moonlight together, "was she like the twilight?"

He turned upon the child with admiration, for to him nothing in nature could better be likened unto his lost and lovely Alice.

"Yes, darling," he said, kissing her again and again, "mamma was just like the twilight--sweet, tender, and soothing."

"Then I am not at all like mamma?" she remarked, a little sadly.

"And why?"

"Because I am strong and full of life. I always feel as though it was just daylight. I never feel tired, papa, I only feel hushed."

"Heaven grant my daughter may never be weary," he said, and stooped to kiss her, while he brushed away a tear which started as he did so.

"I shall never be weary while I have you, papa. You will never leave me, will you?"

"I hope to be spared many years to guard and love my charge."

A few days after, Dawn was surprised to find the governess, of whom her father had spoken, in the library, and her father with his carpet-bag packed, ready for a journey.

"Am I not going too, papa?" she said, turning on him her face, as though her heart was ready to burst with grief. It was their first parting, and equally hard for parent and child.

"Not this time, darling, but in the summer we shall go to the sea-shore and the mountains, and take Miss Vernon with us. Come, this is your teacher, Dawn; I want you to be very good and obedient while I am away," and then, looking at his watch, he bade them both adieu.

He knew the child was weeping bitterly. All the way to the cars, and on the journey through that long, sunny day, he felt her calling him back. There could be no real separation between them, and it was painful to part, and keep both so drawn and attenuated in spirit.

In vain Miss Vernon exerted herself to make the child happy. It was of no use. Her delicate organism had received its first shock; but in due time her spirit broke through the clouds in its native brilliancy, and there was no lingering shadow left on her sky. Dawn was as bright and smiling as she had been sad and dispirited.

"I will gather some wild flowers and make the room all bright and lovely for papa," she said, and in a moment was far away.

"It's no use training her, you see, Miss," the good housekeeper asserted, as a sort of an apology for the child, whom she loved

almost to idolatry, "might as well try to trap the sunlight or catch moonbeams. She'll have her way, and, somehow to me, her way seems always right. Will you please step out to tea, Miss, and then I will go and look after her; or, if you like, you can follow that little path that leads from the garden gate to the hill where she has gone for her flowers."

Miss Vernon was glad to go; and after a light supper, was on her way, almost fearful that the child might consider her an intruder, for she instinctively felt that she must work her way into the affections of her new charge.

She followed the path to the hill, and after walking for some time and not finding Dawn, was about to retrace her steps, when she heard a low, sweet voice, chanting an evening hymn. She sat upon a bed of grey moss until the chanting ceased, and then went in the direction from which the sound came.

There sat Dawn, with eyes uplifted, lips parted as though in conversation, and features glowing with intensest emotion. Then the eyes dropped, and her little hands were pressed to her heart, as though the effort had been too great.

Slowly Miss Vernon stepped towards her. Dawn caught her eye, and motioned her to come nearer.

"Are you not lonely here, child?" she asked.

"Lonely? O, no. I am not alone, Miss Vernon, God is here, and I am so full I sing, or I should die. Did you hear me?"

"I did. Who taught you that beautiful chant?"

"No one; it grew in me; just as the flowers grow on the plants."

"I have an instructor here, and one I shall find more interesting than tractable," mused the governess, as she looked upon the child. But Dawn was not learned in one day, as she afterwards found.

The sun sank behind the hills just as they entered the garden together. Dawn missed her father too much to be quite up to her usual point of life, and she went and laid herself down upon a couch in the library, and chatted away the hour before her bedtime. She missed him more than she could tell; and then she thought to herself, "Who can I tell how much I miss my father?"

"Did you ever have any body you loved go away, Miss Vernon?" she at last ventured to ask, and her voice told what she suffered.

"I have no near friends living, dear child."

"What! did they all die? Only my mamma is dead; but I don't miss her; I think she must be in the air, I feel her so. Have n't you any

father, Miss Vernon?"

"No. He died when I was quite young, and then my mother, and before I came here I buried my last near relative-an aunt."

"But aunts don't know us, do they?"

"Why not? I don't quite understand you," she said, wishing to bring the child out.

"Why, they don't feel our souls. I have got aunts and cousins, but they seem away off, O, so far. They live here, but I don't feel them; and they make me, O, so tired. They never say anything that makes me thrill all over as papa does. Don't you see now what I mean?"

"Yes, I see. Will you tell me after I have been here awhile, if I make you tired?"

"I need not tell you in words. You will see me get tired."

"Very good. I hope I shall not weary you."

"I can tell by to-morrow, and if I do look tired you will go, won't you?"

"Certainly; and for fear I may weary you now, I will retire, if you will promise to go too."

She yielded willingly to Miss Vernon's wish, and was led to her room, where the sensitive, pure being was soon at rest.

It seemed almost too early for any one to be stirring, when Miss Vernon heard a little tap on her door, and the next moment beheld a childish face peeping in.

"May I come?"

"Certainly. I hope you have had pleasant dreams, Dawn. Can you tell me why they gave you such a strange name?"

"Strange? Why I am Dawn, that is the reason; and mamma was Twilight, only her mother did n't give her the right name."

"Have you slept well?"

"I did n't know anything till I woke up. Was that sleeping well?"

"I think it was. Now will you tell me at what hour you have breakfast, that I may prepare myself in season?"

"When papa is at home, at eight o'clock. This morning I am going to see Bessie, the new calf, and Minnie Day's kittens, and Percy

Willard's new pony, so Aunt Sue says she can have breakfast any time."

Miss Vernon upon this concluded that she need make no hasty toilet, and sank back upon her pillow to think awhile of her new surroundings.

Breakfast waited, but no Dawn appeared. Aunt Sue, fearing that the toast and coffee might be spoiled, rang for Miss Vernon.

At eleven Dawn came in with soiled clothes and wet feet.

"O, Aunty, the pony was so wild, and the kittens so cunning, I could n't come before."

"And see your clothes, Dawn. I must work very hard to-day to wash and dry them. Now go to your room and change them all, and try to remember others when you are in your enjoyments, won't you?"

"Yes, and I won't soil them again, auntie."

"Until the next time, I fear," said the kind housekeeper, who was, perhaps, too forgiving with the strange, wild child.

The next day Dawn was filled with delight at her father's return. He came early in the morning, and found his pet awake and watching for his approach.

"O, papa, such a dream, a real dream, as I had last night. Sit right here by the window, please, while I tell it to you."

"Perhaps your dream will be so real that we shall not want anything more substantial for breakfast."

"O, it's better than food, papa."

"Well, go on, my pet."

"I was thinking how glad I should be to see my papa, when I went to sleep and had this beautiful dream:--

"I was walking in a garden all full of flowers and vines, when I saw my mother coming towards me, with something upon her arm. She came close, and then I saw it was a robe, O, such a white robe, whiter than snow. She put it on me, and it was too long. I asked if it was for me why it was so long. 'You will grow,' she said, 'tall and beautiful, and need the long garment.' Then she led the way, and motioned me to follow. She led me down a dismal lane, and into a damp, dreadful place, where the streets were all mud and dirt. 'O, my dress,' I said, 'my pure white robe.' 'No dust and dirt can stain it,' she replied, 'walk through that dark street and see.' I went, and looked back at each step, but my pure white robe was not soiled, and when I returned to her, it was as spotless as ever. Was it not a

lovely dream, and what does it mean, papa?"

"A lesson too deep for your childhood to comprehend, and yet I will some day tell you. But here comes Miss Vernon, and the bell has rung for breakfast."

CHAPTER III.

The next day, while Dawn wandered over the hills, her father conversed with Miss Vernon on what to his mind constituted an education.

"I know that all our growth is slow, but I wish to take the right steps if possible in the right direction; I wish my daughter to be wholly, not fractionally developed. There are certain parts of her nature which I shall trust to no one. Her daily lessons, a knowledge respecting domestic affairs, a thorough comprehension of the making and cost of wearing apparel, and a due regard to proper attire, I shall trust to you, if you are competent to fill such a position, and I think you are."

"I have seen so much misery," he continued, "resulting from the inability of some women to make a home happy, that I have resolved if my child lives to years of maturity, all accomplishments shall give way, if need be, to this one thing, a thorough knowledge of domestic affairs. Society is so at fault in these matters, and women generally have such false ideas of them, that I despair of reforming any one. If I can educate my daughter to live, or rather approximate in some degree, to my ideal of a true woman's life, it is all I can expect. Are you fond of domestic life, Miss Vernon?"

He turned so abruptly upon her that she feared her hesitation might be taken for a lack of feeling on the subject, and yet she could not bear the thought that one whose ideal was so near her own, did not fully comprehend her upon such a theme; but there was no mistaking her meaning when she replied,--

"I love home, and all that makes that spot holy. I only regret that my one-sided labor and my circumstances have kept me from mingling, to any great extent, in its joys and responsibilities. My ideal life would be to work, study and teach, but as no opportunities for doing so have been presented to me, and having had no home of my own, I have been obliged to work on in my one-sided way, unsatisfying as it has been."

"It shall be so no more, Miss Vernon. If you will call my house your home, so long as we harmonize, you shall have an opportunity to realize your wishes, and I will see that your services are well required."

She was too full of gratitude to speak, but a tear started from her eye, and Mr. Wyman noticed that she turned aside to brush it away.

"You will stay with us, Miss Vernon, I am sure of that. Take Dawn into the kitchen every day, no matter if she rebels, as I fear she may, and slowly, but thoroughly educate her in all those seemingly minor details of household economy. Cause her to feel the importance of these things, and teach her to apply herself diligently to labor. I am not anxious that she should make any exhibition of her mental accomplishments, for I have learned to dislike parlor parades, and the showing off of children's acquirements. I do not want Dawn to dazzle with false show, but to be what she seems, and of use to the world. At the close of each day I shall question her about her studies, and show to her that I am interested not only in her books, but in her domestic attainments. Supply to her, as well as you can, that material, the want of which is so great a loss to a young girl, and your happiness shall be my study. Treat her as you would an own dear child, and when she gives you trouble, send her to me. I fear I may have wearied you, Miss Vernon, and as the day is so fine, had you not better take a walk?"

She was already too anxious to go by herself, and think of the happiness which was about opening for her. It seemed too much. All the years that had passed since her dear mother's death had been so lonely. No one had ever understood her nature, or seemed to think her anything but a machine to teach the children their daily lessons. But now what a prospective! How earnestly would she begin her new life; and burdened with this thought she walked to the edge of a green wood, and sat down to weep tears of pure joy.

When she returned she found her room filled with mosses and trailing vines, which Dawn had gathered for her. She was rapidly learning to love the child, and felt lonely when she was out of her sight.

In the evening they sat together,--father, child, and teacher, or companion, as she really was to them, in the library, communing in silence, no word breaking the spell, until Dawn did so by asking Miss Vernon if she played.

She glanced longingly at the beautiful instrument, which had not been opened since Mrs. Wyman's death, and said,--

"I do play and sing, but not as well as I hope to with opportunities for practice."

"Do open the piano, papa, it will spoil shut up so."

"So it will, Dawn. I will open it this moment," and he silently accused himself for keeping it closed so long.

"Do you love music, Dawn?" asked Miss Vernon, "can you sing?"

"You shall hear her, and then judge. Come, darling, while I play your favorite song;" and he commenced the prelude to a low, sweet air. She began at first tremulously, but gained confidence at each word, until at length her sweet, childish tones rose pure and clear above the voice of her father, who hummed rather than sang the song in his deep, rich bass.

His eyes were full of tears when they closed, for that hymn was his wife's favorite. He had taught it to Dawn, without telling her that her mother ever sung it.

"It seemed just as though mamma was here and sang too, papa, did n't it?"

"Mamma, no doubt, is with us. I am glad my little girl feels her presence, and always remember that she is with you, too, when you feel tempted to do wrong."

She nestled her head on his bosom and wept. Tears of joy or sorrow? Only they whose souls are finely and intensely strung, can know what made her weep.

"You must sing for us now, Miss Vernon," he said, and would have led her to the instrument, but for the burden of love, which was resting on his heart.

"I play only simple songs, Mr. Wyman, and, indeed, am quite out of practice."

"You have some gems stowed away, I know; please sing us one."

She arose, and after a few trembling notes, sang a sweet song with such pathos and richness that Mr. Wyman called again for more and more. Dawn was wild with joy, and then her father, after Miss Vernon declined to play more, proposed that they should sing an evening hymn.

In this they all joined, Miss Vernon's rich contralto blending sweetly with Dawn's pure soprano.

Their dreams were sweet and peaceful that night. Their souls had all met and harmonized, and harmony ever brings rest.

The following day Miss Vernon looked over Dawn's clothing, and laid aside whatever needed repairing. She was just folding some aprons, when the child rushed into the room, saying,--

"O, Miss Vernon, I must wear my blue dress to-day."

"Why that one?"

"Because I feel good, and blue is heavenly, so let me wear it, please, will you?"

"It's rather short, Dawn, but I suppose it will cover all your goodness for one day, will it not?"

"O, don't laugh, I feel truly good to-day, and any other dress would not do."

"You shall have it, Dawn. I am glad you like to dress according to your feelings. I do myself."

"Then how do you feel to-day, and what shall you dress in?"

"I feel very, very happy, but have no garment to symbolize my feelings."

"I don't want you to wear that grey dress, though, to-day?"

"Why?"

"Because it don't say anything."

"Nor my black?"

"O, no, no!"

"How will the drab with blue trimmings suit?"

"It's just the dress. You are silent, and have been rather sad, you know, Miss Vernon, and the blue is the glimmer of sky above your old, dull life. Do wear the drab with blue ribbons."

"I will, Dawn. My life is brighter, because I have some one to love;" and she pressed her lips warmly to the cheeks of her little charge.

When Mr. Wyman came in to dinner he thought he had never seen Dawn looking so fresh and beautiful, while his eyes rested in full satisfaction on Miss Vernon's lovely form, so becomingly arrayed. He liked the absence of the black dress, for its removal seemed to betoken a happier life, a life which he knew she needed, and which he mentally resolved she should possess, so far as he could contribute to it.

At the table, Mr. Wyman was talkative and gay, touching lightly here and there, upon subjects, without argument. It was conversation, not discussion, or an array of opinions, which flowed from the minds of those around the board, and of such a nature that all could join, from young to old.

Miss Vernon delighted in watching him as his eyes rested tenderly on his child. It was charming to witness such a tender relation existing between father and daughter.

CHAPTER III.

The days flew swiftly by, and the still, peaceful Sabbath dawned.

How tranquil, and yet how full of life it seemed to Miss Vernon as she sat at her window and gazed on the scene of beauty before her. A lovely spring morning-the distant hills soft and mellow; the emerald fields glittering with dew-the tasseled pines nodding in the gentle breeze-and the whole atmosphere vibrating with the tones of the Sabbath bells.

"Surely," she said, "I need no form of worship. God is in all this. I wonder if I must go from all these beauties to a temple made with hands."

"Is n't this pleasanter than sitting in a bare walled church?" said Dawn, who had entered the room so softly that Miss Vernon was only made aware of her presence by this inquiry.

"I think it is. Do you go to church?"

"No. Papa does sometimes, but he never makes me go."

"I hope not."

"Shall you go to-day, Miss Vernon?"

"Not if I can act my pleasure."

"I am so glad, for papa said if you did not go, we would all take a walk, but if you wished to go, he would harness Swift and take you.

"I had much rather take the walk to-day. Some day, I shall want to go to your church."

"There, papa is ready, I hear him in the hall. Get your hat, Miss Vernon."

"But you forget he has not yet invited me."

"Dawn, ask Miss Vernon whether she will take a walk with us, or go to church?" said Mr. Wyman, at that moment calling from the foot of the stairs.

Miss Vernon was not long in making known her choice, for she sprang and put on her hat, and in a few moments the three were walking through the garden towards the woods and fields.

"Which direction, Miss Vernon, shall we take?"

"Any; it's all lovely."

"Then lead the way, Dawn, and mind you act as a good pilot, and do not get us into any brooks."

She ran gaily on before, and they soon found themselves on the verge of a rich, mossy dell.

"O, is it not beautiful, papa? I shall carry all this lovely moss home."

"No, Dawn, let it remain. Gather a few specimens from here and there, but do not mar the general beautiful effect. It is ours now; we can not make it more so by carrying it home to fade and die. Can we, darling?"

"No. You are always right and good, papa."

"To-morrow others may come here, and the lovely scene will be as pleasing to them as to us. There is a possession, Miss Vernon, other than that which the world recognizes; and it is always pleasant to me to think that though a man may build himself a palace, and call himself its proprietor, he alone really owns it whose eyes see the most of its beauties, and whose soul appropriates them. And so, a lovely spot like this, or the finest garden may belong to the passer-by whose purse does not contain a penny."

"How it smoothes in life the inequalities of station, and makes us content to admire, rather than strive for ownership."

"I see by your fervent enjoyment of the scene around us, Miss Vernon, that you, too, have discarded some of the old forms of worship, or rather found that a true worship of the divine is not limited by four walls."

"I have. For a long time I have seen so much bigotry, and so great a lack of all the Christian virtues, even in the most liberal churches, that I have felt I must seek my own mode of enjoying the Sabbath."

"I long ago found my true relation to all places and forms of devotion," remarked Mr. Wyman. "I do not for a moment ignore the

church, nor what Christianity has done for us, yet while I see the good the church has accomplished, I also see its shortcomings and regret them. As an individual, I can say that I have done with most church organizations. I have heard good and earnest words spoken by clergymen in the pulpit once a week, and as good from the lips of working people at their tasks every day. I do not undervalue the influence that the forms of worship have on the masses. While they need them, they must remain where they are, and have them. I only want the church to be so liberal, that men and women who feel that they are getting life in another direction, will be recognized by it to be as good and true to their needs, as though they sat within its walls. How much have we at the present day of this? Who is large enough to feel that we cannot always draw from one fount? We are not machines, to be continually run in one direction."

"What do you think of our sabbath schools. Do they not need a new life, too?"

"Unquestionably. I think they need an infusion of dramatic life; something that interests while it instructs. Dry catechisms are not suited to the children of our day. We want the living present, and not the dead past. If I was called to superintend a sabbath school, I would have a little play enacted by a portion of the children, and then another portion, until all were actors in their turn."

"If you express your opinions, I fear you will wait a long time for a call?"

"I do not crave the position; I am only anxious to see the effect of my theory in practice. Children need demonstration; need muscular action. But I am, perhaps, wearying you."

"Go on. I am interested in all that relates to new phases of life."

"I should astonish some divines of the conservative order, were I to publish my views of social and religious life. I would sooner give money to build theatres, than churches. Everywhere I would cultivate a love for the drama, which is the highest and most impressive form of representing truth. My being is stirred to greater depths by good acting than it can possibly be by mere preaching. I shall be happy to see the day when religion is acknowledged to be the simple living out of individual lives, always toned, of course, by pure morality. I hope to see acts of kindness looked upon as religion, instead of a mere personal attendance upon worship. But I have talked too long. Where is Dawn?"

They walked on, and soon found her sitting on a moss-covered stone, twining a wreath of wild flowers. She looked like a queen, as she was for a time, of that beautiful dell.

"Have flowers souls, papa?" she asked, as he approached her.

"I hope they are immortal, at least in type. But why do you ask?"

"Because these flowers I have gathered will fade and die, and if they have souls they will not love me for gathering them, will they?"

"Perhaps all the sweetness of these flowers, when they die, passes into the soul of the one who gathers them."

"O, how pretty! That makes me think about the little girl who played with me one day and got angry. You told me that she was better for the bad feeling I had; that I had taken some of her evil, because I could overcome it-it with good."

"I am glad you remember so well what I tell you. Now as we cannot tell whether flowers have souls or not, we will believe that all their sweetness passes into ours."

"But if I should kill a serpent?"

"You must cover the evil with good."

"But, papa, people come to our house all full of evil things, like serpents. Don't they have enough good to cover them, or why do I feel them so plain?"

"I fear not; or, rather, their goodness has not been cultivated and made large enough to absorb the evil. We must go home now, or Aunt Susan will be waiting for us."

The three walked home together, in harmony with nature and themselves. They found their dinner waiting, and the simple meal neatly prepared, was graced with a vase of beautiful flowers.

CHAPTER IV.

In a few weeks the little neighborhood was duly aroused, and discussing the state of affairs at Mr. Wyman's. Each one considered herself called upon to pass judgment upon the daily proceedings.

"It's too ridiculous, right in the face and eyes of honest people, to see this woman and Mr. Wyman carrying on as they do," said Miss Gay, a lady of forty years, whose notions of the mingling of the sexes were of the strictest character.

"Why, how? Do tell us," chimed in her companion, a garrulous old lady.

"Why, they say that this young woman is going about with Mr. Wyman all the time. He takes her to ride almost every day, and they have interminable walks and daily confabs together."

"Well, I should think the child's lessons would come off slim, Miss Gay."

"O, that's only a subterfuge. They'll be married 'fore one year has gone by."

"I do not believe Hugh Wyman will ever marry again," said one who knew his character better than the others.

"Then what can he want of that young woman? No good, depend on that," and Mrs. Green shook her head as though she had more in it than she wished at that time to display.

While they chat and waste the hours, let us go and listen to the parties talked of, and judge for ourselves whether two earnest souls can not approach, enjoy each other, and yet be pure and blameless.

"I can scarcely believe, Mr. Wyman, that so brief a period could work such a change in my being. Before I came here, I thought all the world cold and heartless. You have taught me that friendship, even between men and women, may exist, and that the only true relations are of soul and not of blood. I can never by words tell you how grateful I feel to you for all these teachings," and she looked thoughtfully out on the summer scene before her.

"I am very glad that you are happy here, Miss Vernon, for when I first saw you I instinctively felt that you were just the companion for myself and daughter. I saw, too, the cloud which hung over you, and felt that my hand could lift it. You belong to Dawn and myself, and we shall keep you so long as you are happy."

"But-"

"But what? I know your fears, and what this busy little neighborhood will say. I care no more for all its ideas of life than for the wind, while I feel right here," said Mr. Wyman, placing his hand upon his heart. "The time has come for all to live individual lives. I would not for a moment have your name sullied, but should you go, would gossip cease? No; stay here, Miss Vernon, and show to this little portion of the world that man and woman can live together sociably and honorably. I love you as a sister; no more. My dear Alice is now my wife, the same as when on earth. I speak as I do, knowing that you will meet with many sneers and frowns if you stay, but the consciousness of right will sustain you."

"How could you know what was in my mind? You have, indeed, expressed

all my fears as regards this relation between us."

"Will you go or stay?"

"I shall stay."

"May you never regret the decision."

"Now may I ask you about this strange belief, that the departed are about us? Excuse me, if I seem curious, but when you spoke of your dear wife, my whole being quivered with a new and strange emotion. I only ask from deepest interest."

"I believe you. I wish I could transmit to your mind the proofs of my belief. I have almost daily positive proof of my wife's presence, sometimes by my own powers, and then again from those of my child."

"Then she, too, sees like yourself?"

"She does. And every day my experiences are too real and tangible for me to deny, or even doubt that the loved, and so-called 'lost,' are with us still. To my mind, there is nothing unnatural about it. Every day my faith deepens, and not for all the glory of this life would I change my belief. Death has brought myself and Alice nearer together. But I can only state to you my faith in this, my experience cannot be imparted. Each must seek, and find, and be convinced alone by personal experience and observation."

"I believe you, and your earnest words have sunk deep within my mind, yet in modern spiritualism I have little faith."

"Mere phenomenal spiritism is of course only designed to arrest the attention; its other form appeals to the soul, and becomes a part of the daily lives of those who realize it."

"But I have heard of so much that was contradictory, so much that cannot be reconciled."

"Neither can we reconcile the usual manifestations of life. Our daily experiences teach us that seeming absurdities abound on every hand."

"That is true. I sometimes think I shall never get the evidence which my nature requires to convince."

"In God's own time and way it will come, and when you are best fitted to receive it."

"But please go on, Mr. Wyman, and tell me more of your experience."

"I would I could tell you how often when I am weary, my dear Alice comes and watches over me at night; how truly I feel her thoughts, which she cannot express in words; and how, when the poor and needy

are suffering, she leads me to where they dwell amid scenes of want. When my pure child speaks thoughts beyond herself, and describes to me some vision which I at the same time behold, with the exact look and gesture of her mother, I say I believe in spirit communion. I can well afford to let the world laugh; I know what I see and feel. And well do I know how much there is mixed with this modern spiritism, which has no origin save in the minds of the persons who substitute their hopes and thoughts for impressions. On this I have much to say to you at some future period. It is well that it is so, else we should not discriminate. Life is so full of adulterations, that which the world calls 'evil' is so mingled with that it calls 'good,' would it not be strange if this phase should come to us pure and unmixed?"

"It would not take you long to make me a convert to your faith; yet I hope sometime to have my own experiences. If there was not so much that conflicts with our reason, I think every one would naturally accept the belief you so fondly cherish."

"Without such conflicting experiences, we should be mere machines. We must grow in every direction, using every faculty for our guidance, yet ever remembering there are mightier realms than reason, and that the human soul must often go beyond that portal, to catch glimpses of the silent land."

"Life would indeed be blessed to me, could I feel an assurance that my mother was near me to strengthen me in my hours of weakness, and that she was interested in my labors."

"I know all our earnest longings are answered, and that sufficient proof will be given you. Say nothing of this conversation to Dawn. I have my reasons, and should not be surprised if, in a few days, she should give you a test of spirit presence."

"Can Dawn see as clearly as yourself?"

"She can, and far better. I do not force the gift upon her, or seek to overwork her powers. I want it to be natural and to unfold with all her other capacities. Never question her, let all come freely."

"I will remember; and here she comes laden as usual with flowers."

"O, Miss Vernon, O, papa, I have had such a good time!" she exclaimed out of breath and almost wild with excitement.

"What was it all about, child?"

"I was on the hill out here, getting flowers, when I seemed to hear music, all at once in the air. I think I went to sleep, but if it was a dream I know it means something, for I saw a tall, beautiful lady come to me, and on her forehead were the letters, M. V. Then she took a little box inlaid with gems, and drew from it a necklace of pearls, and then she went away, and as she turned-I saw these

words come like a light-'Tell Florence.' Now, papa, what did it mean?"

Mr. Wyman turned to Miss Vernon who was weeping. He waited until her emotion subsided and then said,--

"Your mother, was it not?"

"They were my mother's initials. Her name was Mabel Vernon, and mine Florence."

"How strange. And the necklace, do you recognize that?"

"My mother gave me--on her dying bed--a pearl necklace in such a box as described by Dawn."

"And we did not know your name was Florence. We only knew you as Miss Vernon."

"Can it--can this be true? Ah, something tells me I may believe. I am too full now, Mr. Wyman, to talk. I must go."

"Call me Hugh, Florence, I am your brother--" and he led her gently to the house.

She remained in her room all that evening. Deep and strong was the tide which was setting into her new life. "If 't is true, 't is the greatest truth mortal has found," she said again and again to herself, as the old upheaved, and the new flowed into her soul. Life was becoming almost too full; her brain grew fevered, but at last sweet sleep, that soul refiner, came, and after a night's repose she awoke, calm and at rest.

CHAPTER V.

After breakfast, Mr. Wyman informed Miss Vernon and Dawn that he should go away that day on business, and be absent perhaps two weeks.

"I have a book which I would like you to take to Miss Evans for me to-day," he said, addressing Miss Vernon.

"The lady who called here soon after I came?"

"The same."

"I like her much, and should be pleased to see her again."

"I am glad you do. She is my ideal of a true woman, and one whom every young, earnest soul ought to know. You will go to-day?"

"Certainly; I am anxious to see her in her own home."

"She is queen of her domain, and entertains her friends in a most lady-like manner; but I must bid you both good-bye, and be off. Be happy, Miss Vernon, Florence, and let me find you full of good things to tell of yourself and Dawn, on my return. Good-bye."

"Good-bye, papa," rang out on the sweet summer air till he was out of sight, then the child's lid trembled, the lips quivered, and she laid her head on the bosom of her friend and teacher, and gave vent to the grief which ever wrung her at parting with her kind parent.

"I am glad you did not let your father see those tears. You are getting quite brave, Dawn."

"I feel so bad when he goes. Shall I ever be strong like you, and look calm after these partings? Perhaps you don't love papa; but every body does that knows him-you do, don't you?"

"Very much; but we will go to our lessons, now, dear."

"Can I bring my book into the hall, to-day? I like to stay where I saw him last."

"Certainly; and we will have a review to-day and see how well you remember your lessons. We shall have no interruptions this morning, and after dinner we will go together to see Miss Evans."

An hour passed, and the lessons were but half through, when a ring at the door caused them both to start, and they left the hall.

Aunt Susan answered the call, and ushered the visitors into the family sitting-room.

"Some ladies have called to see you, Miss Vernon," she said, thrusting her head into the doorway of the room where teacher and pupil sat close together with clasped hands, as though some invading force was about to wrest their lives apart.

"In a moment, Aunty, I will see them," and a strange shudder shook her frame.

"Where shall I go while they stay?" asked Dawn.

"Anywhere; only not far from home, as we intend to have an early dinner."

"Then I will stay here, and look over papa's folio of drawings."

Miss Vernon went to her room to see that her hair and dress were all right, and then slowly descended the stairs to the sitting-room. Her hand trembled violently as she turned the knob, and she almost resolved to go back to her room. "I am growing so sensitive of late," she said to herself, "but this will never do, I must go in," and she opened the door.

Three ladies hastily rose and bowed very formally, as she entered.

The tallest and most stylish of the three blandly inquired for her health, and after a few commonplace remarks, announced the object of their visit.

"We have come to you, Miss Vernon, to-day, as friends of our sex, to inform you of, as you may not fully comprehend, the character of the man whom you are serving."

Miss Vernon coolly signified her attention.

"We deemed it our duty to do so, being married women," broke in a little squeaky voice, belonging to the most demure-looking one of the party.

"Yes, we all decided, after long deliberation," added the third, "that no young woman who cared for her reputation, would tarry a day longer under this roof. This visit of ours is an act of the purest kindness, and we trust you will receive it as such, and in a kind spirit."

"Yes," resumed the first speaker, "it is no pleasant duty, and one we have long delayed performing, but we could not bear to see youth and innocence betrayed."

Miss Vernon at first seemed stunned. She knew not what to say, so many emotions filled her. She tried to speak, but her tongue lost its power, and all was silent. She made one more effort, and voice and courage returned, enabling her to address her "friends."

"Will you inform me, ladies, what grounds you have for your accusations against Mr. Wyman?"

"I beg pardon, Miss, we who have known him longer than yourself, of course know both sides of his character; indeed he has no reputation in B--, as all know."

She started involuntarily. What passed through her mind at that moment none can tell, but all can form some idea of the wild tremor of doubt which was gaining strength under their vile calumny and falsehood.

They saw their vantage ground, and followed close with such invectives as women only know how to hurl against whomsoever they assail.

"Strangers," she could not call them ladies, "I can only speak out of my own experience of this person who a few months ago was unknown to me. He has ever treated me with all delicacy and respect. I have ever found him to be a gentleman. I cannot, will not, believe your assertions," she said with emphasis, a sudden strength coming over her.

"If you do not believe us, then seek one proof of his wrong dealing, which you can find any day, at a small cottage near the uplands, on the road to L--. 'Tis only a mile from here, Miss, and we would advise you to acquaint yourself with the fact. Take our good advice and leave this house. That is all we can say to you. Of course, if you remain here, you will not be admitted into respectable society."

"I will not leave his house while he remains the friend and brother he is to me now."

"No virtuous woman will permit you, then, to enter her house; remember this, Miss Vernon," and the tall lady assumed an attitude of offended dignity.

"I see," she continued, "our visit has done but little save to arouse you. It may be at some future day, you will thank us for our advice to you this morning. We must go now. Good day, Miss."

"Good morning," replied Miss Vernon, rising and accompanying them to the door, scarce able to repel the strong tide of grief, or bear up under the weight of sadness that was bearing down her soul.

"My brief, happy days so soon, O, how soon, gone by, and over," she said, after she had closed the door; and she sank on her knees and prayed as only those have prayed before, in like trouble.

She knew not how long she knelt there, but she was roused by Dawn's sweet voice, which was always music to her soul, saying, "Please, may I come, Miss Vernon?"

She rose and held out her arms to receive the little one, who stood hesitatingly on the threshold of the library, then pressing the dear child to her heart, found a sweet sense of relief in doing so.

"I know what makes you feel so, Miss Vernon."

"What, Dawn, tell me all you feel," and she sank upon a seat and rested her face on her hand.

"I was looking over the drawings, and feeling very happy, when the room grew dark and cold, so cold I was frightened. Then I heard something say, 'Fear not, Dawn,' and I laid my head down upon the

couch, and saw you standing in a damp, cold valley, on either side of which were beautiful green mountains, whose tops overlooked all the towns around. They were so steep that no one could climb them. While you stood there, a great cloud came directly over your head. It was full of rain, and it burst and flooded the whole valley. I feared you would be drowned; but you rose with the water, instead of its going over you, and when the tide was as high as the mountain, you stepped to its highest point, on the beautiful green grass, and sat down. Slowly the waters went down and left you on the mountain-top, where you could never have gone without the flood. Then I looked up, and the room was all full of sunshine just as it was before. I felt cold, and I heard the women go, and then-

"Then what, Dawn?"

"Then I came to you. The cloud is over you now, but the high green mountain is more lovely than the valley, and overlooks all the pleasant vales and hills around. Do you care if the clouds burst now, Miss Vernon?"

"No, child, I will stand firm and sure while the rain descends. O, Dawn, so justly named, come and soothe my brow, for it aches so hard."

The child passed her soft, white hands over the forehead of Miss Vernon, and the throbbing pain passed away under her magic touch.

The bell rang for dinner long before they were ready for the summons, but they soon took their places at the table, yet with little appetite for food.

"A poor compliment you pay my dinner," said Aunt Susan, as she came to remove the dishes, and prepare for dessert. "I suppose you are both lonely without Mr. Wyman. I, too, miss his pleasant face and smile to-day."

How Miss Vernon wished she had not spoken his name just then.

The form of dinner over, Miss Vernon and Dawn dressed themselves for their walk, knowing that they must start in good season, as it was a long way to the house, and they would need to rest a little before their return.

"I almost question, Dawn, if I should go to Miss Evans while this cloud is over me," remarked Miss Vernon, feeling as though she was seeking counsel from one her superior in wisdom, rather than addressing a mere child.

"Why, Miss Evans is just what you need to-day. She is as calm as the lovely lake on which we sailed last week."

"Well, I need her to-day; but should I carry my state to her?"

"Why, she is like a great stream that carries all lesser streams to the ocean of truth," said Dawn, in a voice not her own, and so deep and thrilling that it made her teacher start and gaze with new wonder upon the child.

"Then we will go this very minute, Dawn; and through the pleasant fields, that we may avoid the dusty road."

CHAPTER VI.

Miss Evans sat quietly reading, when a gentle ring at the door, which seemed to reach her heart rather than her ears, aroused her from an intensely interesting chapter; but she laid the book aside, and promptly answered the call.

Her face looked the welcome her heart gave them, as she asked Dawn and her teacher into her cool, airy room. It was one of those snug, homelike spots, made bright by touches of beauty. Here a vase of flowers, there a basket of work; books, pictures, every chair and footstool betokened the taste of the occupant, and the air of home sacredness that pervaded all, soon made Miss Vernon at ease.

"We could n't help coming," said Dawn, as Miss Evans removed her hat and mantle, and her glowing features confirmed the assertion.

"Just the kind of visitors I like, fresh and spontaneous. We shall have a nice time, I know, this lovely afternoon."

"Can I walk in your garden, Miss Evans?"

"Certainly. But are you not too tired, now?"

"O, no," and Dawn was out of sight the next instant.

"I have brought you a book, Miss Evans, which Mr. Wyman requested me to bring, myself."

"O, yes," she said, glancing at the title, "the one he promised to loan me so long ago. Is he away from home?"

"He left this morning."

"You must miss him very much."

"We do."

Miss Evans saw, with a woman's intuition, that something was weighing on the mind of her visitor, and kindly sought to divert her thoughts. The conversation brightened a little, yet it was apparent that Miss Vernon's interest flagged, and that her mind grew abstracted.

"I shall not relieve her, unless I probe the wound," said Miss Evans to herself, and she boldly ventured on grounds which her subtle penetration discovered to be the cause of her gloom.

"You find my friend, Mr. Wyman, an agreeable companion, I hope, Miss Vernon?"

"He has ever been so, and very kind and thoughtful."

"He is a true gentleman, and a man of honor, as well of refinement and noble character."

Miss Vernon breathed freer.

"You have made him very happy," resumed Miss Evans, "by consenting to remain with him and his daughter. They are both much attached to you."

A flush of pain she could not conceal passed over the face of the caller. "O, if I might but speak to you as I would," she said, almost fainting with emotion.

"Do tell me in words what you have already so plainly told me in your looks. Tell me freely the cause of the shadow that hangs over you."

In response to this appeal, Florence related the experience of the morning.

"I am not at all surprised at this," said Miss Evans, after the statement had been made, "for well I know the dark surmisings that the dwellers in this little village have worked up into imaginary evils. Sages would no doubt assert that all rumors have some degree of truth, however slight, for a foundation. This may be true; at least I will not deny that it is so, but the instigators of the cruel slanders in this case have nothing but ignorance upon which to base them. Hugh Wyman is what some might call eccentric. The fact is, he is so far beyond the majority of his fellow men that he stands alone, and is the cause of great clamor among those who do not know him. He expresses his views upon social questions freely but wisely. His opinions respecting the social relations that should exist between men and women, and their right to selfhood, are not his alone, but are held by the best minds in the world; and his home is often visited by men and women of the largest culture and ability, both as thinkers and writers. I do not wonder for a moment

that your equilibrium was disturbed by these shallow-brained women. And now before I advocate my friend's honesty and virtue farther, I will tell you, what no one save myself and he knows, of one of the women who called upon you this morning. It is your due, after what has occurred, and belongs to this moment. I believe in such moments it is right to raise the veil of the past. Listen:--

"A few years ago, one of that number who came to you, sought by every subterfuge and art, to gain the affections of Hugh Wyman. Intellectually, spiritually, in every way his inferior, of course he could not for a moment desire her society. Yet she sought him at all times, and when, at last, he told her in words what he had all along so forcibly expressed by his acts, that he had not even respect for her, and bade her cease her maneuverings, she turned upon him in slander; and even on his wedding day asserted that his fair Alice was a woman of no repute--abandoned by her friends. Nor is this all;-one year after the marriage of Hugh, she gave birth to a child; it was laid at night at his door, and he was charged with being its father."

"But was she married, then?"

"No. She subsequently went to a small village in N--, and married."

"Did the town people believe her story?"

"A few-but proofs of his innocence long since established the falsity of the charge, except in the minds of those who seem to delight only in that which dispoils the character of another."

"But his wife? did she too suffer with doubt?"

"Never. Not for a moment was her faith in her husband clouded."

"And this child must be the one they spoke of to deceive me."

"It is. I will go with you some day to see him, and if your eyes can detect the slightest resemblance to Hugh Wyman, I shall think you are gifted with more than second sight. I do not wish to weary you, Miss Vernon, but my friend's character is too sacred to me to be thus assailed, and I not use all my powers to make known the truth, and prove him innocent."

"I believe his views upon marriage are rather radical, are they not, Miss Evans?"

"They are. I join him fully in all his ideas, for long have I seen that our system needs thorough reformation, and that while the marriage bond is holy, too many have desecrated it. I believe some of the most inharmonious offspring are brought into the world, under the sanction of marriage-children diseased, mentally and physically; and worse than orphans. I do not say this to countenance licentiousness. Indeed, I know that licentiousness is not all

outside of wedlock. It is to purify and elevate the low, and not to give license to such, that earnest men and women are talking and writing to-day. I do not blame you, Miss Vernon, for wishing proof of Mr. Wyman's purity and honor. I like a mind that demands evidence. And now, tell me, have I scattered or broken the cloud that hung over you?"

"You have. I shall trust Mr. Wyman till I have some personal proof that he is not all I feel him to be."

"That is the true course to pursue, my friend. In that way alone you have your own life developed. If by word, look or deed he ever betrays your trust, I shall call my intuitions vain, and all my insight into human character mere idle conjecture."

"But I must go now, Miss Evans. I thank you much for the light which you have given me, and your sympathy, all of which I so much needed."

"Your position was indeed trying, but do you not feel that your character will be deeper and stronger for this disturbance?"

"I feel as though I had lived through a long period."

"I have one question to put to you, which you must answer from your soul's deep intuition, and not from your reason alone. Do you believe Hugh Wyman guilty of the crimes charged against him?"

"I do not."

There was no hesitation in the answer; their souls met on sympathetic ground, and those two women loved Hugh Wyman alike, with a pure sisterly affection.

CHAPTER VII.

There are pauses in every life; seasons of thought after outward experiences, when the soul questions, balances, and adjusts its emotions; weighs each act, condemns and justifies self in one breath, then throws itself hopefully into the future to await the incoming tide, whether of joy or sorrow it knows not.

In such a state Florence Vernon found herself a few days after her visit to Miss Evans. She thought when with her that no doubt could

ever shadow her heart again; but fears had crept over her, even though she desired to be firm.

"Shall I stay and trust his nature, or go away and take up my old life, and be again desolate and lonely? Which?" She kept asking this again and again to herself. "I have been so happy here; but, if I go, it must be before he returns. No! I will not. I will stay and brave the talk, and-"

"Miss Vernon, please come down, papa has come!

"O, why did he come so soon? How I dread to meet him," were the words that Florence found springing to her lips; but not hearing his voice, she thought that Dawn must have been only in jest.

She listened again. Yes, Mr. Wyman was talking to Dawn in the hall. She sat very still, and soon heard them both go into the garden; then all was still. Again alone, she tried to analyze her emotions, and see whether her deepest feeling was that of peace and rest, the same she felt when she first entered the home of Mr. Wyman. It was there, as it had been, but so agitated that the effort to ascertain its presence gave back no deep trust to her questioning heart. The bell rang for tea. She would gladly have stayed away, but could find no excuse, and after bathing her eyes, which were red and swollen, she went slowly down stairs.

"I suppose you are surprised, Florence, among the rest, at my unexpected presence. I did not myself expect to be at home so soon, but meeting one of the firm with whom my business was connected, I was but too glad to adjust it and return at once. I have felt very weary, too, since the first day I left home, as though some cloud was hanging over my home. My first thought was of Dawn, but her rosy, happy face soon put to flight the apprehensions I had for her; yet you, Florence, are not looking well; are you ill?"

"I am quite well, thank you."

He looked deeper than her words, and saw within a tumult of emotions. He did not notice her farther, but talked with Dawn during the remainder of the meal, and when they were through went alone to walk.

"He shuns me," she said, as she went into her room and sat down, sad and dejected, "what but wrong can make him appear so? But I will not leave it thus. I will know from him to-night whether these reports are true, and then if true, leave here forever. Happiness, like that I have experienced the past few months is too great to last."

He sat alone in the library; she rapped softly at his door.

"Come in," he said kindly, and rose to meet her as she entered.

She motioned him back to his seat. "Stay, do not rise," was all she

could say, and fell at his feet.

He lifted her gently, as a mother might have raised a weary child, and placed her beside him. Then, taking her hand, cold with excitement, in his own, said,--

"I knew, Florence, by my depression, that your grief called me home. Some slander has reached your ears. Is it not so?"

"It is. I have trusted and doubted, until I scarce know my own mind."

"Do you feel most at rest when you trust me?"

"I think-yes, I know I do. Forgive me," she continued, "if these shadows had not fallen so suddenly on my path, I never should for a moment have lost my trust in you. I have been shaken, convulsed, and scarce know my best thoughts."

"You have, indeed. I know not who have thus disturbed you, but may they never suffer as we both have, and more especially yourself. I say I know not, and yet my suspicions may not be entirely without foundation. And now remember, Florence, the moment you feel that I am not what your ideal of a friend and brother should be, that moment we had better part."

She started, and grew pale.

"I do not allude to the present, or to the scandal which has unnerved and disturbed your state; nor can I expect you who are learning to trust impressions rather than experiences, to feel otherwise than you have. It was natural. I only wonder that you did not go at once. Your remaining has shown me your worth, and a trait of character which I admire. Now that the ordeal is passed, I shall feel that you are my friend, even though slander, vile and dark, may be hurled against me, as it is possible, for I have a battle to fight for you, my friend, and all womankind. The rights of woman, which have been ignored, or thought but lightly of, I shall strongly advocate, as opportunity occurs. I shall be misunderstood, over and underrated in the contest, but for that I care not. I only am too impatient to see the day when your sex shall not marry for mere shelter, and when labor of all kinds shall be open for their heads and hands, with remuneration commensurate with their efforts. I am anxiously looking for the time when their right to vote shall be admitted them, not grudgingly, but freely and willingly given; for is not woman God's highest work, and his best gift to man? Now, if the shadows come again, in shape of scandal, think you, you can trust me?"

"I can. I do, and can never doubt again. Forgive the past. I was weak--"

"There is nothing to forgive," said Mr. Wyman, as he leaned over and

kissed her forehead.

The seal of brotherhood was set, and Hugh and Florence knew from that hour the bond which bound them, and that it was pure and spotless.

CHAPTER VIII.

Mrs. Deane sat rocking, and casting impatient glances at the little clock upon the mantle. The book which she had an hour previous been deeply interested in, lay closed upon her lap, while the nervous glancing of her eye towards the door, told that she was anxiously awaiting the arrival of some one. The clock struck ten, and rising from her seat, she went to the window, and drawing the curtain aside, looked out on the soft summer night. It was one of those lovely evenings towards the close of the season, when the slightly chilled air reminds one of cosy firesides, and close companionship with those dearest to the heart. But her thoughts were not of a peaceful cast. She was alone, and jealous of him who had left her so. A moment later and the sound of footsteps was heard upon the piazza; a sound which in earlier years she had heard with thrills of pleasure. But to-night they only loosed the tension of long-pent passion, and selfish thoughts of neglect. She sank into a chair, and sat with the air of one deeply wronged, as her husband entered the room.

"What, up and waiting for me?" he said, going towards her, his face glowing with mental exhilaration.

She turned coldly from him, and took up her book. He drew it gently from her, saying,--

"Listen, Mabel, to me. I want to talk with you awhile. You can read when I am away."

"Yes, sir, I find ample opportunities for that," and she cast on him a look of keen rebuke.

"Don't, Mabel; listen to me."

"I am all attention; why do you not proceed?"

"Do you think I can talk while you are in such a frame of mind?"

"Why, what would you have me do? I am waiting for your words of wisdom, or, maybe, a lecture on the foibles of the sex in general, and myself in particular; proceed, it's quite a relief, I assure you, to hear a human voice after these lonely evenings, which seem interminable."

"Why, Mabel, what do you mean? I have not spent an evening away from you for nearly a year before this. My absence this evening has been purely accidental, although I have passed it very agreeably."

"And may I ask where you find such delightful entertainment, that kept you away till this late hour, for it is nearly midnight?"

"Yes. I have spent the evening with Miss Evans."

"That detestable strong-minded--"

"Mabel! I will not hear her spoken of in this manner."

"O, no indeed. All the men in L--are crazy after her society,--so refined, so progressive, so intelligent. I am sick of it all. I suppose you think we poor wives will submit to all this. No, no; I shall not, for one. You will spend your evenings at home with me. Howard Deane, you have no right to leave me for the society of any woman, as you have to-night."

Having thus expended her breath and wrath, she sank back into her chair and gave vent to her feelings in a flood of tears. To her limited sight, she was an injured woman. How different would she have felt could she have kindly listened to the words which he was longing to speak to her.

"O, Mabel, if you would only listen to me. To-night I have heard such glorious thoughts that my whole being longed to share them with you. Thoughts that would make any man or woman live a nobler and better life. O, Mabel, be my helpmate. Do not turn from one who loves you."

"A strange way to manifest your love for me, spending your hours with other women,--"

"Stop, Mabel. I will, at least, have myself heard, and be free to hear the thoughts of other women, as well as those of men. I begin to believe that the words of Hugh Wyman are too true, 'marriage, in nine cases out of ten, is a bondage--a yoke of tyranny, keeping two souls fretting and wearing each other's lives away.'"

He stopped, fearful that he had gone too far, and looked earnestly on the cold features of his wife. Forgive him, reader, he could not help comparing her then with Miss Evans, the latter so calm, earnest, and deep in her love for humanity and progressive life.

He stepped close to her side, and taking her hand as tenderly as a

lover might, said,--

"Mabel, forgive me; I was excited, and said too much. I love you, as you well know, as I love no other woman, but I must have the innocent freedom of enjoying a friend's society, even though that friend be a woman.

"O, certainly, Mr. Deane. I would not for a moment debar you from social pleasures. I see I am not congenial, and do not attract you. Perhaps Miss Evans is your soul-affinity; if so, I beg you not to let me stand in your way. I can go to my father's, any day."

"Mabel!" It was all he could utter, and went out of the room.

Alone, and left to her own reflections, she became more calm. A tear of real penitence for her hasty words, stole down her cheek. "I will go and tell Howard I am sorry for my unkind remarks," she said, as she brushed it from her face, and she rose to do so. At that moment a short, quick ring of the doorbell shook away the resolve, and she trembled with fear, unable to answer the summons.

How thankful she felt to hear her husband's firm, manly step in the hall, and then his voice, low and rich as ever, welcoming her own parents. Why were they here? and what could have happened? were the questions which came to her mind, as her mother rushed into the room, followed by her father, with a carpet-bag and sundry packages.

"We have given you a surprise this time, I guess, Mabel," he said, kissing her as tenderly as he used to when she sat upon his knee, and listened to almost endless stories of his own making.

"But why is it that you are so late?" she asked, anxiously.

"The cars were delayed three hours by an accident, so instead of arriving in good time, we have come in rather out of order, but not unwelcome, Mabel, I know."

He did not see her face, or he might have feared that the welcome was not as warm as usual. She answered quickly:

"Why, yes, father, you and mother are welcome at any time of day or night," and yet she wished she was alone with Howard that moment.

"I told father," said her mother, looking at the clock, "that it was so late we had better go to a hotel, but he would come, saying, Howard would not mind getting up to give the old folks a welcome."

"We should have been very sorry to have had you done so. O, here comes Howard," and the husband of Mabel entered, looking very pale.

"Late hours don't agree with you, my son. What has kept you up so long?"

"Some winged messenger, I suspect, knowing you were coming; but you must be weary," and he offered the new-comers refreshments from the side board. Mabel, however, had flown to the dining-room and prepared them something more substantial in the way of cold meats, and a cup of tea, which she made in an incredibly short space of time.

It was a relief when she had shown them to their room. She went below and sat alone, hoping Howard would come to her. He had gone into his study, where he sometimes passed a greater part of the night in writing, for he was a lawyer by profession, being a man of more than average abilities, his services were sought for many miles around. Mabel waited, but he came not, and being unable longer to bear delay, she sought him in his retreat.

"Mabel, you ought to be in bed; its now half past one. You will scarce be able to entertain your father and mother, I fear, if you do not go now," and he resumed his writing.

"So cold! Well, I can live without his love," she said to herself, and turned to leave the room. He glanced at her lithe form, and all the lover-like feelings of early years came over him. He longed to fold her once more to his heart, and rose to follow her.

"Good night, sir," came from her lips in icy tones, and he returned to his labors, chilled, heart-sick and weary, where we will leave him and turn back one chapter to the cause of all this misconception, and see if we find in it aught but words of truth, and principles which should be understood by all.

Like too many women, Mrs. Deane had striven to keep her husband wholly to herself. She could not realize that one who is determined in her own way and time to get the whole, may not get even a part. She wanted him entirely for herself, ignorant of the fact, or if knowing, rebellious against it, that his being would flow to herself after a temporary receding, far richer in love. Alas, how many women are dwarfing noble men, and cheating themselves out of the highest enjoyments of life.

Of Miss Evans she knew nothing, save by report. Like the many, she allowed her prejudices to control her, and avoided all opportunities of making the acquaintance of a worthy woman, one who was fast becoming life and light to minds of a high order. The thoughts which had thrilled the heart and soul of her husband we will record for the benefit of those who may be struggling for light.

Howard Deane walked to the village post office that evening with no other thought than of receiving his papers and returning home. While there, he met Hugh Wyman, who requested him, as it was on his way, to take a magazine to Miss Evans. He did not hesitate to grant the request of his friend. Reaching her home he found her alone, and common courtesies led them into conversation. This at first touched only upon daily events, but soon it led into deeper channels, and

their individual thoughts were brought out upon religious subjects, each receiving suggestions from the standpoint of the other.

"I am impatient, I know," said Miss Evans, as the subject warmed and brightened under the glow of words, "to see the day when my long cherished ideas will be wrought into actual life. Will it not be grand when religion shall no longer be an abstract, soulless science, a musty theology, but a living, vital truth, lived and acted, not merely professed and preached; when the human family shall be united in one bond, and man love to do his brother good; when he who is strong, shall care for him who is weak; when daily deeds of kindness shall be accepted as true worship; when the golden rule shall be the only creed of mankind, and woman shall throw upon her erring sisters the blessed veil of charity. The world is full of need to-day. It never so much needed the labor of every earnest man and woman as now. All can work for its advancement; some speak, some write, others act, and thus unitedly aid in ushering in the millenium of humanity. Religion is to me only a daily life of goodness. The church has little but form. We want vital christianity flowing from heart to heart; and prayers, not at stated times, but when souls mount heavenward, whether in words or deeds, to be recognized as true worship. When our churches shall be adorned by art; when the theatre, now so little understood, is employed as a lever of moral power, equal if not greater than the church, for reaching the heart, and enriching the intellect; when these two forces approach each other, then shall we have a real church and true worship. Art in every form must be acknowledged as the great mediator between God and man, and when this is done we shall have a completeness in our worship, which is little dreamed of now. To my mind, the drama appears as the great instructor of the coming time--greater than the church, more potent, hence more effectual, and will, I think, at some day occupy its place. I have talked long, but the fullness of the theme must be my excuse."

"I am but too glad to hear expressions of such thoughts from any one. I have been for a long time reaching for something more satisfactory than I have received. The forms of worship have long been dull and void of life to me."

"Too long have our minds been lumbered with doctrines, instead of principles," said Miss Evans, her face glowing with earnest thought, "but the signs of the times are now glorious. Men will no longer feed on husks and dry bones. The call is every day for light, more light, and theories are fast giving place to human experiences. A strong current of individual life, too, is setting in, which inspires every speaker and writer with high and noble thoughts, and they are forced to give bread and not stones to the multitude. We shall, I hope, Mr. Deane, live to see the coming of the new day, for surely we have little but darkness now, and yet all the light we could use, I suppose, else it would have come before."

"I trust we shall, and if men and women are true to the light they have, the day will soon be here. But, really, Miss Evans," he said,

looking at his watch, "t is almost ten o'clock; how rapidly the moments have flown."

"I lose all idea of time when I feel the beating and pulsing of a human soul," responded Miss Evans. "I hope you will come again and bring your wife; I only know her by features; I really wish to know her through her thoughts."

"I will, I thank you," and he left, full to overflowing, impatient to impart to his wife the thoughts of an earnest soul. We have met him in his home, and know the result,--the sharp reverse side of most of life's best experiences.

CHAPTER IX.

Mrs. Deane found the hours drag heavily while her parents remained. She was not like her former self, and they could not but notice the change.

It was the first time in their married life that she wished them at home. One hour alone with her husband would have set all right; but there were none, for business seemed to press in from all quarters, and every moment of his time, far into the night, was occupied in writing.

They saw nothing of each other save in the presence of their parents, for Mr. Deane only snatched a few hours' sleep at early dawn, and awoke just in time to prepare for breakfast. They were estranged, and circumstances to embitter the sad state of affairs seemed to daily multiply.

The fourth evening after the arrival, there was a slight pause in the pressure of his business, but feeling no inclination to join the family, knowing that Mabel and himself would be in feelings miles apart, he called again upon Miss Evans.

To his relief he found her alone, for he longed for another communion with a mind so comprehensive, and a soul so pure as her own. She noticed the look of sadness on his face, and was glad her own heart was light and her soul strong in trust, that she might administer to him.

Had he come last night, she said to herself, how little could I have done for him, for my own soul was dark with grief, my lips dumb. His

face bore a more buoyant look as her words of hope and thoughtful sayings appealed to his good judgment, and before long it glowed with joy like her own. He forgot the cloud that had arisen over himself and Mabel; forgot her words that so wounded his soul; and only her best and true self was mirrored on his heart, as he listened to the vital truths which flowed from the lips of the noble woman in whose presence he sat.

"Our conversation the other night," he said, "awakened such new emotions, or rather aroused feelings which were dormant, that I could not resist the strong impulse I felt to call on you again and renew our conversation."

"I am very glad you have come, for it does my soul good to see others interested in these newly-developed views, and recognizing the great needs of humanity, and the imperative demands of our natures."

"I have felt," remarked Mr. Deane, "for a long time that the church, the subject of our last conversation, needs more life; that it must open its doors to all rays of light, and not longer admit only a few, and that those doors must be broad enough and high enough, that whatever is needed for the advancement of mankind may enter therein, come from whence it may, and called by whatever name it may be. In a word, the church must go on in advance of the people, or at least with them, else it will be left behind and looked upon as a worn out and useless institution."

"I am glad to hear you express your thoughts thus, and hope you will give them as freely at all times, for too many who entertain these views do not speak them, standing in fear of what their friends or the church may say or do. Of such there are tens of thousands. Give them utterance. Every honest man and woman should, and thus aid in hastening on the day of true life and perfect liberty. While I value associative effort, I would not for a moment lose sight of individual thinking and acting. We do not have enough of it. The church has much to adopt to bring it into a healthy condition. To-day it ignores many valuable truths which retired individuals hold, while it feeds its hearers on husks. Finding better food for their souls outside, they go, and cannot return, because the truths they hold would not be accepted."

"We have made rapid advances in art and science, Miss Evans, but the church has lagged behind, until at length we find that more christianity is found outside than inside its walls."

"True. The best men and women I have ever known, have never sat at the table of the Lord, so called, have never broken the bread and drank the wine, yet their souls have tasted life-everlasting when they have given in His name food to the hungry and clothing to the naked. Each soul is a temple and each heart a shrine. The only thing the church can do to-day is, to reach forth and take its life from the world. All the accessions of art must be unfolded, if she would

keep alive. Fortify it with these things, and we shall not see, as we do now, in every town and city even, the whole burden of its support resting on one or two individuals. If it has life enough it will stand; if it refuse light, such persons only retard its progress, although strictly conscientious in their position. I think one of its greatest errors is in keeping one pastor too long. How can the people be fed, and draw life from one fount alone?"

"True," he said, "and is not that view applicable to our social and domestic as well as to our religious state? Can we draw life always from one person?"

"No; nor was it ever intended that men and women should so exhaust each other. The marriage law is too arbitrary; it allows no scope for individual action, and yet the subject is so delicate, so intricate, that none but the keenest and nicest balanced minds dare attempt to criticise, much less improve it. The misconstructions of a person's motives are so great that many who see its errors, tremble and fear to speak of them. But if we are to bring any good to the covenant, so sacred in its offices, we must point out its defects and seek to remedy them, and I sometimes think it will be my mission to help it to higher states. Although such a task would be far from enviable, I will willingly give my thoughts to those who are struggling, at the risk of being misunderstood nine times in ten, as I probably shall be."

"Then please give me your best thoughts, Miss Evans, for I need all the light I can get, not only for myself, but for others."

"I am but a scholar, like yourself, Mr. Deane, and I sometimes think that all I may hope to do will be but to lift the burden an instant from the pilgrim's shoulder, that deeper breath may be taken for the long and often dreary journey."

A sharp ring of the door-bell interrupted further conversation, and Mr. Deane, bowing to the intruder, as such she seemed at that moment to be, bade Miss Evans good evening, and departed.

The caller was a gossiping woman, who kept many domestic fires alive with her fuel of scandalous reports.

"Dear me, Miss Evans," she said, as soon as comfortably seated, "was n't that Mr. Deane? Yes, I thought so; but my eye-sight 'aint over good, and then he looked so sad-like; maybe he 'aint well," and she looked inquiringly to Miss Evans, who replied,--

"I think he is in his usual health; a little worn, perhaps, with business. How is your family, Mrs. Turner?"

"O, tol'able, thank ye. But Mr. Deane did n't say anything, did he, about his folks?"

"His folks? What do you mean, Mrs. Turner?"

"Law me, I might as well tell as not, now I've said what I have. Why you see Miss Moses who nusses Mrs. Baker, was up ter Mrs. Brown's last night, and Mrs. Deane's hired gal was there, and she told Mrs. Brown's man that Mr. Deane and his wife had some pretty hard words together, and that her folks-her father and mother-was 'goin ter take her home."

"Mrs. Turner, I have no interest in this gossip; we will change the subject if you please."

"Lor, don't be 'fended; I only-I mean I meant no harm."

"You may not; but this idle habit of retailing the sayings of others, is worse than folly. It's a great wrong to yourself and the individuals spoken of."

"Well, I did n't think to have such a lectur'," said the woman, affecting a feeling of good nature, "I say as I said afore, I meant no harm. I like Mr. and Mrs. Deane very much, and thought it was too bad for such things to be said."

"Is marm here?" inquired a coarse voice at the door, and a red, chubby face was thrust in the narrow opening.

"Why, Josiah Turner, I told you ter go ter bed an hour ago. Well, I must go, Miss Evans. I 'spose my boy won't go without me," and taking her son by the hand, she departed.

"A storm upon their domestic horizon, I fear, is coming, if not already there," said Miss Evans, setting down and resting her head upon her hands. "I wish he had not come. Something may be charged to me-but why should I fear. I have said simply what I felt was right. I must expect to encounter many storms in this voyage whose haven of peace is-where? None knoweth."

She fastened her door, and after lifting her heart in prayer for guidance, retired.

Mr. Deane found his wife alone when he returned, and one could have seen by his manner how glad he was to find her so.

"It seems a month, Mabel, since I have seen you alone."

She only remarked that she feared her parents felt his absence from home.

"I do think, Howard," she continued, "that you could give us a little of your time. It is due to my parents. It must seem to them that you willingly absent yourself, and it is hard for me to convince them to the contrary."

"I am sorry that any such impression should have worked its way into

their minds. They ought to know that it is quite a sacrifice for me to devote myself so closely to business. I hope, Mabel, you are wrongly impressed as regards them, and it may be that your own state has more to do with it than theirs. This is the first evening I have had to myself since they have been here."

"And why was this not spent at home?"

"Because I cannot assume to be what I am not, and you know I am not at rest; that our harmony is disturbed. Could I have seen you alone, I should have been at home before this."

"You have sought society, I suppose, more congenial?"

"Mabel, be careful. You may so unnerve me that I may say much that I shall be sorry for."

"Howard?"

"Well, Mabel."

"I think I shall return with father and mother. They will go home day after to-morrow."

He did not raise his eyes, nor appear in the least anxious to detain her, but merely said:

"Where are they this evening?"

"At Mrs. Norton's. They went to tea. I felt too ill to accompany them."

"Are you very ill, Mabel?"

"I feel far from well, and yet it does not seem to be from physical indisposition. It is something deeper."

"True, my poor wife, we have become estranged; and what has caused it?"

She looked thoughtfully at him a moment, but no answer came from her lips.

"I think we had better part awhile. It will do us both good."

She started, scarce expecting such a remark from him.

"Then my presence has, indeed, become irksome to you?" Her tone and manner implied more than she cared to display.

"You know better than that, Mabel; but I-we both are sadly out of harmony; perhaps have exhausted each other. Let us part, and each find ourselves. We shall be brighter and happier when we come

together, Mabel; shall we not?" and he laid his hand tenderly on her head.

O, why cannot two at least see things in their true light? Why was it that she remained so blind to the real state of affairs? Either ignorance or wilfulness kept her from the light, and coldly bidding him good night, she left the room.

The next day was indeed gloomy. Mabel's parents had become acquainted, not with the facts, but with a distorted view of the case, and in their eyes she was a greatly abused woman. It was no longer any use for her husband to exert himself for their happiness, the poison of prejudice had entered their minds, and tintured every thought.

It was a painful parting. Misconception on one side, and deep suffering with pride, upon the other. No lighting of the eyes, no pressure of the hand, no warm good-bye, to keep his heart alive while she was away.

He stood, after the cars had left, deeply pondering the strange affair, until the crowd jostled him, and brought him back to the external world, with its toil, its sounds of mirth, and its varied forms of life.

What a break in his usual peaceful life; what a void he found in his soul when he entered the silent home. There was no lingering atmosphere of love about the rooms; everything was put away out of sight. The order was painful, and he left to seek companionship if not sympathy.

CHAPTER X.

"What is it like, Dawn?"

"Like a great Soul that has absorbed a million lives into its own, and cannot rest, it is so full of joy and sadness," and she fixed her gaze more intently on the foam-crested waves.

It was the first time she had seen the ocean, and her father's keen enjoyment watching her enraptured, wondering gaze, afforded Miss Vernon another source of pleasure, aside from the wide expanse of beauty, which stretched from shore to horizon.

The three, according to Mr. Wyman's promise, had come to enjoy the pleasures and beauties of the seaside for a few weeks, as well as to see the different phases of human character which were daily thronging there.

It was intensely interesting to Miss Vernon to watch the child's eager interest in this glorious display of nature, and her strange insight into the character of the people with whom they were in daily contact.

There was one faint, gentle girl, about twenty years of age, who walked every evening alone, and whom Miss Vernon watched with great interest.

"I like her, too," said Dawn, coming close to her teacher one evening, as she walked up and down on the beach.

"Who? and how do you know I like her."

"Why, the lady there, walking in front of us. I feel you like her."

"I am glad you do, Dawn. And now tell me why you love her."

"I love her because she is white."

"You mean that she is pure. I think she is."

"Yes. I mean that and something else."

"What?"

"In one of my lessons, you told me, that some objects were white, because they absorbed none of the rays, but reflected all."

"You must explain your singular application-or in plain words, tell me how she reflects all, and takes none."

"Why, because she don't take the life from people, but gives to them."

"You know just what I mean-she throws it back to themselves purified by her light." And the child's face was not her own, another's shone through it.

"Very good, Dawn, I hope we shall sometime know this pure young lady, and receive a brightness from her," said Miss Vernon, talking more to herself than the strange child who was dancing at that moment in time to the waves.

"According to your scientific symbol, I suppose we shall see some black people here before we go," she said laughingly to the child.

"Yes, there are plenty of those everywhere. They take all the light,

and give none out. But see, Miss Vernon, the lady is sitting on a rock and weeping, may I go to her?"

"Would it not be an intrusion?"

"Yes, sometimes, but not now. May I go? Papa would let me, I think."

"You must ask him. I had rather not give you such a liberty."

"Then I will," and she flew at the top of her speed to the bank where he was sitting.

"May I go and see that lady out on the rock, papa?"

"Why? Do you know her?"

No, but I must go," and as she spoke Dawn's eyes had that strange look which betokened an inner vision.

"Yes, daughter, go," was his answer, and she bounded from his side, and was close to the weeping stranger, in an instant.

Her father watched her with the deepest interest, and almost wished himself within hearing.

She did not approach the stranger quietly, but with one bound sprang and threw her arms around her neck, saying in a voice deeper and stronger than her own:

"Pearl, I am here. Weep no more!"

The young girl thrilled, but not with terror, for to her such things were of frequent occurrence. Yet the proof to her now of the presence of the unseen was of such a positive nature, more tangible than she had felt for months, that all her accumulated doubts gave way, and the pure waters of faith flowed over her soul.

Here, among strangers, where none knew her name, or her grief, had the voice of her loved one spoken. Why should she doubt? Why should thousands, who have every day a similar experience?

She rose from her position, and taking the hand of the child, which thrilled strangely to her touch, walked towards the house.

"Do you love the sea?" she asked of the little stranger.

"O, ever so much. I mean to ask papa to live here forever," and she looked enthusiastically towards the receding waves.

"Do you live here?" asked Dawn.

"No; my home is far away. I come here to rest."

"Was that what made you weep? Was you weary?"

"Yes, dear. My soul is very weary at times."

"Is the sea weary when it moans?" and she looked wonderingly over the wide expanse of changing waves.

"I think it is; but I must leave you now; I see your friends are looking for you."

But Dawn would not let her pass on. She held her hand tighter, and said:

"This is my papa, and this is my teacher."

"I hope my child has not annoyed you, Miss," said Mr. Wyman, as he gazed on the face of the beautiful stranger before them.

"Far from it, sir. She has comforted me. Children, under ordinary circumstances, are ever welcome, but when they bring proof—"

She stopped, fearful that she might not be understood.

"I comprehend it, Miss. I saw another life than her own in her eyes, else I should not have permitted her to have gone to you."

"I thank you both," said the gentle girl, and bowing gracefully, she went towards the house.

"Is she not white, Miss Vernon?" asked Dawn, exultingly, when the stranger was out of hearing.

Yes, she is beautiful and pure."

"I hope she was comforted, for her face has a look of sorrow, deeper than we often see on one so young," remarked Mr. Wyman, who had been enlightened by Miss Vernon on Dawn's strange application of soul-science.

"Yes, she was, papa. Some one in the air made me speak and call her name. It's 'Pearl'; is n't it pretty? O, see those clouds, papa," she cried, with thrilling ecstasy; "I hope they will look just like that when I die."

"You are weary now, darling; we must go in," said her father, watching with jealous eyes the snow-white and crimson clouds which lay on the horizon, just above the foaming waves.

"There are some people here from L--," said Miss Vernon, as she and Mr. Wyman sat together on the piazza the next morning, watching the changing sea.

"Ah, who are they; any of our friends?"

"I have never seen them at your house. Two ladies,--a Mrs. Foster and sister. Do you know them?"

"I know that there are such people in L--. When did they arrive? I have not seen them."

"Last evening; but you do not look particularly pleased. Will they disturb you?"

"I do not mean they shall, although they are busybodies, and know every one's affairs better than their own."

"So I judged by their conversation last evening, which I could not but overhear, as they talked so loud, their room being next to mine, and their door open."

"Of whom were they speaking?"

"Of a Mr. and Mrs. Deane. I think I have heard you allude to them."

"I have; nice good people too. As usual, I suppose they were charging them with all sorts of foibles and misdemeanors."

"I heard one of them assert that Mr. and Mrs. Deane had parted, and that she had gone to live with her parents."

"It cannot be! Howard Deane is too just and honorable for anything of that nature; but if they have, there are good reasons for it. I think I will write him this very morning, and urge him to come and bring his wife to this beautiful spot for a few days. Will you lend me your folio, Florence? Mine is up two flights of stairs, and I would really like to be waited on this morning."

She flew to her room, and returned and placed it before him, and then went in search of Dawn.

Selecting a delicate sheet from its orderly arranged contents he commenced,--

"My Dear Friend Howard.

"Come and spend a few days in this loveliest of--"

At this point a strong hand was laid on his shoulder, and another placed over his eyes.

"I am here;" said a well-known voice, "so throw aside pen and paper. We will commence in a better way."

"Why? when? where did you come from, and how came you to select this place?"

"I came this morning; arrived ten minutes ago from L--. Did not 'select' this place; the place drew me here. Now I have answered all your interrogatories, may I ask you how long you have been here, and why you did not let me know you were coming?"

"Two days only. I should have told you, but did not suppose you could leave for a moment, knowing the pressure of your business. But how is your wife? She is here of course?"

His averted face did not reveal the look of pain which passed over it, as he replied:

"She is not well, and went home with her mother."

"So you was lonely and betook yourself to this scene of life to pass the hours away. You could not have chosen a better place. I hope the period of your stay here is not limited to a few days."

"Instead of that it is indefinite."

The tone of his voice was too sad to be mistaken, and Mr. Wyman began to think that there might be some truth in the rumor which Florence had heard.

He glanced at Mr. Deane's face, and read all he had failed to see when he first met him.

"I hope nothing has occurred to mar your pleasure while here; at least nothing but what the waves will wash away?"

"The sea is a good place for the soul-weary, as well as for the light of heart. I cannot, however, leave my burden here. I am, indeed, very sad, Hugh. Are you much engaged? If not, we will take a walk together," he said, in tones which plainly implied a need of a companion like Mr. Wyman.

"I have nothing to do, now you have arrived and saved me the laborious effort of writing to you."

"Then you wished me here?"

"I did. My thoughts went out to you this morning. I felt that you needed a change."

"I do indeed;" and they walked together for awhile, then sat beneath the shade of a tree, whose long outstretched branches seemed to wave benedictions on their heads.

"I need change, but human sympathy most. Mabel has gone from me. It is not a corporal separation only, but one of soul and heart."

"Mabel gone! Is it, indeed, true? But the separation cannot last; she will surely return to your love and protection. Howard, I am

glad you are here. Some unseen power must have brought you to this place, where you can unburden your grief, and take better and clearer views of the case."

"Then you think she will come again to me?"

"Certainly; and you will both be stronger for the temporary separation."

"I could bear it better were I not so sensitive to the opinion of the world."

"You must rise above that. There is no growth to him who, seeking the new, fears to lose his grasp on the old. These backward glances retard the pilgrim on his way. Do what you feel to be right, and care for no man's words or opinions."

"I wish I had your strength, Hugh."

"I think you were sent here to me to be strengthened. God's hand is in the cloud as well as the sunshine, and I know He will work good from the seeming evil that encompasses you."

"Your words cause me at least to hope."

"This separation will work good for both of you."

"I felt myself, when I found my love doubted and my truthfulness questioned, that it would be best for us."

"Then you favored it?"

"I did."

"I am glad it was so. You will each have an opportunity to know yourselves, and how much you are to each other. When together, words take the place of thoughts, while absence ever kindles the flame of holy love, and by its light we see our own short-comings, and our companion's virtues. Were I you, I should look on this as one of the greatest opportunities of my life to test my heart's true feelings towards one whose affection had grown cold, or rather whose understanding had become clouded; for I doubt not her heart is as warm as when you led her to the altar. Like yonder receding wave, her love will return to you again, while to her restless soul you must be as firm as this rocky coast."

"Woman's love," he continued, "is stronger, mightier than man's. It is no argument against their devotion that they are changeable. So is this ocean. Each hour a different hue comes upon its surface, but the depth is there. Thus is woman's soul full of varied emotions; the surface play is sometimes dark, at others reflecting the blue of the heavens above. Yes, they are deeper, higher than ourselves, and every day's experience attests to the fact of their superior

delicacy and nicer perceptions. Their keen insight into daily matters, their quick sense of everything pertaining to religious and social life, are to me proofs of their fine qualities."

"But their inconsistency at times wars with your assertions."

"No; it is sterner stuff that reasons most; they are nicer in their perceptions, and feel instinctively their way into questions over which we work and solve alone by long reasoning."

"I believe it is so."

"Then you have advanced one step. We cannot appreciate woman too highly. That many do foolish things is no proof that many are not wise and good, bearing crosses day after day which would make you and I ready to lie down and die-they ever do great things, either good or bad, and men, I hope, will some day place her image next to his maker's, and look upon it as to him the holiest and highest on earth-the best gift of God."

"Why, Hugh, you are wild upon this subject."

"I am awake, and hope I shall never slumber."

"Your words have given me rest, and stirred my best emotions. I will write to Mabel to-night. But yesterday and I felt that all women were as fickle as these waters. I am changed, and your remarks have caused me to think differently."

"I have not changed your mind, I have only brought some of your better feelings to the surface."

"And what is that but change?"

"It may be, that it is. Do you not see that something mightier than yourself brought you here, where your morbid feelings will pass away,--though I do not wonder that you felt as you did, neither can I blame you. The human soul has many sides, and turns slowly to the light."

"If I had your penetration, I could bear the discords of life."

"We must learn not only to bear them, but to gather wisdom from their teachings. If we cannot grow under to-day's trial, we surely cannot under to-morrow's."

"I begin to feel that we shall both be better for this estrangement."

"You will, and come together, on a higher plane. Married people live in such close relations that each becomes absorbed by the other, and then having nothing fresh to give, what was once attraction becomes repulsion. I see these things so plainly myself that the criticism,

and may be, censure of a multitude, jealous of personal freedom, affects me no more than the passing breeze. I know that if I stand upon a mount and behold a beautiful scene beyond, that it is there, although the people below may declare with positiveness that it is not. A man knows nothing of the value of his wife who sees not other women and learns their thoughts."

"True. I have felt for a long time that I needed a fresh mind with which to hold converse, and my seeking one, although accidental, has brought about this state of things."

"And that person?"

"Was Miss Evans."

"I remember; and the evening, I asked you to call and leave the magazine. Little did I think of such a result, which I should regret, perhaps, did I not fully believe that all things are ordered and arranged for our best good. Long and prayerfully I have studied this question, so vital and so closely allied to our best interests. I could not gleam even a ray of truth did I not live above the crowd and fearlessly pursue my own way. I see no escape from our thralldom, but through soul expanse, and this is produced only through soul liberty. I loved my Alice most when I was learning her through others; I am still learning and loving her each day, through my child and our friend Miss Vernon. With all our laws, we have and ever have had haunts of vice. Will the emancipation of soul increase their number? I think not. If men and women can be brought together on loftier planes we shall not have these excrescences. The sexes need to be purely blended; they will approach each other, and it is for society to say how. Block up harmless social avenues and we shall have broad roads to destruction. I know husbands and wives who are consuming, instead of refreshing each other's lives. Yes, Howard, this is your great opportunity to take your position and draw your wife up to it. Life will be a new thing to you, and all of us who can accept these truths. Our present forms and ceremonies hold us apart, and there is scarcely a ripple of spontaneity upon life's surface. The highest hours, and those most productive of good, are when two souls converse and reflect each other's innermost states."

CHAPTER XI.

It was not by words that they knew each other, but when their eyes

met each felt that the other had passed some ordeal which made their souls akin.

The stranger to whom Miss Vernon had been so drawn, met her on the beach the next morning, and asked her to walk with her.

"I would like to tell you," she said, "of my strange experience last night; perhaps these things are not new to you," and she went on in a confiding tone at Miss Vernon's visible look of deep interest;--

"I was weeping, as you may have noticed, when your strange and lovely pupil came to me,--weeping for the loss of one to whom I was betrothed. No mortal save myself knew the name which he gave me on the day of our engagement. It was 'Pearl.' My own name is Edith Weston. Judge of my emotion and surprise, when that child--a total stranger--came and spake my name in his exact tones. I have had other tests of spirit presences as clear and as positive, but none that ever thrilled me like this. Do you wonder that I already love that child with a strange, deep yearning?"

"I do not. I have myself had proof through her that our dear departed linger around, and are cognizant of our sorrows as well as our joys."

"Perhaps you too have loved."

"Yes; but not like yourself. My mother's love is the only love I have known."

"And you are an orphan like myself?"

"I am."

"That is what drew us together. And may I know your name?"

"Florence Vernon. And I was attracted to you the first time I saw you."

"I cannot tell you how glad I am to experience these proofs of human ties. It is a pleasure to me to think that wherever we go we shall meet some one who loves us. I am a dependent character, as you no doubt have perceived. I need the assurance and support of stronger minds even when I see my own way clear. Some there are who can see and go forth. I need to be led."

"I hope you are fortunate enough to have some stronger mind about you. We are not all alike, and the vine nature must have something upon which it may cling and find support, or otherwise it will trail in the dust."

"I am not thus fortunate. I have no one on whom to lean, or to whom I can look for guidance. Shall you remain long here?" she asked, fearing she had spoken too freely of herself.

"We shall stay until we have received all that this atmosphere and these scenes can supply us with. It will then be our duty to go."

"I like that. I must go away very soon to join my aunt who is obliged to remain among the mountains, as the sea air does not agree with her. But look, Miss Vernon, here comes Mr. Wyman and another gentleman!" and she seemed greatly disappointed at the interruption.

"Miss Weston, Mr. Deane," said Florence, introducing them, and the next instant she watched with earnest gaze the look of admiration which he gave the timid girl. It was not a bold or intrusive look, but such an one as a man might have bestowed were he suddenly ushered into the presence of his highest conception of female worth and loveliness.

Every line of his features betokened the keenest admiration, while her glance was far over the sea. Hugh saw the look, too, and was glad.

Miss Vernon trembled, she knew not why. She wished that he had not come to the sea-shore, and that the beautiful stranger was all her own.

The four walked together on the beach, until the heat of the day, and then Miss Weston withdrew.

"The finest face I ever saw," said Mr. Deane, watching her figure till she was out of sight, "and as lovely in soul as in form and features, I perceive." Then turning to Miss Vernon, he said:

"I see you harmonize. I am really glad it is so, for you can help each other very much."

Mr. Deane dropped the conversation, and assumed an air of abstraction, his gaze fixed on the blue waves-his thoughts none knew where.

Hugh and Florence walked to the house and seated themselves in the shade, within view of the sea. Then he told her in his clear, brief way, of what had transpired between Mr. Deane and his wife, with the remark that it was far better she should be informed of the true state of affairs, and thus be guarded against the evil of false reports.

"I saw your look of concern when he met Miss Weston-"

She looked wonderingly in his face.

"You feared for him, and her then. That was natural. I see beyond, and that no harm will come from any attachment that may arise. I hope to see them often together."

"Mr. Wyman, if I did not know you, I should sometimes fear your doctrines."

"I have no doctrines."

"Well, theories then."

"No theories either. I follow nature, and leave her to perfect all things. Sometimes you think I am not sufficiently active; that I sit an idle looker on."

"What! do you know my every thought--everything that passes through my mind?" she asked, a little agitated.

"Nearly all, or rather that which goes with your states of progression."

She was vexed a little, but as the lesser ever turns to the greater, the earth to the sun for light,--so she, despite difference of temperament and mental expansion, was inclined to rest on his judgment.

"This pure girl will give him a deeper faith in woman, unconsciously to herself, and he will become a better man; therefore fear not when you see them together, that he will lose his love for his wife. Yes, she will do him good, as you, Florence, are every day benefiting me."

"Do I? Do I make you better?" she asked in a quick, nervous way; and her soul flooded her soft, brown eyes.

"You do, Florence, and make me stronger every day; while your deepening womanhood is my daily enjoyment. You give me an opportunity to know myself, and that there are many holy relations between men and women beside the conjugal."

Mrs. Foster lost no time in informing the people of L--of the movements of Mr. Deane. She well knew there were persons who would circulate the report, and that it would finally reach his wife, even though she was several miles away. The report was, that Mr. Deane had brought a young lady to the sea-shore, and was seen walking with her every day and evening, and that they both were greatly enamoured with each other.

Strange to say, Mrs. Deane, weary and sad, left her parents and returned to her home just before her husband's letter reached its destination, and just in time to hear the narration of his strange conduct.

Howard gone, no one knew where, save from the vague and scandalous report of a few busy tongues; no letter telling where he was, and her soul sank, and all its good resolves faded away. When she left her parents that morning, she fully resolved to meet him with all

the love of her heart, for she had found that love beneath the rubbish of doubt and jealousy that had for a time concealed it. It was not strange, therefore, that all the fond trust died out when she realized that he had gone, and the bitter waters returned stronger and deeper over her hope.

Shall we ever reach a world where we shall not have to plod through so much doubt and misgiving, and where our real feelings will be better understood?

"He will surely come back soon," she said again and again to herself, while the veil of uncertainty hung black before her troubled vision. Every day she listened for his footsteps, till heart-sick and weary she returned to her parents, and told them all her grief and all her fears.

An hour later they handed her his letter, received an hour after her departure, and which her father had carried every day in his pocket and forgotten to re-mail to her.

While every one in L--was rehearsing the great wrong which, in their estimation, Mr. Deane had done his wife, she was eagerly absorbing every word of his warm-hearted letter, which he wrote on the day of his conversation with Mr. Wyman. Could she have received it before she returned again to her old home, how different would she and her parents have felt towards him. It was only for them she cared now. In vain she argued and tried to reinstate him in their good graces; but words failed, and she felt that time and circumstance alone were able to reconcile them.

She longed to go to him, but he had not asked her, and only said at the close:

"I shall return when I feel that we are ready to love each other as in the past. Not that I do not love you, Mabel, but I want all the richness of your affection, unclouded by distrust. We have been much to each other; we shall yet be more. When I clasp you to my heart again, all your fears will vanish. Be content to bear this separation awhile, for 'tis working good for us both."

She read it over a score of times, felt the truthfulness of his words, but could not realize how it was possible for the separation to benefit them. To her the days seemed almost without end. To him they were fraught with pleasure, saddened they might be a little with a thought of the events so lately experienced, but gladdened by the sunshine of new scenes, inspirited with new and holy emotions. It was well for her weak faith that Mrs. Deane did not see him that very evening walking with Miss Weston upon the sea-shore, engaged in close conversation. She would have questioned how it was possible that under such conditions his love for herself was growing more intense; not thinking, in her shallow philosophy, that the contrast of two lives exhibits more fully the beauties of each, and that it was by this rule she was growing in his affections.

"We must wait awhile for our friends, Miss Weston; I see they are in the rear," and he spread his shawl upon a rock, motioning her to be seated, close by the foam-white waves.

Mr. Wyman and Florence soon came along. They had forgotten the presence of every one. Nothing engaged their attention but the lovely scene before them, while the moon's light silvered the rippling surface of the waters. Their communion was not of words as they all sat together that lovely summer eve. Soul met soul, and was hushed and awed in the presence of so much that was entrancing, and when they separated each was better for the deep enjoyment they had mutually experienced.

"I may seem strange," remarked Miss Weston to her new friend, Miss Vernon, the next morning, as they sat looking at the sea, so changed in its aspect from that of the evening before, "that I should in the company of comparative strangers, feel so little reserve. I know my aunt would chide me severely, but I have not felt so happy for many years. It may be that the influence of the ocean is so hallowed and peaceful that our souls live their truer lives, but I have never before opened my heart so fully to strangers. I wonder if I have overstepped any of the lines of propriety?"

"I might have thought so once, but I see and feel differently now. I think the soul knows its kin, and that it is not a matter of years but of states which causes it to unfold."

"I am glad you feel so. I seemed so strange to myself, ever conservative, now so open and free. I do not feel towards any of the others here as I do towards you and your friends. I regret that I have not a few days more to enjoy you all," she said quite sadly, "as my aunt has written for me to come to her the last of this week."

Miss Vernon could not help thinking how much more this fair being had to impart to her aunt, for this season of rest and enjoyment. "I wonder if the time will ever come," she often asked herself, "when we can go when and where we gravitate, and not be forced mechanically."

"I wish people could follow their natural attractions once in a while, at least," said Miss Edith, and she fixed her fair blue eyes on the sea.

Florence started; for it seemed as though she had read her thoughts.

"I suppose these limitations and restrictions are for our good, else they would not be," replied Miss Vernon.

"And the desire to shake them off is natural, if not right; is it not?"

"Natural, no doubt, and pleasant, if we could have the desire granted; but duty is greater than desire, and circumstances may at times impel us to the performance of the one rather than favor us with the gratification of the other. What I mean is, that it is our duty sometimes to take a part in scenes in which our hearts cannot fully sympathize."

"And yet you say you are attracted heart and mind to Mr. Wyman and his daughter. Is it not possible that, notwithstanding this, your duty calls you elsewhere,--that some other soul may be in need of your presence?"

"You have questioned me very close, Miss Weston, but I will answer you promptly: I know of no one who needs me, else I should certainly go. Remember this,--in following our attractions we should never lose sight of our duties. They should go hand in hand."

"Very true. I feel that my aunt needs me, and I will go at once; this very day. I have lost a part of my restless self, and gained the repose I so much needed, since I have been here; and I am indebted to you and your friends for the exchange. Now I will go where duty calls."

"You have decided right, and I have no doubt you will be amply remunerated for the seeming sacrifice you are making of the few days of happiness you would have had in longer remaining here, had not the summons come for you to leave."

"I do not doubt it; and yet Miss Vernon, I need your atmosphere. How I wish our lives could mingle for awhile."

"If there ever comes a time when no earthly tie binds you, when duty will permit you to follow this attraction, come and live with us, and remain as long as you wish."

"With you?" exclaimed the astonished girl. "Can I? Is Mr. Wyman willing?"

"He has authorized me to invite you."

"But would it be right? Will it certainly be agreeable to him?"

"Most assuredly. We all love you, and as for Mr. Wyman, he never invites those to his home in whom he has no interest. So come. I know you will."

"Thank him, for me," warmly responded Miss Weston, "and I trust the time will arrive when I can more practically demonstrate how much I thank you all for your kindness."

The morning was spent by Miss Weston in packing her trunk, and making ready for her departure, much to the surprise of Mr. Wyman, and to the disappointment of Mr. Deane, who had hoped for a longer

enjoyment of hours of communion with one so rich in goodness and innocence of heart.

In her atmosphere all his hardness seemed to pass away. She was balm to his troubled soul; light to his darkened vision. She would go that day, and life, busy life, close over the fresh, happy hours, and perchance never again before his vision would come that fair young face.

He asked permission to ride with her to the station, and see to her baggage and tickets. It was cheerfully granted, and in a moment all was over. The train came, stopped but a second, then moved on, and was soon hid from sight by a sharp curve. Then his past life came over this little break, this brief respite, and he felt that he, too, was ready to go and kindle anew the waning flame upon his domestic hearth.

Dawn, to the surprise of her father, was greatly delighted when she found Miss Weston was going.

"She is wanted there; some one in the air told me," she said, and clapped her hands in glee.

Her departure made quite a break in the little party, and when Mr. Deane made ready to go the next day, Florence and Mr. Wyman both felt that their own stay was about over.

Judge of their surprise two days after, to receive a note from Miss Weston, saying that her aunt had been seized with paralysis of the brain the day she arrived, and would not recover.

Every test of this nature strengthened Mr. Wyman in the belief in his daughter's vision, and he felt that there could be no safer light placed in his path for him to follow; a light which no more interferes with man's individuality or reasoning powers than the falling of the rays of the sun upon the earth.

The cry of the multitude is, that mediumship and impressibility detract from individual life, lessens the whole tone of manhood, and transforms the subject to a mere machine. Such conclusions are far from correct. Our whole being is enriched, and made stronger and fuller by true impressibility. Are we in any degree depleted if we for a time become messengers to bear from friend to friend, words of love, cheer and encouragement? Are we mere machines, because we obey the promptings of the unseen and go where sorrow sits with bowed head, or want and misery wait for relief? If so, we are in good service, and have the consciousness of knowing, that, being thus the instruments of God's will, we cannot be otherwise than dear to him.

All matter is mediumistic. Life is tributary, one phase to another, and soul to soul speaks suggestively.

The ocean has its fullness from tributary streams which flow to its

bed.

Lives alone are great that are willing to be fed.

CHAPTER XII.

Summer's soft foliage changed to gold and red, and the distant hill-tops rested their brown summits against blue and sapphire skies. A soft mist lay over the scene, almost entrancing, to the soul, while the senses seemed wrapped in that dream-cloud which borders the waking and sleeping worlds.

Seven times had the cyprus turned to a golden flame, beside the grave of fair Alice.

Seven times had the pines nodded over the snow-white bed, under which lay her sacred dust.

Seven years had gone by with their lights and shadows, since he laid her form beneath the green sod-and wept as only those have wept, whose light has gone out from their dwelling.

Rich and full had these years been in their strange experiences, while firm as a rock had grown his faith in the unseen whose love and guardianship is round us as the atmosphere is about the earth. It was a fact to him and not sentiment alone, that, though his Alice had passed on to a higher existence, her life was more clearly than ever blended with his own. Like warp and woof, their souls seemed woven, and he would sooner have doubted his material existence, than question her daily presence.

The days grew richer in glory, till one by one, the dry leaves withered and fell to the ground, as even our brightest hopes must sometimes fade and fall. The sky was darker and more lowery. The air lost its balmy softness, and was harsh and chilly, till no sign of foliage was seen,--nought but the leafless branches stretching their bare arms towards the sky. The meadows were brown and cheerless. The silvery brooks trilled out no merry song. Life grew hushed and still without, while more joyous became the tones of happy hearts within pleasant homes. Fires blazed on the hearth-stones, and charity went abroad, to administer to those whom Christ has said, "Ye have always with you." Cities were gay with life, and people went to and fro from homes of plenty, with quick, earnest steps, as though life was a continuous chain of golden links.

The thoughtful walked amid all these lively scenes, and wondered if the gay plumage covered only happy breasts.

The gay passed on, and thought only of joy and their own pleasures, dreaming not that saddened lives had an existence near at hand.

Afar from all this life and gaiety, stood a low, brown cottage in a barren spot, upon the brow of a hill. No trees sheltered it, giving that air of protection which ever sends delight to the beholder. No indication of taste or culture met the sight; naught but a bare existence, and every-day toil to sustain it, impressed the passer-by.

One day when the wind blew loud and bleak, and the snow fell fast, a young girl looked from that cottage window, upon the scene before her, with that abstraction which one feels when all hope has withered, and every fresh impulse of a young heart has been chilled.

She scarcely realized that the afternoon was fast wearing away, until the entrance of one, who, in a sharp, shrill voice, thus addressed her: "Well, Margaret Thorne, I hope you have looked out of that ere winder long 'nough for one day. I've been inter this room fifty times at least, and you hav n't stirred an inch. Now go and get supper, milk the cows, and feed the pigs; and mind, don't forget to fodder that young heifer in the new stall-and look here, you lazy thing, this stocking won't grow any unless it's in your hands, so when supper's over, mind you go to work on 't."

Margaret went quickly to her duties, glad to escape from the sound of that voice, and be alone with her own thoughts.

This was but a portion of her daily life of drudgery. The old house was no home to her, now that her dear mother was laid in the little church-yard. She could just remember her. It was years before, when, a little child, she used to hear a sweet voice singing her to sleep every night. The remembrance of that, and of the bright smile which greeted her each morning, was all that made her life endurable. She had no present-no future. It was this bright recollection on which she was pensively meditating that stormy afternoon.

Margaret's mother, Mary Lee, had married when very young, a man greatly her inferior. She was one of those gentle, timid beings, who can not endure, and brave their way through a cold world, much less a daily contact with a nature so crude and repulsive as that of her husband's. She longed to live for her child's sake, but the rough waves of life beat rudely against her bark-it parted its hold, the cold sea swept over it, and earth, so far as human sight went, knew her no more.

One balmy spring day, when the blue skies seemed wedded to the emerald hills, they laid her form away, and little Margaret had lost a mother's earthly protection.

In less than a year after that sweet face went out of the home, another came to take her place; a woman in form and feature, but in nature a tyrant, harsh and cruel.

For little Margaret she had no love, nought but bitter words; while her father, growing more silent and morose each day, and finding his home a scene of contest, absented himself, and passed most of his leisure hours with more congenial companions in the village.

Margaret grew to womanhood with but a limited education; indeed, a very meagre one, such only as she could obtain from an irregular attendance at the village school, in summer when the farm work was lightest, and in winter, a day now and then when the bleak weather and the rough, almost impassable roads allowed her to reach the place which was to her far more pleasant than any other on earth.

It was her hands which done the heaviest and hardest work of the family. No word of cheer or praise ever passed her mother's lips. All this, and it was no wonder her life was crushed out, that her step had no lightness, and her eye none of the vivacity of youth. The out-door work, such as caring for the cattle, was, at last added to her other burdens; yet all this she would have done willingly, could her soul have received something which she felt she so much needed—the light and blessing of love. She was deeply impressed with this when she entered other homes on errands, and she longed for the warmth of affection she saw manifested in every look and word of their happy inmates. Yet her poor, crushed nature dared not rise and assert its rights. She had been oppressed so long, that the mind had lost all native elasticity, and one whose sympathies were alive would have looked on her as a blighted bud—a poor uncared for flower, by life's road-side.

It was quite dark when she finished her milking, and went to give the young heifer her hay. She loved this animal more than any living thing beside the old house dog, and as she patted her soft hide, the creature turned on her eyes which seemed full of love, as if to show to her that there is some light in the darkest hour, something compensatory in the lowliest form of labor. Margaret lingered beside the animal, and thought how much better she loved her than she did her present mother. "I love you, Bessie," she said, as the creature stretched forth her head to scent the warm milk in the pail. "I 've a good mind to, Bessie; you want some, don't you?" and without stopping to think of the consequences, she turned some of the contents of the pail into Bessie's trough.

"Margaret Thorne! I wonder if you don't know when it's dark. It's high time your work was done!" screamed her mother at the top of her voice. She seized her pails and ran to the house, making all possible haste to strain and set the milk away. But Mrs. Thorne took it from her hands, saying, "Go and 'tend to the supper. I'll do this myself."

"There ain't as much as there ought to be inter two quarts," said her mother, returning and looking the girl squarely in the eye.

"What does this mean? I'd like to know."

Margaret was awe-struck. She dared not tell her that she had given some to Bessie, and yet she could not tell an untruth. One struggle, and she answered: "I gave some to Bessie," letting fall a dish in her fright. It broke into atoms.

"Careless jade you! Break my dishes and steal my milk; giving it without my leave to a dumb beast. There, take that," and she gave her a sharp blow on the face.

It was not the blow that made the poor girl's blood tinge her cheeks, but the sense of degradation; the low life she was living, in daily contact with one so overbearing, coarse, and rude.

She did not weep, but one might have known by those suppressed sobs, that the heart's love was being sapped, all its feelings outraged.

At that moment her father came in, and finding supper delayed, commenced scolding in a loud voice.

"I tell ye what, woman, I won't work and provide, to be treated in this ere way. D' ye hear?" and he came close to Margaret and looked into her face.

"Yes, sir. I was late to-night."

"Yer allus late, somehow. Why don't yer stir round and be lively like other gals, and be more cheery like?"

His poor, rough nature was beginning to feel the need of a better life.

"Let her work as I have, and she'll be thankful to have a roof over her head, let alone the things I make her," broke in Mrs. Thorne. "When I was a gal, I had to work for my bread and butter." Having thus relieved her mind, she flew busily about, and the supper was soon ready, to which they sat down, but not as to a homelike repast. Such a thing was not known in that house.

The evening, as usual, passed in a dull routine of drudgery, and Margaret was, as she had been hundreds of times before, glad to reach its close and retire to her room.

Thus wore the winter slowly away, and the days so full of labor, unrelieved by pleasure of any kind, were fast undermining the health and spirits of the sad girl.

When spring came, her step was slower and her cheek paler, but there was no eye of love to mark those changes, and her labors were not lessened. At length her strength gave way, and a slow fever coursed

through her veins as the result of over-taxation. The languor it produced was almost insupportable, and she longed for the green woods, and the pure air, and a sight of running waters.

Mrs. Thorne saw that something must be done, and finally consented that Margaret might take a little recreation in the manner she had proposed, accompanying her consent with the remark that she thought it a very idle way of spending one's time.

Margaret's constant companion in her rambles was the faithful dog Trot, who highly enjoyed this new phase of life, and with him at her side she had nothing to fear.

The change brought new life to her wasted system, and as she coned over the beauties around, watched the sparkle of the running brooks, and listened to the songs of the free birds, she wished that her life was as free and beautiful.

One day while trimming a wreath of oak leaves, she thought she heard footsteps, and the low growl of Trot, before she had time to turn her head, confirmed her impression that some one was approaching.

She turned, and encountered the gaze of a stranger, who said in a deep, pleasant voice:

"I have lost my way, I believe. Is this Wilton Grove, Miss?"

"It is," she answered, not daring to raise her eyes.

"Thank you. I was not quite sure, yet I thought I followed the direction," said the stranger, and gracefully bowing, departed.

In all her life so bright and manly a face had never crossed her path. And that voice-it seemed to answer to something down deep in her soul. It kindled a fire which was almost extinct, and that fire was hope. Perhaps she would some day see people just like him, live with them, and be young and happy.

Old Trot seemed to share her new-found pleasure, and looked knowingly into her face, as much as to say, "There are some folks in the world worth looking at."

She went home that night to dream of other forms and faces than those she had been so long accustomed to, and slept more sound than she had for many months.

Weeks passed away, and the bloom came back to Margaret's cheek, a new life was in her eye, for the voice of love had spoken to her heart, and the blood leaped till the color of her face vied with that of the roses.

The young man whom she met that day in the grove, often found his way to that spot, not by mistake but by inclination, attracted by

the fair face of Margaret. Again and again he came, till his glowing words kindled the flame of hope to love, and it became a source of greatest pleasure to him to watch her dreamy eyes glow with brightness under his repeated vows of constancy.

Clarence Bowen was the only son of a city merchant of great wealth, acquired by his own indefatigable industry. His son had inherited none of his father's zeal for business, and after repeated efforts to make him what nature had never intended he should be, he sent him to study law at the college in D--, a thriving town a few miles from Margaret's home. It was while there, and in an hour when weary with study, he wandered away to the spot where he accidentally met her. His nature being not of the highest order, he did not hesitate to poison her mind with flattering words, until at length he won her heart, not as a pearl of great price, a treasure for himself, but as a bauble, which he might cast aside when its charm had departed.

Sad indeed was the day to her in which he told her she could never be his wife. Pity her, ye who in happy homes have kind friends to guide your hearts into peace, and refresh your souls with a true and perfect love. Have charity, and raise not hand nor voice against one who, had her life been cast in as pleasant places as yours, would not have trusted so fondly in a broken reed, or listened so confidingly to the siren voice of the tempter. She had pined for a warm heart and a faithful love. She had trusted and been betrayed. You owe her your pity, not your condemnation.

"Did you say you were not going to marry me, Clarence?" and asking this, she cast her eyes to the ground, and sobbed like a child.

"No, girl; you ought to have known I could not. I have no money but that which my father supplies me with to pay my board and expenses. I have nothing to support--"

She looked so pale he dared not say more.

"Go on," she at length said, pressing her hand closer to her heart, lest its strong beating might too plainly betray her feelings.

"And even could I support you, my father would disown me were I to take such a step."

"Then you never loved me, Clarence. You only sought your own pleasure and--and my--my ruin?"

She broke down. Life had nothing now for her but shame and sorrow. Alas, the world has no pity for its children.

Hard indeed must have been his heart, had it not relented then. He went and placed his hand upon her head, saying,

"I would marry you, Margaret, if I had money enough," and just that moment he meant it.

She looked up through her tears to him, and seeing the expression which accompanied his words, mistook it for real sorrow at parting from her, and answered in a hopeful, bright voice,--

"I can work ever so hard, and we might be married privately if you chose, as no one knows us, and go away. You don't know how hard I can work, Clarence."

"And then, sometime we might become rich," she continued, without looking at his face, "and I would study, too, and improve myself. Then we could return to your parents and be forgiven. They surely could not blame us for loving each other. You will not forsake me, will you, Clarence?"

He bowed his head. She thought he wept, and she continued her words of cheer till he could bear it no longer.

She laid her bursting head upon his bosom saying, "I will go away from here to-day, Clarence, and be no burden to you, till you can support us both."

He nerved himself for the desperate emergency, and shook her off as though she was poison, saying, in cold, measured words, not to be this time misunderstood,--

"No, it cannot be; don't deceive yourself; you can never be my wife," and then he left her.

Angels pity her. Heaven have mercy on her who sank prostrate with grief that bright day on the green lap of earth. One heart-piercing cry went up for help and mercy from above, and hope and love went out of that heart, perhaps forever.

Faster and faster flew the betrayer, as though he would elude a pursuer from whom he could not escape. But he could not close his ears to that pleading voice, nor his eyes to that agonized look. Aye, erring mortal, that sound will pierce your soul till some reparation, some pure, unselfish deed, washes the sin away.

"Why, Clarence, you look as pale as a ghost; what on earth has happened to you!" exclaimed his college chums, as he walked breathless and weary into the house.

"I am sick," he answered, and went by himself to evade further questions, which he knew would rend his soul with anguish. He early repaired to his room, but found no rest, and finding himself unable to attend to his studies the next day, obtained leave of absence.

CHAPTER XIII.

How long Margaret laid there, she never knew, but when she came to consciousness she found herself in her own room, and her father bending over her, with a look she had never seen on his face before,--one of deep anxiety for her.

"All this ere comes from letting her go out in the air every day," were the first words which broke the silence, and conveyed to her senses that any one beside her father was in the room.

All the recollection of her misery came over her then. She had forgotten all, save that her father looked with eyes of love upon her. The shrill voice broke the heavenly spell, and Magdalen knelt again in prayer at the Saviour's feet.

She closed her eyes as though she would shut out the sorrow from her soul, while a look of deep pain settled on her features which her father mistook for physical suffering. There was something in her pale face then, that reminded him of her dear, dead mother. It touched the long buried love which had lain in his uncultured nature many years, and he drew his sleeve roughly across his eyes to wipe away the tears which would come, despite the searching glance of his wife, who looked upon any demonstration of that kind as so much loss to herself.

He thought Margaret would surely die. It must be some terrible disease that caused her to look so white, and made her breathing so low and still, and he resolved to go for a physician.

His decision met with little favor from Mrs. Thorne, who fretted continually about the extra work and expense of a sick person, interspersing her growls with the remark which seemed stereotyped for the occasion:

"A nice job I've got on my hands for the summer."

"Come, I 'll have no more grumbling to-night. How long the poor girl laid in the woods nobody knows. May-be she fainted and fell, and them ere faintin' spells is dreadful dangerous, and I'm going for the doctor, if it takes the farm to pay for 't."

When Caleb Thorne spoke like that, his wife well knew that words of her own were of little avail, and she wisely concluded to keep silent.

Margaret might have remained as she had fallen, faint and uncared for in the woods, for a long time, had not the faithful dog, who

instinctively knew that something was wrong, ran furiously to the house, and by strange motions and piteous pleading moans attracted the attention of Mr. Thorne from his work. Trot would not act as he did without cause. Caleb knew that, so he left his work and followed the dog, who ran speedily towards the woods, momentarily looking back to be sure that his master was close at hand, until he reached the spot where Margaret laid.

He thought her lifeless, and raising her from the ground, bore her home, while a heavier burden at his heart kept his eyes blinded, his steps slow, and his walk uneven.

When the physician arrived, he saw, at a glance, that some great trouble rested, like a dense cloud, on the girl's mind. Her restless manner and desire to remain silent, showed plainly that some great anguish was working its sorrow within, and silently he prayed to heaven, that the young heart might find that relief which no art or skill of his could impart. He could only allay the fever into which her blood was thrown, and as he went out, left his orders, saying, he would call again on the morrow.

"She's as well able to work as I am, this blessed minit," impetuously exclaimed Mrs. Thorne, who could ill brook the state of affairs.

"If looks tell anything, her pale face aint no match for yourn in health, Huldah," remarked Caleb, as he glanced somewhat reproachingly at the full, red features of his wife.

"A white face aint allus a sign of sickness; here I might be next to death, and my face be getting redder and redder at every pain,--but then who cares for me? No one, as I knows on."

She turned and found she might have left her last words unspoken, for Caleb had gone to milk the cows, and she was alone.

It was no sudden thought. Every hour since the day they found her in the woods insensible, she had busily matured her plans. Those words,--"You can never be my wife," made life to her of no moment, save to find a spot of obscurity in which to conceal her shame, and spare her old father the grief she knew it must bring him.

She must leave her home, none but strangers must know of her sorrow; and when health returned and she went about her daily toils, a short time prior to the crisis of her grief, she deeply thought upon where she might turn her weary steps. She had heard of a factory in N--, a town twenty miles distant, where girls earned a great deal of money. She would go there and work until--O, the pain, the anguish of her heart, as the terrible truth came close and closer every day upon her. And then she would go. Where? No mother's love to help her, no right granted her to bring another life into being. How keenly upbraiding came to her at that moment the great truth, a truth which cannot be too deeply impressed upon every human mind,

that no child should be ushered into this world without due preparation on the part of its parents for its mental, moral and physical well-being. Let pity drop a tear, for sad indeed was her lot.

One day she gathered what little clothing she possessed, and made up a small parcel preparatory to her departure, and as her only time of escape would be in the night, she carefully concealed it, and went about her work in her usual, silent manner.

One moonlight night when all was still, she took her little bundle and went softly down stairs. Noiselessly she trod across the kitchen floor, pulled the bolt, lifted the latch, and stood outside. For an instant she paused. A rush of feelings came over her, a feeling of regret, for it was hard even for her to break away from familiar scenes, and leave the roof that had sheltered her; but it would not do to linger long, for Trot might bark and arouse her father. Then she could not bear the thought that she should never see the faithful old dog again; and almost decided to go to him, but the thought had scarcely entered her mind ere her old companion was at her side. His keen sense of hearing had caught the sound of her movements, though to her they had seemed noiseless, and he had come from his kennel and stood at her side, looking up in her face as though he knew all her plans.

Her courage almost forsook her as he stood there, wagging his tail and eyeing her so closely. She feared that he would follow her, and thought she must go back to her room and make a new start; but now she was out of the house, and, perhaps she could not escape another time without disturbing her parents. This thought nerved her to carry out her resolve, and she walked rapidly away. One look at the old house, as her step was on the hill which would soon hide it from her view. One more look at old Trot, then she waved her hand for him to go back, and swiftly walked as though borne by some unseen power. The grey light of morning touched the eastern hills just as she lost sight of her native village.

New scenes were before her, and from them she gathered fresh inspiration. The houses scattered along the roadside, from which persons were just coming forth to labor, gave her new feelings and enlivened her way, until at length something like fear that she might be recognized and sent back came upon her; but her fears were groundless, and she passed on and soon came to a deep, wooded road, closely hedged on either side by tall trees, whose spreading branches seemed to her like protecting arms. There she could walk slower, and breathe more free, and for the first time for many days her mind relaxed its tension.

She was plodding along, musing upon the past and trying to discern some outline of her future, when the sound of steps following her caused the blood to leap to her face. Looking around she beheld Trot, and ordered him back; but words were of no avail; he had scented her footsteps thus far, and seemed determined to follow her

to her journey's end.

"Poor fellow," she said, patting his head, "I would not send you back if I had a home for you," and she tried again to induce him to return, but he only gave a sigh, or sort of moan, as though imploring her to keep him with her.

She could no more bid him depart. Was he not her only friend, and did he not love her as none other did? So she patted him again and said,--

"Perhaps God will provide for us both. Come on, dear, old brave fellow," and then the faithful animal's eyes lit up with almost human gratitude, and he ran on joyfully before her.

The tall trees waved their branches in the morning breeze, and their music touched her soul, and attuned it to sweeter harmony than it had known for years. The flame of hope began to kindle anew. There might be some one, after all, who would pity her, who would not wholly condemn her; while the music of the tall pines seemed like angel voices, saying: "Yes, love her, pity her, and all on whom the blight of sorrow falls."

She loved the music of the singing trees, and was grieved when the road turned off towards a hill, and she was obliged to part with the protection and seclusion which they afforded her. But taking fresh courage from the guide-board, which indicated her approach to N--, she travelled bravely on. She had provided herself with provisions for a single day only, and had scarcely dared to take even that from the plenty of her father's home. Reaching a sheltered spot by the roadside, and feeling faint and weary, she sat down and shared her food with her dog.

Ten miles of her journey had been passed, and more rapidly than she could hope to continue, and she found that on a renewal of it, she must proceed more leisurely.

A sad, but interesting picture they made. She, with her young, fair face, touched by lines of grief; the once dreamy eyes, so soft, now full of nervous fire, and wild with restless fear. Her bonnet was thrown back from her shoulders, and the golden sun of morning touched her wavy hair, till it glowed and seemed like a halo of light about her pale brow.

When their little repast was over, she rested her head upon her hands, and from her soul went forth a prayer for guidance and protection,--more deep and earnest than words can portray.

CHAPTER XIV.

Morning broke in all its splendor over the little village she had left behind.

Dewy flowers, touched by the rising day, glittered in their beds of green, while mists, ethereal as air, hung over the verdant meadows. Long lines of hills whose tops rested against the blue sky, mirrored their heads in the waters which flowed at their feet.

Beauty was on every hand. In whatever direction the eye turned, it beheld the smile of God, and all nature seemed a psalm of thanksgiving.

Caleb Thorne arose, and shaking off dull sleep, called Margaret to her morning duties, while his wife bustled about the house in her usual manner.

Neither looked on the lovely scene before them. If their eyes chanced to turn in its direction, their souls took no cognizance of all the wealth of beauty which was before them.

"What on earth keeps that gal up stairs so long," said Mrs. Thorne, "I'll call her and bring her down I guess,--Mar-ga-ret-Mar-ga-ret Thorne; it's most six o'clock-get up."

No sound; no footstep. She waited a full half hour, then Caleb returned from the barn, having milked the cows, a labor which he had performed since Margaret's illness.

"That gal ain't up yet," said his wife, as he came and placed the pails on the table.

His breath came fast, for he feared she might be ill, or dead, perhaps.

"Go and see what the matter is," he said to his wife. But as she was somewhat afraid to enter a room where all was so silent, she hesitated. At length she mounted the stairs very slowly, calling Margaret's name at each step. When she had reached the landing, she found the door wide open, but no Margaret was there, and the bed was undisturbed. Pale and trembling, she went down stairs.

"She's-she's gone!" were the words with which she met her husband's inquiring gaze. "Yes, gone; run away, I s'pose, in the night."

Mr. Thorne sank into the nearest seat, almost paralyzed with emotion and apprehension.

"Gone?" he repeated; it was a long time before he could take in her meaning. It came at last; not as some truths do with a flash, but it dropped like lead into his soul, down-down-to depths he knew not of. And she had gone, just when he was waking to realize a fraction of her worth; just as he was learning to look with a single spark of love on her young, fair face, growing every day so much like her dear, dead mother's.

He leaned his face upon his hands and wept. The fount of feeling long dried was touched, and his heart felt a tenderness it had never known before, for his child.

Through the dark atmosphere about his soul a ray of light broke in. Down through long years it crept, and seemed to carry him back to the time when his Mary was a bride.

There comes a moment to every soul, when its treasures are truly appreciated; when hearts God has given to love and bless us are rightly valued. Well is it for us if that moment comes while they are with us in the earthly form.

It seemed but yesterday when she was a bride, white in soul, as well as attire. How vividly the scene now stood before him, and he felt, as he then did, the beating of her young, trusting heart, which she gave into his keeping.

Down through all these years flowed the light of recollection, and brought to mind the morning when a tiny babe was placed beside its mother for him to love and cherish. Grief shook his soul to its foundations. Through his rough nature crept a tenderness he had not known for years, for those two treasures--one beneath the sod; the other,--where?

"I s'pose you did n't look to see if the door was onbolted, did you?" remarked his wife, wondering what made him so long silent.

"Come to think 'ont, 't was," he answered, like one awaking from a dream.

"Then, the ungrateful thing's gone; and I am glad, if she could n't be more thankful to us for her home."

"Yes,--Margaret's gone." His voice sounded far off, as though his soul was off in search of her.

"Margaret Thorne has run away!" went from mouth to mouth, and harsh comments, bitter words, flashed through the village a few days, and then all was still again.

Wild and fearful emotions rushed through the mind of Margaret, when, after a long, weary walk, she reached the town of N--, with old Trot at her side.

It was a small white house, apart from others, and far from the road, at which she applied for board, drawn thither by its quiet, home-like appearance, and a strange feeling within her mind which she had not fully learned to trust.

She felt that her weary feet could go no farther, as she walked up the path, bordered by flowers, and knocked timidly at the door.

It was opened by a woman of about forty years, whose pleasant face smiled upon her, as she invited her to enter.

Margaret took courage from the kind manner in which she was met, and at once made known her desire to obtain a boarding place, designing to work in the factory near at hand.

"I have no room at present for any one," she answered, "but if you are to work in the factory there are boarding houses built by the corporation, at which you can obtain accommodations. The first step, however, will be to call upon the overseer, and if you like I will go with you after you have rested."

Margaret was too grateful to reply in a satisfactory manner, but her face looked what her tongue could not speak.

Mrs. Armstrong glanced at the young girl, and thought how unfitted she seemed for such a place of labor. With her large experience, for many had wandered there before, burdened with heavy struggles, she quickly saw that grief, or want, perhaps both, had driven her from home, or shelter, whichever it might be.

She shrank as she thought of the rough influences to which she would be subjected, and though she knew she could not avert the fate of this wanderer, or any of those who came to her for love and sympathy, yet she inwardly resolved to befriend her, and do all that she could to aid one so young and innocent, through a cold world.

"I'll get you a cup of tea, and something to eat," she said, and hurried out of the room before Margaret could reply.

This was not the first one to whom her bounty had been given; not the first lonely stranger who had supped at her table.

Old Trot sat on the door-step during this time, his eyes riveted on the house, and his ears poised to catch every sound within.

When all was ready, Mrs. Armstrong called Margaret to partake of a good substantial meal, which her busy hands had so speedily prepared, and knowing that the young girl might feel diffident, seated her alone at the table, while she busied herself about the room.

How Margaret longed to share her meal with Trot. What was her surprise to see Mrs. Armstrong gather some scraps of meat and bones,

and carry them to the hungry animal.

No wonder the girl thought her an angel; she rose from the table, her eyes too dim to see her newly-found friend, and her heart too full to thank her for all her kindness.

In a short time Mrs. Armstrong was in readiness to accompany her to the factory, and the two left the house, the former making the walk pleasant by her familiar conversation and the sympathy she manifested for the wanderer. Trot followed them, and, as if conscious that his young mistress had found a friend, occasionally ran on before, looking up in their faces, and leaping as if wild with joy.

After a short walk through the most retired part of the village, they reached the factory building and entered.

The noise was so great that Margaret thought she should be stunned, and put her hands upon her ears, to keep out the sound. She had never been in a factory before, and the thought of having to bear all that confusion, every day, sent a feeling to her heart somewhat akin to terror; but she must labor, and where else could she go?

The curious gaze of the girls, as they entered the weaving room, was most trying to her sensitive nature, and Margaret's face crimsoned, as she followed Mrs. Armstrong to the farthest part of the room, where Mr. Field, the overseer, was conversing with one of the operators.

He was a black-eyed, sharp-featured person, and there was something in his look which caused her to shudder, as Mrs. Armstrong made known her errand.

"Have you ever worked in a factory?" he asked, in a quick, impatient manner.

"No sir."

"A new hand, then," he said, with a little more suavity.

"We need another hand in the carding-room, so you may go there. I will show you the room."

He led the way, Margaret following, yet keeping close to her new friend.

The noise of the room was almost as great as that of the other, but it was sunnier, and the windows were adorned with some beautiful plants. The girls seemed more modest and less inclined to stare at visitors. Mr. Field was about to leave, when he suddenly turned to Margaret and inquired when she intended to commence.

"To-morrow, sir, if you are ready for me?"

"All right. Be on hand at the ringing of the bell."

"I had almost forgotten an important part of my errand," said Mrs. Armstrong, "and that is, a boarding place for this young lady."

"Ah, she wishes to board in the Corporation. Well, there is a place at Mrs. Crawford's. I think she has a spare room. Her house is on Elm Street, third block."

It was a relief to feel the fresh air again, and to be away from the noise and confusion of the factory. As soon as they had reached the street, Margaret inquired of Mrs. Armstrong, the way to Mrs. Crawford's.

"O! I shall go with you," said that kind lady, to the great relief of the young and timid girl, already worn and weary with fatigue and excitement.

"Thank you," in low, but sweet tones, came from her lips, and the two wended their way along, with Trot close behind.

They passed pleasant private dwellings, and then turned into a long and narrow street, with blocks of houses on either side. Margaret had supposed by the name, that the street must be very pretty, with rows of trees on each side. She was just learning that there are many misnomers in life, and that this was one.

The house in the third block was reached, and Mrs. Armstrong rapped with her parasol on the door. A red faced, but good-natured appearing woman answered the call.

"We have called to see if you have a spare room for a young lady who wishes board," said Mrs. Armstrong.

"We 've got a spare bed for a factory girl, if that's what you want," she replied, grinning, and eyeing Margaret from head to foot.

"But have you no room she can have by herself?"

"Bless your stars, no my lady. We don't take them kind o' boarders. There's plenty of places where genteel folks are taken, if they like to be starved out and out," and her face glowed with such genuine good nature, that her questioner felt that whatever else one might have to endure, they would at least have a sunny face to cheer them.

"This young woman can sleep with other folks, can't she?" inquired the good-natured woman, and her smile, not of sarcasm, but true goodness, though rough, saved Margaret's tears.

"If you have no other, she must," said Mrs. Armstrong, disappointedly, for she saw from the first, a native dignity and delicacy in Margaret which would shrink from the contact with

others, and intended to have paid the extra price demanded for a room herself, if one could have been obtained.

At that moment, old Trot came in through the open door, and looked around, as though he did not like the appearance of things.

"That dog can't come," said the woman, losing for the first time her pleasant smile. "May-be he's your's though, madam?" she said apologetically.

"No, he's mine, and I must have him with me," broke in Margaret, "and I cannot-"

She stopped short, frightened at her own earnest words and manner.

"I think he will be better off with me," said Mrs. Armstrong; "I will keep him for you."

"I would n't care myself about the cur," said Mrs. Crawford, following them to the door, "but my boarders are so agin anything in the shape of a dog."

"Certainly; she could scarcely expect you to take him; and besides, I want him to watch my chickens and garden. I took a fancy to him the moment I first saw him."

Having thus made all satisfactory in regard to the dog, as far as Mrs. Crawford was concerned, they bade her good-day, and reached home just before dark.

"You are too kind," said Margaret to Mrs. Armstrong, who told her that she must remain all night with her, and then she could say no more, but broke down completely.

The kind woman took her at once to a neat little bed-room, and permitted Trot to lie on a mat close to the door of his mistress.

Weary and worn, she gladly went to bed. Sleep came at last, and the tired, intense state of her mind was lost in slumber. She dreamt that she was at her home again, and that she was going to marry Clarence. They were walking to the village church together, over the soft green meadows. The air was balmy and full of sweetness; the sunshine lay in golden bars at her feet, and her whole soul glowed with happiness, life, and love. The bells--her marriage bells--pealed out joyously on the air, while she turned to Clarence, saying, "I had a terrible dream; I thought you had deserted me." Another peal,--merry and full--then the meadows that were so warm and sunny, grew cold and wet; and a cloud came between her and the golden sun. The bell rolled forth another peal--it sounded like a knell--and she awoke.

The factory bell was ringing, calling the operatives to labor.

A sweet voice broke on her utter desolation just at that moment, saying:

"That is the first bell; you will have just time enough to dress and take your breakfast."

Mechanically she arose, dressed, and forcing back her hot tears, went below, to sit again at the table of one who ever remembered these words: "As ye have opportunity."

CHAPTER XV.

There comes to every one at times the inquiring thought, of what use is life? What will be the result of all this seemingly useless toil, these states of unrest, these earnest efforts of the soul unappreciated, these best endeavors misunderstood? Such questions flood the reason at times, and we are ready to lay down our life weapons, scarce caring how the busy scene goes on.

Then, through the parted clouds, the rays of truth illumine the mind again, and we take up the life-song once more, not as we laid it down, but with a richer melody, a fuller and sweeter strain. The soul feels new pinioned, and spreads its wings for loftier flights, rising, height after height, up and on to the fields of the infinite.

This questioning state is sure to come to the most earnest, truthful, and thoughtful worker. All along the pathway of life these weary, yet hopeful pilgrims, sit waiting for "light, more light."

In such a mood sat Miss Evans, at the close of one summer day, as the sun was going slowly to his fold of gold and crimson clouds. A sort of mental twilight had gathered over her, dimming the sharp lines of thought which gave her words at all times such force. All her best and most earnest endeavors seemed as nought. Words which she had spoken, warm with life, vital with her own enthusiasm, had become metamorphosed, till their real meaning was lost to her.

"Alas! we must remain a riddle to ourselves forever," she said, and her deep brown eyes, always warm with affection, now seemed cold, as she turned her thoughts inward to sound herself more thoroughly, and if possible detect any other than a desire for advancement.

How long she might have searched we cannot say, for just as her

thoughts were most abstracted, Hugh came and sat down by her side, before she knew that any one had entered.

"Why, Hugh!" was her exclamation of surprise.

"You are not at home, I see."

He brought her back with those words.

"Really, I was away; but how glad I am to see you," and her glowing features endorsed the truth of her assertion.

"How far had you wandered?" he asked, his face full of glowing sympathy; "far enough to gather a new impetus for the soul?"

"I fear not. I was questioning my motives, and looking for my shortcomings."

"I fear I should have been absent much longer on such an errand," he said, and then dropping their badinage they resumed their true earnest relation to each other.

"Tell me, Hugh, you who have so often illumined my dark states, if all this contest is of any avail; if it is any use to put forth our words and have their meaning misinterpreted?"

"I question," she continued, "if we should project our thought until mankind is impelled by the actual need of something new, to seek it."

"Our thoughts and soul exchanges are not like the merchant's wares, to be held up for a bid. The soul is too grand and spontaneous a creation to be measured. Yes, we must often speak our deepest thoughts, even though they are cast away as nought, and trampled upon. There would be little richness or worth without this free offering, this giving of self for truth's sake, even though we know that we and our words may be spurned. You are cloudy to-day, my friend; you have been too long alone, and are consumed by your own thoughts."

"I am mentally exhausted, Hugh. I needed you to-day, for my soul has lost all vision. I know by my own experience, that we must speak when we are full, no matter who misapprehends or turns upon us. It is this fear that keeps too many from great and noble utterances. We forget that truth can clear itself, and that principles are not dependent upon persons. You have given me myself, as you ever do, when the mist of doubt hangs over me."

"Yes, we must give when there is no approving smile, no look of recognition; give when our giving makes us beggars, alone and friendless in the chill air of neglect."

"This is but your own life. I have but put it into words for you

to-night."

"O, Hugh, you are ever on the mount, looking with calm, steady gaze over the dark mists. Your head rests in eternal sunshine, like the towering hill whose top is mantled with the golden light, even though its base is covered with fog. Shall we ever see the day when these inner, pivotal truths will be accepted?"

"We shall behold it in the lives of thousands. It matters not when, or where. Our part is to labor, to plant the seed, though it may not be our hands that garner the harvest."

"True. I was selfish and looking for grain."

"Not 'selfish.' The human soul seeks recognition, and finds it often a difficult task to wait for the presence of that human face which says in every line and feature, 'I know you; I feel your salient thoughts and motives.' A long time it takes us to learn to do without the approving smile of man, and go on our way with none but God and angels to sanction our efforts. I, too, have hours of darkness. All souls are at times tossed on heaving waters, that they may rise higher than their weary feet can climb."

"You have done me good to-day; but do not go," she said, seeing him rise to leave.

"I must; but first tell me if I can have your aid in a material matter, which I had nearly forgotten?"

"I am at your service."

"Well, then, I am going to have a party, which I suppose is the last thing you would have imagined of me."

"I should have thought of any thing else; but what has put such an idea into your head?"

"Some fairy, perhaps. I expect to get some life out of it, and the satisfaction of seeing my guests enjoying themselves. I shall bring together a strange medley,--counterparts, affinities, opposites, and every form of temperament which our little village affords, besides drawing on places largely remote from here. I must go now. Will you come and help us to-morrow?"

"I will. My love to Dawn and Miss Vernon."

"Thank you," and he passed out, leaving her bright and full of hope. She felt the transfusion of his strong life into her own, and neither herself nor her friend was the same as yesterday.

The day for the party was fair and balmy. Dawn and Miss Vernon rode to the green-house and purchased flowers for the occasion, and the home seemed like a fairy bower, so artistically and elegantly had

they arranged the fresh and fragrant blossoms.

Miss Evans glided from room to room, placing a vase here, and a statuette there, as her feeling suggested, and what was her fancy was Hugh's, for their tastes were one, and their lives ran parallel in natural, innocent ways, never able to translate their feelings to another, but giving and enjoying each other more and more at every meeting.

Poor Mrs. Norton thought how pleasant it would be to her, to see a room full of beautiful things, pleasant faces, and elegant clothes: it would be such a contrast to her own dull life, which would be still more lonely but for the frequent visits of Mr. Wyman's family, and the substantial evidence often given by them that they did not forget the poor and needy. She arrayed herself neatly in her black alpacca, the gift of a friend; and when she looked in her little glass which hung above the table, just were it did thirty years ago, when her good husband was alive, a rush of better thoughts and feelings came over her. She lived over again the happy days of her married life, and almost thought she was making ready to walk by her husband's side to the little church on the hill. Then the scene changed, years rolled away, and it seemed but yesterday when she leaned over the coffin, and looked on the still, pale face that would never light her home again. Thoughts grew into words, and she said,--

"How little to keep me here. I have far more to recover by death than to lose; and somehow it seems as though it would not be long ere I go."

She was not sad; far from it. The thought was pleasant to her, and folding her white handkerchief over her breast, she surveyed herself once more, and then putting on her shawl and bonnet, was soon on her way to Mr. Wyman's, thinking again and again how much good it would do her to see so many people together.

Mrs. Clarke wondered if Mrs. Simonds would be dressed in great style, for she had a wish not to be outdone in that direction, and yet possessed a sufficient degree of good sense to feel that overdress would be out of place at such a gathering; so she arrayed herself in a blue silk, not over-trimmed, and put pearls in her dark hair to match her jewels.

And thus, from different sections, arose a kind of magnetic life, as each individual's thoughts went out and centered there.

Dawn was dressed in white, with scarlet sash, and coral ornaments. She seemed like a ray of light flashing through darkness. Her soft, brown hair hung in wavy curls over her shoulders, and the involuntary exclamation was, "How beautiful," as the pure light and brightness of her inner being shone through and over the external.

At dusk, the carriages began to appear, winding up the long avenue,

which led to the house. Then came a few persons on foot, and in an hour all the bustle and stir attendant upon a crowd was heard in the hall, on the stairs, and in every room. The house was all aglow with life, and lines of care and sorrow were swept away by radiant smiles.

Masks were drawn over aching hearts; jealousies, envyings, and all strifes were put at bay, and the better natures of all were called forth, and responded, each to each. Palm grasped palm, that had not in the ordinary relations of life thrilled with contact for many years. Hearts that had grown cold and callous under slights, and chilling indifferences, were warmed anew in the social atmosphere which filled the whole house; and then the sound of music swept through the rooms, lifting all out of their narrowness into higher and better states.

Mr. Wyman had a word of cheer and love for all, and delicately brought such temperaments together as could best enjoy companionship, and for the time kept himself aloof from those he loved best, that others might partake of their genial natures.

"Can you tell me who that tall, graceful lady is?" asked Miss Vernon, before Mr. Wyman was aware that she was at his side.

"A Mrs. Hammond," he replied, without looking at her.

"She is very elegant," continued Miss Vernon.

"She is, externally."

"What, not lovely in mind? Can it be that such an exterior covers unloveliness?"

"I fear it does. I have known her many years, and although she is a woman of decorous manners, and some polish, she has none of the elements of a true lady, to me."

"Why, Mr. Wyman, see how thoughtful she seems of those around her," said Florence, her eyes still fixed upon the engaging stranger.

"Yes, I see all that, and all the externalism of her life. It is all acting. Within, that woman is cold and heartless. She is sharp enough, and quick in her instincts, but give me hearts in conjunction with heads."

"Why, then, did you invite her?" she accompanied this inquiry with a most searching glance.

"For the same reason I invited all. I want them to mingle, for the time to lose their sense of individual importance, their feelings of selfishness, or in a few words, to throw off the old and take on the new."

"Are you enjoying yourself, Florence?"

"Yes, very much. I like to see so many people together, and absorb the spirit of the occasion."

"I am glad you do. Come this way." He led her to a remote part of the room, where stood a tall, dark-eyed stranger.

"Miss Vernon, Mr. Temple" and he watched their eyes as they met, and knew he had linked two souls for at least one evening's enjoyment.

A bustling woman, who could not conceive of any christianity outside of church-going, came and stood beside Miss Evans, and commenced a conversation by saying,--

"There seems to be plenty of people in our village, though we don't see many of them at church."

This was put forth as a preface, designed to exhibit the character of a forthcoming volume, but Miss Evans adroitly changed the subject to one of general interest.

Just at this point, a stir was made, a rustling of silks was heard, and the way opened for a young prodigy in music, considered by his parents to be the wonder of the nineteenth century; one of those abstracted individuals who seem to live apart from the multitude, speaking to no one, save in monosyllables, and walking about, with an air of superiority, constantly nurtured by his doating parents' admiration,--at home a tyrant, abroad a monkey on exhibition.

After a flourish of sounds, and several manipulations, each accompanied with a painful distortion of countenance, he commenced a long and tedious sonata,--tedious, because ill-timed. On a suitable occasion it would have been grand and acceptable. Of course the music was wasted on the air, because it had only a mental rendering.

The anxious parents looked around for the expected applause. It did not come. Only a few murmured, "How very difficult," while a sense of relief was so manifest, that none could have failed to realize that such elaborate performances should be reserved for a far different occasion. But we are slow in learning the fitness of things, and that everything has its proper time and place.

The next performer was a sprightly girl of seventeen, who played several airs, and sung some sweet and simple songs, charming all with their light and graceful beauty.

Mr. Wyman then led his friend and guest, Mr. Temple, to the instrument. He touched it with a master hand. One forgot everything save melodious tones; forgot even that there was a medium, through which those tones were conveyed to the senses. The performer lost self, lost all save the author's idea, until, at length, the ecstatic sounds came soft and clear as light from a star. There was

no intervention of self; his whole being was subordinate to the great creation--the soul of the theme. Eyes grew moist as the music floated on the air in one full, continuous strain. Hearts beat with new pulsations; hopes soared anew; sorrows grew less; life seemed electric, full of love; sharp lines, and irregularities of mind were touched, softened, and toned to harmony under the swelling notes, now soft, sweet, and dulcet; now broad, high, and upsoaring. No words broke the heavenly spell when the performer left the instrument, but each thrilled heart became a temple, in which only love and beauty dwelt.

There, in that holy atmosphere, a soul burst its fetters and went home. Old Mrs. Norton, who came with such glorious anticipations, sank back upon the pillow upon which she was resting, while listening to the soul-ravishing sounds, and died.

No feeling of awe came over the people assembled; but all felt as though they, too, had entered within the confines of the silent land.

Gently they raised her form as one would a child who had fallen asleep.

There, in the presence of the still, pale face, they parted, with better, truer natures than when they met.

CHAPTER XVI.

The months wore away, and Margaret applied herself closely to her labor, and became a favorite with her companions. Gladly would she have changed places with most of them, but they knew not the secret sorrow which was wearing her bloom away. Her sighs grew more frequent, as the time rapidly approached when she must leave them.

Again and again she resolved to go to Mrs. Armstrong, and tell her all her grief, but the remembrance of her kindness made her cheek turn scarlet when the thought suggested itself. No, she could not reveal it to one whom she loved so well. She must go far away, and hide her shame from the eyes of all who had befriended her, and she had made many friends, yet would have lingered a few weeks longer, had she not one evening just at dark espied an old gentleman from her village, an acquaintance of her father's. She could not bear the thought that she must be carried back, to scenes so closely allied to her sufferings, and bear the scorn of those who knew her. She

could not endure that, and fearing that the person whom she had seen might some time meet and recognize her, she hastened the preparations for a change. Again she collected her clothing, now more valuable, packed it and awaited some indication of the direction in which she should move.

She must once more see the face of that good woman, who had been so faithful and kind to her; and after many efforts to call upon her, finally gained courage and did so.

A strange thrill came over Mrs. Armstrong, as she heard the gate close, and a well-known step on the gravel walk. Margaret patted her old friend Trot as she approached the house, and somewhat surprised Mrs. Armstrong with her presence when she entered.

"I am glad to see you," said Mrs. Armstrong, with her usual kind look of welcome, but with a deep tremor in her voice. "Come and sit by me, Margaret, and let me see if your hard labor is wearing you out. I have thought for some weeks that you looked pale."

Margaret trembled in every limb, as she took the seat her friend offered her, for a searching glance accompanied her friend's words. Just then a strange thought flashed through Mrs. Armstrong's mind—a thought she could not put aside, and she tried in every way to win the poor girl's confidence, and perhaps might have succeeded had there not been heard the sound of footsteps outside. Trot's loud bark made them both start and turn their faces to the window. Margaret gave one glance,—and she needed not a second to assure her that the caller was none other than the old gentleman she had seen on the street. In a moment there was a knock at the door. While Mrs. Armstrong answered the call, Margaret made one bound from the sitting room to the kitchen, and from thence into the open air, and flew as fast as her feet could carry her, towards her boarding house.

As she turned from the principal street, a woman accosted her, and inquired the way to the Belmont House. Glad of anything that would even for a moment take her thoughts from herself, she offered to show her the way.

The darkness was so great, she had no fear of being recognized, as she walked in silence with the stranger. One thought filled her whole being, and the problem with her was, how she could escape from N--, and where should she find shelter?

"Perhaps you can tell me," said the lady, in a clear, silvery voice, "of some young girl, or two, or three even, whom I can get to return with me to B--."

"I am here," she continued, "in search of help; good American help. I am so worn with foreign servants that I can endure them no longer."

Margaret's heart gave one bound. Here was her opportunity, and she only needed the courage to offer her services.

"Perhaps you would go?" said the stranger, who looked for the first time on Margaret's face, as they stopped in the light that shone brilliantly in front of the Belmont House. "Or, maybe you do not work for a living. Excuse me, if I have made a blunder."

"I do," answered Margaret, "and would like to go with you if I can earn good wages."

"I will see that you are well remunerated, provided you suit me. I shall go to-morrow, in the noon train. If I do not succeed in getting any others beside yourself, will you meet me at the station?"

Margaret replied in the affirmative, and retraced her steps, pondering upon how she should secrete herself during the intervening period.

She walked rapidly back to her home, and thought how fortunate it was that her room-mates were absent that night, and good Mrs. Crawford would never suspect that the quiet girl up stairs was planning how she could escape with her clothing. The darkness of the evening favored her, and the noise within prevented any that might be without, from being noticed.

She enclosed the balance due for her board, in an envelope, sealed, and directed it to Mrs. Crawford, and laid it on the little table at which she had stood so many mornings, weary in body and sick in soul.

She hoped she would not encounter any one on the stairs, and to her relief she did not. For an instant she paused, as she heard the footsteps of the good housewife walking from the pantry to the dining-room, intent on her useful life, uncouth, illiterate, but kind and well-meaning. A tear stole over her cheek as she listened for the last time to that firm step, which never seemed to flag in its daily rounds, and one which often, when the day's work was over, went lightly to the bedside of the sick. But no time must be lost; the door was opened and closed, and she was once again out in the world, a wanderer. She knew not what her next step was to be. Standing there in the silence and darkness of the night, she clasped her hands, and with earnest prayer, implored Divine guidance.

Down through the earthly shadows, through clouds of oppression, swept a mother's pure, undying love. Love for her wronged child, and pity for her state; for angel's missions are not in halls of light, amid scenes of mirth, but far away in desolate homes, with the oppressed and the forsaken, bringing hope to the despairing, comfort to the lonely, joy to the sad, and rest to weary hearts.

A thought darted through her mind, and she rose firm and collected,

as though a human hand had been outstretched for her aid. Who shall question that it was a mother that spoke to her at that moment?

She arose, and as noiselessly as possible wended her way to a small and obscure dwelling, inhabited by a strange old woman, known to all the villagers, as possessing a wondrous power of vision, by which she professed to foretell the future, and decide questions of love and business.

Margaret had often heard the girls in the factory speak of her, and knew that they frequently consulted her; but she had always shrank from the thought of going to her dwelling, though often importuned by them to do so. Now, how gladly her feet turned that way, as to her only refuge, for she well knew if she was searched for, no one would think of going there to find her.

She reached the place at last, and with beating heart and dizzy brain, raised her hand and rapped very softly at the door. Then the thought flashed over her, that some one might be there who knew her, and hope fled for an instant.

The rap, low as it was, soon brought the old woman, who opened the door and said in a voice tremulous but sweet, "Come in, my dear. I saw last night that a stranger was to visit me at this hour; yes, it's the same face," then motioned for her to pass in.

Margaret's first thought was that some evil was intended, and she trembled and grew pale.

"No fears, my child," said the woman, as though she had read her very thought, "angels are around you, guarding your life. I do only my part of the work, which is to keep you to-night."

And this was the strange woman of whom she had heard so much. Her fears vanished, she took the proffered seat, and without a shadow of distrust, drank the glass of cordial which was passed to her.

A feeling of rest came over her,--a rest deeper than sleep imparts. She leaned back in the chair, pillowed her head against the cushion, and felt more peaceful than she had for many months.

A strange curiosity pervaded her being, as she watched the woman moving about the room, to know of her former life--the life of her maidenhood,--and learn if others beside herself had loved and been betrayed.

"I shall have no visitors to-night," said the woman, seating herself opposite to Margaret.

"Do you often afford a shelter to strangers, as you have to me to-night?"

"Yes, child; many a sorrow-laden traveller, worn with life, seeks my

lowly cot."

"Sorrow-laden and worn with life," said Margaret, repeating the words to herself; "she must have known my past experience;" and she wished she would go on, for somehow her words comforted her.

"Yes, there are more sinned against than sinning," she continued. "I knew that you was coming, or rather some one, for last night in my dreams I saw a form, and now I know it was your own, floating on a dark stream. There was no boat in sight, no human being on shore, to save you. The cold waters chilled you, till you grew helpless, and the waves bore you swiftly to the ocean. I cried for help, and was awakened by my effort. That stream represents your past, and here you are now in my dwelling. Some one has wronged you, girl?"

She did not see the tinge on the pale cheek of Margaret, but continued, "Yes, wronged; but I see clouds and darkness before you, and then happiness, but not the joys of earth. Something higher, holier, my child."

A light seemed to have gathered over the face of the speaker, and her words, although strange and new to Margaret, seemed full of truth and meaning.

"Shall I find rest on earth?" she inquired.

"No, not here; above," the old woman lifted her eyes toward heaven, then said:

"You are stepping into sorrow now; going with one who will degrade you. Do not follow her. Though her outer garments are of purple and fine linen, her spiritual robe is black and unseemly."

"Where? O, tell me, then, where to go," exclaimed Margaret, her whole face pale with terror.

"Go nowhere at present. I see nothing now; all is dark before me. Stay beneath my roof, till light breaks. I see that you will need a mother's care ere long."

Here the poor girl's long pent up tears flowed in torrents; tears such as angels pity. It was a long time ere she grew calm; and when peace came, it was like that of a statue, she was cold and silent. No future stretched before her, nothing but a present, sad and hopeless, in which circumstances had placed her.

"Shall I tell you the story of my girl-life," said the strange, weird woman, putting a fresh supply of wood upon the fire, which had fallen into embers.

Margaret's interest manifested itself in her face, as she answered, "I would like to know if others have suffered like myself?"

"It will help you bear your own burden better, and perhaps show you that none escape the fire. I will proceed with my narrative."

"Many years ago, so many that it seems as though ages must have intervened, I loved a young and elegant man, who returned my affection with all the devotion which an earnest, exacting nature like mine could desire. I was the only child of wealthy parents, who spared no pains or expense on my education. With them I visited Europe, and while there, met this person, who seemed to be all that mortal could aspire to; refined, educated, and the possessor of a fortune. The alliance was the consummation of my fond parents' wishes. I will pass over the weeks of bliss which followed our engagement, and speak of scenes fraught with the most intense excitement to myself and others. We were at Berlin when my engagement was sanctioned by my parents. A few weeks subsequent, there arrived at the hotel at which we were stopping, a family of most engaging manners. We were at once attracted to them, and in a few days words of kindly greeting were exchanged, and finding them very genial, a warm friendship soon existed between us. The family consisted of parents, three sons, and two daughters. Laura, the eldest, was the one to whom I was particularly drawn. She was tall, graceful, and had about her an air of elegance, which showed unmistakably, her early associations. But to the point: I had been walking with my lover one evening, in the summer moonlight, and had retired to my room, strangely fatigued. I had never before parted from Milan, my betrothed, with such a lassitude as then pervaded my entire being. I had always felt buoyant and strong.-That night, as I laid on my bed, seeking in vain the rest which sleep might give me, I seemed suddenly to float out in the air, to rise above my body, and yet I distinctly felt its pulsations. The next moment, the sound of voices attracted me, and though I was in my room, and the persons in conversation in a distant apartment, yet I could hear every word which was uttered. What was my horror to see, for my sight was open as strangely clear as my hearing, the beautiful Laura sitting beside Milan, his arm encircling her waist. I tried to speak, but no sound came from my lips. I shook with fear and wonder. I had surely died, I thought, just then, and this is the vision and hearing of the soul released from flesh. 'O, Milan, hear me, hear me,' I cried in anguish. But no sound of my own lips floated on the air. Nothing was heard but their words, which I was obliged to hear. And O, how my heart was turned to stone, and my brain to fire, as these words came to my ears:

"Love her! Why, dearest Laura, whom I have adored so long, and whom chance has again brought into my path,--how can you question my affection for you,' and then I saw that he knelt at her feet!

"I think I heard but yesterday, that you were engaged,' continued the fair and brilliant girl, at whose feet he still remained.

"O, angel of my heart, will no words convince you that I love you beyond, above all women? I have in times past exhausted the language of love in speaking to your heart, Laura, are you heartless? I can

plead no more.'

"I saw the tears glitter on her face as purely white as marble, then her lips parted and these words fell on my ear,--

"O, Milan, I would that I could divine my feeling towards you. My heart is full of love for you, but my reason falters, and something within me tells, I must not accept you. I feel thrills of horror at times, even when my affection turns toward you. I cannot fathom the strange mystery.' She bowed her face in her hands and wept. I saw him rise from his kneeling posture, and walk away to hide his emotions. I felt the fearful contest going on within himself, and then all grew dark. I heard no sound again, though I listened intently. I seemed back again in my form-sleep at last came to my weary senses. In dreams, then, I was walking again with him, by a beautiful lake, over which a storm had just passed, leaving a lovely rainbow arching its bosom. I felt the pressure of his hand, as he held mine, and saw his eyes beam tenderly into mine own.

"The storm is over,' he said, 'see how the waves are tipped with golden rays.'

"Cheered by these words, I looked on the scene-the calmed lake, the bow of promise,--with a feeling of rapturous delight thrilling my whole being. Gazing thus earnestly, my attention was drawn to a curious ripple on the lake's surface. Then I beheld a female form rising from the waters, upon whose broad, white brow were these words:-Loved and Deserted. Startled by this, I turned to look upon Milan, but I saw him not. He had fled, and I was alone. All was lonely and still as death.

"Tremblingly I pursued my way back. The sun was sinking behind the hills, and darkness would overtake me before I could reach home. I quickened my speed, when suddenly I stumbled over something in my path. A light from the heavens, a flash of summer lightning revealed a grave, from which the form of a fair, sweet girl arose, and said, 'Beware! He, too, loved me, and for his love I pined and died.' The form vanished and the air seemed full of sounds of admonition, while around me appeared hosts of beings of another world. My senses reeled. I called for help, and must have cried aloud, for just then I heard my mother's voice from the adjoining room,--'What is it, Sibyl?' and when I awoke she was at my side.

"Bring a light,' I cried, as I placed my hand on my forehead, which was cold and damp with perspiration. Mother went to her room, and returned with a candle and came to my bed side.

"I can remember her look of horror, as though it was but yesterday-and her voice when she sobbed, rather than spoke these words:-'My child, O, my poor child, what has happened?' Then she fainted.

"I learned on the morrow, that my beautiful hair had turned white;

not one thread of my deep brown tresses was left, and my features too, were shrunken. That night's vision had done the work of years of suffering, and Sibyl Warner, the belle, the heiress, was no longer an object of love.

"A physician was summoned the next morning, who pronounced me suffering under mental hallucination, for I had told my mother all my strange dream or vision. I had no way to prove that my lover was treacherous, and I alone must suffer. But Laura. What was my duty towards her? was my dominant thought, even while I sat writing, a day or two after, a note to Milan, releasing him from his engagement. Vainly my mother entreated me to see him just once more. I was inexorable, and there being nothing now to bind us to Europe, we made all possible haste to return to our native land.

"Laura came to bid me good-bye. I tried to speak my fears to her, but my tongue seemed paralyzed. I kissed her warmly, and the tears flowed over her pale, lovely face. We parted. I knew she would be his bride ere long. I hoped she would be happy; but the revelation of that night led me to fear that such might not be the case.

"The first week of our voyage home was very pleasant, but soon after, a gale arose, and then a fearful storm set in. After being tossed by wind and wave five days, our ship went down. O, that morning so vividly present to my memory now. My parents were both lost. I was saved with a few of the passengers, and most of the ship's crew,--a vessel bound to my own native port, took us on board. But what was life to me then, alone, and unloved as I must ever after be.'

"It was not the Sibyl Warner who stepped on shore the day of our arrival who had left it years before; not the young girl of seventeen, but a woman, with love, trust, hope, all departed--a wreck of her former self, and yet within, a strange light glittering. As one sees, hung over dangerous, impassable ways at night, or half sunken rocks, a light telling of danger, so I had thrown over my entire being a blaze of fire, which, while it guided others, seemed to be consuming myself. I possessed what is now called 'second sight,' and could see the motives of persons, and their most secret thoughts and designs. Life became burdensome because I could not balance the power with any joy, until I learned that I must live for others and not for myself, alone.

"My father's estate was settled at last, and I had means enough to live in luxury and ease the rest of my days; but a strange inward prompting continually urged me to give up my former mode of living. I disposed of my property, exchanging it for ready money, and one day found myself penniless, through the treachery of one who professed to be my friend. I had not been allowed to learn his motives, and fraudulent designs, because, as I subsequently saw, my experience must be gained through toil and want, but when others were in danger of losing their material goods, I could readily discern their perils, and warn them.

"Since then, I have travelled years and years, following this light; when I did not, I have failed in my mission. I am not understood. This little village, to which seven years ago I found my way, has not a soul in it that knows me as anything but a 'Witch'-a diviner of events. I have sat in halls of splendor, and revealed strange things to men and women. I have visited the sick and down-trodden-and everywhere this power has gone with me, carrying comfort and light. I think my earthly mission is almost over. I seem to see a light, like the glimmer of a lamp which shines for a traveller to guide him home."

She paused. The story was told. Margaret sat silent, too much occupied with her own deep thoughts, to look on the woman's face.

It was past midnight. The fire was out, on the hearth. A strange stillness pervaded the room. It grew oppressive. Margaret rose and went towards the old woman, who seemed to have dropped asleep. She took the withered hand in her own. It dropped lifeless. She was dead; the two whose lives had become as one by suffering, were parted. Sibyl had gone to that world where the erring are forgiven. Margaret was left to struggle on with an adverse fate, and thereby ripen for the kingdom.

The morning flooded through the narrow windows of the humble cot, and lit up the pale, dead features with a strange light. Margaret must leave. Though heeding the woman's words of warning, and resolving to avoid the stranger she had met, she saw but one course before her, and that was, to go to the city and seek refuge in some hospital, during her approaching need. She struggled with her feelings a long time at leaving the dead alone, and so irreverently, but circumstances were pressing her on; she could not do otherwise, and stepping out from the shelter, where her soul had been so deeply thrilled, she walked rapidly to the station, and sat with her veil closely drawn, awaiting the hour for the departure of the train. It came at last, though the time seemed very long to her, the more so, as she was in constant fear of being recognized, but fortunately no one saw her whom she knew.

She trembled all over, as she took her seat in the car, and saw an elegantly dressed woman enter and look about as though in search of some one; for under the "purple and fine linen" was the stranger, the willing destroyer of hundreds of young, innocent lives. To her relief, however, the woman passed on to another car, and Margaret felt as though all danger was over. It gave her a respite from her fears, that was all, for she did not know that the woman's keen eye recognized, and was quietly laying her plans to ensnare her.

One weary form was through with its earthly toil; one bark was moored to celestial shores, beyond this rough clime, this imperfect world, in which all are judged by externals. She was no longer old and wrinkled,--"But a fair maiden in her father's mansion."

The town buried her and sold the few articles of furniture to defray expenses. Thus ended the life of one who was once the belle of a great city, the child of luxury and tender care, and her body was laid in the town lot among the graves of the poor. All supposed she died alone, at night, and a few words of real pity fell from some lips as all that remained of her on earth was borne through the streets.

Before the winter snows fell, Mrs. Armstrong planted a white rose beside her grave, remarking to her husband, that it was hard for one to die alone unloved, and a stranger to all about her. "She may have been once lovely and beloved," she said, as she pressed the sod close about the tree. "I should not like to die away from my kindred, with none to care for my last resting place." This done, the kind woman walked home happier for the deed of goodness she had performed, while unseen hands dropped their heavenly benedictions on her head.

CHAPTER XVII.

In a small parlor in the city of Berlin, where, fifty years ago, young Sibyl's heart had thrilled to words of love, sat a party of young men, over their wine, while mirth and song flowed freely.

Light-hearted, and free from care, they had met to pass the evening hours, with songs and wondrous tales.

"Come my good fellows," said the eldest, who appeared to be the leader of the group, "we must relate our stories, as the hours are waning. Krepsel, we will hear from you first, to-night."

"Shall the tale be sad or gay?" said Krepsel, looking around the group.

"Either," exclaimed the voices in chorus. He took a glass of wine and then commenced.

"Many years ago a young man was studying in a Military Academy in this city, who, a few weeks after his entrance, had a strange dream, or vision, which changed all the future which he had mapped out for himself. He had a great love of art, and was often found with his pencil and paper, apart from others, instead of mingling in their recreations. For several nights, he dreamed that a lovely female approached his bed-side, and bent over him with a look of

affectional interest.

"The vision so vividly impressed him that he employed his first leisure moment in sketching the lovely face. At every touch and line, his admiration grew more intense, until at length he could scarcely keep the fair image from being ever prominent in his mind. It haunted his day dreams, till he could scarcely conceal his impatience to relate the strange vision to his mother and sister. The fair one stood each night at his side, until the first day of his vacation season arrived, and he left to pass its days at home. When within a few miles of his destination, he saw the same face before his waking vision. This time her features were sad, but not less lovely. Indeed the air of melancholy gave the features a deeper charm, and more strongly than ever he desired to reach his home, and find, if possible, a solution of the strange apparition.

"At last the hills of his native town rose to his view; then the old pines which sheltered his home. Soon he felt the warm tears on his cheek, and the soft arms of his mother and sister around his neck.

"Where is Reinhold?' he asked, after he had released himself from their embrace.

"He is away to-day; gone to a fair, but will be back by supper time, and bring his fair affianced.

"Reinhold engaged!' exclaimed Conrad, in tones so strange that Marie, his sister, turned pale. But his quick return to himself assured her that he was not angry, as she supposed, only surprised; and taking his proffered arm they walked together in the garden-talking of old scenes and pleasures, till even the fair face of his vision was forgotten, and he rested his eyes in tender, brotherly love, on the fair girl at his side.

"They were in close conversation, so earnest, they did not hear the approaching footsteps, when the well-known voice of his brother called:

"Welcome, Conrad; welcome home,' and the next instant a pair of stout arms were around him.

"I believe he is stronger than you, Con., with all your military drills,' said Marie, laughing to see her brother trying to extricate himself.

"I am so glad you have come,' said Reinhold, 'I want you to see your new sister,' then he called her from where she stood apart from them, behind a clump of trees. Conrad's back was towards her when she approached, and he turned, at his brother's words.

"Miss Rosa,--Conrad, my brother,' and for the first time he looked on the face that had so long haunted his dreams.

"My God!" he said, 'It is the same,' and fell prostrate on the ground.

"The poor girl flew to the house, laid her head on the shoulder of Reinhold's mother, and wept bitterly. She, too, had seen his face in her dreams, and supposed it an ideal which she should never meet. She had seen it before she met Reinhold, and thought as she looked on him, that he approximated somewhat to it, nearer than she even hoped to see, and had grown day by day to love him, not as one ought a lover, but tenderly like a brother.

"The deepest anxiety seized the good parents, and Marie, to fathom the cause of Conrad's strange state. They carried him to the house, where he lay insensible for hours, but once only his lips parted, and then he breathed the name of 'Rosa,' in accents so tender, that his brother, who stood bending over him, in agony of grief at his state, flew from the room.

"In half an hour Conrad started as though shot, and rose from the bed with blood-filled eyes, and wildest terror on his features. He placed his hand upon his heart, and then sinking on his knees, cried, imploringly, 'God forgive me; I have killed my brother!'

"Go and call Reinhold, Marie,' said the affrighted father, 'and prove to the poor boy that his brother is alive and well. O, what has come over our happy home.'

"Marie flew from room to room; no Reinhold was to be found. Then to the garden, calling his name at each step. A wild fear seized her young heart; her brain grew giddy; yet on she went, calling again and again his name. As though impelled by an unseen force, she flew till she reached the edge of a wood, where herself and brothers had played together. She went on. Something lay on the ground; an object, she could not at first discover what. A cold chill run through her frame. The blood seemed to stagnate in every vein, for there, under an old oak, lay the lifeless body of Reinhold.

"She fainted, and fell. The cool air blew on her temples and restored her to consciousness. She passed her hand over her forehead, as though trying to recall some terrible dream,--and then it all burst upon her mind, more fearful and appalling in its rebound.

"My mother, my father,' were the only words that broke from her lips, and she went back, slowly, for the fright and agony had almost paralyzed her brain and limbs.

"You were gone a long time,' said her anxious parents, who did not see her face when she entered; 'where is Reinhold?'

"She had no words. The deathly face, the beating heart, and the trembling limbs, told all. She led them to the spot, and the mystery appeared still deeper.

"Seven days Conrad lay in a raging fever. At their close, reason returned, and they learned from him the vision which had so haunted him, and wondered over the strange phase of life, in which action had been involuntary, but dual.

"They buried Reinhold under the tree where he had shot himself, and kept it covered with flowers, watered by tears.

"Poor Rosa returned to her home with her good parents, and pined slowly away. Conrad held his brother's memory sacred, and never breathed words of love to his affianced. 'She will be his in Heaven,' he said, as he walked with his sister one day to his grave; and when the Summer flowers faded they made another beside it, for Rosa went to join Reinhold, and to guard, with tender love, Conrad and Marie."

Krepsel rose from the chair. The hours were waning.

"We can have but one more," said the leader, "and from whom shall it be?"

"From Berthhold," cried several voices.

"I have seen his eyes full of strange, weird tales to-night," said one.

"I know by his far-off look he has something interesting to say," said another.

"Berthhold, take the chair," said the leader.

He rose, walked like one in a dream, took the seat, gazed a few moments around, and then commenced:

"My story will be told in a few words. It is not of tradition, but experience."

All eyes turned to the youth, whose face glowed with a strange light, as he commenced.

"While sitting here to-night, listening to the story just narrated, my eyes have seen something I never saw before, and I pray I may not again see, at least until my nerves are stronger."

"What was it? What was it like?" they all cried together, while Berthhold looked around the room, as though expecting the vision to be repeated.

They were called to order by their leader, and he went on,--

"A soft, misty light filled the room, and rested at last just before me. I strained my eyes to assure myself that I was not dreaming, and

looked upon all your faces to assure myself that I was of the earth, and not a spirit. Then my eyes seemed to be fastened upon the light. In vain I tried to remove them; I could not; and only hoped none of you would notice me.

"Soon a face, radiant and fair, burst from the mist; one almost too lovely to gaze upon. I was spellbound as I gazed, then the vision of the face faded. I seemed to float away, far over the sea, and there came before my sight a low, humble cot, whose walls offered no resistance to my vision. They seemed like glass as I looked through them, and saw sitting in a chair an old woman, wrinkled and faded, her hair white as snow, but on her face a peace which gathers on those who sleep the last sleep.

"I also felt conscious of another presence, but could not see any one. Then all was dark again. I saw neither mist nor cot, but something spoke to me. A voice whispered in my ear, 'Tell Milan I forgive him.' That is the name of my mother's father."

"How strange," said the listeners, who had followed him closely to the end.

"Does your grandfather still live?" inquired one.

"He was alive this morning, and is now, for aught I know."

The party were about to separate, when a messenger entered in great haste, and called for Berthold, stating that his (Berthold's) grandfather was very ill, and greatly desired his presence.

He was not long in answering the summons, leaving those who had listened to his story wondering over it, which wonder was not a little increased by this sudden call.

It was thought that the old gentleman was dying, but when Berthold went and sat by his side he brightened up, and motioned for the others to leave the room.

"I have been very ill," he said, grasping the hand of his grandson, "and have had a terrible dream. For fear I may some day depart suddenly, I wish to tell you of a portion of my early life, that you may avoid the sin, and escape the suffering which I have endured."

He then related the wrong of his early years, in deluding a young and pure girl, while loving another.

"Have you a picture of the one you allude to," asked Berthold.

His grandfather started as though a voice from the other world had spoken to him.

"Why, how do you know that? No one but myself knows that I carry her miniature about me."

"May I see it?" asked his grandson, not a little alarmed at the excited manner of the sick man.

"Yes,--that is if no one knows it,--not even Laura. Mind, Berthold, your grandmother knows nothing of this,--not a word."

Berthold's word was sacred, and the old man drew from his pocket an oval case of blue velvet, ornamented with pearls.

"Here, look, and be quick; I fear some one may come; and if, if I should die, Berthold, take this and keep it forever."

"I will," said the faithful boy, as he unclasped the case.

Was he dreaming? There, before him, was the same; yes, the very same fair face he saw in the mist. He could not take his eyes from the picture, so strange was the spell.

"I have seen this face to-night, grandfather," said Berthold, going close to him, and laying his hand upon his brow.

"Seen what! seen her? Sibyl! O, God, she must have died."

He sank back exhausted on his pillow.

"Did it--did she speak?" he gasped, as he revived.

"Yes. She said, 'Tell Milan I forgive him!'"

"Berthold, Laura, quick! O come,--my breath is go-. I--am--dy--."

He, too, was gone; gone before his wife could be summoned; gone to meet one he had so greatly wronged, perhaps to learn of her beautiful truths, which her sad life experience had taught her; and perchance to woo her soul, this time with truth and love.

Berthold kept the miniature, and when, after a few months, the club met again, confirmed the truth of the story he had startled them with that night. He could never account for the lowly cot, and the old wrinkled woman, but he remembered his grandfather's dying words, and never wooed where he knew he could not give his heart and soul; nor was his vision ever again unfolded, but one of heaven's choicest, purest women was given him to love, and in her high and spiritual life, his soul grew to sense that which by sight he could not obtain.

Three years had swept by, with their lights and shadows, bringing no change to the house of Mr. Wyman, save the daily unfolding of Dawn's character, and the deepening happiness of all.

Mr. Wyman had promised Dawn that when she was eighteen he would take her to Europe.

Miss Vernon passed her time very happily, dividing it between teaching, study, and labor, and found herself improving daily, both spiritually and physically; indeed, such a change had come over her whole nature, that she could scarce believe herself the same being that entered Mr. Wyman's home, three years previous. Life opened daily to her such rich opportunities for usefulness and growth, that no day seemed long enough to execute her plans.

Mr. Temple, whom the reader will remember as one of the guests of the party, came often to Mr. Wyman's, and soon found himself greatly interested in Miss Vernon.

It was a new experience to her to contrast him with Hugh, and to learn to analyze the new feeling which suffused her being,--that deep, undercurrent which lies beneath all surface emotions and interests, namely, Love.

How broad, deep and rich her being grew. How near and dear to her now seemed Hugh, her friend and brother. How sharply were the lines of their true relation defined,--a relation as pure as untrodden snow. Her heart overflowed with thankfulness to the giver of all good, who had brought her feet into such pleasant paths of peace.

In the same spot where ten years ago Mr. Wyman and fair Alice were seated, sat Herbert Temple and Florence. The night was as fair and cloudless, while the rustle of the trees alone broke the stillness. Pale moonbeams rested at their feet, while words of love flowed between them.

"I think I found my way to your heart the first evening I saw you, for I felt my being thrill as though I had another life pulsing with my own; am I right?"

She raised her eyes to his, and answered in words which he ever treasured,--

"It was so, Herbert. I felt as though I was stepping from my own confines; as though some strong hand had taken mine, and infused new life into my being. It was when you played, Herbert, that I was absorbed in your soul."

"It was you, Florence, who helped me to play. I felt and was inspired by your interest, your appreciation, for no one can do such things alone. I never play as I did that night, when alone. Now, that I shall have you always to help, shall we not be happy?"

"O, Herbert, will these days last? Will love bind us the same in years to come?"

"No, not the same; but deeper, holier, if we do not exhaust ourselves by free ownership."

"You talk like Hugh," she said, resting her hand on his arm, and looking out on the soft, still scene before them.

"I would I could talk like him. While I admit no oracles, I confess I admire his views, and his life which is a perfect transcript of his theories."

"He is a noble man, Herbert, and has done much towards my development. I thought I loved him all I could, but since you have come to my life, I feel nearer than ever to him."

"Such is the law, and beautiful it is, that true love expands our being, while the opposite contracts it. Hugh's views at first seemed wild, and rather disorderly, but close contact with the man, and opportunities of knowing him, in public and private, have made me acquainted with his worth. Love him always, Florence, and when I take you to my home never fear that I shall not understand you need to see him at times alone, for he will need you. You have been friends, and friends need each other. I am not taking you from him in soul and heart; I will but help you to give yourself to him, with your being made richer by my love."

Florence had no words with which to thank him. She only nestled closer to the heart which loved her so well.

"How lovely this night is," she said, breaking the long silence which followed; "the stillness is so sacred, I would not for worlds disturb it with a sound, even of the sweetest music."

"Your words give me much comfort, Florence, for long have I wanted some one who could sympathize with me on that subject. To most persons, sound alone is considered music; to me, a night like this should not be jarred save by soft vibrations of aeolian strings. And the same of beautiful scenery. I cannot bear to hear one burst forth in song, for the landscape is to me, in itself, a Te Deum, a perfect song of praise."

"I am made happy by your words, Herbert, for there are moments when music seems to me to be so sadly out of place, that I feel almost like crushing the instrument and performer together. And now may I ask you, why the music of some performers gives me pain instead of pleasure? I know, but I want your answer. We will take Miss York,

for instance; she is full of hearty, earnest life, robust and strong. I know she plays in time and tune, and sings correctly, but I feel all out of tune, and completely disharmonized when she performs in my presence."

"I fully comprehend your feelings. I have had the same myself, and my interpretation of it is that I cannot accept the music through her organism; or, rather, her atmosphere being between the subject and the auditor, the latter feels only time and sound, not music, not the idea the composer designed to convey. Is not that it?"

"Exactly. After all, there are very few who are organized sufficiently delicate to translate music."

"True, Florence; how many seek the glorious art, not for its uplifting power, but as a means of display. Let us love it for the good it does for mankind, and use it, not for the end, but as a means, of enjoyment."

"I play but seldom, Herbert, dearly as I love it."

"I am not sorry to hear that. I think that greater good is obtained by not being too much in its immediate sphere. Of course greater mechanical skill is acquired by constant practice, but I know by my own experience that when the soul has reached a certain height of culture, the physical nature becomes subordinate to the spiritual, and is controlled by it, because the two natures are then replete with harmony, and the fullness of the one finds expression through the other,--the hand moves in complete obedience to the spirit. Dearly as I love music, I cannot hear or execute it too often. On this I am pleased to see we agree. The air is growing chilly; we will go in and sing one song before we part. What shall it be?"

"The Evening Song to the Virgin," she answered.

Seating himself at the instrument, he played the prelude soft and low, then their voices mingled in that graceful, gliding song, as only voices can mingle that are united in the harmony of love.

It filled the whole air with sweetness, and Hugh's senses revelled in the holy spell, as he sat alone on the piazza, thinking of the past, his lovely Alice, and the beautiful child which was left to bless his years.

No other song followed; none could. Florence listened to the retreating footsteps of her lover, and then sat in the moonlight to think of her joys.

Howard Deane was weary. Life had not gone pleasantly with him, since we introduced him to the reader. His business, so lucrative and once full of interest, demanding his closest attention, now seemed of no account. Existence had become to him a round of duties mechanically performed. The very air was leaden, and void of life. He needed a

revivifying influence, something to invigorate him. His energies languished, and there seemed no one to extend to him a helping hand, as his wife was at deadly variance with those who could have given him what he was so much in want of.

The fire had gone out on his domestic altar, for no trusting wife sat there. She was dark and heavy in soul. They had become strangers to each other, not by roaming, but by a too close relationship.

Mrs. Deane had returned only bodily to her home; her heart and mind were on a sea of doubt, at the mercy of every wind and wave. No ripple of love broke their long silence, as they sat together in their home. They each felt lonely, and would have been far less so apart. Mr. Deane at length broke the spell, by saying,--

"I am going to the mountains next week, Mabel; would you like to go?"

"I am going home. Mother has sent for me. I may as well be there as here; no one will miss me."

She had better have left the words unsaid, and saw it herself in the dark, contracted brow of her husband, who replied,--

"I shall go alone. It is best I should. You can remain with your parents the remainder of the season, for I shall not be back for months," then abruptly left the room.

The words were as decisive as his manner. She felt she had gone too far, and would have given worlds to retract. But it was too late; he was now out of hearing.

What had come over their lives? They were treading a road thick with dust, which rose at every step, soiling their once white garments. Surely they needed a baptism to make them pure.

The cloud which overhung their sky held the heavenly water which would make them clean.

It came in the form of sickness. Their eldest boy laid ill and near unto death. Hope and fear alternated in their hearts as they stood beside the little one, and saw a raging fever course through his veins, and day by day the full form wasted away. Thus the baptismal waters flowed over their souls, and they wept together. Joy beamed from their faces when the dread crisis was past, and they were told he would live. Through sorrow they were reunited. They had wandered, but were returning with life and love in their hearts, and crowns of forgiveness in their hands. Thus do we ever become strong through our sufferings, and seeming evils work our good, for they are parts of the great unity of life.

Mrs. Deane lessened her prejudices, and learned to know and love those whom her husband had found worthy, and among them, Miss Evans.

With her she passed many pleasant hours, and that noble woman made known to her, many paths of rest and peace which she had previously through her ignorance and jealousy, persistently shunned.

The years sped on; some were gathered to their homes above; some found new relations and strong ties to bind them here, until, at length, Dawn's eighteenth birth-day came, bright and sunny over the eastern hills. On the morrow, with her father, she was to leave for the city where they were to embark for England. The morning was passed in receiving the calls of friends, and later Mr. and Mrs. Temple and Miss Evans came to dine with them. The evening was spent by Dawn alone with her father.

The next day, Florence, now a happy wife and mother, came to see them off. It had seemed to her for a month previous that all her partings with them had been final adieus, and now the moment was at hand which was really to separate them-for how long she knew not. It was not strange that a vein of sadness ran through the pleasure of the hour. But each strove to conceal aught that would mar the joy with which Dawn anticipated her journey, and the gladness which Florence would experience on their return was by her made to do service at this their time of departure.

Hugh took the hand of Florence in his own, and held it so closely that his very soul seemed to vibrate its every nerve. Then his lips touched her brow; fond good-byes were exchanged, the quick closing of the carriage door was heard, and they were gone.

Statue-like stood Florence for several moments, then going to the room she had for so many years occupied, she permitted her tears to flow, tears which she had kept back so nobly for their sake. Her husband walked through the garden with a sense of loneliness he scarce expected to experience; and then back to the library, where he awaited the appearance of his wife.

She came down soon with a smile on her face, but the swollen eyes showed the grief she had been struggling with.

"We must look cheerful for Miss Evans' sake," he said, kissing her; for, somehow he felt as though she too had gone, and he must assure himself that it was not her shadow alone that stood before him.

"It is so nice," she said brightly, "that Hugh has prevailed on Miss Evans to remain here during his absence. It would be so lonely with only Aunt Susan at home. As it is, we can see the library and drawing-room open, and we shall not feel his absence so keenly."

"And what a charming place for her to write her book in," remarked Herbert, walking to the bay-window that overlooked the garden.

"We can come over every week and see her and the house, which will be next thing to seeing Dawn and her father," said his wife, earnestly.

Despite all his theory, his large and unselfish heart, a strange feeling came over him, a cloud flitted over his sunny nature. It was hardly discernable, and yet were it to take a form in words, might have displayed itself thus: "I fear she loves them better than me." He shook the feeling off, as though it was a tempter, and said fondly:

"As our friend Hugh arranged that we take tea in his home to-night, we will go and meet Miss Evans, who, I think, must be near by this time."

It was Mr. Wyman's desire that Miss Evans should be at his house as soon after they were gone as possible, and establish herself within it. She granted his wish, and requested them to bid her adieu at her own home, which she would close immediately after, and repair to his.

"What an atmosphere she will have to work in," said Florence, as she arranged a delicate vine over a marble bust. "But come, it will be lonely for Miss Evans to walk all the way by herself, to-day."

They met her just turning into the path. She had a wreath on her arm, Dawn's parting gift, and a beautiful moss rose-bud in her hair, which Hugh gave her when he bade her good-bye.

"How were they, happy?" were the first words of Florence, anxious to hear a moment later from her dear ones.

"Very happy and bright," answered Miss Evans, with an inward struggle to keep back a tide of emotion. Florence clasped her hand, and held it in a manner which said, "Let us be close friends while they are away, and help each other."

The firm pressure assured her that we may talk without words, they entered the house, and sat down to a nice repast, which Dawn had prepared with her own hands, while the room was fragrant with blossoms which she had gathered an hour before her departure.

After supper they walked in the garden, and when twilight came on, returned to the house, and listened to the charming music which came from the instrument, under Herbert's magic touch.

"I expect we shall all dream of sunny France, and dreamy Italy," said Miss Evans, after the music had ceased, and the time for words had come.

"If we expect to dream, we must place ourselves in proper condition; so we must bid you good night, Miss Evans," said Mr. Temple, rising.

"I did not expect my words to hasten your departure, Mr. Temple. Can you not stay longer?"

"Not another moment," he answered, taking his wife's bonnet and shawl, which she had brought from the hall, and putting them upon her. "I expect Florence has gone with our good friends. Come and see us, Miss Evans, soon. Good night; I will speak for both. Florence has gone away in spirit."

At this Florence roused, and kissed Miss Evans good night. She had no words. She was very weary, and felt glad to know that her home was not far off, only a pleasant walk, for Hugh would not consent that there should be a great distance between them, so long as the freedom to build where they chose was allowed.

Florence was indeed weary; neither the morrow, nor the deep love and devotion of her husband brought her strength back, but she pined day by day.

Miss Evans carried flowers, Dawn's favorites, to her each day, with the hope that she would revive. On the contrary, they only served to keep the spell of languor upon her. At last her husband grew alarmed, and one evening after she had retired to rest, earlier than usual, he sought Miss Evans, who, hearing his step on the carriage path, knew he was alone, and expected to be summoned to his wife.

"How is Florence, to-day?" she inquired, as soon he was seated.

"The same languor oppresses her, and I have come to speak with you about it. Can you enlighten me in regard to her state? Some strange fears have crept into my mind, I suppose, because my nerves are weak, in my anxiety for her." Here he paused, as though he dared not entertain the thought, much less make it known to another.

In an instant she read his fears.

"I think I understand the cause of your wife's languor, for, although not an educated physician, I lay some claim to a natural perception of the causes of physical and mental ills."

"Some people are magnetically related." She continued. "I think Hugh and your wife were bound by spiritual laws which are as sacred as physical. They lived upon each other's magnetism. She will droop for a while, but revive when she receives his letters. He will not feel the change so sensitively, as he has new life and interests before him every moment. This relation ought to be better understood, and will be, I trust, with many others, which are not now recognized as having an existence."

"Then you think she will recover?"

"Certainly; and a change for the better will be apparent as soon as she receives his first letter. She is only attenuated now, reaching after him, her friend and instructor for so many years."

"I feared-I almost-forgive me, Miss Evans, for the strange thought,

that Florence might, after all, have loved Hugh better than myself. I will not stand in her or any woman's way to happiness, if I know it."

"Drive that thought from your mind, Herbert." As she said this with so much depth of earnestness, he noticed that her manner and tone betrayed not a shadow of surprise at his confession, and his face turned inquiringly to her.

"It was a wicked thought, I know; let it rest with you, Miss Evans."

"It is buried," she said, "and will never know a resurrection. But as to its being wicked, it was far from that, and very natural."

"Your words allay my fears, and strengthen my trust."

"They have lived such an earnest life together that his was a constituent, a part of her own. No wonder that she drooped when this union of vital sympathy was divided. Neither is it strange that you should be agitated by doubts and fears; but let me assure you again, that she by this attraction is none the less your own. She will feel an infusion of his life through his letters, and regain her wonted strength. She is yours, and his too; and more to you because she is much to him."

A smile of peace settled over his disturbed features, as he took her hand, saying,--

"You have made me strong and trustful, and from this hour my life will flow in broader and deeper channels. My present is bright; my future all radiant with hope."

"I am very glad that your call has resulted so pleasantly," said Miss Evans, and as Mr. Temple left she sent her love to Florence, with the assurance that she would soon have the pleasure of welcoming her again to the home of Dawn.

CHAPTER XIX.

There are two classes that are specially liable to disease,--those who live grossly, and whose lives are spent in scenes of excitement, and those who are finely organized, so delicately constituted, that their nerves vibrate to every jar, not only of the physical but of the moral atmosphere.

There are persons whose routine of daily life is seldom if ever disturbed; whose minds are at ease on material questions. Having enough, and to spare, they seek their pleasure from day to day, with scarcely an interruption of their established course. Such may well be free from the ills of the flesh, and being so, they complacently attack the less fortunate, those whose lives are tumultuous and heavily-laden with their own and other's needs; applying to them such remarks as, "They might live more regular." "They work too much." "They do not work enough." "They go about too much." "They do not go about enough;" and having delivered their opinions, these self-satisfied mortals settle themselves down in their comforts, thanking God they are not as other men.

There are lives that are shaken with convulsions; circumstances over which no mortal has control, surge their wild, tempest-waves over them, and all their wishes are of no avail; they must take what is borne to them. Raving out life every moment; pressed on every side, with every faculty strained to its greatest tension, is it a matter of wonder that they become weak, that they sicken and suffer?

Sickness is not a sin, neither is its presence derogatory to our nature. It implies a susceptibility to the inharmonies of life, and is complimentary than otherwise to our organization. They are not to be envied who have never known an hour of pain and languor, for they come not under the discipline and instruction of one of life's great teachers. They are apt to be harsh, and cold, and unfeeling towards their fellows; apt to be boastful of their own strength, and regardless of the delicate sensibilities of others. While we should studiously endeavor to live in harmony with the laws of our being, it is nevertheless true that with all the caution we may exercise, we cannot avoid, if we are spiritually true, the jarring of the inharmonies of this world, and from this as much if not more than from any other cause, come the ills and pains of our earthly life.

These disturbances of the spirit produce to those of fine natures a similar disturbance of their physical condition; then disease follows and makes sad havoc with the temple of the soul.

On a subject so intricate as the cause of disease, only a few hints can here be given.

People become sickly from living too long together; from pursuing continuously one branch of study or labor; from meeting too often with one class of minds; from living on one kind of food, or on food cooked by one person; besides, there are countless other causes; agitations of mind, overtasked and irregular lives are constantly generating impure magnetisms, with which the whole atmosphere is tainted, and which those who are susceptible are forced to absorb.

As there are many causes of disease, there must be many ways of cure. No one system can regulate the disturbances of the complex machinery of the human frame.

Dr. Franklin subjected himself to what was denominated the air bath, as a remedial agent. Others believed in the direct action of the sun, placing themselves beneath glass cupolas to receive it; while still later we have the water-cure, which is thought by many to heal all diseases. These are right in combination, but no one will cure alone.

Does the strong man, with steady nerves, compact muscle, and perfect arterial circulation, need the same remedy when ill, as a less vigorous person, one whose hourly suffering is from a diseased nervous organization?

One member of a family argues that because he can bathe in ice water, another, with more feeble circulation, can do the same, and realize the same results. One man will take no medicine, another swallow scarcely anything else, and thus we find extremes following each other.

One ideaism in this direction is as much to be avoided as in any other. The man of good sense says, "I will take whatever is required to restore the balance of my system."

Of mental disorders we know little. Asylums for their treatment have multiplied in our midst, but few of the thousands of educated physicians are qualified to minister to a mind diseased. Past modes will not do for to-day. Our conditions are not the same. Our lives are faster, our needs greater. Our grand-parents lived in the age of muscle; we exist in the nerve period, and have new demands, both in our mental and physical structure.

And new light will come in answer to the demand. The eye of clairvoyance is already penetrating beyond science, and traversing the world of causes.

Eagerly Florence broke the seal of her first letter from Hugh. He had arrived safely, and wafted over the sea his own and Dawn's love and remembrance.

"Dawn desires to go to Germany, first," he wrote, "and as I have business with parties in Berlin, I shall gratify her wish. I thought, all along, how much I wished you were with us, but since writing I feel different. I need you at home to express myself to, when I am overflowing with thought. If you were at my side, when I am seeing all these things, we should both have the feast together, and be done. Now, in rehearsing it to you, I enjoy it over again. Very much we shall have to talk about, when we meet again. How I would like to transmit to your mind the vivid impressions of my own, when I first put my foot on the soil of England; but such things are not possible, and sometime I hope you will be here yourself, and feel the thrill of the old world under your feet."

This portion of the long and interesting letter so refreshed her,

that Miss Evans, when she came in after tea, guessed at once the cause of the sparkling eye that greeted her.

"Letters are wonderful tonics," said Mr. Temple, laughingly, as he glanced toward Florence.

"That depends from whom they come," she answered, and repented of it as soon as said. She looked up after a while, but there was no shadow on his face. She saw that he was sharing her joy, and then she knew that not a ripple of doubt would ever disturb their smoothly flowing life.

Miss Evans left at an early hour, and reaching her home, wrote till nearly midnight. Her nature was one that was most elastic at night; her brilliancy seemed to come with the stars.

Page after page fell from her desk to the floor; thought followed thought, till the mortal light seemed to give place to the divine. At length the theme grew so mighty, and words seemed so feeble to portray it, that she laid down the pen and wept,--wept not tears of exhaustion, but of joy at the soul's prospective. Sublime was the scene before her vision; enrapturing the prospect opening before earth's pilgrims, and she felt truly thankful that she was privileged to point out the way to those whose faith was weak, and who walked tremblingly along the road.

She gathered her pages, laid them in order, and then wrote the following in her journal:

"Night, beautiful night; dark below but brilliant above. I am not alone. These stars, some of them marking my destiny, know well my joys and my griefs. They are shining on me now. The waters are darkest nearest the shore, and perchance I am near some haven of rest. I have been tossed for many a year, yet, cease my heart to mourn, for my joys have been great. The world looks on me, and calls me strong. Heaven knows how weak I am, for this heart has had its sorrows, and these eyes have wept bitter tears. The warm current of my love has not departed; it has turned to crystals around my heart, cold, but pure and sparkling. There is a voice that can melt them, as the sun dissolves the frost.-I turn a leaf. This shall not record so much of self, or be so tinged with my own heart's pulsations,--this page now fair and spotless.

"I thought, a month ago, this feeling would never come again. I hold my secret safe; why will my nerves keep trembling so, when down, far down in my soul, I feel so strong?

"To-night I must put around my heart a girdle of strong purpose, and bid these useless thoughts be gone. I must not pulsate so intensely with feeling. My fate is to stand still and weave my thoughts into garlands for others. I must lay a heavy mantle on my breast, and wrap fold after fold upon my heart, that its beating may not be heard. Why have we hearts? Heads are better, and guide us to safer

ports.

"T is past the midnight hour. What scratches of the pen I have put upon this virgin page. So does time mark us o'er and o'er. We must carry the marks of his hand to the shore of the great hereafter. Beyond, we shall drink from whatever fount will best suffice us. Here, we must take the cup as 't is passed to us, bitter or sweet-'t is not ours to choose. These boundaries of self are good. Where should we roam if left to our inclinations? Let me trust and wait God's own time and way."

"Dear Florence," wrote Dawn, some months after they had been away, "I have seen gay, smiling France, and beautiful Italy with its wealth of sunlight, and its treasures of art. I have seen classic Greece,--of which we have talked so many hours,--and its fairy islands nestling in the blue Archipelago,--isles where Sappho sang. I have been among the Alps, and have seen the sunset touch with its last gleam, the eternal waste of snow; but more than all, I love dear Germany, the land of music and flowers, scholarship and mystic legends.

"Now, my good friend and teacher, how shall I describe to you my state amid all this new life? At first I felt as though my former existence had been one long sleep, or as I suppose the mineral kingdom might feel in passing to the vegetable order, as some one has expressed it.

"It was an awakening that thrilled my being with intensest delight; a fullness which left nothing to hope for. A new revelation of life has arisen within me, as sudden and grand as the appearing of those mysterious isles which are upheaved in a single night from the depths of the ocean.

"A deeper pulsation than I have ever known, now stirs my blood. I feel the claims of humanity calling me to labor. My purpose is strong; I shall return with this thrill in my heart, and become one of God's willing instruments. That He will own me, I feel in every heart-beat. My mission is to erring women, and you, my friend, will smile, I know, on my purpose.

"The other night I dreamed that a beautiful being stood by my side, while a light, such as I have never seen on earth, shone about her.

"'Tell me,' I said, 'why this heavenly halo is around you? and if I, too, may become like you?'

"'Listen.' She answered. 'Years ago, I lived on earth and passed through much suffering. I seemed to be placed in a close, high building, into which all the light that could enter came from above. I could only look up, with no power to turn to the right or left. After being years in this state, the rays coming thus directly from above, cleansed my soul, whitened my garment, and made it spotless. This light became a part of myself; it followed me to the other

world, and now, when I approach earth, it enables me to see all the errors and virtues of humanity. Wouldst thou be willing to become a light by which pilgrims can see the way to Heaven?’

“I would. My only desire is to do good,” I replied.

“It is easy to desire this,” she remarked, sadly.

“But wouldst thou be willing to be almost annihilated, were it by that only you might become a lamp to the pilgrim’s feet?’

“I looked into my heart, and think I spoke truthfully, when I answered that I would.

“Then thou art accepted,” the angel said. ‘It shall not be literal annihilation, although akin to it, for all your earthly desires must be swept away; all ambition, fame, learning, friends, must be sacrificed upon this altar. The light you will bear is fed alone from heavenly sources. Think again, child, if all these things can be as naught.’

“I searched my soul once more. One answer, one word broke from my lips,--‘Amen.’

“‘T is well,’ the angel visitant said; ‘thy being shall be turned to light.’

“I awoke. The morning sun shone in my windows, and laid in golden bars upon my bed. I thought long of the vision of the night, and then sat down to pen it to you. To me it is significant. Write and tell me if it seems but a dream to you. I should like to be permitted to glorify my name, and be the ‘Dawn’ of light to some of earth’s weary pilgrims.”

CHAPTER XX.

In a pleasant room in Frankfort, on a slight eminence which overlooked the river Maine, sat a young man, of about thirty years, in deep meditation. His face showed traces of recent suffering; his broad, high brow was white as marble, and his hands, though large, were soft and delicate as a woman’s. Near by sat a young girl, whose physiogomy showed close relationship to the invalid. She was his sister, and was travelling with him, hoping that change of air and scenery might produce a beneficial effect on his health.

"I think you seem stronger than when we came, Ralph; don't you?" She had been watching the color flickering on his face and lips, the last half hour.

"Yes, the air of Frankfort has done me good, and the present fatigue is only the result of my journey."

"I am glad to hear you say so; it confirms my impression, which is, that you will recover."

"Heaven grant it may be so. Long suffering has robbed me of the buoyancy of hope. I think I have not enjoyed myself more at any time during my illness, than while we were at Heidelberg, among its castles."

"I hope you will enjoy your stay here as much. You know how long you have wished to see the birthplace of Goethe."

"I have, and expect to see his statue to-morrow, which will be pleasure enough for one day; at least for an invalid. Do you remember his 'Sorrows of Werter,' Marion? In what work has the depth of men's emotional nature been so sounded?"

"I remember you read it to me last winter, while I was working those slippers you have on."

"Ah, yes; delightful days they were, too. I wonder if I shall be able to see Dannecker's Ariadne the same day?"

"I have forgotten, Ralph, the figure."

"It is that of a beautiful female riding on a panther. The light is let in through a rosy curtain, and falling upon the form, is absorbed and incorporated into the marble."

"How beautiful; I wish we could go to-day."

"I shall be stronger to-morrow, and perhaps be able to sketch a little before I leave."

"Ah, if you could. What a pity that we had to come away from Heidelberg without your being able to add anything to your folio."

"It was; but if I recover my health, as you think I will, I shall go again, and see how that place of beauty looks to me in full vigor."

"I wonder if there are many visitors at the hotel? Taking our meals as we do in our rooms, we see but little of them."

"There have been several arrivals to-day," she answered.

"And there are more coming. Sister, I feel strangely here. The

feeling has deepened ever since I came. I feel a soul; some one near me; a being strong in soul and body, and more lovely than any one I have ever met."

Marion looked distressed. She feared his mind was wandering. In vain she tried to hide her look of concern; he saw it, and relieved her fears by his words and manner.

"It is not mere fancy, nor mental illusion, my dear sister, but something real and tangible. I feel it in my entire being: some one is coming to make me whole."

"A woman?"

"Yes; a woman such as you nor I have never looked upon."

"You are weary now, Ralph; will you not lie down?"

"I will to please you; but I am far from being weary."

She smoothed his pillow, and led him to the couch. At that instant a carriage drove to the door, and several persons alighted.

Marion turned her gaze from the strangers to her brother. Never in her life had she seen him look as he did then. His eyes glowed, not with excitement, but with new life. The color mounted to cheeks and forehead, while he kept pacing up and down the room, too full of joy and emotion to utter a single sentence.

"What is it, brother?"

This question, anxiously put, was all she could say, for she perceived, dimly, a sense of some approaching crisis.

Her anxious look touched him, and he threw himself on the couch, and permitted her to pass her hand gently over his brow.

"There; it's over now."

"What, Ralph?"

"The strange tremor of my being. Marion, some one has come to this hotel, who will strangely affect my future life."

"The woman,--the soul you felt in the air?" she inquired, now excited in turn.

"Yes, the soul has come; my soul. I shall look on her before to-morrow's sun has set. I feel an affiliation, a quality of life which never entered my mental or physical organization before. And Marion, this quality is mine by all the laws of Heaven." He sank back upon the couch like a weary child, and soon passed into a sweet slumber.

Marion watched the color as it came into his face. It was the flush of health, not the hectic tinge of disease; and his breath, once labored and short, was now easy and calm as an infant's.

Some wondrous change seemed to have been wrought upon him. What was it? By what subtle process had his life blood been warmed, and his being so strongly affiliated with another life? and where was the being whose life had entered into his? Beneath the same roof, reading the beautiful story of "Evangeline."

The next morning Ralph arose, strong and refreshed, having slept much better than he had for many months.

"Such rest, Marion," he said, "will soon restore me to health," and his looks confirmed the truth of his statement.

"I should think you had found life's elixir, or the philosopher's stone, whose fabled virtues were buried with the alchemists of old. But who is the fairy, Ralph, and when shall we behold her face?"

"Before the sun has set to-day," he answered, confidently.

Marion smiled, looked slightly incredulous, and sat down to her books and work.

Towards the close of the day, her attention was attracted by a graceful figure approaching the river bank. Her hat had fallen from her head, displaying its beautiful contour, and in her hair were wild flowers, so charmingly placed, that they seemed as though they had grown there. She watched her with the deepest interest, and turned to beckon her brother to the window, when lo! he was directly behind her, and had seen the fair maiden all the while. He had been drawn there by an irresistible power, and in the single glance he felt the assurance that she was the being who was to bless his life. He would have given much, then, to have seen her face, and having watched her till out of sight, went to his couch for rest.

Marion looked on his placid features, and hope sprung up in her breast. She felt that her brother was, by some mysterious power, improving, and knew that he would fully recover his health. The flood-tides of affection flowed to the surface, and she wept tears of joy.

Towards sunset they walked out together. Even the mental excitement caused by looking upon Goethe's statue, and the beautiful Ariadne had not exhausted him as formerly, and he was able to go into the evening air for the first time for many months.

They returned to their rooms, and talked of the stranger.

"Is she not lovely?" asked Marion, after long silence.

But in that dreamy silence, Ralph had, in spirit, been absent from his sister and present with her of whom she inquired. The sound of her voice brought him back; he started and said,--

"Who?"

"Why the stranger, of whom we were speaking."

"Lovely?" he replied; "she is more than that, she is holy, heavenly, pure. But let us talk no more tonight, dear; I am weary."

The link was broken; her words had called him from the sphere of the beautiful stranger, and he needed rest.

"Just what I feared," she said to herself, "he is mentally excited, and to-morrow will droop."

Contrary to her fears, however, he awoke fresh and bright on the morrow, and able to visit with her, many places of interest. He did not see the stranger that day, nor the one succeeding.

"I fear they have gone," said his sister, as Ralph walked nervously through the room. "I saw several go last evening, and she may have been among the number."

"No, no; she has not gone. I should feel her absence were she away. I should have no strength, but lose what I have gained, and droop. I feel her here under this roof. I am approaching her, and shall, within a few hours, look on her face, and hear her voice."

"Ah, Ralph, don't get too much excited, for I want you to look well when father and mother join us at Paris. They will be overjoyed to see how much you have improved."

He made a hasty gesture, which she did not see, and then, ashamed at his feeling of impatience, went and sat beside her, and arranged the silks in her basket. Engaged in this light pastime, he did not hear a low rap at the door.

"Come in," rose to the lips of Marion; then the thought flashed on her mind that the caller might be a stranger, and she arose and opened the door.

"Have you a guide-book you can loan me?"

The voice thrilled Ralph's being to its centre. He raised his eyes and said,--

"Come in; we will find the book for you."

To Marion's surprise she entered and seated herself by the window, but never for a moment took her eyes from the features of Ralph.

His hands trembled violently as he searched for the book among a pile on the table, and Marion had to find it at last, and pass it to the stranger, who took it, but moved not. Her eyes seemed transfixed, her feet fastened to the floor.

"This is the person who has drawn my life so since I came here. He is ill, but will recover," she said, stepping towards him, and placing her soft, white hand upon his brow.

During this time Ralph was speechless, and felt as though he was struck dumb. He trembled in every limb, as she gently led him to the couch and motioned him to lie down. Then his limbs relaxed, his breath became calm, the face lost all trace of weariness, and he passed into a deep, mesmeric sleep. "Fold on fold of sleep was o'er him," and the fair one stood silently there, her eyes dreamy and far off, until his being was fully enrapt in that delicious state which but few on earth have experienced.

Then silently she withdrew, while Marion whispered in her ear, "Come again; please do, for this is so new and strange to me."

"I will," she said, and quietly departed.

An hour passed, and he did not awake; another, and still he slumbered. "Can it be? O, is it the sleep which precedes death? I fear it may be," and the anxious sister, musing thus, suppressed a rising sigh. He moved uneasily. She had disturbed the delicate state by her agitated thoughts.

"O, if she would come," said Marion, "I should have no fear."

At that instant the door opened, and the wished for visitor glided in.

"Has she read my thought?"

"Fear not," whispered the stranger, in a voice and manner not her own, "thy brother but sleepeth. All is well; disease will have left him when he awakes. I will stay awhile."

A volume of thanks beamed from Marion's face at these words, as she took her seat close by the side of the fair girl.

At the end of the third hour he awoke. The stranger glided from the room just as his eyes were opening, and Marion closed the door, and went and sat beside him.

"What was it like, Ralph? O! how strange it all seems to me."

"Like? sister mine; like dew to the parched earth; strength to the languished; light unto darkness. What was it like? Mortal cannot compare it to anything under the heavens. It was as though my being soared on downy clouds-the old passing out, weariness falling as I

ascended, and all sense of pain laid aside as one would a garment too heavy to be worn. I knew I slept. I was inspired with currents of a new life. I was lulled by undulating waves of light; each motion giving deeper rest, followed by a delicious sense of enjoyment without demand of action; a balancing of all the being. O! rest, such rest, comes to man but once in a lifetime. But where is the fair one to whom I am so much indebted for all this?" He glanced around the room.

"Gone. She left just as you were waking. But tell me, Ralph, is it the mesmeric sleep that has so strengthened you, and with which you are so charmed?"

"It must be. What wondrous power that being has; Marion, I am as strong and well as ever; look at me, and see if my appearance does not verify my assertion."

She looked and believed. The past hour had developed a wonder greater than could be found among all the works of art in that great city; for Christ, the Lord, had been there and disease had fled.

Ralph and Marion met the strangers quite often, and passed many happy hours in her society. Marion rallied her brother on his long tarry at Frankfort, at which he smiled, saying, "I cannot go while she remains." No more was said concerning his departure, it being her pleasure to go or stay, as he wished.

One bright morning, they sat under the trees. Ralph was sketching, while Marion and the young lady who had so entranced him, were amusing themselves with some portraits which he had drawn a long time previous, when a servant delivered a letter to Marion. She opened it eagerly, and said, "It's from mother, Ralph, and we must meet her in Paris by the twentieth; it's now the seventh."

A look of disappointment passed over his face, which was soon chased away by smiles, at the words of their companion who said:

"How singular. Father and myself are going there. We leave to-morrow."

Marion excused herself, and ran to her room to answer her mother's letter. The two thus left alone, sat silent for some time, until Ralph broke the calm with these words, "I long to know the name of one who has so long benefited me. I only know you as Miss Lyman. I should like to treasure your christian name, which I am sure is bright, like your nature."

"My surname is Wyman, not Lyman, and my christian name, Dawn."

"How strange! How beautiful!" almost involuntarily exclaimed Ralph.

"Will you allow me, Dawn," he said, after a brief silence, "to sketch your profile?"

"Certainly, when will you do it?"

"Now, if you have no objection."

"I have not the slightest, provided I can have a duplicate, in case I like it."

He complied readily, and she took a position requisite for the work.

"Look away over the river, if you please."

He did not know how much these words implied. Her gaze was far away, and would ever be, for her real home was beyond.

He succeeded at the first effort, and asked her judgment upon it.

"Truthful and correct," she said. "Now another for me, if you please."

"This is yours. I shall idealize mine, and in it I shall sketch you as you appear to me. Mine would not please you, I know."

"You judge me correctly. I wish my portrait to be exactly like myself."

"Yet if you sketched, you would want to draw your friends profiles as they appeared to you, would you not?"

"Certainly. Is this your speciality, heads, or do you go to nature and reproduce her wonderous moods and shades with your pencil?"

"My great ideal is Nature. You, too, are an artist."

"I have no talent whatever, but the deepest sympathy with Nature, and an appreciation of her harmonies."

"Do you not paint flowers, or sketch home scenes?"

"I have never used pencil or brush, and yet I feel at times such longings within me to give expression to my states, I think I must have, at least, some latent power in that direction."

"As all have. I could teach you in a very short time, to sketch woods, hills, and skies."

"I think I should never copy. You don't know how foreign it is to my nature to copy anything. I should respect artists more if they did not copy so much. I reverence the past; I honor and admire the pure lives and noble works of those who are gone; but where are the new saints and the new masters? Was genius buried with Michael Angelo and Raphael? The same God who inspired their lives, inspires ours. We can make ourselves illustrious in our own way. We may not all

paint, but whatever our work is, that should we do as individuals. If we copy, we shall have no genius to transmit to future generations."

Dawn wished to be pardoned if she had wearied her listener, but she saw at once, as she looked on his face, that the thoughts she had expressed were accepted, and that her words had not fallen on unappreciative ears.

"You have spoken my own views, and if my health remains, I shall give the world my best efforts in my own way. Nature shall be my study. I will not fall a worshipper, like Correggio, to light and shade, but use them as adjuncts to the great idea which must ever dwell in the soul of the faithful artist, to give the whole of nature."

"I would not have spoken so much upon a theme even so dear to me as this, had I not felt that you would accept my thoughts, and therefore knew that I should not weary you."

"I shall see you before you go," he said, retaining her hand which she extended, as she arose to leave.

"I should be very sorry not to bid you good-bye. Have you my portrait?" He handed it to her, and walked with her to the hotel.

"To-morrow she will depart, I may never see her again. Never! No, it cannot be. I shall see her, live near her, feel her life flowing into mine each day. It must be, I shall droop and fade without her, as the flower without dew or water." He went in and found the letter written, sealed and directed to Paris. He loved the word, since she was going there.

Dawn went to her room and wrote her last letter from the land of music, flowers, legends and art.

"Dear Ones at Home:-To-morrow we bid good-bye to this land of beauty, which so accords with my feelings. We shall bid adieu to its mountains, its castles, and its works of art. When you receive this we shall have visited Paris, thence to London to embark for home. 'Home,' dear word. All my roamings will only make me love home better, and those whose lives are so woven in with mine. Tell Herbert he must come here to have his inspiration aroused. When he has walked upon Mont Blanc; when he has sailed on the Rhine, stood by Lakes Geneva and Lucerne, and by the blue Moselle, then he will feel that his whole life has been a fitting prelude to a rapturous burst of immortal song. He must come to Germany before he can fathom the sea of sound, or understand in fullness what the rippling waves of sweet music are saying. Florence, Herbert! do not let old age come on you, before you see this land, if none other. It is growing dark, or I would write more. Were I to sing a song to-night it would be, 'Do they miss me at home?' Three years have passed; I could stay as many more and not see half of that which would interest and

instruct me, yet I feel ready to leave, for I know it to be my duty to do so. May the waves bear us safely to the arms of those who love us. Yours ever, DAWN."

CHAPTER XXI.

During the voyage home, Dawn was too indrawn to converse much with her father. He saw her state, and delicately left her to herself, except at brief intervals. What a help is such an one to us in our moods—one who knows when to leave us, and as well when to linger.

The days went swiftly by. As they neared home, Dawn's abstracted manner warmed to its usual glow, and parent and child talked earnestly of the joy of returning to their own dear fireside. With deepened life within, and extended views of happiness, how pleasantly would the days glide on, lit with the sunlight of the happy faces they were so soon to behold.

The autumn had just flashed its beauties on the forest trees, when Mr. Wyman and Dawn drew near their home. It was sunset when they reached the little station at L--and saw their carriage waiting, and Martin, their faithful servant, holding Swift. A bright face peeped out from a corner of the carriage. One bound to the platform, and Florence and Dawn were clasped in each other's arms. Tears sprang to Hugh's eyes as he held her hand and read in her happy face that all was well with herself and friends. The old horse even gave them a kindly greeting, turning his head and looking upon the joyous group, then pawing the ground as if anxious to take them to their home. They were not long in catching the hint, and soon Martin gave Swift the reins, and he pranced along as though his burden weighed no more than a feather.

"Who do you think is at our house?" inquired Florence.

"I have been too long away from yankee land to 'guess'; tell me at once, Florence."

"Miss Weston, whom we met at the sea-shore."

Dawn held up both hands with delight.

"Why did you not mention it in your last letter?"

"Because she arrived since I wrote."

"I hope she is to stay awhile with us," said Dawn.

"We shall need all the balancing power we can bring to offset our enthusiasm. Do you not think so, Florence?" asked Mr. Wyman.

"I do, indeed. I expect Dawn's earnestness will kindle such desires among these home-loving people, that by next spring, all L--will embark for Europe."

"Some fuel will not ignite," said Dawn, casting a mischievous glance at Florence.

"I think foreign travel has injured my pupil's manners," remarked Mrs. Temple, assuming an air of dignity.

"Yes, you must take her in charge immediately," answered her father. "But here we are at our own gate. Stop, Martin," and with a bound he sprang from the carriage. He could sit no longer. The familiar trees which his own hand had planted, spread their branches as though to welcome his return. Brilliant flowers flashed smiles of greeting. The turf seemed softer, and more like velvet than he had ever seen it; the marble statues on the lawn more elegant than all the beautiful things he had looked upon while away. Some hand had trailed the vines over the pillars of the house; the birds sang, and the air seemed full of glad welcomings. The good, honest face of Aunt Susan met them at the hall door, and a warm, hearty shake of the hand was the greeting of each.

Flowers everywhere,--pendant from baskets, and grouped in vases; vines everywhere,--laid as by a summer breeze, on marble busts and statuettes; blossoms everywhere:--but where was she whose thoughtfulness and taste was made manifest in all these?

Impatiently he passed to the drawing-room, then to the library, and a feeling of blank disappointment rose in his breast, for she he so much expected to see, was not there to greet him.

"I forgot to tell you," said Aunt Susan, "that no sooner was the carriage gone for you, then Miss Evans was called to a very sick friend. She left this note for you."

Hugh hastily opened it, and found a line expressing regret that such summons should come at such an hour, and welcoming him home with all the warmth of a true and earnest soul.

"O father! is it not heavenly to be back again?" and the sensitive daughter fell weeping with joy into her father's arms. He pressed her to his heart, held her as though she had been away from him all these years, instead of at his side beholding the wonders of the Old World. "Dawn, Dawn, my darling girl," was all he could say.

"Where is she?" she inquired, suddenly rising.

"Who?"

"Miss Evans. Strange I have not thought of her since we entered our home."

"She is away. Here is her note, which will explain her absence."

Dawn read it without looking at the words, and said:

"The house is full of her. I like her sphere; she must not go away from us."

Her father glanced wonderingly towards her. How strangely woven into his own life was the tissue of his child's, how vibratory had their existence become.

"Shall she not always stay, dear father? You will need some one-some one with you."

The last words were slow and measured. What was it that seemed drifting from his grasp just then? What more of joy was receding from his life-sphere?

"Dawn, my child," he said, "You are not going from me?"

"Why, poor frightened papa, I am not so easily got rid of. I am not going, but some one is coming, coming, I feel it, close to you, yet not one to sever us. There are some natures that bind others closer, as some substances unite by the introduction of a third element."

"Child, you are my very breath; how can you come closer to me?"

"By having a new set of sympathies in your being aroused; by expansion. Was my mother farther removed or brought nearer to you, when she gave birth to a new claimant upon your love?"

"Brought nearer, and made dearer a thousand times."

"Do you understand me now, father?"

"I feel strange to-day, Dawn. It came over me when I left the carriage,--a something I fain would put away, but cannot. Some other time we will talk upon it."

"May we come in?"

The door was flung wide open, and Florence and her husband stood before them. The children were in the garden just at that moment. The tea-bell rang, and soon they all formed a happy group around the bounteous board.

Revelations come to us sometimes in flashes, at others in partial

glimpses. The revelation of Hugh Wyman's feelings towards one he had known but as a friend, came slowly. There was no sudden lifting of the veil, which concealed the image from his sight. It rose and fell, as though lifted by the wind,--and that merely a chance breeze,--no seeming hand of fate controlling it.

How should he know himself; how fathom the strange fluttering of his heart, the quickening breath, the flashing blood, at times when he most earnestly sought to put such emotions away. What meant his child's close words touching his dim thoughts floating like nebulae in his mind? What was this vague questioning state, with no revelations, no answers? He tried to put it away, but each endeavor brought it closer, and he yielded at last to the strange spell.

Three days after their arrival, Miss Evans came from the house of mourning to their home of joy.

Hugh met her suddenly in the garden, whither she had gone in search of Dawn. But where was "Hugh," her brother, when they met? Not before her. The person had the manners of a stranger, instead of a long absent friend returned.

She sought Dawn, and met with a cordial welcome from her, which in some measure removed the chill from her heart.

Dawn struggled long that night with her feelings. Her thoughts would wander over the sea to one who had so deeply touched her sympathies. Her last meeting with him was in Paris. He then stood with his sister gazing on Schoffer's picture, which so beautifully represents the gradual rise of the soul through the sorrows of earth to heaven. This beautiful work of art "consists of figures grouped together, those nearest the earth bowed down and overwhelmed with the most crushing sorrow; above them are those who are beginning to look upward, and the sorrow in their faces is subsiding into anxious inquiry; still above them are those who, having caught a gleam of the sources of consolation, express in their faces a solemn calmness; and still higher, rising in the air, figures with clasped hands, and absorbed, upward gaze, to whose eye the mystery has been unveiled, the enigma solved, and sorrow glorified."

That picture floated through her mind.

"Shall I ever be among the 'glorified,'" she asked of her inner self; "among those who see the divine economy of suffering, which purifies the soul from all grossness? I must banish the thought of him from my mind," she exclaimed, vehemently. "I must have no earthly moorings; far, far out on life's tumultuous sea, I see myself buffeting the waves alone." Thus spoke reason, while her soul kept up the swelling tide of emotion, and soon away went thought and feeling far over the blue sea, where he was yet gazing on the beauties of the Old World.

Would chance once more send him across her path? Would she ever

again look into those eyes of such wondrous depth? These were the thoughts which floated through her mind-the last she experienced before passing into dreamland.

Lulled in sweet sleep, she seemed to stand upon a shore watching the waves which threw, at each inflowing, beautiful shells at her feet. They were all joined in pairs, but none were rightly mated; all unmatched in size, form and color. What hand shall arrange them in order? Who will mate them, and re-arrange their inharmonious combinings?

She tried to tear a few asunder. She could not separate them, for they were held so firmly by the thick slime of the sea, that no hand could disunite them. 'They must go back, and be washed again and again by the waves,' a voice within seemed to say, 'on eternity's broad shore they will all be mated. They symbolize human life, and what in the external world are called marriages. The real mate is in the sea, but not joined to its like.'

A feeling of impatience came over her, as she saw the shells roll back, and the incoming tide still throwing more at her feet. The feeling deepened, and she awoke.

It was midnight; a gentle breeze scarce stirred the curtains of her windows and bed, and there broke over the room a wave of sound.

Dawn knew that some one was there, yet no fear of the visitant came upon her. She only feared her breath might disturb the delicate atmosphere which filled the room, growing at each moment more rarified and delicate in its quality. She knew that the presence could be none other than that of her mother, for none but she could so permeate her being, and fill the room with such an air of holiness, and she felt that in the atmosphere which was thus gathering, her angelic form must soon become cognizant to her sight. As these thoughts filled her mind, the rays of light began to converge and centre at her side. Her eyes seemed rivited to the spot, as she saw the dim but perfect outline of a form. It grew more tangible, until at last the form of her mother stood saintly and glorified before her.

O, the rapt ecstasy of such an hour; the soothing influence which flows into the brain when a mortal is thus blessed.

Dawn tried to speak; her lips parted, but no sound issued, and she learned that there is another communion than that of words, which mortals hold with those who have passed into a broader and deeper life.

Slowly the form faded away; first the limbs, then the shadows, or semi-transparent clouds, rose gradually, till nought but the white effulgent brow beamed out; yet but for an instant, then all was gone.

A rest deeper than that of sleep came over her. She closed her eyes to shut out the darkness, and retain the vision, and remained thus until slowly the golden orb of day rolled his chariot over the eastern hills, when reluctantly she arose, and the heavenly spell was broken.

"Dear Pearl, how good you are to come and see us," burst from the lips of Dawn, when, two hours later, she entered the parlor of her teacher and clasped the hand of Miss Weston. "I shall claim her to-day; may I not, Florence?" and without waiting for a reply, she carried her to her own home.

They talked long and earnestly; Dawn's description of her travels entertaining her guest exceedingly, and it was noon ere they were aware that one half of the morning had passed away.

"And now I have talked long enough, and will stop; but may I ask you where you propose to spend the coming winter? If you are not positively engaged, I want you to stay with Florence and myself."

"I am going to the quiet little town of B--, to remain for an indefinite period with some dear friends, relatives of my dear Edward, who have just returned from Europe. I had a letter from them yesterday, saying they were all safe at home, and should be looking for me next week."

"Then all my plans must fail."

"As far as having me here for so long a time; but how I wish you could know Ralph and Marion, Dawn.-Why, what is the matter; what is it, dear Dawn?"

"Nothing but a sharp pain. It's all over now. Were your friends in-in Paris last month?" her voice trembled as she spoke.

"Yes. But how pale you look. Dawn, you must be ill."

"I am not. I did not sleep well last night. But Pearl, I have seen your friends."

"Seen them; seen Ralph?" exclaimed Miss Weston, in joyous surprise. "Is his not a fine character? And Marion, his sister, is she not lovely?"

"I know them but little. They were at a hotel in Frankfort, where we stopped. I first met them there, and again in Paris, twice, accidentally."

"How strange," continued Miss Weston. "Will they not be greatly surprised when I tell them I know you?"

Dawn laid her hand heavily on her friend's shoulder, saying:

"Miss Weston, I have my reasons, which sometime I may explain to you, for asking you not to mention my name to any member of that family." It was the same bright face which years ago was turned on her with words of consolation; the same childish pleading, for Dawn's face was a type of her spirit,--free, innocent and pure. "Will you promise without an explanation?"

"I will, strange as it seems; but, may I ask you one question, before we leave this subject?"

"Certainly."

"Has Ralph or Marion ever injured you?"

"Never. I think very highly of them both."

The subject was dismissed, and although their words floated to interesting topics, no deep feeling could be experienced by either, for each had become insphered and separate; one pondering, despite her efforts to the contrary, upon the strange request; the other thinking how strangely fate had again approximated lives which, in her present state, she could only see, must be kept apart.

Little did Dawn think she should meet in her own home, one who knew Ralph. It seemed an indication that she might meet him again, when and where she knew not, but of one thing she was certain, the meeting could not be one of friendship only. A conflict of emotions pulsed through her being. She could not converse, and plainly told her friend that she was too abstracted to be companionable.

"Go to Florence," she said, "and tell her she may have you the rest of the day. To-morrow--to-morrow," she said slowly, "I shall want you, for then I shall be myself."

CHAPTER XXII.

When Margaret Thorne left N--, it was with the intention of following the old woman's warning, and avoiding the stranger.

"Where shall I go?" was the ever prominent question, repeated again and again, to the end of the journey.

At last the train stopped at the busy city; the close of the journey had come, but no end to her restless thoughts. While she was thus

musing, she was aroused by the usual, "Have a hack? a hack, miss?" This seemed to indicate her next step. She handed her baggage check to the person who addressed her, and directed him to drive to a public house.

Seated in the carriage she was somewhat relieved of the feeling of uncertainty which had oppressed her. Alas, the poor girl did not know that at that moment the woman of evil deeds was directing the coachman where to carry the helpless victim.

And thus her fate was sealed; her child was born in a house of sin, and its little eyes first opened in its dark, immoral atmosphere.

The woman had managed all so cunningly that Margaret did not know but that she was in a respectable house, nor see her until it was too late. Then, knowing her helplessness, the woman, by subtle flatteries and approaches in her hour of womanly need, at a time when she was weak and susceptible to seemingly kind attentions, won her confidence. The child of circumstances caught at the broken staff held out for her as a drowning one seeks any hold in a storm. In her hour of sorrow and destitution, she accepted the only aid which was proffered her, for aid she must have, and she was not able to command her choice.

Day by day the woman into whose hands she had fallen, worked herself into her life and affection, until at length Margaret began to think there might be worse persons than those about her, and greater sins in the wide world than those which were committed beneath the roof which now sheltered her.

Creatures of circumstance as we are, we are too apt to attribute to our own strength of purpose the virtue, so called, in which we pride ourselves. Women in happy homes, by pleasant hearths, and surrounded with every means of social enjoyment, take credit to themselves for their upright demeanor, and indulge in bitter denunciation of those, who, less fortunately circumstanced, yield to the tempter's allurements. Little do they think of what they themselves might have been, but for the protection which some good angel has thrown around them. It would be well for us all to pause and think, and ask our souls the question which this thought suggests.

As has been seen, Margaret Thorne came not willingly to the home in which she now was, neither did she willingly remain. Circumstances not of her own making, governed her; and may it not be there are many similarly situated. To such the world owes its pity, not its condemnation.

The "social evil" is not confined to the houses which the public marks as its only abode, but is to be found in many of those in which the marriage ceremony is supposed to have insured chastity.

In these, too often, the unwelcome child is ushered into being, the fruit of a prostitution more base than any which is called by that

name, because sanctioned and shielded by a covenant of holiness. If any children are illegitimate such are. If any mothers are to be condemned, they are those, who, vain and foolish, filled with worldly ambition, angrily regret that their time is encroached upon by the demands of their dependent offspring. In vain the little ones reach out for the life and love which should be freely given them; then, finding it not, fade and die like untimely flowers. Thousands of innocent beings go to the grave every year from no other cause than this, that though born in wedlock they are the offspring of passion, and not the children of love.

Sad as these thoughts are, they are nevertheless true. An hour's walk in any community, will bring to any one's observation inharmonious children. Let the married reflect, and closely question themselves, in order that they may know the true relation which they bear to the children who are called by their name. Better by far that a child of pure love be brought into the world, with a heart to love it, a hand to lead it, and a soul to guide it, than a child of passion, to be hated and forsaken by those who should care for and protect it.

Little can be done by one generation to right this wrong, but that little should be done with earnestness.

"I will not forsake it," said Margaret, looking into the eyes of her child; eyes that fastened on hers such a questioning gaze, that it made her heart beat fast, and the scalding tears flow down her cheeks; eyes that resembled those that once flashed on her the light of passion, which she mistook for that of pure affection.

Years rolled on, and she struggled with life, trying to support herself and child by her efforts. But, alas, the taint was on her; none would help her to a better existence, and she fell to rise no more this side the grave.

Not suddenly did she surrender her womanhood, but slowly, as hope after hope failed, and all her efforts were met with a fowl distrust.

The years that came and went by, bringing happiness to many, brought none to her. One night the angel of death stole noiselessly to her side, and took her only earthly comfort,--her child. His fair face and innocent smile had repaid her a hundred fold for the frowns of the world she had met. Now she had no moorings, no anchor in the broad sea of existence.

"I shall die some day," she said, "and perhaps the angels will forgive me." So she walked alone, and cared not what came to her life, or filled the measure of her days on earth.

Miss Evans sat alone in her home, musing, as she had often done. She had just been reading passages from "Dream Life," having opened the book at random to a chapter entitled, "A Broken Hope." Was life

mocking her at every step? She turned the pages listlessly, and "Peace" flashed before her vision. Peace, at last. No matter how great the struggle, rest shall be ours. We may not attain what we have striven for on earth, but peace will come, and the "rest which the world knows not of."

But her mind did not feel the promise then. Life seemed growing dull, insipid. The course of the chariot wheels of progress, were impeded. What had become of her earnest, working self, whose deepest happiness was in laboring for humanity? Why were her hands so idle, and her mind so listless? Question rose on question, until her mind seemed plunging into a sea whose troubled waves moaned and dashed against her life-bark, giving her spirit no repose. Why was she floating on this restless sea?

A hand was laid upon her shoulder. She turned, and the warm blood tinged her cheeks and brow.

"Hugh!"

"Arline!"

It was the first time for years that the sound of her own name had thrilled her so deeply.

He sat by her, took her hands in his own, and had never seemed to belong to her so much as in that hour.

"I never was more delighted to see you," she said, unaware of the tide of emotion which his answer would awaken.

"I am glad, indeed, that it is so. Then I do not seek you to be repulsed. I love you, Arline."

She was not startled by this avowal, as it might have been supposed she would have been, and yet she never thought to hear words like those pass his lips. Like dew upon withering flowers they came, and she looked up, saying,--

"How long has this feeling existed in your heart, Hugh?"

"Since I found I could love more than one, and yet love that one deeper and more tenderly."

"And when was that?"

"When I first saw my home after my foreign trip. Until then, I had but one feeling towards you, and that, you know, was a brother's love."

"I do."

"But tell me," he said, as though a new thought had impressed him,

"how long have you loved me?"

"Always, Hugh."

"Always?" he repeated. "And yet you kept that love a secret to every soul but your own. It is well, and in order. I could not have known it before. May I ever prove worthy of such devotion, such true love. Arline, our love has not the fire of passion, but a purer flame burns upon its altar, one which consumes not, while it illumines our way."

For many hours they sat together, much of the time in silence, their souls communing in that language which has not an earthly expression. Soon the current of their lives mingled; the green banks of peace were in view. Night adorned itself in the robes of morning; doubt and questioning gave place to faith and trust.

She went to his home to walk daily with one whom God had made to vibrate in soul to that of her own earnest life. There was no crowd to witness the external rite; only a chosen few who could enter into the true spirit of the occasion, were present, while over them hovered the angelic form of the dear, departed Alice, happy indeed, that a woman's affection and gentleness had come to bless him whom she too so truly loved.

Dawn was radiant with emotion at the union. "Another life now enfolds me," she said to her father, when they were alone for the first time after the ceremony. "I knew she was coming; I felt it when we came home. You did not seek it, father, it came to you; it was to be; and now as you have some one to sit by your side, I may roam a little, may I not?"

"Ah, yes; I remember a certain pair of eyes over the sea, which more than once flashed on a young lady who shall be nameless."

Dawn suddenly interrupted this remark by the exclamation, "Ah, don't, father, don't!" and her tone struck him as sadly out of place for the time and occasion; so he said no more, but wondered at her strange, and to him at that moment, unaccountable manner.

"What a peculiar wedding," said every one; "just like the Wymans, they never do anything like any one else."

"What he found to admire in Miss Evans, is more than I can see," said one of the busy-bodies who favored Miss Vernon with a call on a certain memorable morning.

"He's a curious man," said an old lady, between a yawn and a smile, "and nobody ever could understand him."

These, and a hundred similar expressions equally unimportant, were heard, and then all was still again.

The new pair took up the deep current of their lives with united strength, and merged their efforts into one channel, each distinct, but flowing in time to the divine order, enriching each other's lives.

CHAPTER XXIII.

Some lives are steady, with a continuous flow of discipline; other's convulsive and terrible in their wild upheavings. Slowly we learn the goodness of God's mercy, which sends the storm that whitens our garments, making them pure as snow. When our song should be praise, we fly here and there bemoaning our fate, crossing and re-crossing the path which leads into life, instead of walking therein, and following it out to its glorious goal.

Slowly we learn to take each day, and fill it with our best endeavor, leaving to-morrow to God. Life's experiences should teach us to find where our work begins and where it ends; but in our learning, how we project ourselves, and exalt our own little knowledge.

Like children, we meddle with our father's tools, and so retard the blessing. When we learn to work with God, then will our lives be in divine order, and flow deep and peaceful to the end. Our impatient movements cut the threads in the heavenly warp, and the garment which was to enfold us is delayed in its making.

It has been said, "Man is his own worst enemy," and life's experience proves the truth of the assertion. But our final success is born of our present failures. It is in our efforts to ascend the stream, and thus rowing against the current, that we gain strength. Without resistance life would be a negation, and our running, sparkling river, become a stagnant pool.

Dawn brightened with the rising sun, or rather the cloud went by, leaving her in all her native brilliancy. Miss Weston spent her last day with her, and then went to her friends, with permission to write whenever she felt disposed, but with the caution not to say anything of her to Ralph or Marion.

"I think I must take one more look at the sea before winter closes in," said Dawn to her father, one pleasant day when the air was still and the foliage bright with autumn hues.

"You will be obliged to go alone, then, for I have too many duties, to accompany you," he said, and after a moment's pause, he asked, "Can you not wait a day or two?"

He read an answer in her pleading eyes, which said, "To-day, or not at all; I am in the mood, and must go now."

"Go, then," he said, "but do not allow the waves to steal you away."

It seemed to him that she was slipping from his life; and indeed she was receding, but only to flow again more freely and strongly to him. As the tide which sweeps out and comes back, each time making a farther inroad upon the shore, so she was outflowing and inflowing, each tidal return beating deeper into his soul. We must flow out to the ocean, to the depth of living waters, if we would win a firmer abiding in the hearts of those we love.

Dawn walked upon the beach, the very spot where in childhood her ardent spirit first looked upon the sea. Idly, some might think, she wore the hours away, gathering white pebbles, and throwing them into the waters.

How long she continued thus, thinking of the past and musing of the future, she knew not. With her, one thought was uppermost, and that was of Ralph, whose letters to her had of late been warm with that spirit which sooner or later glows in every heart. She felt that to him she had a duty to perform which at the farthest could not long be deferred, and she knew that to meet it, required a strength and a singleness of purpose which would call into service all the philosophy she could command.

The deep silence that surrounded her was at length broken by the sound of a footstep; then a voice was heard, that seemed to her, in her half-entranced state, to come from the world of spirits. She started, as the voice sounded nearer. She knew whose voice it was, yet she only whispered to herself, "How strange," and still gazed upon the sea, while a feeling pervaded her whole soul, akin to joy supernal.

"Dawn, Dawn; I have found you at last, and by the sea!"

Still she looked on the restless waters. There are moments in every life when speech fails, when words are powerless, when the soul can only express itself by silence. Such a moment came to Dawn.

Ralph took her hand in his own. She turned on him a gaze which seemed to bring her soul nearer to his own than ever before, and they walked slowly side by side. Then he told her that his sister and a friend were on the beach, a mile below; that they had all three come to take one more look at the sea, and to gather mosses.

"I knew not why I had such a strong desire to come here," he said "but now see clearly what drew me in this direction. The feeling to

come was overpowering, and I could not resist it."

They walked, and conversed of all the past, until finally, the question of so momentous interest to both was approached, and Ralph pleaded as none but a lover can.

A long silence ensued. Hope and fear, doubt and uncertainty, came and went, and every moment seemed to him an age.

Dawn at length turned her face slowly towards him, and then raised her eyes to heaven, as if imploring its aid. The deep working of her spirit was plainly depicted upon her features; first the conflict, then the triumph.

"I must walk alone. I love you, Ralph, as I have never loved before; but I have a mission on earth; one which I cannot share with another. To its service I dedicate my life."

She sprang towards him, threw her arms for an instant around his neck; then, tearing herself away, was gone before he could fully realize what had happened.

Slowly the reality of what had occurred came upon him, like a storm more terrible for its slow approach.

"O, that I had not seen her to-day," he said, "for then hope would have been left me. Now, all is over. With me life must be gone through with mechanically, not lived earnestly; happiness must be relinquished, peace and rest prayed for."

When Marion and Edith came in search of him, the crisis of his great grief was past, but the white face showed it was not the Ralph who left them.

"Why, you are ill; what has happened?" was his sisters' ejaculation.

"I came near sinking."

"Were you bathing?" they both asked, together.

"In sorrow's sea," he was about to say, but kept the words back, and appeared cheerful for their sakes.

"Then a wave did really come over you, Ralph?" said his sister, looking anxiously into his face.

"Yes, a strong one. I came near going under."

They did not know that he spoke in correspondences, and accepted the literal explanation, which was true in the abstract.

"You look as though you had concentrated a dozen years into one day," said Mr. Wyman, as he met Dawn at the door.

"I have had a very intense day."

"You should have taken more time, child."

This was her first unshared sorrow, and she longed to be away, alone. It seemed as though an ocean rolled, for the time, between herself and her father, and she hastily left him and sought her room. That night none but angels witnessed her struggles, and the peace which afterwards flowed into her troubled heart.

When morning came, with light and love in her face, she went below, and those who met her knew not the conflict of the night,--the great darkness,--so brilliant was her morning.

"I am going to the city, to-day, to make some purchases: my wardrobe needs replenishing."

"Which announcement, I suppose, is an appeal to my purse," remarked Mr. Wyman.

"I should put her on a shorter allowance, if I were you," said his wife, "if she does not give us more of her company."

"Are you aware that you have been roaming most of the time, Dawn, since the change in our home?" said her father, as he presented her the means for her purchases.

"Of course, having some one to take my place as housekeeper, I wish to enjoy my freedom a little."

Mrs. Wyman looked troubled. Had she separated them? Was Dawn absenting herself on her account? A look of pain passed over her face, which she little knew the subject of her thoughts caught and interpreted.

"I am not going because you are here," said Dawn at parting; "I am going because I feel impelled to. I am truly grateful to you, that your love came to bless my father's life. Do you believe me?"

"I do; and thank you from my heart for your words." This was said with a depth of feeling that is always accompanied by the holy baptism of tears, and this was no exceptional occasion.

The first thought that came to Dawn, on her arrival in the city, was the dream of her childhood,--the pure white robe, and the damp, dark lanes.

"Perhaps my mission is close at hand," she said, stepping aside to let an old man pass. She glanced at his sad, wrinkled face. It seemed as though other eyes were looking through her own into it. She took some money from her purse, and thrust it into his hand.

He closed his fingers mechanically over the bill; it was something more than money he needed.

"I am looking for-for-her," he said, his eyes gazing on vacancy.

"Any one I can find for you?" inquired Dawn, touched by his gentle, childlike manner.

"Find her? Can you find Margaret? Why, she went away when she was a little gal; no, she has grown up-like you. But I guess she's lost; yes lost. O, my little Margy,--your own mammy, and your other mammy is dead, and I am all alone. Come, Margy, come," he said, reaching forth his hands to Dawn.

"I am not Margy; but perhaps we can find her." She drew nearer to him, and walked by his side down the street.

They passed along until the crowd grew more dense, and the sea of human forms, rushing and jostling, made her head swim.

What a variety; from childhood to age,--faces in which sorrow and hope were struggling; faces marked with lines and furrows; cheeks sunken by disease and many griefs; bright, glowing faces, fresh as flowers, before the dew had been parched by noon-day sun and heat. On, on they went,--the busy crowd, and the old man, and the maiden; he, looking at all, yet seeing none; she, gazing with restless vision, for what? for whom? How typical of life's great highway, on which we wander, looking for that which we know not; hoping, that out of the sea of faces, one will shine forth on us, to receive or give a blessing.

They passed spacious buildings, and came to those less pretentious in style. The crowd grew less dense, the apparel less showy and elegant; the low wooden houses contrasting strangely with the lofty edifices which they left behind. Little shops, with broken panes in every window; children ragged, idle, and brutal in their appearance, stirred the heart of the passer-by with a grief which no words could portray.

Dawn looked on them, and longed to gather them all into one fold of love and harmony. "O, guide me, Father, and help me to lead them to better lives," was the earnest prayer of her soul.

"I am led hither to-day, that my sympathy with human want may be deepened," she said to herself, while a thrill of joyous emotion pervaded her being, and faith laid hold more firm of the eternal anchor, which holds us fast, in the deep waters.

She was so indrawn that she did not notice the approach of a carriage, as they were on a street that ran at angles with the great thoroughfare, until a sharp cry from the old man aroused her to the state of affairs. He had been struck, and had fallen under the wheels. One moan, one convulsive motion of the features, and he was

white as marble.

Before she had time to think or act, a shriek rent the air, and pierced the very soul of Dawn, for it was a wail from depths which few have fathomed. She turned to see from whom it came, and beheld a light female form bending low over the prostrate man. She was poorly clad, and her face bore every mark of the workings of great inward struggles. Two men raised the fallen one carefully, and carried him into a store near by. But it was only the clay they bore there; the soul had fled; gone to a world of a larger charity, and nobler souls than this.

"O, my father; my poor, old father," broke from Margaret's lips, and her body swayed to and fro with its burden of grief.

Dawn took her hand; it was icy cold. Thus had the father and child met; one in the slumber of death; the other with the last sorrow of earth eating away what little of life remained in her. It was, truly, a pitiful scene, and touched all who witnessed it.

"Where shall we take him, miss?" said the police respectfully, to Dawn, whom he supposed, from her manifest interest, knew the parties.

"I do not know them, sir," she replied, turning a look of deepest pity on Margaret.

"May I ask where your father shall be taken?" said Dawn tenderly, to Margaret.

"Taken? Why, home; no, it's a great way off; but don't bury him here in the wicked city. O, take him where the grass will wave over his grave, and the blue birds sing at early morn. O, do not bury him here," she cried, clinging to Dawn with that confidence born of the soul when ushered, however strangely and suddenly, into the presence of truth and goodness.

"He shall be carried away to the green fields, and we will follow," said Dawn, and stepping to a kindly-looking man in the crowd, she gave him orders to prepare a casket and shroud, and carry the body to the home of the poor woman who stood moaning beside her.

"Where shall we take him, Miss?" he said, stepping towards Margaret.

"Take him? I-I have no home. I was sent from my lodging this morning, because I had no money to pay. Take him anywhere, only let me go to his grave."

Her pleading voice and look told that life had now but one more step for her. All was swept away; one hope after another had departed, and she stood alone in darkness.

Clarence Bowen, and his young and elegant wife, were riding in a

part of the city whose broad avenues were overarched with trees all radiant with autumnal flames, when a hearse, followed by a single carriage, suddenly attracted the attention of the former.

Why was it that his whole frame shook, and the color left his face? His wife laughed and chatted by his side, and it was no uncommon sight in those streets to see a funeral pass. What was it, then, that so thrilled him? And his wife, too, she became alarmed as she glanced at his altered countenance.

From that lone carriage a face looked forth upon him. It looked with a vacant gaze. It was Margaret's face that, even she knew not why, stared upon Clarence. An electric chord seemed to connect the two,--the one with wealth and the vigor of life, the other with poverty and death.

"Why! what has come over you?" asked his wife. He was wandering again in the green woods, and stood once more by the innocent maiden's side. He heard not the voice that spoke to him, and she left him to his thoughts. The reins slackened in his grasp, and the horse walked at a slow pace, while his wife knew not of the bitter waters that were surging about his soul. Thus by our side do forms sit daily, while our thoughts glance backward and forward with lightning speed. At such times, the soul brings from the past its dead, to gaze on their lifeless forms, then turns and looks, with restless longing, towards the unknown, impenetrable future.

"Why! hus', I declare if you are not too stupid. I'll take the reins myself, if you do not arouse."

She little knew how his soul was aroused then, and how great the conflict that was going on between self and conscience.

He struck the horse lightly, and they passed on while the little funeral cortege went slowly to the burial place for the poor and unknown dead.

It was a simple, and somewhat dreary place, which they reached at last. There were no cared-for flowers blossoming there, and the grass grew uncut around the nameless graves.

The old man with his spade had just finished his work. The last shovel-full of earth was thrown out when the hearse and carriage stopped at the gate, and the men bore the coffin slowly in, followed by Margaret and Dawn.

The angels must have wept had they seen the grief-prostrated form beside that grave, when the sound of the earth, as it fell on the coffin, came to the ear of the desolate-hearted Margaret.

Moan after moan broke forth, as they bore, rather than led her away to the carriage.

Homeless and friendless; where would the morrow find her? God tempered the wind to the shorn lamb, and sent his ministering angel in his own good time. Dawn had decided, on the way to the grave, to take her home, and gave the hackman directions to drive to the station.

The rain drops began to patter on the pavement, the air grew chill and heavy, adding to the gloom of the occasion, and it was a relief to both to step into the cars, and see faces lighted up by hopes, going to life's experiences, rather than floating away from them.

There was no action in the dumb soul, which sat beside Dawn. She had passed beyond question and agitation of thought. It was that simple quiescence which every soul feels when the curtain of sorrow has fallen, even amid scenes of hope and happiness; but to one whom hope had long since forsaken, and life's bitter experiences been often repeated, there could be no projection of self, nought but the Now, divested of all earthly interest.

The train rushed past hills, through valleys, fields and woods, like a thing of life and intelligence, and stopped at the station, where a carriage was waiting. Mechanically Margaret followed, and Martin, at Dawn's gesture, lifted her into the carriage. The smoke of the receding train rose and curled among the trees, assuming fantastic shapes, while the shrill whistle caused the cattle to race over the fields, and the lithe-winged warblers to recede into the forests. Just so does some great din of the world, falling on our ears, send us to our being's centre for rest.

CHAPTER XXIV.

She laid still and pale upon the bed, while Dawn moved, or rather floated, about the room. The tide of life was fast ebbing; the last grief had sundered the long tension, and soon her freed spirit would be winging its way heavenward.

"Shall I sit by you and read?" asked Dawn, as the hand on the clock pointed to the hour of midnight. No sleep had come to the weary eyes, which now turned so thankfully and trustingly to the benefactor of the outcast.

In tones sweetly modulated to the time and state, she commenced reading that comforting psalm, "The Lord is my shepherd."

At its close, Margaret was asleep, and Dawn laid back in her chair, rested, and watched till morning.

"Where am I? What has happened?" were the questions expressed on the features of the poor girl, when she awoke, and her spirit wandered back from dreamland.

It was some time before she could take up the thread of joy which was now woven into her last earthly days, and forget the dark, sorrowful past. The old years seemed to her then like musty volumes, bound by a golden chord. The present peace compensated her for the long season of unrest, and in its atmosphere her soul gathered its worn, scattered forces, and prepared itself to leave the old and to take on the new form.

How few homes are such gates to heaven. And yet they who expect angels to abide with them, must not forget to entertain the lowly and the erring. Many have houses decked and garnished, but how rarely do we find on life's journey, these wayside inns for the weary pilgrims who have wandered away into forbidden paths.

Not alone did Dawn administer to her; her father and mother soothed the dying girl's pillow, and infused into the otherwise dark and troubled soul, rays of eternal light.

Ye who would have beautiful garlands beyond, must care for the neglected blossoms here, and wash the dust of life's great highway from their drooping petals. Ye who would seek life, must lose it; the flowing stream alone is pure and vital. Lives are selfish that are stagnant, and generate disease and death.

How poor, because destitute of enduring wealth, are those who, rich in worldly goods, neglect their opportunities, and hence know not the blessedness of doing good. There is no provision in all God's universe for such pauperism. Slowly must they, who by their own acts, become its subjects, work themselves from it into the sphere of true life. Another world will more plainly reveal this, and it will be found that they who value not such opportunities here, will beg for them there. In that existence will be many, who, forgetful or neglectful of their duty while on earth, must remain in spirit about this world, and through other organisms than their own, do that which they should have done, and could have accomplished far easier, when occupants of their earthly temples. There is no escape from the law of life, for God is that law, and that law is God. Happy they who become willing instruments in his hand.

In selfhood, nothing can be done, for life is always in conjunction. All potent forces are combinations, and egotism ever limits that power which is daily and hourly seeking lodgment in the midst of mankind. He who trusts only to himself, destroys his own usefulness, and blindly turns away from every source of highest enjoyment.

The sun passed slowly over the western hills, tinging with a

beautiful mellowness the clouds along the horizon. It was a pleasant hour to die, when the earth was still, and weary feet were turning from labor to rest.

"Shall we know each other there?" asked the dying girl of Dawn.

"It is there as here. We are ever known and loved, for God's provision for his children extends beyond the vale."

"And are the sinful, the erring, received into peace and rest?"

"None are without sin; none spotless; peace and rest are for the weary."

"O, comforting words. They must be from God," softly whispered Margaret; she closed her pale blue eyes as though she would shut out everything but that one consoling thought.

When she opened them, they shone with a heavenly radiance, and she reached forth her thin, white hand towards Dawn, who clasped it in her own. A few short breaths, a single pressure,--it was Margaret's last token as she went over the river to find that life and rest which on earth had been denied to her.

Dawn laid the cold, white hands on the breast of the sleeper, and went out of the chamber where a soul had had its new birth, with deepened emotions of life, and its claims upon humanity.

The next instant she was clasped to the warm heart of her father, and nestled closely there until the weary lids closed, and sleep descended upon her.

He held her through her slumber, and prayed for strength to bear the separations which must come between himself and child; for most clearly did he perceive that God had mapped out for her a labor that would call her from his side.

"May I never shadow the rays of the Infinite," he said, just as she awoke.

"How clear it is; some cloud seems to have been removed from me," spoke Dawn, looking up into his eyes, not perfectly comprehending all. "I may work in my own way, now you have some one to love beside me; may I not?"

"Not for worlds, my child, would I hinder you in your mission of usefulness, and if in the past, I have been selfish, I am not now. Go and come at your pleasure; bring whom you will to your home, and my blessings shall rest on them and you."

Dawn had no words with which to express her gratitude. The tears, that in spite of her efforts to keep them back, would glisten in her eyes, indicated the depth of her feelings, and the love she

cherished for her father. From that moment their lives flowed like a river, in a deeper and broader channel, and many bright flowers blossomed on its margin giving hope to the despairing, rest and strength to the weary and fainting pilgrims of time.

They made a grave under a willow, and engraved on a plain, white stone, the simple word: MARGARET.

Parents and child had met in the world beyond, to grow into daily recognition of, and unfold in a more genial clime, their individual lives.

Mrs. Thorne (Margaret's step-mother) had died a year previous to the time when Dawn found the old man in the city, looking for his daughter.

After Margaret's departure from home, he became dull and listless, and finally deranged. What subtle attraction led him to the city where Margaret was stopping, few can comprehend; but to those who fully realize that guardian angels watch over and guide us, the mystery is solved, and it, like many other seemingly strange things of life, made clear in the light of that faith.

It was for woman that Dawn labored, for through her elevation she saw that the whole race must ascend. All should know that men will be great if women are; and it is a truth that is daily becoming more evident, that he must be reached through her. In a Hindoo fable, Vishna is represented as following Maga through a series of transformations. When she is an insect, he becomes an insect; she changes to an elephant, and he becomes one of the same species; till at last she becomes a woman, and he a man; she a goddess, and he a god. So, outside the regions of fable, if woman is ignorant and frivolous, man will be ignorant and frivolous; if woman rises she will take man up with her.

Two years passed away, and the current of life grew stronger, as each wave inflowed to the shore where Dawn sat, waiting for shattered barks. This was her life-mission, and well she knew, to help the lowly and down-trodden in every station of life, was but fulfilling the divine command.

They were not all outcasts who laid claim to her love and sympathy; for, sanctioned by the marriage law, the soul's chastity was daily being sacrificed to lust, shame, and dishonor. She saw many living together in wedlock, under the most debasing influences, void of every grace and feeling which makes life holy and refined; bringing into the world children, gross, dull, and inharmonious, like themselves.

The question will force itself upon every thoughtful mind, Why is all this?

Even to destroy life, heinous as that sin is, cannot be deemed more

sinful than to bring it into being, under such circumstances, to suffer.

But we are passing through the refining process. Much will be questioned, much remain unanswered. Let us look well to ourselves, and learn that there are many ways in which we may err, before we condemn others.

The light of to-day is insufficient for to-morrow; let us, therefore, be not too assertive, and bold, but follow quietly the indications of life, not closing down our opinion upon any of its agitations. To-day is ours, no more; sufficient unto the day is the evil. We burden ourselves each hour with too many questions which retard our progress.

A wise man takes no more weight than his horses can draw. Our journey would be swifter, if we started with less each morning. We can not hasten God's purposes. Growth is slow; feverish action is disease. The throbbing pulse is beating away our vital forces, not adding to life, and yet how many do we behold, who, working in this unhealthy manner, look on those more calm and collected, as lacking force.

The cataract expends itself in spray and foam; the deep river, more slow, bears its tribute of wealth to the ocean.

Let us work calmly, and not mistake mists for mountains. Depth is height.

Enthusiasm is the sun which warms, not burns, our lives. It is a richness, a fullness of being, not a wild, spasmodic action.

With Dawn's efforts came increased light, until it seemed to her, that all the motives of human souls were laid open before her vision. This power of perception made her life compact, sharp, and real; and there were moments when she longed for a veil to be let down between her and the persons with whom she came in contact.

She walked among the crowd, but did not mingle with it. She soared above, and they who could not comprehend her, called her strange and odd. Such chasms must ever exist, where one sees the heart's interior, and knows that its true beatings are muffled and suppressed. With such clear vision, the mind at times almost loses its mental poise, its equilibrium, and forgets the glorious hopes and promises which are recorded in the book of life, as compensatory for all its conflicts here.

After many months of a life of intensity, it was with a sense of relief that Dawn, upon opening a letter from Miss Weston, received information of her intention of making her a short visit. This would so change the tenor of her life, that she was overjoyed at the thought of the happiness in store for her. But when, at the close of a bright summer day, she met her friend at the door, and recognized

the life of Ralph so closely blended with her spirit, she involuntarily shrank from her approach, and almost regretted that she had come. She, however, quickly rallied all her forces, fearful lest the shadow might be mistaken for that of uncordiality, and drawing her tenderly to her side, imprinted her warmest kisses upon her lips.

Tears sprang to Edith's eyes, and coursed down her cheeks; tears which Dawn could not comprehend, for her vision, both mental and spiritual, was clouded, her thoughts wandered, and her words seemed vague and indirect.

Seated in the library after tea, she asked her friend to sing for her.

Miss Weston readily complied, and sang with beautiful pathos and feeling, Schubert's Wanderer.

"Why that song?" said Dawn, as Edith rose from the instrument.

"I seemed to sing it for you, for I, surely, am no wanderer now."

The color rose to Dawn's face, as she said quickly, "I hope not. Then you, at last, have found rest?"

"Perfect peace and rest. I think I never found my home before; for I am so happy with Ralph and Marion."

Was Dawn jealous? What did that blushing face mean, followed by a whiteness rivalling that of the snow? Was it caused by fear, or hope?

Miss Weston seemed not to notice her agitation, but continued praising Ralph and his sister, till her listener proposed a walk in the garden before retiring.

They strolled among the flowers and shrubbery, and then sat upon the same seat which her father and mother had so often occupied.

Her tears could flow now and not be seen, so she repressed them no longer, but allowed them to fall freely over her blanched cheek.

"Dawn," said Edith, suddenly, "I have a fairy tale which I wish to read to you to-night, before we go to our slumbers."

Dawn, glad of any diversion, gladly assented, and they went into her room, where they sat together, while Edith read the following tale:--

"In the days of chivalry, when life to the wealthy was a series of exciting enjoyments, and to the poor a hopeless slavery, a Fairy and a beautiful child lived in an old castle together. The owner of this large and neglected building had been absent on the crusade ever since the time which gave him a daughter and deprived him of a wife;

but many an aged pilgrim brought occasional tidings of the glory he was winning in the distant land. At last it was said he was wending his way homeward, and bringing with him a young orphan companion, who had risen, by dint of his own brave deeds alone, from the rank of a simple knight to be the chosen leader of thousands. The child had grown to girlhood now, and very bright upon her sleep were the dreams of this youthful hero, who was to love her and be the all of her solitary life. I said she dwelt with the Fairy; true, but of her presence she had never dreamed. Always invisible, the being had yet never left her. She whispered prayer in her ear, as she knelt morning and evening in the dim little oratory; she brought calm and happy feelings to her breast, which the commonest things awoke to joy and life; she led her to seek and feel for the needy, the sick, and the suffering; she nurtured in her the holiest faith in God, and trust in man; yet the maiden thought she breathed all this from the summer evenings, the flowers, the swift labor of her light fingers, and the thousand things which cherished the happiness growing up within her heart.

"It was night, and Ada slept; the moon's rays, gilding each turret and tower, crept in at the narrow portal which gave light to the chamber, and lingered on the sunny hair and rounded limbs of the sleeping girl.

"The Fairy sat by her side, weeping for the first time.

"'Alas!' said she, 'the stranger is coming; thou wilt love him, my child; and they say that earthly love is misery. Among us, we know no unrest from it; we love, indeed, each other and all things lovely, but ages pass on, and love changes us not. Yet they say it fevers the blood of mortals, pales the cheek, makes the heart beat, and the voice falter, when it comes; yet it is eternal, mighty, and entrancing. Alas! I cannot understand it! Ada, I must leave thee to other guidance than my own. I love thee more than self, still I can be no longer thy guide.'

"The Fairy started, for she felt, though she heard not, that other spirits had suddenly become present. She raised her eyes, and three forms, more radiant than any fairy can be, were gazing on her in silent sadness.

"'O, spirits,' cried the weeper, faintly, 'who can ye be?'

"'The shades of love,' replied voices so ethereally fine that a spirit's ear could hardly discern the words.

"'The shades,'" repeated the Fairy in surprise; 'I thought love was one.'

"'I am Love,' said the three together; 'intrust the untainted heart of your beloved one to me.'

"'O, pure beings,' cried the Fairy, bending reverently before them,

'will ye indeed guide Ada to happiness, yet ask my permission? Tell me, though not human, to choose which a human heart would prefer.'

"My name is Mind,' replied the first. 'When I dwell on earth, I bind together two etherial essences; I unite the most spiritual part of each; I assimilate thought; I cause the communion of ideas. No love can be eternal without me, and with me associate the loftiest enjoyments. Words cannot tell the rapture of love between mind and mind. Dreams cannot picture the glory of that union. Very rarely do I dwell unstained and alone in a human breast, but when I do, that being becomes lost in the entireness of its bliss. Fairy, the lover of Ada is a hero; wilt thou accept me to reign in her heart?'

"The Fairy paused, and then spoke sadly,--

"Alas, bright being, Ada is a girl of passionate and earnest feeling. Thou couldst not be happiness to her. Thou mightest, indeed, abstract her intellect in time from all things but itself; but the heart within her must first wither or die, and the death of a young heart is a terrible thing. Pardon me, but Ada cannot be thine.'

"They call me Virtue,' said the second spirit; 'when I fill a heart, that heart can live alone. It wakes to life on seeing my shadow in the object it first loves; that object never realizes the form of which it bears the semblance, and then turns to me, the ideal, for its sole happiness. I am associated with every thing pure and holy and true. Where human spirits have drawn nighest to the Eternal, I have been there to hallow them; where the weak have suffered long without complaint, where the dying have to the last, last breath held one name dearer than all; where innocence hath stayed guilt, and darkest injuries been forgiven, there ever am I. Fairy, shall I dwell with Ada?'

"Still sadder were the accents of the guardian Fairy:

"And is this human love?' said she. 'This would be no happiness to my child, who is a mortal and a woman, and who will yearn for a closer and a dearer thing than the love of goodness alone; erring creatures cannot love perfection as their daily food. Beautiful spirit, thou art fitted for heaven, not earth, for an angel, but not for Ada.'

"Then spoke the third:

"My name is Beauty,' said she. 'Men unite me to imagination and worship me. Many have degraded me to the meanest things I own, because my very essence is passion; but they who know my true nature, unite me with everything divine and lovely in the world. If I fill Ada's heart when she loves, the very face of all things will change to her. The flowing of a brook will be music, the singing of the summer birds ecstasy; the early morning, the dewy evening, will fill her with strange tenderness, for a light will be on all

things—the light of her love; and she will learn what it is to stay her very heart's beatings to catch the lightest step of the adored; to feel the hot blood rushing to her brow, when only he looks on her, the hand tremble, and the whole frame thrill with exquisite rapture, and meet with delicious tremor, the first look of love from a man. The raptures of my first bliss were worth ages of misery; and, pressed to the bosom of the beloved, a human spirit feels it is indeed blessed. Youth is mine, eternal youth and pleasure. Fairy, Ada must be mine.'

"'Thou seemest,' said the Fairy, musingly, 'to be the most suited for mortals. In thy words and emblems I see nothing but sensuality of the least material order. And to all there seemeth, too, to be a time when one clasp of the hand that is loved is more than the comprehension of the grandest thought. Beauty, I will give up my child to thee; and O, if thou canst not keep her happy, keep her pure till I return. Guard her as thou wouldst the bloom of the rose leaf, which may not bear even a breath.'

"The Fairy's voice faltered as she turned away, and imprinted a kiss on the sleeper's cheek. Ada moved uneasily, but did not awake; and in the last glance that she gave to her charge was united the form of the spirit of Beauty, folding, in motionless silence, her radiant wings over the low couch. The other shades had fled some brief time since, and, burying her face in her slight mantle, the beautiful Fairy faded slowly away in the moonlight.

"A brief time passed, and the baron had returned with his hero guest to the castle, and the beneficent being who had guarded Ada's childhood, had been up and down the earth, cheering the sad, soothing the weary, and inspiring the fallen.

"Much had she seen of human suffering, yet many a great lesson had it taught her of the high destiny of mortals, and she winged her flight back to Ada's couch, sanguine of her happiness. The spirit of Beauty still floated above it, but the Fairy thought that the bright form had strangely lost its first ethereal quality.

"Fevered and restless, the sleeper tossed from side to side. With trembling fear she drew near the low bed, and gazed fondly on the unconscious form. Alas! there was no peace on that face now. There was that which some deem lovelier than even beauty-passion; but to the pure Fairy the expression was terrible.

"'My child, my child,' cried she in agony, 'is this thy love? Better had thine heart been crushed within thee, than that thou shouldst have given thyself up to it alone. Thou hast an eternal soul, and thou hast loved without it; thou art feeding flames which will consume the feelings they have kindled. Spirit, is this thy work?'

"'Such is the love of mortals,' answered the shade. 'It is ever thus; the sensual objects are but emblems of the spirit union of another world; yet this is never seen at first, and every impetuous

soul, rushing on the threshold of life, worships the symbol for the reality,--the image for the god. Fear not, Fairy, the flame dies, but the essence is not quenched; from the ashes of Passion springs the Phoenix of Love. Ada will recover from this burning dream.'

"'Never!' cried the Fairy, 'if she yields her heart up to thoughts like these. Thou art a fiend, Beauty,--a betrayer. Avaunt, thou most accursed, thou hast ruined my child.'

"And as she spoke, weeping bitterly, she averted her face from the shade. All was still once more, and her grief slowly calming, the Fairy hoped she was now alone, until, raising her eyes, she saw the being, more radiant and glorious than ever, still guarding the sleeping girl.

"'Fairy,' said the shade, sadly, 'this is no fault of mine. I have ever come to the human heart with thoughts pure as the bosom of the lily, and beautiful as paradise, but the nature of man degrades and enslaves me. Thou sawest how my wings were soiled, and their light dimmed by the sin of even yon guileless girl, and, alas! thousands have lived to curse me and call me demon before thee. Now, at thy bidding, I will leave Ada, and forever. She will awake, but never again to that fine sympathy with nature, that exquisite perception of all high and holy things, I have first made her know. She will awake still good, still true; but the visions of youth quenched suddenly, as these will have been, leave a fearful darkness for the future life.'

"'Alas! alas!' cried the Fairy, wringing her hands, with a burst of sudden grief, 'whether thou goest or remainest now, Ada must be wretched.'

"'Not so,' returned the shade, in a voice whose sweetness, from its melancholy, was like the wailing of plaintive music; 'not so, if thou wilt otherwise. Thou hast erred; from the shades of Love thou didst select me, and, panting as we each do for sole possession of the heart we occupy, it is impossible either separately can bring happiness to it. Each has striven for ages, but in vain. It is the union of the three, the perfect union, that alone makes Love complete.'

"'But will Mind and Virtue return?' asked the Fairy, doubtingly; 'I bid them myself depart.'

"'They will ever return,' said Beauty, joyfully, 'even to the heart most under sway, if desired in truth. A wish, sometimes-fervent and truthful it must be, but still a wish-alone often brings them.'

"At that moment a hurried prayer sprang to the Fairy's lips, but ere it could frame itself into words, light filled the little chamber, and the three shades of Love stood there once more, beautiful and shining.

"'Mighty beings,' said the spirit, 'forgive me. Attend Ada united and forever, and I shall then have fulfilled my destiny.'

"'We promise,' returned the shades; and gazing for a few moments in earnest fondness on the dreamer's happy face, the Fairy bade a last farewell to her well-loved charge."

"Where did you find this strange tale?" inquired Dawn, as soon as her friend had finished.

"In Ralph's folio of drawings, which he loaned me a few days ago."

"Have you the folio here?"

"No, I left it at home; but took some of his last sketches to copy, or rather study."

"I did not know you could sketch."

"I do not; but Ralph is teaching me."

"Do you enjoy it?"

"Very much, with him for instructor. I should not like any one else to teach me."

"How do you know that, as you have never tried any other?"

"We know some things intuitively; as I know that you love this man, though no words of yours have ever lisp'd that love to a living being."

"Edith!"

"Dawn, it's true; and may I not know the reason why you so steel your heart against him?"

"I steel my heart against him? Who told you that?"

"Some Fairy, perchance; but seriously, my dear friend, answer me, and forgive me if I seem curious and intrusive. Do you know aught against him? Is he not high, and good, and noble?"

"For aught I know he has all those qualities of heart and soul which would draw any woman's heart towards him."

"Then you cannot love him, save as a brother, or you would respond to his longing to take you to himself, and help you in your labors."

"Edith, how do you know this? Has he thus laid his feelings before another? I could not ever reverence one who could do this."

"He has not. I know it all by living in his home. I feel his sorrows

and know their nature, as well as his joys. You seem strange, Dawn;
I do not understand you."

"Neither do I understand myself. My life is strange; although I love
this man as I never loved before, I do not see that I can wed him.
Perhaps we shall be one above, but no one must come between me and
my labor,--not even the dearest idol."

"Perhaps his love might make you stronger; help you to extend your
usefulness by increasing your happiness."

Carlyle says, 'There is in man a higher than love of happiness; he
can do without happiness, and instead thereof, find blessedness."

"Very true; and yet happiness might also be blessedness."

"And yet you have read to me, in the fairy tale, that 'earthly love
is misery,' that it 'fevers the blood of mortals, pales the cheek,
makes the heart beat, and the voice falter, when it comes.' I cannot
be thus consumed. I have another mission. Edith, who do you suppose
wrote that tale?"

"I know not; it bore no name. Which of the three shades would you
prefer to guide you, Dawn?"

"Virtue."

"I knew your answer before you spoke it. May the spirit you have
chosen remain with you forever, and may your career be as bright as
your name."

They parted; one to rest, the other to struggle long and earnestly
with passion and feeling, ere the tide of peace flowed in.

It was morning when her soul cast off the contest, and as the
shadows of night were swept away, so her mental shadows were lost in
the soul's bright effulgence; for her emotions had been made
subordinate, not destroyed, as they should ever be, to the
spiritual. They were only submerged, not annihilated, ready to flow
again when the hour should demand them.

The natural emotions of the heart are right, when kept subservient
to reason. They are the soul's richest reserved forces, and should
not be daily consumed.

A more intimate relation sprang up between Edith and Dawn, and when
they met that morning, it seemed as though they had just emerged
from a long experience. So closely and unexpectedly do we sometimes
come to one another.

Herbert and Florence, to Dawn's great joy, were travelling in
Europe, and their children were now a part of her father's
household. The day's pleasure was planned with a view to their

happiness, and spent mostly in the woods gathering mosses, wild flowers, and ferns.

Hugh and his new wife were daily extending their usefulness, and growing in stronger individuality and deeper harmony. It was always a great pleasure to have Dawn with them in their most earnest conversations. She seemed to vivify and to cause their thoughts to flow with a power they knew not, separately or together, without her presence. Thus do some natures impart a sense of freedom to our mental action, while others chill our being with a feeling of restraint, and limit all our aspirations. In the presence of these latter we seem and act directly the opposite of ourselves, or rather below our intellectual and affectional plane, and the warm heart and generous nature appears cold and distrustful.

Young Herbert, Florence's eldest, was a great talker, and as they wandered through the woods, naught scarce could be heard, but his voice in exclamation, questioning, or surprise, as each turn and winding revealed some beauty new to his admiring eyes.

"I think I shall have to relate to you the fable of Echo and Narcissus," said Dawn, as he was contending for the last word with his sister.

"What is that? tell me right away, won't you?" he said impatiently, seizing her hand and looking eagerly into her face.

"Not just now, but after we have gathered more mosses, and had our luncheon, I will tell you all about the beautiful nymph."

"Nymph, nymph! what was that? Was it alive? Could it see us?" These and other questions followed, till Dawn found it quite hard to longer put him off.

"If you are patient and good to your sister, I will tell you all about the nymph. Now go and take good care of her, while I go on farther, where Miss Weston is sketching those rocks."

"I will be good, but don't forget the story, Auntie, when you come back. Are there any nymphs here?"

"Perhaps there may be. I think there is one who resembles them very much," and she kissed his young, happy face, turned so eagerly up to her own. Leaving him to amuse himself as best he might, Dawn approached Edith and seated herself beside a bed of deep green moss, and watched, with intense interest, the growing picture for a long time; then her mind became abstracted and cloudy. She was no longer in the green woods, amid the fern and wild flowers, but away, far away on life's great highway, where the dust, rising at every step, blinded her eyes.

Thus semi-entranced, Dawn sat unconscious of the presence of her friend, and everything earthly around her, until the spell was

broken, and her attention was attracted by a sheet of note paper, which fluttered at her feet. Almost involuntarily she picked it up, and her gaze was fastened upon the writing with which it was covered.

"'Tis love which mostly destines our life.
What makes the world in after life I know not,
For our horizon alters as we age;
Power only can make up for the lack of love--
Power of some sort. The mind at one time grows
So fast, it fails; and then its stretch is more
Than its strength; but, as it opes, love fills it up,
Like to the stamen in the flower of life,
Till for the time we well-nigh grow all love;
And soon we feel the want of one kind heart
To love what's well, and to forgive what's ill
In us--"

Then followed these lines, written with a trembling hand, some of the words being almost illegible:

"I cannot love as I have loved,
And yet I know not why;
It is the one great woe of life,
To feel all feeling die;
And one by one the heart-strings snap,
As age comes on so chill;
And hope seems left, that hope may cease,
And all will soon be still.
And the strong passions, like to storms,
Soon rage themselves to rest,
Or leave a desolated calm--
A worn and wasted breast;
A heart that like the Geyser spring,
Amidst its bosomed snows,
May shrink, not rest, but with its blood
Boils even in repose.
And yet the things one might have loved
Remain as they have been,--
Youth ever lovely, and one heart
Still sacred and serene;
But lower, less, and grosser things
Eclipse the world-like mind,
And leave their cold, dark shadow where
Most to the light inclined.
And then it ends as it began,
The orbit of our race,
In pains and tears, and fears of life,
And the new dwelling place.
From life to death,--from death to life,
We hurry round to God,
And leave behind us nothing but
The path that we have trod."

She knew whose hand had copied these words, and how keenly the heart that sensed their meaning was suffering, and yet she could not place her hand upon its beatings and quell its throbs.

"Why! how came this from Ralph's folio? The wind must have taken it out," said Miss Weston, noticing the paper, while holding the picture for her friend to look at. Dawn did not reply to her inquiry, but gave her words of praise and encouragement, while her thoughts were afar from forest, friends and picture.

"Come, Auntie, it's time for the luncheon, your father says, and we have it almost ready."

She arose, and with Miss Weston joined the party, thinking how strange it was that those lines should come to her; for something seemed to tell her that they had been accidentally placed in the folio, as they were evidently not intended for any eye but that of the writer.

The luncheon was partaken of with more avidity by the others than by Dawn, whose mind was constantly reverting to the words which she had read.

"Now for the story, Auntie," said Herbert, seating himself on the grass, beside her.

"Do you remember the name of the nymph I am going to tell you about?"

"Yes, it was-it was Echo."

"Very good. I am glad you remembered it. Well, Echo was a beautiful wood-nymph, fond of the woods and hills, where she devoted herself to woodland sports. She was a favorite of Diana, and attended her in the chase. But Echo had one failing; she was fond of talking, and would always have the last word. One day Juno was seeking her husband, who, she had reason to fear, was amusing himself among the nymphs. Echo by her talk contrived to detain the goddess till the nymphs made their escape. When Juno discovered it, she passed sentence upon Echo in these words: You shall forfeit the use of the tongue with which you have cheated me, except for that one purpose you are so fond of--reply. You shall have the last word, but no power to speak first.

"This nymph saw Narcissus, a beautiful youth, as he pursued the chase upon the mountains. She loved him, and followed his footsteps. O, how she longed to address him in the softest accents, and win him to converse; but it was not in her power. She waited with impatience for him to speak first, and had her answer ready. One day the youth, being separated from his companions, shouted aloud, 'Who's here?' Echo replied 'here.' Narcissus looked around, but seeing no one, called out, 'Come.' Echo answered, 'come.' As no one came, Narcissus

called again, 'Why do you shun me?' Echo asked the same question. 'Let us join one another,' said the youth. The maid answered with all her heart in the same words and hastened to the spot, ready to throw her arms about his neck. He started back, exclaiming, 'Hands off; I would rather die than you should have me.' 'Have me,' said she; but it was all in vain. He left her and she went to hide her blushes in the recesses of the woods. From that time forth she lived in caves and among mountain cliffs. Her form faded with grief, till at last all her flesh shrank away. Her bones were changed into rocks, and there was nothing left of her but her voice. With that she is still ready to reply to any one who calls her, and keeps up her old habit of having the last word."

"Speak to her now, and see if she will answer you?" said Dawn to her attentive listener.

"Why, is she here? in these woods?"

"Call her, and see."

"Echo-Echo!" The words came back to the wondering child, his face aglow with curiosity and fear.

"Now I will tell you the moral of this little story, which is: be not anxious for the last word, as I see my good little Herbert is, too often, especially when talking with his sister."

"Will I change into rocks and shrink all up if I do?"

"That is not the thing to be feared. But you would not; your mind would grow narrow and selfish, which is a fate most to be deplored, for you wish to be a good and great man, do you not?"

"Yes, I want to be good as papa, and uncle Wyman, as he always calls him."

"Then remember and be unselfish, and think first of others' welfare, will you?"

"I will try; and can I always talk with Echo?"

"Whenever you are near the wood where she lives."

"Will she live here when I am a grown-up man?"

"Yes. Why?"

"Because, if I don't like folks' answers, I can come and talk to Echo."

"She will certainly be very likely to be of your opinion, or, at least, she will express herself to your liking; but I hope my little Herbert will find those more agreeable than Echo to talk with."

"I don't want to, Auntie; I like her."

Dawn smiled, and thought how older heads did not like disputation, preferring often the companionship of a mere echo, to good sense and sound judgment, forgetting that "he who wrestles with us, strengthens us."

The party returned home laden with flowers, with just weariness enough to enjoy their rest. The children were put to bed, after a good supper, and the family enjoyed themselves with music and conversation, each feeling differently related to each other, as we ever do, when some fresh life is infused into the every-day scenes of life.

The barren soul seems like a kaleidoscope, changing its relations at each experience, whether of joy or sorrow. How beautiful is life, when we learn how much we can be to each other, and how varied may be the relations we bear to our friends.

CHAPTER XXV.

Miss Weston returned to her friends, and Dawn took up the thread of her life, which was every day extending and winding into new scenes of darkness and light. But a voice within her, told her that one day all the darkness would become light. She trusted that voice, for it was speaking unto her every day, and growing each hour into deeper recognition. What avails the love of our friends, if it be but for a few earthly days or years? What is the love of a mother to her child, without an eternity for its manifestation? "Whatever has lived upon earth still lives."

The mother, forced from her new-born child, sorrows over the physical separation. It is natural; but what power does she not possess to live and breathe into its spiritual unfolding. Silent, but subtle, like nature's most potent forces, her spirit descends into its being, and there dwells, molding it every hour into a higher form of life. Truth is at the basis of all theories, and, though man builds many a superstructure in accordance with his own fancy, he can in no way affect this truth. It is a natural law of the universe, that love should linger and remain after the habiliments of flesh are withdrawn. No one lives who has not felt, at times, the presence of the unseen; and it seems strange that there can be one so limited in thought and understanding as to say

there is nought beyond the narrow limit of physical life to hold communion with our souls? Happy the man who opens the doors of his spirit wide for angel visitors. Happy the heart which knows by its own beating, when they come and go, for,

"It is a faith sublime and sure,
That ever round our head
Are hovering on noiseless wing,
The spirits of the dead."

It has been said that nothing is more difficult than to demonstrate a self-evident truth. To those who feel and know of this guardianship of friends, gone beyond, this affiliation of soul with soul, language is powerless to transmit the conviction. It must be felt and experienced, not reasoned into the mind, because it is a component of the soul, a legitimate portion of its life.

"I must go, and remain away a long time," said Dawn to her father, one morning, after they had just finished reading a letter from Florence.

"And why, may I ask?"

"Because we are replete with the same kind of life; our minds are set to the same strain, and exhaust each other. I can be more to myself and others, if I go, you will enter mother's sphere more completely in my absence, and thus shall we both be refreshed and strengthened."

"I feel the truth of your words, and I am glad to know that your philosophy of life so fully accords with my own."

"We have a superabundance of one quality of life in our home, and a change is absolutely requisite for our mental as well as for our physical well-being. Absence from it, separation between us, a going out into new atmospheres, a social mingling with persons we do not daily come in contact with, will produce the most beneficial results. This is what every family at times needs. One great objection I have to our marriage system is, that as society is now constituted, it allows no freedom to the individual. The two are so exclusively together that they lose knowledge of themselves. They suffer physically and intellectually. On the other hand, if more freedom existed, if their lives took a broader scope, each would know each more perfectly, and absorb from others that vigor which would develop a natural growth of their own. For my part, I can never submit to the existing rules of married life."

"The analogies of the natural world to human life are good, for the rocky shore symbolizes the highest power of the human soul, which is endurance rather than action. To most persons such characters seem vapid and sentimental, lacking force and tone, and generally unfitted for the enterprises of the world. And yet there are forces in man beside the grappling and hammering manifestations of the day.

There is a greater mastery in control, than in the exercise of power. An angry man may evince more energy than he who keeps calm in the heat of provocation, but the latter is the man of most power. In the common circumstances of life we must act, and act lawfully; but to bear and suffer is alone the test of virtue, for there come hours of pain and mental anguish when all action is vain, when motion of limb and mind is powerless; then do we learn

"How sublime it is
To suffer and be strong."

Then do we learn the great lesson that there is no quality more needed in our life than endurance. There is so much which occurs outside the circle of our own free will, accidents both mental and physical."

"And yet we feel there can be no accident."

"Nothing in the highest analysis which can be termed such, for all things are either in divine order, or under human responsibility, which latter power is too limited. What we term accidents are parts of, and belong to, the general plan, and when these occur, they serve to inspire us with endurance, which is no minor virtue-it is achievement-and bears its impress on the face. These thoughts are those of another, who has so well expressed them, that I have given them to you in his own language."

"I shall profit by your words, dear father. I shall need much of that heavenly quality which is so little appreciated, and apt to be mistaken for lack of force."

"May you grow in all the Christian graces, and be life and light to yourself and others, always remembering that your light is none the less for lighting another's torch."

"I shall go to-day to G--. Will you drive there, yourself alone?"

"I will."

An hour later they were on their way to a quiet village, a few miles from the Wyman's, where lived a friend of Dawn and her father, with whom she would stay a few days. The ride was delightful, and their communion so close and deep, that when they parted, it seemed as though they had never realized before, their need of each other. This feeling of tenderness brought them nearer in soul, if that were possible. It was like moonlight to the earth, mellowing and softening all lines and angles.

"Dearest father, did I ever love you before?" said Dawn, throwing herself on his breast, at parting.

"If you had not been working yourself so many years into my heart, you could not touch its very centre as you do now," he said, wiping

the moisture from his eyes, and folding her more tenderly to himself. "Partings are but closest approaches, drawings of the heart-strings, which tell how strong the cords are which bind us to each other." The door of the friend's house was thrown open just at this point of his remarks, and a welcome face smiled on Dawn, who sprung from her seat beside her father, into the arms of her friend.

"Take good care of her, and send her home when you are weary," said her father, and turned his face homeward, but lingered long in spirit in the atmosphere of his child.

As he wound his way slowly up the long, shady avenue, that led to his home, another love came to his bosom, and transfused his being with a different, but equally uplifting life. A moment more, and he held that other love close to his heart, the woman whom he had chosen to brighten his days and share his happiness.

"It seems as though Dawn had returned with you," she said, as she received his loving caress.

"She is with me, and never so near as now. Heaven grant I may not make her an idol," he said, fervently, and then, almost regretting his words, he gazed tenderly into the eyes of his wife.

"You would find me no iconoclast," she said, "for I, too, love her with my whole heart, and am jealous at times of all that takes her from us. Yet she must go; day must go, for we need the change which night brings."

"True," answered Hugh, "no mortal could live continually in such concentrated happiness as I enjoy in the companionship of my child." He looked into the face of her who sat beside him, and saw in its every feature love, true love for him and his own, and he thanked God for the blessings of his life, laid his head on that true woman's breast, and wept tears of joy.

It was twilight when they rose from their speechless communion, and each felt how much more blessed is the silence of those we love, than the words of one whose being is not in harmony with our own.

It was a relief to Dawn to drop out of her intense sphere into the easy, contented, every-day life of her friend. They were not alike in temperament or thought. It was that difference which drew them together, and made it agreeable for them to associate at times. Such association brought rest to Dawn, and life to her friend. There was little or no soul-affiliation, consequently no exhaustion. It was the giving out of one quality, and the receiving of another entirely different, instead of the union of two of the same kind, hence there was not the reaction of nervous expenditure, which two ever feel, who perfectly blend, after a period of enjoyment. How wise is that provision which has thrown opposites into our life, that we may not be too rapidly consumed. For pure joy is to the soul what fire is to material objects, brilliant, but consuming.

"I am going to have some company to-night, charming people most of them. I think you will enjoy them, Dawn; at least I hope so," remarked Mrs. Austin, rocking leisurely in her sewing chair.

"No doubt I shall." She was not called upon to tell how she should enjoy them. Amused she might be, but enjoyment, as Dawn understood it, was out of the question with such a class as came that evening, and to each of whom Mrs. Austin seemed very proud to introduce her friend.

Among the guests was one who attracted the particular attention of Dawn, not from grace of person or mind, although he had them, but from some interior cause. He was tall, and rather elegant in appearance, a kind of external beauty which draws most women, and wins admirers in every circle.

At a glance Dawn perceived that although mentally brilliant, he had not the spiritual and moral compliment. By his side stood a woman of the world, whom Dawn at once knew to be his wife, and on her, she felt that involuntarily her look was steadily, almost immovably fixed.

She felt like testing the power of inner vision. It seemed to her that the woman was weighing heavily upon the man, holding him to earth rather than in any way uplifting him to heaven in his aspirations. She saw that the chain which bound them, was large, coarse, and flashed like gold. This led her to conclude that she married him for his wealth. She saw that the chain was wound around them both so tight that it was almost suffocating, and that the links that passed over the woman's heart were corroded and black.

At the instant that Dawn noticed this, some one approached the lady and asked her to seat herself at the piano. She consented, and after a great many excuses and unnecessary movements, began to play. A dark cloud took her place at the side of her husband when she left, which became greatly agitated as the music proceeded, and soon there issued from it a female form. That face Dawn had surely seen somewhere; she passed her hand over her brow and endeavored to recall the familiar features.

Like a flash it came; it was poor Margaret's face, white and glorified, but with a shade of sadness resting upon it.

Dawn's whole being quivered with emotion. She saw nothing now in the room but that form, and the earthly one beside it. The young man pressed his hand to his brow, as though in troubled thought, and moved from where he stood, shivering in every limb.

"Are you cold, Mr. Bowen?" some one inquired of him; the window was closed to shut out the chill air; but the chill which ran over his frame, no material substance could keep off, for it was caused by a spirit touching him.

"I declare, he looks as though he was frozen," said his wife, rising from the instrument amid the usual applause, and drawing close to him, she whispered in his ear, "You look precisely as you did the day we met that hearse and one carriage. Come, it's a shame to be so abstracted." Then, addressing Mrs. Austin, she expressed a wish to be introduced to the gentleman who came in last, and the introduction followed.

Nearer and nearer she went. She could not do otherwise, until at last Dawn stood beside Clarence Bowen, the destroyer of Margaret's earthly happiness. The face in the cloud grew brighter; hope seemed to glow from its features, as she stood there and found her way to his troubled soul, with all the native instinct and delicacy of a true woman. She talked of life and its beauties, its opportunities to do good, and of uplifting the down-fallen; still the face shone on, till it seemed to her that every person present must have seen it, as she did. Such presences are no more discernable by the multitude, than are the beautiful principles of life, which lie every day about us, but which though not seen by them, are none the less visible to the few.

A new interest glowed in the young man's face; he felt that he had met a woman divested of the usual vanities of most of her sex. His being awake to life under the new current of earnest words which flowed in his own narrow stream of life. The waters deepened—he felt that there was something better, higher to live for, as he gazed on the glowing face before him.

During all the conversation, his thoughts kept flowing back to the green grove, and the sweet, innocent face of Margaret. There was surely nothing in the face before him to recall that likeness, yet the bitter waters of memory kept surging over him, each word reflecting the image of the wronged girl.

The face which had all the time been visible to Dawn, slowly faded away, and when the last outline had passed from her sight, she ceased talking, and left him alone with his thoughts.

Alone with those bitter reflections, heaven only might help him, for the chains that bound him to earth were many and strong.

He could not resist the impulse to ask permission to call upon Dawn some day while she remained at Mrs. Austin's, which she readily granted, and then the party broke up, with a strange murmur of voices, and rustling of silks.

"Was it not delightful? I hope you had a good time, Dawn," was the first remark of Mrs. Austin, after the last of the company had left.

"I have enjoyed it very much," and she answered truthfully; but little did her friend surmise in what manner.

It was a relief to be in her room alone that night, and think over the thrilling experience of the evening. And this is one of the lights the world rejects, and calls by every other name but holy. A light which reveals the inner state, and shows the needs of the human soul. It may be rejected, but it cannot be destroyed. Man may turn his back upon it, yet it shines on, though he wilfully refuses to enjoy the blessing it imparts. The testimony of one who lives in a dark, narrow lane, that the sun does not exist, would not be considered of any value. Supposing one chooses to close his eyes, and declare that it is not morning; shall those whose eyes are open accept his assertion? Alas, how true it is that many are talking thus, with closed mental vision, from the rostrum and the pulpit. Let each see for himself, and take no man's word upon any subject any farther than that word gives hope and encouragement. Each must do his own thinking, and look upon every effort of another, to limit his range of thought or debar him from the investigation of every new presentation of truth, as an attempt to deprive him of his liberty.

CHAPTER XXVI.

When Clarence next met Dawn he was greatly dejected. She thought he appeared too old and wan for one of his years. The brow on which the light of hope and life should repose, was indeed wrinkled, and furrowed with unrest because the spirit was ill at ease. There was a claim upon him, a voice calling for retribution, which through the very law of life, aside from personal wrong, would not let him rest; and was only in the presence of Dawn that he experienced anything like repose. His wife and friends taunted him daily upon his depression, because they were far from his soul, and could not comprehend the agony which was working therein. Many thus live only on the surface of life, and see only results. What a righting of affairs will come when all are able to see the soul's internal; when darkness shall be made light. That time is rapidly approaching.

Dawn sat beside him, the same grieved but saintly face shone out, in the atmosphere.

"I have heard, Miss Wyman, that you sometimes have interior sight-that you can see conditions of the mind, and the cause of its depressions. May I ask you if you can at present, penetrate my state, and ascertain the cause of this unrest?"

She was silent for a moment. The workings of her own mind were

visible on her features. She scarce knew how to break the truth to him, but soon lighting up she said:

"I think I have seen at least one cause of your unrest. There is a spirit presence now in this room, a young and lovely girl whom you have at some time neglected." She did not say "wronged."

He started to his feet.

"The face, Miss Wyman; can you describe her appearance?" his words and manner indicating his interest, if not belief, in her power.

"She has light blue eyes, heaven blue, and brown hair. She is a little taller than myself, has a very fair complexion, and she holds a wreath of oak leaves in front of you."

Clarence turned deadly pale.

"I think she must have been once dear to you, by the look of sweet forgiveness which she gives you."

He groaned aloud.

"Now she holds in her arms a child—a bright-eyed boy, which has your look upon its face."

He started with a defiant look, but this changed in an instant to one of grief, and he leaned his head upon his hands and wept.

Slowly the fair face faded away; then Dawn knew all, and knowing all, how great a comforter did she become to him! Angels smile on and mingle in such scenes; mortals see but the surface, and wonder why they thus mingle, with the usual earthly questioning, whether it is for any good that the two thus come together.

The long pent-up grief passed away, in a measure, and Clarence felt as though in the presence of an angel, so sweet and soothing were the words of promise, and tender rebuke which came from the lips of Dawn and flowed to his heart, strengthening his purpose to become a better man.

"Can he who fully repents be wholly forgiven," he asked, in a tone of deepest want.

"God's mercies are for such and his forgiveness is free, full, and eternal. It does not flow all at once: it must be obtained by long-suffering and earnest asking, that we may know its value, and how precious is the gift."

"Do you think if I were to go beyond, where dwells that one I have wronged, I could be with her and walk by her side?"

"If your repentance was pure and complete. You would be where your

soul was attracted."

"Do spirits feel the change in our states? If we are sorry for our misdeeds, can they see that we are?"

"Their mission to earth as helps and guardians to mortals would be of little use if they could not. They rise and fall with us. They administer to us, and learn of us. The worlds are like warp and woof. We stay or go where our labor is, wherever the soul may be which has claim upon us."

"This must be sight then, real vision, for such a person as you have described I once loved and wronged. But the hour is late, I must go, yet I hope you will permit me to call upon you once more. Can I have your promise to see me again, before you leave the place?"

"If I remain I shall be most happy to see you. Remember that all your efforts to do right will relieve and elevate this friend who is around you, who cannot leave you, until her mind has become assimilated with yours, and the balance of your nature is restored by the infusing of her life into yours. If she is relieved by your act, rest will follow; if not, the opposite. This is a law of nature, and cannot be set aside, no more than two on the earth living disharmonized and misunderstood, can find rest away from, or out of, each other.'

"I deeply thank you," he said, "for your kind words. May all happiness be yours forever." And then they parted, not the same as when they met, but linked together by the chain of sympathy and common needs.

Clarence heard not the words of his wife that night as he entered his home, who after a while grew weary of his absent replies, and found consolation in sleep. But to him sleep was not thought of. All night he laid awake, his being transfused with a new current of thought, and his life going out and soaring upward into a higher existence. The warp of a new garment was set in the loom. What hand would shape and weave the woof?

When day broke over the hills another morning burst on his senses, and Clarence Bowen, of the gay world, was not the same as before, but a man of high resolves and noble purposes, trying to live a better life.

Slowly his higher nature unfolded. Very slowly came the truths to his mind, as Dawn presented them with all the vigor and freshness of her nature. She told him the story of Margaret, of her death and burial, and of her father; and while he listened with tear-dimmed eyes, his soul became white with repentance. As Dawn spoke, the vision came and went,--each time with the countenance more at rest. It was an experience such as but few have; only those who seen beyond, and know that mortals return to rectify errors after their decease.

There could be no rest for either, until a reconciliation was effected. Happy he who can stand between the two worlds and transmit the most earnest wishes of the unseen, to those of earth. The mission, though fraught with many sorrows, is divine and soul-uplifting to the subject. But who can know these truths save one who has experienced them? The human soul has little power of imparting to another its deepest feelings. We may speak, but who will believe, or sense our experiences? An ancient writer says: "There are many kinds of voices in the world, but none of them without signification. Therefore, if I know not the meaning of the voice, I shall be unto him that speaketh a barbarian, and he that speaketh shall be a barbarian unto me."

"When you tell me of these things I believe; they are real to me," said Clarence, "but if I read them, or hear them related as the experience of others, they are dull and meaningless; why is this?"

"I suppose it is because you so feel my life and assurance of them, that in my atmosphere they become real and tangible to you."

"I think it must be so. I may yet find strength enough to walk alone."

"You will walk with her who comes to mingle her happiness with yours, and to help bear your crosses."

"Is it wrong to wish to die?"

"It is better, I think, to desire to live here our appointed time, and ultimate the purpose of our earthly existence."

"But I can never be happy here, for there are none who understand me."

"Seek to understand yourself, and that will draw others to you. It matters but little whether we are understood in this world, when we think of the long eternity before us. There is danger of becoming morbid on that point. We lose time and ground in many such meditations. Our gaze becomes too much inward, and we lose sight of life's grand panorama while thus closed in. We can see ourselves most clearly in others; our weakness and our strength. We need to go out, more than to look within. Do you not in conversing with me feel yourself more, than you do when alone?"

"I do. Another essence, or quality of life mingling with our own gives us our own more perfectly. Will all this power go with us to the other world, or do we leave much behind?"

"Nothing but the husk-the dust is left here. Whatever is, shall be. Should you or I pass on, to-day, we should still preserve our individuality of thought and being."

"And our loves will unfold there, and we be free, think you, to associate with whom we love?"

"I have no doubt of it in my own mind, but can scarce expect another to feel the conviction as I do. We shall be better understood there. Here we have inharmonious natures of our own and others to contend with. These are given to us and are brought about us without any ability in ourselves to accept or reject. Our surroundings are not always what we would wish them, and few find rest or harmony of soul while here. And yet all this is necessary for proper unfoldment and development, else it would not be. Few weary pilgrims reach in this life the many mansions prepared for the soul; few find their fullness of soul-enjoyment. I have seen some of these weary ones as they entered the other world and were led to places of rest. As they caught a single glimpse of the peace and rest awaiting them, their faces glowed with the light of a divine transfiguration; yet they knew that the bliss they had been permitted to look upon, and to hope for, could be theirs only as they were developed into a state of perfect appreciation of it. Even so the person who enters the most fully and understandingly into our own feelings, grasps and holds the most of us. I am yours and you are mine just so far as we can fathom and comprehend each other."

"I had never thought of that before. How little do they who claim us as their own, know of the existence of this law; and yet the more I consider it, the more do I see its beauty, its truth, and the harmony of all its parts."

Dawn was greatly pleased in seeing how readily he recognized her position, and continued:

"The relation which such claimants bear to us is one purely external in its nature, and oft-times painful. It is a kind of property ownership which ought to be banished from social life. It should be cast out and have no place nor lot with us, for those higher and divine principles cannot dwell with us until these things are regarded as of the past, and now worthless."

"But might not the new flow in naturally, and displace the old?"

"That is partly true, but when content with our condition we feel the need of no other. This is one reason why to many, the blessings in store for them are seemingly so long in coming. The man who is struggling with adversity, and sees nothing but darkness and want surrounding him, fondly imagines that in the possession of abundance he would find rest and peace. And yet he could never be blest while in that condition of feeling, though all wealth were his. But having passed through, and out of, this condition, and learned that the exertion induced by privation was the best possible means of his growth, then, wealth might come to him and be a blessing and a power. Blessings will come to us when we are prepared by culture or discipline to rightly employ them for our own good and the good of others."

"Your thoughts have made me truly blest. You have withdrawn the dark veil which has hung over me so long. I must surely call this a blessing."

"And the darkness was the same, for it has led you to appreciate the light."

He took her hand at parting, and pressed it with the warmth of generous gratitude, bade her adieu and went out into the darkness of the evening, but with rays of the morning of life shining in his soul.

CHAPTER XXVII.

"Dawn! Dawn! where are you?" called Mrs. Austin from the library after Mr. Bowen had left. "I'm glad that stupid fellow has gone," she continued, "for we want you to sing for us."

How could she sing? The sentiment which would suit her mood would not surely be fitted to those who would listen; but forcing her real state aside, she played and sung several lively songs.

"Delightful!" exclaimed her friend, "we mean to have more of your company now, and keep such stupid people as Clarence Bowen away, he is so changed; he used to be very gay and lively; what do you find in him, Dawn?"

"A need; a great soul need. He wants comforting."

"What, is he sad? He ought to be the merriest, happiest fellow alive. He has enough of this world's goods, and a most brilliant woman for a wife."

"These alone cannot give happiness. True, lasting happiness is made up of many little things on which the world places but little value. He has much to make him thoughtful and earnest, and very little to make him gay."

"You are so unlike everybody else, Dawn. Now I like life; real, hearty, earnest life. I don't care a straw for hidden causes. I want what's on the surface. I think we were put here to enjoy ourselves and make each other happy."

"So do I; but what you call 'happiness,' might to some, be mere momentary excitement, mere transient pleasure. To me, the word happiness means something deeper; a current, which holds all the ripples of life in its deep channel."

"Well, if happiness is the deep undercurrent, as you say, I don't want it. I want the ripples, the foam, and the sparkle. So let us go to bed and rest, and to-morrow ride over the hills on horseback. I'll take Arrow, he's fiery, and you may take Jessie. Will you? You need some roses on your cheek." And the joyous-hearted woman kissed the pale face of her friend till the flush came on her cheeks and brow.

"There; now you look like life; you seemed a moment since as still and white as snow!"

"Your warm nature has surely changed the condition of things, for I feel more like riding just now than sleeping."

"That's good. Suppose we have a moonlight race?"

"I protest against any such proceeding, being the lord and master of this manor," said her husband, looking up from his book, in which they supposed he was too deeply engaged to hear their conversation.

Reader, don't trust a gentleman who has his eyes on the page of a volume when two ladies are conversing.

"Then I suppose there's nothing left for us but to go to bed."

"Yes, a something else," said her husband.

"What?"

"Go to sleep."

"Stupid! I suppose you think you have made a brilliant speech."

"On the contrary I think it the reverse. I never waste scintillations of genius on unappreciative auditors."

"Edward Austin! you deserve to be banished a week from ladies' society. Come Dawn, let us retire."

It was in this pleasant, light vein of thought that Dawn recovered her mental poise, and she sank into a sweet and profound slumber, which otherwise would not have come to her. Thus do we range from one sphere to another, and learn, though slowly, that all states are legitimate and necessary, the one to the other. The parts of life contribute to the perfection of the whole. Each object has its own peculiar office, as it has its own form. The tulip delights with its beauty, the carnation with its perfume, the unseemly wormwood displeases both taste and smell, yet in medicinal value is superior

to both. So each temperament, each character, has its good and bad. The one has inclinations of which the other is incapable.

"This is a world of hints, out of which each soul seizes what it needs." So from other lives we draw and appropriate continually into our own, and we need the manifestations of life to make us harmonious. Each person draws something from us that none other can, and imparts out of its special quality that which we cannot receive from any other. We need at times to surrender our will, to merge ourselves into another sphere, and loose the tension of our own action; this surrender being to the mind what sleep is to the brain.

The whole of life does not flow through any one channel; we drink from many streams. "A ship ought not to be held by one anchor, nor life by a single hope." Slowly we learn life's compliments, and the value of its component parts. Many threads make up the web, and many shades the design. As we advance in experiences, we feel that we could not have afforded to have lost one shade, however dark it may have been. Time, the silent weaver, sits by the loom, seeing neither the light nor shade, but only the great design which grows under his hand in the immortal web.

The morning was clear and lovely. Mrs. Austin and Dawn rode over the hills, their spirits rising at every step, under the exhilarating exercise. A fresh breeze stirred the leaves of the trees, and made the whole air sweet and vital. Birds carolled their songs, and made the woods vocal with praise. Nature seemed set to a jubilant key; while fresh inspiration flowed into the heart of man as he gazed on the scene so redolent with life and beauty.

"You are as radiant as the day," said Mrs. Austin, drawing in Arrow a little, and coming to the side of Dawn.

"Thank you for your compliment, but it's more the reflection of the outer world, than a manifestation of myself. One cannot but be bright on such a morning."

"I cannot hold Arrow in longer, or I might argue on that point." In a moment she was out of sight, round the bend of the road.

"She does me good every moment. I sometimes wish I did not see the conditions of life, and its states as I do. I must keep on the surface a little more,--so run along Jessie," said Dawn, giving the gentle animal a little touch of the whip that caused her to canter away briskly and catch up with Arrow. Yet it was but for an instant, for Arrow bounded off as he heard the approach, and horse and rider were soon as far in the distance as before.

At the end of the long road Mrs. Austin halted, and reined Arrow under a tree to wait for her friend.

"You are quite a stranger," said Dawn, coming up at a slow pace. "I've been taking time to enjoy the scenery."

"So I perceive. I thought you had dismounted and was sketching, or writing a sonnet to the woods."

"It were most likely to have been the latter, as I never sketch anything but human character."

"Then tell me what I am like. Sketch me as I am."

"You are unlike every one else," said Dawn, in an absent manner.

"That's a diversion. Come to the point, and define me. I'm a riddle, I know."

"If you have got thus far, you can analyze yourself. It's a good beginning to know what you are."

"But I cannot unriddle myself. I have, under my rippling surface, a few deep thoughts, and good ones, and they make me speak and act better, sometimes. I am not all foam, Dawn."

"I never supposed you were. There is a depth in you that you have never fathomed, because your life has been gay, and you have never needed the truths which lie deep, and out of sight."

"But I'd rather go up than down; much rather."

"Depth is height, and height is depth."

"So it is. I never thought of that before. Dawn, you could make a woman of me. Edward does not call me into my better self as you do. Why is it?"

"I suppose because he does not need that manifestation of your being. Your lives are both set to sweetly flowing music. You have never felt the sting of want and suffering, either mental or physical, nor witnessed it to any great extent in others."

"Why are we allowed to sit in the sunshine, then, if there is so much sorrow in the world?"

"You are saved for some work. When the worn laborers now in the field can do no more, perhaps you will be called forth."

"O, Dawn, your words thrill me. Then we may not always be as happy as now?" and her glance seemed to turn inward on her joyous heart.

"You may be far happier, but not so full of life's pleasures."

"Yes; I remember the deep, strong current, and the ripples. Let us go on, Dawn. I feel, I don't know how, but strange. Shall we start?"

"Certainly; I wait your move. Come, Jessie, show me another phase of

your nature. I have seen how gentle you are; now go."

At the word, the creature seemed to fly through the air, so swiftly did she leap over the ground, and Arrow was left behind.

At noon they stopped at a house on the mountain side, the home of an acquaintance of Mrs. Austin's, to refresh themselves and their horses.

"I have brought you to some strange people," said Mrs. Austin, as they alighted, and a boy came and led their horses to the stable.

"Strange; in what way?"

"O; they believe in all sorts of supernatural things-in the doctrine of transmigration, second-sight, and every other impossible and improbable thing."

"I am delighted. I shall be most happy to see them."

"Because you yourself are so much inclined that way?"

"No. I should be more curious to see them if I were not interested in the things you have mentioned. But now I shall meet kindred souls, and in those I always find delight."

"I've half a mind to take you home without even an introduction, for your impudence; as though I was not a 'kindred soul.'"

"It's too late, now, for here comes a lady and gentleman to welcome you."

"Miss Bernard, my friend Miss Wyman, Mr. Bernard."

Dawn took their proffered hands which seemed to thrill with a welcome, and they led the way to a large, old-fashioned parlor. The house was one of those delightful land-marks of the past generation, which we sometimes see. It stood on a high hill, or rather on a mountain shelf, shaded by lofty trees which seemed like sentinels stationed about to protect it from all intrusion. No innovations of modern improvement had marred the general keeping of the grounds and buildings, for any change would have been an injury to the general harmony of the whole. A large, clean lawn sloped to a woody edge in front, and in the rear of the dwelling were clusters of pines and oaks.

Miss Bernard could not be described in a book, nor sensed in a single interview, yet we must lay before the reader an outline to be filled by the imagination. She was a blending of all the forces, mental, moral, and spiritual. Her face was full of thought, without the sharp, defined lines, so common to most women of a nervous temperament. It impressed you at once with vigor and power; chastened by a deep, spiritual light, which shone over it like that

of the declining sun upon a landscape. It seemed to burst from within, not having the appearance of proceeding from dross burning away, but like a radiance native to the soul, a part and quality of it, not an ignition which comes from friction and war within.

Basil, her brother, whose name indicated his nature, made every one feel as though transported to a loftier atmosphere. He seemed to belong among the stars. Dawn felt at home at once in his presence, which was a mystery to her friend, to whom he seemed intangible and distant. She had never seen upon the face of Dawn such rapt admiration as she saw there, when Basil conversed.

The conversation changed from external to inner subjects, just as the bell rung for dinner. At the table there were no strangers, and to Dawn it seemed as though she had always known them, and many times before, occupied the same place in their midst. Thus do those who are harmonious in spirit affiliate, regardless of material conditions.

A vase of elegant flowers decked the table, also a basket of blossoms, unarranged, which, at dessert, were placed on the plates of the guests.

A light shone from Basil's eyes, which did not escape Mrs. Austin's notice, as he placed a scarlet lily upon her plate.

"The wand-like lily which lifted up,
As a Maenad, its radiant-colored cup,
Till the fiery star, which is in its eye,
Gazed through clear dew on the tender sky."

While these lines of Whittier's ran through her mind:

"I bring no gift of passion,
I breathe no tone of love,
But the freshness and the purity
Of a feeling far above.
I love to turn to thee, fair girl,
As one within whose heart
Earth has no stain of vanity,
And fickleness no part."

Then she watched him with deeper interest as he placed a spray of balm beside the lily.

"Balm that never ceases uttering sweets,
Goes decking the green earth with drapery."

"I wonder what he will give me," she said to herself, almost impatiently, yet fearing the offering might not be complimentary, for she well knew that Basil Bernard was always truthful. He held already in his hand a rose, blooming and fresh as morning, which he put upon her plate, and beside it a spray of yellow jessamine. Grace

and elegance-while the beautiful Mundi rose spoke its own language-"you are merry."

"Blushing rose!
Blown in the morning-thou shalt fade ere noon:
What boots a life that in such haste forsakes thee?
Thou 'rt wondrous frolic being to die so soon,
And passing proud a little color makes thee."

And now came the most interesting point, to see what flowers he would place upon his sister's plate.

First, a handful of violets. "Faithfulness," thought Dawn, "he is right thus far." And then, as though his thoughts rose with the sentiment, he laid snowballs gently around them, while these words flashed upon her mind:

"Should sorrow o'er thy brow
Its darkened shadow fling,
And hopes that cheer thee now,
Die in their early spring;
Should pleasure, at its birth,
Fade like the hues of even,
Turn thou away from earth--
There's rest for thee in heaven.

"If ever life should seem
To thee a toilsome way,
And gladness cease to beam
Upon its clouded day;
If, like the weary dove,
O'er shoreless ocean driven,
Raise thou thine eyes above--
There's rest for thee in heaven."

"And now we will each make a contribution to Basil" said his sister, smiling on him in a manner which told how dear he was to her.

She passed the basket to Dawn, who blushed and trembled at first, not with fear, but pleasure.

"The offering," said his sister, "is to be an expression of the sentiments, which, in the opinion of each of us, are most in keeping with his character."

Dawn reached forth, and drew, without hesitation, a cluster of verbenas, and one white water-lily.

"Sensibility and purity of heart. She has read him aright," thought Miss Bernard.

"Gentle as an angel's ministry
The guiding hand of love should be,
Which seeks again those chords to bind

Which human woe hath rent apart."

"She has seen my brother's very heart, his most noble self," she repeated to herself, as she passed the basket to Mrs. Austin, who plucked a Clyconthas, and laid it on his plate, with a blossom of Iris.

"Benevolence," said Dawn, and to her mind these beautiful words were suggested;

"Wouldst thou from sorrow find a sweet relief,
Or is thy heart oppressed with woes untold?
Balm wouldst thou gather for corroding grief;
Pour blessings round thee like a shower of gold?
'Tis when the rose is wrapped in many a fold
Close to its heart, the worm is wasting there
Its life and beauty; not when, all unrolled,
Leaf after leaf, its bosom, rich and fair,
Breathes freely its perfume throughout the ambient air.
Rouse to some work of high and holy love,
And thou an angel's happiness shalt know.
Shalt bless the earth while in the world above;
The good began by thee shall onward flow
In many a branching stream, and wider grow;
The seed that in these few and fleeting hours
Thy hand unsparing and unwearied sow,
Shall deck thy grave with amaranthine flowers,
And yield thee fruits divine in heaven's immortal bowers."

But one more offering, and that from his sister. She drew the bay leaf, of which the wreath to adorn the conqueror and the poet is made, and, while the eyes of the two women rested on her, drew forth also the pale, but sweet-scented mountain pink, signifying aspiration, beautifully expressed by Percival in these lines:

"The world may scorn me, if they choose-I care
But little for their scoffings. I may sink
For moments; but I rise again, nor shrink
From doing what the faithful heart inspires.
I will not falter, fawn, nor crouch, nor wink,
At what high-mounted wealth or power desires;
I have a loftier aim, to which my soul aspires."

"We regret that we must leave, now," said Mrs. Austin to her friend, after they had returned to the drawing-room and conversed awhile.

"We would gladly detain you longer, but knowing you have a long drive, we cannot conscientiously do so," said Miss Bernard; "but may we not hope to see you both, again?"

"Not unless you return our visit; we cannot take another long drive right away, having so many ways to move, and so little time to spare. But come and see us whenever you can."

"Thank you," replied Miss Bernard, and Basil bowed, while his eyes rested on Dawn.

"We should both be happy to see you again, Miss Wyman," he said, taking her hand, and the horses having been brought to the door, he helped her into the saddle first, and then Mrs. Austin.

They bounded away, and were soon far from the hospitable home, discussing, as they rode side by side, the merits and beauties of its occupants.

"I did not tell you Miss Bernard's name. I think her brother did not mention it while we were there; now what do you think it can be?"

"I do not know; perhaps Margaret-a pearl. No, not that; maybe, Agathe, which signifies good; and yet I do not feel I have it yet."

"No; guess again."

"I thought once while there, it might be Beatrice, for she seems like one who blesses."

"You are right. That is her name, and most nobly does she illustrate its signification."

"I am glad, for I hoped it was. How strange their names should so suit their natures," said Dawn, musingly.

"Not if you knew them and their ancestry. They are of German descent, and believe in all sorts of traditions, and, as I have said before, supernatural things. They live almost wholly in sentiment, and are little known save by a very few. I like them, yet I cannot tell why. When in their presence I feel a sort of transcendental charm, a something intangible, but restful to my soul. It's only with you and them, Dawn, that I ever feel thus, and that is why I brought you together."

"I can never thank you enough, but I wish to know them better."

"You shall. Did I not see how they felt your sphere, as you 'impressionists' say."

"I hope they felt my desire for a better life, for it is a great rest to be comprehended. It is as though some one took us by the hand, and led us over the hard places of life."

"I wish I could feel and live as you do, Dawn. You seem to have something so much deeper and richer in your life, than I have in mine-but, I suppose you would say, if I wanted deeper thoughts, I should search and find them."

"I should, most certainly; you have anticipated my answer. We have

what we aspire to--what we feel the need of."

"We are getting too earnest, it makes me feel almost sad. Come, Arrow, let me see you speed over that shady road;" and away he flew at the sound of his name, leaving Dawn and Jessie, who seemed in no mood just then for galloping, far behind.

It was almost twilight when they reached home together, Mrs. Austin having checked her horse's speed, for her friend to come up with her. They had passed a most delightful day, and cosily seated in their parlor, we will leave them talking as the twilight deepens around, and go to the home of Basil and sister, who are conversing upon the day's events.

"It seems as though somewhere, in this or another existence, I had seen that face and form," said Basil to his sister.

"She is certainly very lovely, wherever you may have met her. She may have been a dove, brother, and rested on your shoulder. I do not know but that we should hesitate before we condemn the belief in a transmigration of spirits, souls, and forces, when nature seems to somewhat imply its truth in her kingdom?"

"Spirit cannot, in its countless transmigrations, be limited to the little space which we call earth. The life of the universe is the activity of its ever-living forces and existences, and their eternal striving to separate or to unite.

"The belief in the transmigration of souls is of high antiquity, and is worthy of more than a passing thought. A writer has said: 'Being itself does not change, but only its relations. Mind and soul move in other connections, according to divine ordinances. The strength or weakness of the will, which the mind is conscious of, in itself, by a natural necessity creates a distinction between the elevation or the degradation of self. That is its heaven-this is its hell. There is an infinite progress of spirit towards perfection in the Infinite, as the solar systems with their planets wheel through the realm of the immeasurable. All eternal activity! New union to be going on of spirits and souls with new powers, which become their serviceable instruments of contact with the All of things-this is transmigration of souls. Any other kind of continued duration and continued action is inconceivable to us. Whether upon earth, or in other worlds, is a matter of indifference.' But one spirit sees these things more clearly than another."

Basil stopped, and gazed long into the dim twilight, that light so fitted for communion; and as he gazed he felt his mind going out from his home, towards the being who had so touched his soul-thoughts. Was it his counterpart, or second-self, that made him feel that evening as though he had never known himself? What new quality had so blended with his own, in that brief space of time, as to quicken all his spiritual and intellectual perceptions? Would they meet again? and when and where? were the concluding

interrogatories as he came back from his reverie, his thoughts flowing again into audible language.

"You seem freshened, brother," said Beatrice, perceiving that he lacked words for the full expression of his intense feelings.

"It's the power of a new mind. I am quickened in spirit."

"I see you are; and is it not wonderful how much a person whom we do not daily meet can inspire us? What an impetus such an one brings to us, even though but a few words may be spoken. Its fresh magnetic life mingles with our own, and tinctures our inspirations and aspirations with a new fervor.

"True; how much we have to learn regarding social intercourse. We have in society so little spontaneity, that it will take many genial natures like that of Miss Wyman to melt the frost away."

She saw that he was pleased with Dawn, and felt glad. It was almost a relief to feel the strong tension of his love for her relax a little. It is not often that sisters have thus to complain, but Basil Bernard knew what love was, and how to enfold his object in an atmosphere of delight. It was protective and uplifting, refining and broadening, to all who felt it.

There are some natures like that of an infant, ever asking for love, and protecting arms. Such need to be carried on one's bosom, and nestled, through their whole life. There are maternally protecting arms that can bear them thus, and in the sphere of their life and love their souls would rest. There are natures that will ever be as children, and also those who can meet their wants.

Such clinging lives should be all infancy; they should be cared for, until their souls are strong enough to stand alone.

Why is there so much that is fragmentary and unlinked? Why is the vine left to trail, when the strong oak, with its giant trunk, is standing bare? It's all in parts, disjointed, broken, as though some world of glory had been torn asunder, and its portions scattered here and there.

There is completeness somewhere-in the land beyond-where the sighs, the tears, the passionate longings, the hopes and fears will be all adjusted, and our souls rest in celestial harmony.

We cannot question but that it will be well with us there, if we have striven for the good, our souls conceived of, here. If, with good purpose and intent, we have out-wrought the hints and suggestions which have been given us of life, we must find growing states of rest, sometime, to repletion. It will not be all peace there; for the two worlds are interblended, and shadow into each other. There is an interplay of life and emotion forever, and to those who sense it, a joy too deep to be portrayed by human words; a

truth which helps us to bear the sorrows of this life serenely, and more fully appreciate its joys.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

Basil and his sister sat longer that summer evening than was their wont. There was a deeper intoning of sentiment, a closer blending of thought, or rather, their individual states had been more clearly defined by the day's incidents.

They were of those rare types of mind which know just how far they can be together, and not detract from each other; just when the mental and spiritual assimilation was becoming attenuated, and each needed solitude. Thus they were constantly coming each to the other, and consequently drew from exhaustless fountains of intellectual and physical strength.

Life is replete with harmonies ready to inflow, if we are but receptive and delicate enough to receive and appropriate them. Blest are they who recognize life's indications, its index-fingers which are pointing each hour to some new experience, which will deepen and expand our lives.

Generally there is great danger of two persons settling into themselves, as these two seemed to have done, but Basil and Beatrice were so catholic they could afford it, in fact they needed just the close companionship which they held. The brother, with his colossal spirit, lofty and original, moving forward through life with that slow majesty which indicates the wholeness of the individual, unlike the airy advance of natures which rush with but one faculty quickened, and mistake speed for greatness, supplied the sister with that manly, noble quality, which must ever exist in the real or ideal of every woman. No wonder her warm, beneficent nature expanded daily, until her heart seemed a garden full of flowers of love and gratitude.

Did life at times seem dim and hazy, and the mind full of a thousand doubts, he could dispel the cloud, wrench the truth from its old combinations, and present it to her in striking contrast with its opposite error.

No wonder that new purposes and aspirations were born every hour in that woman's heart, impregnated by his manliness of quality. Yet each drew through the subtle texture of soul a different hue of

life, as in a bed of flowers, from the same sunlight, one draws crimson, another azure, as though conscious of the harmony of complement and difference.

"I feel a rich, deep vein of thought to-night," said Beatrice, "as though I could write a poem or a book, so vivid are my thoughts."

"Your life has been a poem, full of sweetly blended words. You have lived yours out, while others have written theirs."

"But there is such power in books, Basil."

"I know it well. 'Some books are drenched sands on which a great soul's wealth lies all in heaps, like a wrecked argosy.' And some are sweet and full of passion-tones, and you feel on every leaf that you are turning, as though their heart-beats were going into yours; that they were dying that you might have life. Books are indeed great, but lives are greater; lives that are full of earnest purpose, and that fail not, even though the tide beats strong about them and the heavens hang thick and dark with clouds. The greatest poems are true lives, now surging with grief and passion, now pulsing with joy-notes, thrilling on each page of life. Some books, as well as persons, make us feel as though we stood in the presence of a king, while some give us tears. Some books and some beings dome us like a sky. Sister, you are the dome which ever overarches my life,--if day, with its azure and ermine clouds; if night, with its stars. Nay, do not write a book, but breathe and live your life out each day."

"Yet I know that you, Basil, could write one, and make it full and perfect."

"I could make one full of words, if not of thought; but come, the night is passing, we shall scarce have an hour's rest before sunrise."

"Indeed, I think we are in a fair way to see its early brightness."

To their dreams and life we will leave them awhile, knowing that to such hearts will ever come peace, whether sleeping or waking.

Past midnight, that silent hour when the earth is peopled with other forms. It is the hour for the brain to receive the most subtle influences, whether sleeping or waking.

Some kinds of sleep bring us brighter states than day gives us. They are awakenings, in which the understanding, instead of being dethroned, acquires a power and vivacity beyond what it possesses when the external form is awake and active. The soul seems emancipated from earthly trammels. The ruling thought of a man's life is not unlikely to shape itself into dreams, the constant thought of the day may encroach on the quiet of the night. Thus Columbus dreamed that a voice said unto him, "God will give thee the

keys of the gates of the ocean." So any earnest longing, resting on our minds when we composed ourselves to sleep, may pass over into our sleeping consciousness, and be reproduced, perhaps in some happier mood.

Modern writers on the phenomena of sleep, usually concur in the assertion that man's sleeping thoughts are meaningless, and that dreams are, therefore, untrustworthy. Such was not the opinion of our ancestors. They attached great importance to dreams and their interpretations. They had resort to them for guidance in cases of difficulty, or great calamity. We do not claim for all dreams, a divine or reliable character, but that some are to be trusted, every individual of any experience can testify. Plato assumes that all dreams might be trusted, if men would only bring their bodies into such a state, before going to sleep, as to leave nothing that might occasion error or perturbation in their dreams.

A young lady, a native of Ross-shire, in Scotland, who was devotedly attached to an officer, with Sir John Moore in the Spanish war, became alarmed at the constant danger to which her lover was exposed, until she pined, and fell into ill health. Finally, one night in a dream, she saw him pale, bloody, and wounded in the breast, enter her apartment. He drew aside the curtains of the bed, and with a mild look, told her he had been slain in battle, bidding her, at the same time, to be comforted, and not take his death to heart.

The consequence of the dream was fatal to the poor girl, who died a few days afterward, desiring her parents to note down the date of her dream, which she was confident would be confirmed. It was so. The news shortly after reached England that the officer had fallen at the battle of Corunna, on the very day in the night of which his betrothed had beheld the vision.

Another, a lady residing in Rome, dreamed that her mother, who had been several years dead, appeared to her, gave her a lock of hair, and said, "Be especially careful of this lock of hair, my child, for it is your father's, and the angels will call him away from you to-morrow."

The effect of the dream on her mind was such, that, when she awoke, she experienced the greatest alarm, and caused a telegraphic notice to be instantly dispatched to England, where her father was, to inquire after his health. No immediate reply was received; but, when it did come, it was to the effect that her father had died that morning at nine o'clock. She afterwards learned, that, two days before his death, he had caused to be cut off, a lock of his hair, and handed it to one of his daughters, who was attending on him, telling her it was for her sister in Rome.

Well authenticated cases might be multiplied till they filled volumes; but the two we have cited, suffice to prove that in sleeping, as well as in waking hours, our minds may receive

impressions of truth, or, that the spirit goes out to other scenes, and there takes cognizance of events and conditions.

Dawn slept on; her beautiful white face was still and upturned, as though gazing into the heavens. The excitement of the day had gone, and the look of keen pleasure on her features was changed to one of intensest emotion, for she was away, her spirit beside one whose life seemed almost ebbing out of this state of existence. She saw his pale features half hidden in the snowy pillows, the deep, soft eyes looking as though in search of one they loved; and then she heard him call her name, in tones touching and tender. She wept, and awoke. The sun was shining brightly through the window. She arose, and dressed for her departure, and, to the surprise of her friend, announced her intention of leaving that morning for home.

"You are no more to be depended on than the rest of your sex, Miss Wyman," remarked Mr. Austin, who really enjoyed having her with them.

She was in no mood to reply in the same spirit, but said quietly:

"I have concluded not to tire you out completely this time, for I want to come again."

"I think your going must be the result of some very hasty conclusion, Dawn. I had no intimation of it last evening. Really, unless you are ill, you are quite unfair to leave us so soon." Mrs. Austin having made this remark, glanced for the first time at Dawn's white face. What had come over her? Was it Dawn who sat there so still and white? "Are you ill?" she asked, the tremor of her voice betraying her deep solicitude for the welfare of her visitor.

"No; but anxious. I must go to-day, however, or I shall be sick, and on your hands."

"I'd a deal rather you should be on my hands, than weighing on my heart, as you are now," and Mrs. Austin expressed the hope, after her husband had left, that she would confide to her the cause of her departure and sudden appearance of illness.

"I have had an unpleasant dream," said Dawn, when they were alone, feeling that some explanation was due her friend, "and I must go home."

"A dream! O, fie, I never mind them. Why, I once had a most frightful one about Ned. He was away on a journey, and I dreamt that the boat caught fire, and every one on board was lost. I even went so far as to see a messenger coming to tell me of the disaster."

"But had not your mind been agitated through the day?"

"Why, I had read of some dreadful disasters, to be sure, and then I had retired at a late hour, after getting my mind wrought up about

the liabilities of danger, which, of course, accounted for it-but was your dream about your father?"

"No."

"Why must you go? Do you think any one is in danger? I think it was the result of the long ride, don't you?"

"I do not. My dream was purely impressional, and outside of the effect of daily incidents. Yes, I must go, Fannie, and right away."

"In that case I shall ride home with you," and she rang for the man to harness the horse.

Each busy with her own thoughts they rode in silence for a long distance, a silence which was only broken by Dawn's exclamation of pleasure, as they came in sight of her home.

The next day she sat beside the bed of Ralph, whose snow-white face and attenuated form, showed how fast he was passing away.

He gazed long and tenderly into her face, as she sat there, their souls holding their last earthly communion. His spirit was all aglow with life, and trust, while the shadow of separation rested on her, and dimmed her faith and vision.

"But for a little while, Dawn, and then we shall meet again; perhaps, to be united."

How the words entered her heart, for now, under the cloud, she felt, O how keenly, that her state had hastened him home. His was the vine-like nature that must cling to another, or die. It was all dark to her then, and added to the pang of separation, was the thought of her cold indifference. He, all gentleness and love, lie in rays of light; all her vision and life had gone into him to help him over the river.

"And you do not dread to go, Ralph?" she said, her voice choking with emotion.

"Fear? I only long to do so; to be there, where all is peace and rest;" and the rapt, upturned gaze, confirmed his words.

"It will be always day there," he continued; "none of these weary nights which have been so long and lonely-"

"O, Ralph, live; live for me. I have been blind and wayward. O, come back, and we will live for each other."

"In my father's house are many mansions; I go to prepare a place for you."

The words sounded far, far away.

"Yes, we will live together above, not here. God has so ordered it, my own Dawn. I shall be light, perhaps, to you, even in that far-off land. Nay, 'tis not 'far'; 't is here. I shall dwell in your heart close-close-closer than ever."

He closed his eyes and rested for a few moments. Then, arousing, he clasped her hands firmly, as though he would bear her away with him as he took his heavenward flight.

"Look there," he said, "the river! go close with me-for this is our last moment. Dawn, I am yours; not even death can part us. I am not going; I am coming closer than any earthly relation could bring me to you; coming-call them."

Parents and sister stood beside the bed with tearful eyes. To them he was going far away.

Dawn saw not the death-dew on the marble brow, nor heeded the passing breath. Another sight was given her, and while they stood so statue-like with anguish, her eyes beheld a soft mist gather like snowflakes on the head; and while the breath grew quick and short, this seemed to pulsate with life, until a face was outlined there. That face the same, yet not the same, but her own dear Ralph's, immortalized, set in a softer, finer light. Her being pulsated with new joy. A tide of life seemed to have flown into her heart, leaving no room for pain.

A moan struck on her ear; so sad that she started, and the vision fled.

"O, Ralph, my own loved boy; he's gone, he's gone," burst from the mother's sorrowing heart, as they bore her from the room.

Marion stood dumb with grief, while the poor stricken father bowed his head and wept bitter tears for his lost son.

Had Dawn no grief, that she could stand there and look so calmly on? What made her feel so indifferent to the dead form on which she gazed? Because his life, the life that had once animated it, had passed into hers, and they were one and united. Ralph, warm with life, was imaged in her heart and mind. The clay he bore about him, that husk, had no claim upon her being now, and with scarce a look at the body, she walked away.

"I think she could never have loved him, or she would not seem so cold," were the words that floated to her as she passed from the room where lay all that was mortal of Ralph.

It was as near as she could expect to be understood here, in a world where so much of her real self was hidden; but such words touched her sensibilities none the less, notwithstanding her philosophy. They went deep, like an arrow, into her heart, and then she knew

that the house of mourning was no place for her; that she must go, and to the world appear cold and unfeeling, while her heart was ready to burst with its deep emotion.

She left them, and they never knew how dearly she loved him, nor how close his soul was linked with her own. They mourned him as dead, while to her he became each hour a reality, a tangible, living presence, full of tenderness and love.

Miss Weston met Dawn as she passed out of the house, with that look of tender pity, which says, "I know you suffer." In that look their souls met and mounted to higher states. They could not speak, for the tears which flowed over the graves of their dead; their sorrows made them one and akin.

"You will return by to-morrow," said Miss Weston, as she parted with Dawn at the gate, supposing that she designed returning to be present at the funeral.

"No, I cannot."

"Why, Dawn! not follow dear Ralph to his grave?"

"I have no Ralph to bury. He is resurrected-gone higher."

"But the family, they surely-"

"They will not miss me. I am not a part of their lives now. They do not know me, nor do I know myself."

Here trust, light, and vision left; the weakness of flesh uprose, and she went down into the dark valley of grief.

She gave a parting pressure of the hand to her friend, and walked slowly to the station. Alone; O, what relief do our tears give us, when no one can see them flow. In that dim, summer twilight she walked. Fast fell the tears over her cheeks. None but angels knew the sobs, the agony of desolation which swept over her, and like a pall hung between herself and heaven.

It was midnight when she arose from prayer, but morning to her soul. Peace had come; the dove had returned with the olive branch; the waters had gone down, and green banks shored the wild sea of sorrow.

She spent the day of the funeral ceremonies alone in the solitude of the woods. Full of meaning now came to her these words of Christ: "Let the dead bury their dead;" and this was her first personal realization of the truth. Alone, yet not alone. That presence, unseen, but real, was with her, soothing the harshness of sorrow, filling her heart with peace and comfort. Just as the sun sank in clouds of sapphire and crimson, his form stood, radiant, joyous, and life-like before her. It was no myth, no hallucination of the mind. Close, within reach, yet she could not touch him; he stood there,

the same Ralph, with all the tenderness of love on his beaming face which he bore in life. No loneliness came over her as the vision faded slowly away; he seemed to dissolve and flow into her heart. The soft twilight, the singing of birds, and charming landscape, with the breath of summer floating on the air, came like sweet accompaniments to the melody which was pulsing her being, and giving her new strength and vigor for life.

She knew, that to her Ralph would each day be a sustaining power, and give life a dual action. When weary of the outer, she could turn within and find one conjoined by the holiest of ties unto her soul.

His life, too, was being unfolded through her, as it could never have been on earth; and as years rolled on she saw how well and good it was that he had passed on before her. There was more completeness to her being than there could possibly have been, had they been united on earth by the form of marriage.

When she emerged from the cloud, all this light transfused her being, and she had no tears, because there was no separation.

CHAPTER XXIX.

We learn in unlearning. We lay aside, one by one, the garments in which we have enwrapped ourselves; garments of various hues, which are our opinions, and so clog and hinder our progress. Happily for us that we find our states changing, and the wrappings of old dogmas too oppressive. Fortunate are we if our freedom of spirit is large enough to enable us to lay aside what was a shield and protection to us yesterday, if it be not fitted for us to-day. He who is strong to do so, benefits all around him, for no good or evil is confined or limited to one. Everything flows; circulation is in all things, natural and spiritual. Life in one is life in another; what is faith in one is also faith in another.

"What is gained by one man is invested in all men, and is a permanent investment for all time.

"A great genius discovers a truth in science, the philosophy of matter; or in philosophy the science of man. He lays it at the feet of humanity, and carefully she weighs in her hand what is so costly to him, and so precious to her.

"She keeps it forever; he may be forgotten, but his truth is a part

of the breath of humankind. By a process more magical than magic, it becomes the property of all men, and that forever.

"All excellence is perpetual. A man gets a new truth, a new idea of justice, a new sentiment of religion, and it is a seed of the flower of God, something from the innate substance of the Infinite Father; for truth, justice, love, and faith in the bosom of man are higher manifestations of God than the barren zone of yonder sun; fairer revelations of him than all the brave grandeur of yonder sky. No truth fades out of science, no justice out of politics, no love out of the community, nor out of the family.

"A great man rises, shines a few years, and presently his body goes to the grave, and his spirit to the home of the soul. But no particles of the great man are ever lost; they are not condensed into another great man, they are spread abroad.

"There is more Washington in America now than when he who bore the name stood at the nation's head. Ever since Christ died, there has been a growth of the Christ-like.

"Righteousness grows like corn--that out of the soil, this out of the soul.

"Thus every atom of goodness incarnated in a single person, is put into every person, and ere long spreads over the earth, to create new beauty and sunshine everywhere."

There was one spot which seemed more attractive to Dawn after Ralph's birth, than her home,--our homes are just where our hearts cling for the time, here or there,--and that spot was the home of Miss Bernard and her brother. This desire to be with them was settling into a fixed purpose to go, when one day her friend, Mrs. Austin, burst into her room, saying, "I've come for you. I think a change will do you good."

A short time only was needed to pack a few articles of clothing, and they were soon on their way.

It was early autumn, and the skies and trees were glowing with all the tinges and beauties of that season. Scarlet maples flashed here and there from their back-ground of pines and firs along the road, while over the dead limbs clambered the ivy, more brilliant in death than in life. The air was full of life. The voice of her friend chatting by her side was soothing to her nerves and spirits, for her life had been full almost to bursting since he had come so near.

"You astonish me more and more, Dawn," said her friend, who had dropped her lighter mood, as they rode leisurely by the forest trees, which ever seem to suggest deeper thoughts.

"And why, may I ask?"

"Because your reconciliation to your loss seems so strange and unusual."

"I have no loss. My friend has come home closer to my heart and understanding. The form is of little value to us when death gives us so much more of an individual."

"Would I could think as you do, Dawn. You are strange, and yet you seem to get at the very core of life's experiences."

"We cannot all think alike. There must ever be an individuality of thought, as well as of feature, yet on the common ground of principles we can meet. My serenity of mind is born of vision, for most clearly do I perceive that had I been united on earth to Ralph, our lives would have been limited. We should have gone into each other and remained, for he was the complement of my very self. In a world of so much need of labor, we could not be allowed to be of so little use to mankind."

"But I do not see why you might not have blessed humanity more by your united efforts."

"Because we should have been located, spiritually insphered in each other's life. Now I have no excuse for halting. I must be forever moving to some center, and he will find his life in and through me, loving me ever, but yet never quite settling into my life, which he was naturally inclined to do. In his atmosphere I shall gather another kind of strength and life; a life of two-fold power, because he will be so near in affection, so close and indwelling. I shall have the light of his spiritual life within me to guide me on; and can I not labor, yea, bear all things with such strength?"

"O, Dawn, for such light one could call life and toil here, rest and heaven."

"As it ever will be if we seek the harmonies of our lives."

"Now you rob death of its gloom to me. You must talk with Basil of these things, he can understand and appreciate them. Did you know that he was a relative of the Seyton's, a cousin to Ralph's mother?"

Dawn started. It was all clear now. Ralph would have her go to them, and that was the cause of her yearning to be there.

"Shall we go to-morrow," she asked of her friend, who sat abstracted by her side.

"Where?"

"To Miss Bernard's?"

"Yes, to-morrow. They are anxious to see you, as is also your protege, young Mr. Bowen, who has inquired for you every time I have

met him."

"I had almost forgotten him in my deep experiences. Has he changed? Does he seem more hopeful?"

"He seems far away. I think it your mission to send people off the earth, or, at least, into larger orbits."

"I should like to make their lives larger, for life is not worth anything unless we are daily putting off the old, and taking on the new. We cannot live our experiences over. Fresh breezes and fresh truths correspond-the outer and inner ever correspond. A clean dwelling indicates purity of heart and purpose, while the reverse leads us to beware of the occupant."

They were now at the home of Mrs. Austin, who considerately conducted Dawn to her room and left her alone until tea-time.

The evening brought Mr. Bowen, who appeared pale and dispirited, but he was speedily assisted to better states through Dawn's efforts.

Again poor Margaret appeared to her sight, this time with a new look on her features, as though she had gathered strength and light from the partial recognition of one who had betrayed her, yet from whose life she could not be separated until the spiritual balance of forgiveness had been given and received.

Clarence was soon engaged in earnest conversation. "Do you not think, Miss Wyman," said he, "that we may be weakened physically by spirits who come into our atmosphere?"

"I have no doubt of it. If they remain, and are not illuminating, or changing their states; if they come to do us good, even, they may sometimes weaken us, because our magnetism which sustains them becomes attenuated."

"I have thought that I was at times weaker, from the presence of one whom I feel is near to me."

"It may be. She cannot rise until you are ready to do so. And when you both go to higher states, or you enter hers, a new life will inflow. There will come relief. There is monotony now in the influence, because she is waiting for new truths to be infused into your mind before others can flow in. Perhaps I cannot make it as clear to your mind as I perceive it."

"The thought is suggestive, at least, and will help me out. I suppose these things are of slow growth in the human mind, like all things in nature?"

"They would not be of the soul were they not slow, and of little value to us did they not ripen in the warmth and nurture of our own sunshine."

"True. I would know more of these things. They give me strength to bear life's burdens much better, and although they seem to take my thoughts from my duties, I seem to be brought nearer to them; yet I cannot quite comprehend how it is."

"This influence does not take your mind away; it lifts it above your cares, and makes you more contentedly subjective to the law that governs. Truth ever renders us content to bear, while it liberates us from thralldom."

"I know that my life beyond will be richer and nobler for what little I have of these truths here. You have greatly blest me—"

"And blest myself," she added, seeing the rich gratitude of his soul falter with the poverty of words.

He took her hand, pressed it warmly in token of his deep indebtedness, and they parted, to meet no more on earth, save in spirit. That night the death-angel came. He was seized with hemorrhage of the lungs, and died instantaneously.

The wife of the world, whom position and society had chained him to, put on robes of mourning, and in three months was a gay, flirting widow, while he was happy in the summer land, joined to his mate, the bride of his soul's first love.

For a long time Dawn felt not the presence of either Clarence or Margaret. They were away, reposing in the atmosphere of forgiveness and love, and learning that "it is not all of life to live, nor all of death to die."

Dawn sat beside Basil as an old friend, holding a likeness of Ralph in her hand.

"I little thought that you knew our dear Ralph," said Mr. Bernard, breaking the silence they had enjoyed, "and yet I ought to have recognized his life within yours, Miss Wyman."

Dawn knew well why he did not, for she had kept him away from herself.

"I usually feel the sphere of the one dearest to another, when I come into their presence; but this time I was completely in the dark. There is some reason for it, I know." She knew it, and also that he could read her mind.

"I will keep nothing back," she thought, and told him all. Just as she had finished, Mrs. Austin and his sister came in from the garden.

"Your conditions must have blended very closely," said Beatrice, playfully, "it seems as though there was but one person in the

room."

"You are becoming a dangerous person to have about," said her brother, while his tone and speech were greatly at variance, for his voice to her was always sweetly modulated and full of tenderness.

Mr. Bernard brought to Dawn a folio of drawings, some of Ralph's early sketches, which they looked over together until the hour of retiring, when the evening closed with a calm and natural prayer, such as was nightly heard in that pleasant home.

"I shall claim Miss Wyman to-morrow," said Beatrice; "I have a great many subjects which I wish to talk upon with her; so, brother, you will see that our friend, Mrs. Austin, is entertained."

"We will engage to make you very sorry that you are not of our party," he answered, as they separated for the night.

"Now you are mine for a few hours," said Miss Bernard, after breakfast, to her guest, as she led the way, followed by Dawn, to a little room which she had fitted up, and in which she studied or mused, sewed or wrote, as the mood prompted. The walls were hung with pictures, her own work, some in oil, others in crayon; all landscapes of the most poetic conception and delicate finish.

"I have always longed for the power to express my thoughts in pictures. What a keen enjoyment it must be, Miss Bernard, to have such a resource within one's self."

"I think the power resides in every person, and only waits a quickening, like all other powers."

Dawn thought of the hour in Germany when Ralph sat and sketched her portrait, and the intervening time was as though it had not been. It was but yesterday, and she sat again by his side watching the deep life of his eyes, eyes on which she would never look again. Were they closed forever? "O, heart so desolate. O, lone and barren shore, where are the waves of joy? All receded; all; and she seemed to stand upon the beach alone, while a chill ran over her.

"You are chilly, Miss Wyman, let me close the window."

But Dawn heard not, saw not; for before her vision appeared a face all radiant with life, toned by a look of intensest sympathy; while on the brow glittered a star so radiant that mortal might not gaze upon it. Its rays seemed to enter her very soul, and pierce it with life and light, bathing it with a flood of joy. It was no longer dark, her face beamed with a strange light when Miss Bernard turned to call her attention to some pictures which were unfinished.

"You seemed far away, Miss Wyman," said she. "It's so like Basil. He has such moments of abstraction, and almost takes me with him."

"I was away for a moment; but what a lovely picture you have here."

"It's one I am trying to copy, but I make little progress."

"Truth is not necessarily literal, is it? If so, I should make a poor copyist."

"It is not; and there is where most persons fail. 'The Divine can never be literal, and there is in all art a vanishing point, where the Divine merges itself into the ideal.' And that vanishing point is seen in the human composition, as well as in natural objects, that point where we lose ourselves in the Divine, and merge our own being into that greater, grander being. You are an artist, Miss Wyman, you group human souls and portray them in all their naturalness; not on canvas, for that could not be, but spiritually to our inner sight.

"I love art in whatever form it may come to glorify life, for true art is catholic, beneficent, touching with its mystic wand every soul within its reach, thrilling even the sluggish and the slumbering with a new sense of the Divine bounty which makes this world so lovely and fair."

Miss Bernard looked grateful for the rich appreciation of her guest, which she had scarce dared hope to find; and from art they drifted to life and some of its present needs, glowing with friendly recognition as they advanced and found each possessed with similar views. Thus do we meet pilgrims on the way, at some unexpected turn, when we thought ourselves alone upon the road.

"I know by these pictures, Miss Bernard," said Dawn, "that your life is full of practicality."

"You surprise me, for every stranger thinks that I do nothing else."

"If nothing else, you would not do this, or anything of a fanciful nature."

"I see you have had some experience, for very few entertain that sentiment."

"I have seen enough to know that those whose time is at their own disposal rarely accomplish anything, either practical or beautiful. The one helps the other, and one who delves hardest in the practical, rises oftentimes highest in the ideal."

"It is true of my own self, and others. My experiences have been varied and deep in human life and I have learned that time is of no value unless it is estimated by the amount of labor that can be accomplished. When thus estimated, however it may be employed, the results are productive of good to the individual."

"How I wish, Miss Bernard, that the whole human family might have

just enough labor and time for improvement which they need. Life looks so hard and inharmonious at times, when we see thousands toiling from early morn till night, with no moments for thought or culture, that we cannot but ask where justice to God's children is meted out."

"Life is strangely interspersed with clouds and sunshine. I know that somewhere all will find recompense for such seeming losses, and that what we now look upon as evil will be seen to be good and best for all. Did I not know this, Miss Wyman, I should have little heart to go on. Of one thing I am certain, and that is, we must each keep working, performing the labor of the day, and some time the great united good will come from all this individual work. It is but an atom that each one does, but it counts as the grain of sand on the sea-shore, and helps by its infinitesimal portion toward the aggregate."

"Did you ever feel, Miss Bernard, that extended vision of life's conditions incapacitated us for real, vigorous service?"

"I have felt at times it might be so, but am convinced that it does not; it only deepens our effort and endeavor."

"I have often thought that I was unfitted for life, from the very fact that I saw so much to be done."

"When we see so much it makes us meditate, and that very condition gives birth to greater power."

"True, and yet I often wish I did not see so much. Why do I not oftener feel a power somewhat commensurate with the demand and wish?"

"I suppose, because the power is born of the time and the need, and not a burden to encumber us on our way. It is not of material nature; cannot be packed and stored away for some occasion that may arise, but is proportioned and adapted to the kind and quality of the requirement."

"You have explained it just as I felt it somewhere in my soul. The thought in me needed the quickening of another mind. You do me good, Miss Bernard, every moment. O, how much we need interchange of thought."

"We do, indeed, in order to know ourselves, if nothing more. But I see that you are weary. Stay with us and rest, will you? New atmospheres are good to throw off fatigue in."

"I should indeed be delighted to stay here. Was Ralph fond of being here?"

"Very; and he is here now."

"Then you believe in the presence of spirits, and their cognizance of us, and we of them?"

"Yes, for many years, and have been led by their advice."

"I am at rest. I find many who believe in communion, but not communication. I accept both."

"And so do I. We will compare experiences, and have many happy hours. How much we shall all enjoy. You must know my brother, Miss Wyman, for he, too, loved Ralph with all the ardor of his deep nature."

The next hour Dawn sat alone in communion with self, wondering at the daily events of life, and her own deepening womanhood. Life to her was growing richer each day. She felt that she was catching the divine breath, and coming into celestial harmony, which is the soul's true state. O, what bliss awaits us, when we have passed from the exterior to the interior life; a state not of worlds, but of soul, where we come into divine submission, and can say, "Thy will, not mine, be done."

CHAPTER XXX.

Mrs. Austin left the next day, and the soul-united trio were alone. Only those who know the value of fresh minds and blending qualities of heart and spirit, can realize how much they enjoyed together. To Dawn, Basil seemed new and old,--old in acquaintance, as we ever find those who have pursued the same current of thought; new in the power of presenting truth to her mind, in fresh combination and coloring. He had all the delicacy of Ralph, with more mental vigor, and broader experiences.

His sister, Dawn learned to love better every day, as she witnessed the exercise of her varied powers, all working in harmony, and rounding her life into completeness.

"I could live here forever," she exclaimed, one morning, when nature was sparkling with diamond drops of dew, and singing her morning praises.

"Then stay forever," said a voice, deep and musical, at her side. "Why not stay forever? for we should stay where we live the most," said Basil, laying his hand on her head. "I suppose, however, the

'forever' meant, so long as your life here is replete with enjoyment, did it not?"

"Yes, I suppose that is our definition of 'forever,' and as it is a portion of it, we may properly call it thus."

"Then see that you stay your 'forever,' and make us happy in so doing," and his earnest eyes fastening their gaze on hers, told how dearly he loved to have her there.

The bell rang for breakfast, and the little party brought bright faces and fresh thoughts to the meal.

"Would you like to sail upon the pond, to-day?" inquired Miss Bernard of Dawn.

"Nothing better, if there are lilies we can gather."

"There is a plenty, so we shall go. You will see my brother in a new phase to-day, Miss Wyman, for nothing calls forth the sweetness of his nature like sailing."

"I should advise one to go often, if it had that effect," said Dawn scarce daring to lift her eyes.

"I cannot afford to be exercised that way often," he answered, looking, it seemed to her, almost stern.

"Why?" inquired his sister, laughing.

"Because it so completely exhausts me to be called out into a high, spiritual state too often."

"You speak of conditions as compartments, brother. May we not blend the whole, into one perfect state?"

"We may harmonize and unite, but each distinct faculty must forever have a separate action, like the functions of the human body, perfect in parts, to make a perfect whole."

"I perceive your meaning, yet it does not attenuate me, at least I do not feel that it does, when the spiritual and affectional parts of my nature are exercised."

"One reason is because your balancing power is greater than mine; another, there is more spiritual elasticity in women than in men. Women rebound in a breath; men take a more circuitous route."

"You have explained yourself very well, yet we hope to see you to-day in your best mood."

"My companions would draw me into that state. When will you both be ready?" he asked, rising.

"At nine o'clock."

"Then be at the lower garden gate at that hour." Having give this direction, Basil went to give some orders for the day, while Dawn and Beatrice dressed themselves for the sail.

"Wear something which you do not fear to soil, Miss Wyman; and have you a broad-brimmed hat to protect you from the sun?"

"I have. It is one of the staple articles of my wardrobe. I never go from home without it."

They were soon ready, and found Basil at the gate at the appointed hour. The lake lay calm and clear in its woodland setting. They glided for miles over its smooth surface, and each felt the other's need of silence. A gentle breeze just stirred the waters into ripples, breaking the stillness of the hour.

"The correspondence of speech," said Basil, giving the boat a sudden turn, and displaying some drooping willows on the shore which were duplicating their graceful branches in the clear waters.

"When we are passive, do not they of the upper world thus throw their image upon our minds?" he said, looking earnestly on the reflection of the branches.

Dawn thrilled at the beautiful analogy, and thought of one unseen who might be, perhaps, at that time, enjoying the outer world through her tranquil state, if not through her senses.

"I sailed once on this lake with Ralph. It was such a day as this," said Basil. "O, how he enjoyed it. He loved the water, everything from brook to ocean."

"I wonder if he is near us to day?" said Miss Bernard.

Dawn wept. Her spirit was full of love and harmony, and the tears gushed forth like waters leaping from joyous cascades. They were not tears of sorrow or of loneliness, but crystal drops of emotion.

"There are harmonists whose fingers,
From the pulses of the air,
Call out melody that lingers
All along the golden stair
Of the spiral that ascendeth
To the paradise on high,
And arising there emblendeth
With the music of the sky."

And there they were lifted, and dwelt.

"We are approaching the lilies now," said Basil, feeling that he

must break the deep spiritual atmosphere into which they were all passing. "We must keep on the earth-side a little longer," he said, playfully.

"Long enough to gather some of these beautiful lilies at least," said his sister, as she gazed lovingly into his deep, tender eyes.

He swung the boat round, and gathering a handful, threw them at the feet of Dawn.

"I will twine you a garland," said Beatrice, taking some of the lilies and weaving their long stems together.

"No, no. There are but few who can wear lilies alone, Miss Bernard. Some may wear them, but not I."

"You are not the best judge, perhaps, as to what becomes your spiritual and physical nature," said Basil.

"I know my states, and that lilies are not suited to my present condition," answered Dawn.

"Since you will not be crowned, Miss Wyman, will you please pass that basket? I think we all need to descend into more normal conditions; we are too sublimated." Following this suggestion he allowed the boat to float without guidance, while they partook of the delicate yet substantial repast.

The evening carnation tinged the clouds about the setting sun as they sailed homeward, gathering lilies on their way. The bells from a village near by were ringing, and the sound came distinctly over the water, musical and sweet to the ear.

"Do you remember the passage in Pilgrim's Progress, where the bells in heaven were ringing, over the river?" said Beatrice to them both.

"I do," said Dawn, earnestly. "O, that we all were across that river. When shall we be there?"

"I suppose when our usefulness is most needed here," said Basil, in a tone which caused them both to start.

"Why, brother?"

"Because that seems to be the law of life. All men and women go when most needed here; as the rose dies when its tinge is brightest, its blossom fullest."

"And that is our time," said Dawn.

"And God's," he answered.

Dawn found on her dressing table that night a garland of lilies and

red roses.

"Passion and purity," she said. "O, this will do for human heads." She laid long that night wondering whether Basil or his sister twined it. It did not seem like Beatrice, and yet she scarce thought he would do it. It lay between them, however, and pondering on that, and the day's keen enjoyment, she fell asleep, nor woke till morn.

Miss Bernard was very busy that day from necessity, she said, and partly to balance the state of the day previous.

"I shall want your company this afternoon for a drive," she said to Dawn; "this morning the library, piano and garden are at your disposal, to use at your pleasure. I have domestic duties to perform, and hope you will make yourself as comfortable as possible."

So little time, and so much to enjoy. First, Dawn went into the garden and gathered some flowers for the library; then she played an hour, she thought, but it proved to be two, on looking at the clock, and the remainder of the morning was passed with books. The bell rang for dinner long before she thought it could be time, so quickly and pleasantly had the hours passed away.

After dinner and a little rest, they started on their drive.

"I am going to take you to a little village, or cluster of houses, to see how its peculiar atmosphere affects you," remarked Miss Bernard.

After a pleasant drive through shaded streets and roads, they came in sight of a church spire, then a few cottages here and there, and were soon in the centre of the village, when Miss Bernard looked inquiringly to her guest.

"How frigid and cold it seems here. Why, there is such a desolate, unsocial feeling I should not live out half my days if I had to remain in such a place. Have I indicated its peculiarity?"

"Perfectly."

"But what is the cause of it? Surely the scenery, so lovely and calm, ought to inspire the deepest sentiments of social life in the hearts of the inhabitants."

"One cause is too much wealth; another, too few people. The place needs the addition of two or three hundred families to give it life and impetus. Each family now here has settled into itself, and grown conventional and rusty. Most of the people have considerable mental ability, but lock and bar their souls and hearts so closely that their better feelings cannot flow at all, nor find their legitimate sphere of action. They are all nice, quiet people, read a good deal, adopt theories and fine drawn sentiments in profession, but never

make them of any use to themselves or others. They have considerable mental sympathy, but none of heart and soul. They seem to live by rule. No spontaneous outgushes of their nature are ever seen, for they have dropped into a kind of polite externalism, and lost all the warm magnetic currents of life."

"But are there not a few exceptions?"

"A very few, but the cold is so severe that it soon freezes out their warm life, and the good that they would do is put far from their reach. They are a very pious, church-going people, and invariably as a class, look upon all forms of entertainment, such as assemblies and theatricals, as out of order, and sinful. Of course the young people grow old long before their time, and leave the place, and you know that one of the saddest sights on earth is a little village deserted of youth. All this might be remedied by an infusion of a strong social force; but, one or two families who have lived very different lives, and have taken up their abode in it, can do but little towards so desirable a change. The little hall which we are now passing should have a series of assemblies each winter, concerts, private theatricals, meetings for conversation, and the like, in which all, free of caste limitation, might take part. Now it is seldom lighted with gay and joyous faces. The young have no spirited life, consequently the old have none; for it's the merry beating of their hearts, and happy faces which enkindles and rejuvenates the joys of their elders. Everything joyous is looked upon as innovation, and frowned down. Those who reach out for a little more life, become frost-bitten, and gladly retire within themselves. I have given you a sad picture, I know, but it's true, not only of this but of many places."

"It is sad, indeed, because 't is true."

"Notice this little vine-clad cottage, which we are approaching," said Miss Bernard.

"It's a lovely spot; I hope the people are adapted to it."

"They are not, or, rather, are not suited to their conditions. It is occupied by two maiden ladies, who do not know how to live and get the most out of life, and each other. They live too close, too enwrapped within themselves. They should have separate interests, or occupations; but instead of that, they live in each other's atmosphere every day, go together and return together, see the same people at the same time, when their interviews should be varied, and each at times alone. Thus their magnetisms have become so interblended, that one has nothing to give the other. Now, Miss Wyman, after such mutual exhaustion, what can they have for each other?"

"Nothing but exhaustion; and how many live in the same way, plodding through life, growing old before their time, losing power, or magnetism, which is power, every day. Such persons close their eyes

to any light one might throw upon their path, and I see no way, but for all such to remain where they are. It is lamentably true that comparatively few of the inhabitants of earth are growing people; most of them are content with a slow, dull routine of daily life. I'd rather see persons full of zeal and purpose, even though their impulsive nature might lead them to commit many mistakes, rather than one whose life seems purposeless."

"So had I. Motion is life; and in that motion we do many things which we afterwards regret, yet find them to have been the legitimate results of life; so I suppose we should not regret anything."

"Nothing which has occurred outside or independent of our will or design."

"It is hard to tell where our own will commences to act; is it not, Miss Bernard?"

"I sometimes question whether we can; yet in order for our lives to be individualized there must be some point where we lay aside our personal will, disengage it, as it were, from the causes or outside forces, which seem to be ever propelling us."

"What do you consider the most quiescent state of the soul?"

"That state in which the mind clearly perceives it could not have afforded to have dispensed with one personal experience, least of all, with one sorrow which formed a part of that experience."

"How few can subscribe to that, save in theory, yet I know by the few years of my own life, that I could not lose one of my experiences, least of all, those that deepened the mind; or gave me higher, broader views of life. I hope I shall live many years, Miss Bernard, for the more we know of this life, the better prepared shall we be to live and enjoy the other."

"They are so interwoven that one must really know both well in order to act and live well in either."

"Have you ever seen with your interior perceptions the conditions of mortals who have passed beyond the vale? I have felt their states, but have never seen them. I think you also have, for I have heard from your friend, Miss Wyman, of your wondrous power to see at times, those who have thrown aside the mortal. I should be deeply interested in a relation of any of your experiences at some future time when you feel inclined to give them; for my faith in the ability of spirits to return to earth, and influence us, is as deep and strong as my trust in God."

"In some quiet hour, I will tell you many of my personal experiences. It is a strange, dual life I live, and sometimes I feel myself in such mixed states, that I scarcely know my mooring, if,

indeed, I have any."

"Some do not, I think."

"I am one, then, of that class; I seem to belong everywhere, and to everybody."

"I am quite certain of two, to whom you belong-myself and brother-but here we are in sight of home, and Basil is waiting for us on the piazza."

"It is pleasant to have a brother like yours, and to me to look upon the relation you bear to each other, for usually the relation of brother and sister is so ordinary and means so little."

"He is a noble man and brother, and has done much toward developing my spirit. I want you to know him well, and learn what a friend and companion he can be to woman."

At that moment they wound around the drive, and he came to meet them, his face full of kindness and affection, greeting his sister as though she had been gone weeks, instead of hours only; and bestowing a look of generous hospitality upon Dawn, whose thoughts seemed to grow richer every moment in his presence.

CHAPTER XXXI.

Gladly would Dawn have spent many days with Basil and his sister, but her life was too active to allow her to tarry long in one place. On the evening of the day, the events of which were narrated in our last chapter, a note was placed in her hand from Mrs. Austin, stating that she was ill and needed her presence.

"You cannot go before to-morrow," broke in both sister and brother, at once.

"We must make much of this evening," said Beatrice.

"And spend it as though it was our last together; for life's conditions are so uncertain," remarked Basil, in that far-off tone, in which he often spoke.

"We may have many experiences before another meeting, yet I hope we shall come together again soon."

"How shall we spend our evening?" said Miss Bernard to her brother, yet looking at Dawn.

"Naturally. Let it take its own course." Their eyes at that instant rested on Dawn, whose features glowed with a heavenly light and sweetness.

"It is a trance symptom," said Basil. "Let us keep ourselves passive."

The light of the room seemed to vibrate with life, and their bodies to be so charged with an electric current so ethereal that it seemed that their spirits must be freed from all earthly hold. And then there came a calm over all. The features of Dawn seemed to change to those of one so familiar to them in their early days, that they started with surprise.

"I was on earth known as Sybil Warner," said a voice which seemed not that of Dawn, and yet her vocal organs were employed to speak the name.

"Sybil Warner!" exclaimed Basil, white with emotion, and turning to his sister, whose palor equaled his own, "Have you ever spoken that name to her?" he asked, pointing to the upturned face of Dawn.

"Never! I am equally astonished and interested with yourself."

"Shall we question her,--the spirit?" But before Basil could reply the spirit spoke:

"You were not aware, I know, that I passed to the spirit-land a few years ago; and for that reason, and many others, I come to give you a test. The mention of my name must have been a surprise to you, for never in the earth-life, did I meet this lady whose organism I now employ to speak to you. You would know of my life, after I withdrew from the world of fashion. At some other time it shall be given you; enough for the present, that I became world-weary, and, possessing what is called second-sight, drifted through life, caring naught for the heartlessness around me. The life which makes up three-fourths of the so called happiness of humanity I could not adopt as my own; therefore I was alone, and a wanderer. I was, of course, called strange and weird. What cared I, when every-day glimpses of the larger life were given me,--that life which I was so soon to enter upon. One humble spirit stands by me here, whose name is Margaret, and sends love and gratitude to the beautiful being through whom I now address you.

"Friends of my youth, always so good and true to me, I come to mingle my life with yours, and to grow strong with you in good and holy purposes. We of the upper air, do not live alone; we need your life, as well as you do ours. This communion is as ancient as time, and will endure throughout eternity. Volumes could not tell of the

broken households united through this light. Search for its hidden treasures; they are worthy of untiring study. Its glory will not fall into your life; it must be worked out by your own efforts and found within your own experience. Thus it will become a part of your immortal self, and help you on your heavenly way. The skeptic cannot sit and call us who have thrown off the mortal, by words alone, for only in answer to deep and heartfelt desire do we come and hold communion with our earthly friends. They who seek shall find.

"Of the spiritual condition of those who enter this state of existence, I can only say to you now that it is identically the same after what you call 'death,' as before; neither higher nor lower. Progress and happiness here, is as it is with you, dependent upon personal effort. We of the spirit-world have rest and unrest, hope and doubt, according as our states, conditions and surroundings vary. One of my strongest purposes has been to identify myself to you, my friends, to-night. I have succeeded beyond a doubt; none can exist in your minds of my identity-my self, for you have never breathed my name to this mortal. Again will I come to you and tell you of our lovely world which we enjoy, each according to individual development. I dwell in peace. Peace I leave with you. Farewell."

Dawn passed her hand over her brow, as though trying to recall a vanished thought, and slowly came to her normal condition, while her face shone with a light most beautiful to behold.

"Were you conscious of what has transpired?" asked Miss Bernard.

"Yes; and yet so absorbed in another life, that my own spirit seemed floating, yielding to another's will and heart pulsations. This is imperfect, I know, as an explanation, but it is the best I can give."

"It is something which cannot be explained," said Basil, and she knew by these words that he fully comprehended her.

O, soul, how thou dost relieve the labor of the mind, seeing with finer vision into the centre of life, and there beholding the countless workings of the inner being. What an atom of our self do we exhibit in our little sojourn here. Those of limited sight say we are thus and so, and pass on. Others measure us by themselves, and call us dull, or lacking vital life, ignorant of the fact that they each take all they know how to appropriate, of our quality. A lifetime would give them no more, if their receptive states did not change.

"This experience has given our life a new sweetness," said Basil, seating himself by Dawn. "We have long believed in these things, but have never had such proof of their truthfulness as to-night. We need not tell you how happy you have made us, or how much we shall always enjoy your coming; for we enjoy you personally, aside from this thrilling power which your organization embodies. I, too, have experienced this light, and know well the strange thrill which comes

over us, when we meet those who are akin in soul, and assimilate with our mental and spiritual natures."

"And how the depth is sounded, when we are brought in contact with those who are antagonistic," said Dawn.

"I presume that those who disharmonize us, aid us to higher states, for they force us out in search of something better. The divine economy is at work in every phase of life, and our growth of soul is often greater in our night of sorrow than in our day of joy; or rather, we reach forth deeper and stronger after the true life, when the cloud is upon us, than when the sun shines brightly on our path, just as the tree extends its roots farther into the ground, when rocked and swayed by the tempest."

"Yet the sunshine of happiness matures the leaves and branches. I have had much sunshine," said Dawn, speaking the words slowly and tenderly.

"I would that the storms might pass over you, but in the human lot I know they must come."

She looked into his eyes, and they appeared so like Ralph's just then that tears came to her own, and she could not force them back.

"This emotion is not all your own," said Mr. Bernard.

Dawn looked up inquiringly.

"He is here-Ralph, and too often for your good and his own."

A flush came over her face.

"I mean no harm," he continued. "It is true that he will weaken you by too much emotion, which was ever a large component of his beautiful and trusting nature. Ralph must put aside his deep tenderness, and come less often, and then he will bring you more strength when he does come to you."

"But what if he never left me, and never can, Mr. Bernard?"

"Then you must mingle with those who are his opposite, those who can strengthen him through you."

"I never thought of that before."

"Nor I, Miss Wyman. It is the impression of the moment, but none the less true for that."

"I feel its truth, and will act upon it; thus a portion of his development will come through my associations, be drawn up through the earthly conditions that surround me. How little we know of the other life, or of this."

"The two are so conjoined that a knowledge of one cannot but bring with it some truth concerning the other."

The conversation had been of so much interest that they had not noticed how far into the night it had been protracted, until a sudden glance at the clock led Beatrice to suggest that Dawn might wish for rest preparatory for her journey on the morrow.

"How kind of you to come so soon, Dawn," said Mrs. Austin, excitedly clasping her to her heart. "I am so sad, and only you can relieve me."

"What is it? Are you or any of your family ill?"

"No, no. Something worse, much worse to me. Sit by me while I tell you."

Dawn took the seat, while in hurried, trembling tones, her friend related her story.

"You know my sister Emily, Mrs. Dalton. Well, two days ago I received a letter from her, stating that she had left her husband, and was coming to see me a few days to tell me all, and then go through the world alone."

"Is that all? I thought something fearful had happened," said Dawn, looking calmly on her friend.

"All? Can anything be worse than that? Think of the disgrace to us;" and Mrs. Austin burst into a flood of tears.

"It's no disgrace if they could not harmonize, but the very highest and best thing they could do."

"O, Dawn; but what will the world come to, if all the married people flare up at every little inharmony, and separate?"

"You are not the judge of your sister's course. You do not know what she may have passed through. She knows best, and this is her work alone, her cross. I do not advocate that parties should separate, until all means for a harmonious life have been tried. Then, if they find there can be no assimilation, it is far better that they should part, rather than they should live a false life. The world in its different stages of progress, has been sustained thus far and will continue to be. We are in the midst of a social revolution, and there must be many separations, and changes innumerable in every form and condition of life. Truth and error must be divorced, and whatever does not affinitize in mind and matter, in the moral or spiritual world, must be separated. This is the inevitable result of God's law, and can no more be set aside than any other which he has ordained. You speak of 'disgrace,' but to me that would come only, when, after employing every possible means to live a full,

harmonious life, united, and it is found an impossibility, the two continue to live together despite the decree of God, made manifest in their nature, that it is sinful for them to do so. This all is within the province of that 'higher law' which many profess to condemn, but to which all must sooner or later submit."

"I wish you could talk with Edward; he holds nearly the same views. Will you stay with me a few days, until my sister comes, for I have not strength to bear this?"

"I will; but would it be agreeable for her to see any one here? She naturally desires to see you alone."

"She loves you, and said in her letter, 'if I could see Dawn, or Mr. Wyman, I think I could gain strength.'"

Dawn had no opportunity to escape, for Mrs. Dalton arrived that afternoon, unexpectedly, and before night had opened her soul to her. It was while Mrs. Austin supposed she had retired for the night, that Mrs. Dalton sought the room of Dawn; for the heart, while passing ordeals, seeks another to share or to lessen its woe.

"I will in a few words tell you all," she said to Dawn. "Twelve years ago I was married, to please my parents and friends, to one toward whom I never felt the thrill which should glow through all our being in the presence of one whom we take into so close a relation. Between us there never can exist the conjugal relation, for we are to each other but as brother and sister. Long have I struggled with my sense of duty and moral obligation, and the struggle has done me good. I have found that my life could not come into fulness, or my being unfold its powers while a relation not of my own choosing was maintained.

"Henry has a good and fine nature, one worthy of the warmest love of some woman. We are both on the same mental plane, yet he has not the strength to brave the world's opinion. In my atmosphere he seems to see as I do, and to realize that we should be far better apart,--better physically and spiritually,--but when he leaves me he becomes weak and distrustful of himself. I cannot say that I regret my experience; but something within tells me that it has come to an end. We shall both suffer; I feel it; no ordeal of the soul is passed without it, but my life will be far better alone, far better. Now can you give me any strength or sympathy? for I know well that I must walk through life with but little of human friendship. My act is frowned upon by all my relatives, which, of course, only serves to raise my individuality to a higher point, and throws me still deeper into self. I have no children, and can easily take care of myself. Does my decision seem rash or impulsive to you?"

"Far from it. My warmest sympathies are with you, and with all who, seeing the right, pursue it regardless of what the world may say or do. A deep, conscientious regard for the best interests of the two most intimately concerned in such a step, is all that is required.

You are under inspiration now, and what you have done will be seen to be best for your individual lives. You have left him because there was wanting that heart reciprocity, which is the vital current of conjugal life. The experience was necessary for you, else it would not have been given you. Look on it as such, as no loss to you or to him, and life with its thousand harmonies will flow to you. If the married could but see that the moment they are not in spiritual harmony they are losing life and strength, and in order to avoid the loss would seek a change of some kind,--such change as their interior wisdom may determine,--earth would be a paradise to-day, and family relations what God designed they should be. But it is usually the case, that, instead of a mutual discernment of this truth, one only perceives it, and it follows that it is best the evil should for a time be borne, for the one of smaller vision would only be filled with jealousy and unrest at the suggestion even, of a change. There are innumerable families that this very moment should change their relations. Old elements should be superseded by new; conditions which have surrounded them so long that they have become powerless for good and powerful for evil, so far as physical and spiritual strength is concerned, should be radically changed. We need a revolution in social life, an amendment to the constitution which governs society. Have this right, and all will be right,--politics, religion, and all else. Slowly these truths are being unfolded to the comprehension of the human mind. Some have seen them for years; and they whose views of life have been broadened and deepened by the adoption of a spiritualistic faith, long since became familiar with them. Such are now catching glimpses of the coming light, and have the assurance that ere long will arise the perfect day."

"You have done me good, Miss Wyman; and now there is but one person to whom I wish to speak my thoughts, and that is--"

"My father."

"You are right; for he can give me what I so much need--moral strength."

"I think your next step will be to return with me," said Dawn, in that cordial and positive manner which made it seem as though there was really no other step, or at least that it was the first to be taken. The next day Mrs. Dalton and Dawn left together, and a feeling of relief came to Mrs. Austin, for outside of her own judgment and prejudice, she seemed to feel that it would do her sister good. Thus are we often obliged to leap mental barriers, lay aside preconceptions, and accept what does not strictly accord with our reason, for the soul has larger orbits than those of mere mental states.

It was almost as though they had never met before, so delightful was the re-union between Dawn and her father. Would that all might learn how closely we may come together by bodily separation, paradoxical as this may seem at first thought.

"I have been very happy, father, while away, and have brought a needy soul to you for life," said Dawn, nestling close to that strong, protecting form, and gazing into his eyes, as though she would infuse his being with her own life.

"I am glad you have been happy, and that your happiness does not abate, but increase by change of states. Dawn, my own darling, I saw your mother last night in my dreams. She brought to you a blue mantle, which signifies rest and protection, a rest not of this world. She enfolded you in it, and as you passed through the dark, sunless places of earth, the mantle grew brighter and brighter, until its color almost dazzled the human eye. There were many who could not gaze upon it, and turned away. Others stood until the blinding effect passed, and then followed you with their gaze. This mantle of blue signifies inspiration, as well as rest. They whose inner light is strong, will look upon the truths you utter, and appreciate them, while others, less strong, will turn away, blinded by their brilliancy, and repair again to their old and worn ideas. Blue is of heaven; its quality is not of earth. May it never fade while this mantle enwraps my child." Mr. Wyman remained silent for some moments, and then remarked: "Now, if you will bring Mrs. Dalton, whom I have not seen for many years, I shall be happy to meet her."

Dawn found her weeping bitterly, and folded her arms about her until the sobs ceased.

"I am not presentable, had I not better wait and see him to-morrow?" she said, leaning her head upon Dawn's bosom.

"No; go now. This is just the time for you. You need his counsel and sympathy most, now. Come," and she led her like a child into his presence.

He did not meet her with formality, but took her hand, and led her to a seat, then sat beside her. Dawn left, and soon found her mental poise.

Words grew into sentences, thought leaped after thought, and newly perceived truths came to the mind of Hugh with strange and wonderful rapidity, as he sought to calm and console the tempest-tossed mind. A blessing descended on the communion, and when they parted, one could not tell which face shone the brightest.

Mrs. Dalton laid down that night with stronger purposes of life, and a deeper conviction that the step which she had taken was the right one, though all before her was dark and unknown.

"Give all to her that she calls forth, and inspires in you, for that is her right," said Mrs. Wyman, when her husband told her of his interview with Mrs. Dalton.

How many wives of the present day are deep and strong enough to

utter such sentiments? It was no lip phrase, for it came from her heart—a true heart, which pulsated to human needs.

"Noblest of women!" her husband was about to exclaim, but instead of speech, he pressed her to his heart, and then turned and wept.

Why had woman so blest his life, and showered so many gifts upon it, when thousands were dying for one blessing? It was an orison which rose to heaven from his heart that night, and when he laid his head upon his pillow, a rich resolve stirred his being to its depths, that then and ever, his best self should be dedicated to the service of humanity. Pastors sounded the name of God, and proclaimed what they called, "his word," far and near over the land, and were paid in gold for their speech, but few men lived, acted and spoke like Hugh Wyman. Few reached the human heart so closely, or breathed more consolation into it than he. Old and young, rich and poor, received blessings from his hand and from his cultured mind, each according to his needs. He placed in the hands of those who groped in darkened ways, a light which guided them to the temple of truth, and going out into the highways and hedges of life, invited all to the feast which his heavenly father had spread out for every child of humanity.

CHAPTER XXXII.

"I met Howard Deane a few nights since. He appears to be sadly out of health and somewhat consumptive," remarked Mr. Wyman to his wife, a few evenings subsequent to Mrs. Dalton's departure.

"And the reason is quite apparent. He lives too closely in one atmosphere. He needs a change of surroundings, mental and physical."

"No one of our course of thinking can fail to perceive that the long, uninterrupted companionship of his wife, she being naturally weaker than himself, has so drawn upon his magnetism, that his vitality has become thoroughly exhausted," remarked Hugh.

"I do not doubt that it is so. His nature is large and social, and he requires a circle of varied minds to keep him in a good, healthy condition of body and spirit, as we all do; for though they may be those who can unite with one alone, and lose nothing by such exclusiveness, yet generally, the larger the orbit of life, the better the results that accrue to both, and the greater the development of each.

"You are right; yet how closely we have lived together, Arline, since we were married."

"Because we both had large experiences and had mingled in many spheres, previous to our union."

"Right again; ever right," and he gazed on her with tenderest emotion, while she wondered if the time would ever come when she should not hold him as she then did. The thought made her tremble, so deeply did she love this man who supplied her nature so richly every day with that element of manliness which all women need, but so few receive.

"I will invite Howard here to spend an evening," said her husband, little knowing how tenderly the heart of his wife was going out to him, at that moment.

The next evening Mr. Deane came with Hugh to tea. Mrs. Wyman was surprised to see how pale and care-worn he appeared, and longed to reach his mind, that she might give him that life which he so much needed.

Mrs. Deane, after the recovery of their child, finding her husband's tenderness revived towards her, settled into her own ways of thinking and living more completely than ever. For a time she with her husband lived in a state of undivided love. When that passed away, she was the same exacting woman as before, allowing him no life but what he gathered from her; no thoughts but her own to live upon. In such an atmosphere he drooped, and would have died, but for the timely aid of Mr. Wyman and his wife; those truth-loving souls who cared not for the popular sentiment when principles were to be maintained, and who stood up courageously for the truth, regardless of those who turned sneeringly aside from them, or ridiculed and misrepresented their views.

Mrs. Deane's course amply illustrated one of the evils of our present marriage system, the removal of which will cause confusion and perhaps some wrong doing. But we have confusion and wrongs at present, and all history testifies to the truth that revolutions in political, religious and social institutions, though seemingly disastrous for the time, have been followed by better conditions for humanity, and advanced mankind to higher states. In a relation so intimate, so holy, as the union of two souls, human law has but little to do. When it enters as an external agent, with its rites in conformity with custom, this human law is liable to err, but the divine law which governs internal relations can never err. Hence, marriage should be subject only to this divine or higher law. The questions which grow out of this statement are many, none of which are probably greater, or about which the public pulse is more sensitive than those relating to property. But they, too, may have had their day, and higher conditions as regards material wealth, be ready to descend upon us. Of woman's right to be paid according to

her labor-of her right to the college and the various professions, her eternal right to follow her inspiration, and become just what she feels she is fitted for, and thus fulfil her destiny, we have been in the dark, and have groped and stumbled; and our theory and practice of marriage have been as imperfect as all others. Whatever has been, has been right and proper for its time, but now a change is called for. The advancement of the race demands it. No more shall one man amass great wealth, and in so doing leave thousands penniless; no more shall politicians, who twaddle and toady for offices, deprive themselves and others of manhood and all that is noble; no more shall the pastor love his money, his position, and the praise of men, better than an opportunity to speak the truth fearlessly.

We are living in a great age, and the age demands great men and women, who dare brave the public voice and popular side, if that voice and side are wrong. We would not confound daring with heroism, or mistake boldness for bravery. Nor should we throw our truths away upon the dull and listless. There are seekers enough, who, when they receive these gems of truth, will value them. Let those who possess, learn to know when and where to utter them. Then will the darkness flee away, for every ray of light aids the advance of the golden age.

Mrs. Wyman did not speak to Howard Deane of himself, but upon subjects of equal interest to both, until of his own accord, he alluded to his own state. Hugh left the room to write letters, leaving them to that close communion which is never perfect with a third person present.

"I think disease often commences in the mind, and acts upon the body until that may succumb to its power," said Mrs. Wyman, in answer to a remark of Mr. Deane upon his bodily state.

"Do you think mine is of the mental?" he inquired, looking at her so earnestly that he seemed to penetrate her very being.

"I do."

"What has caused it, can you tell me?"

"I think the need of cheerful and varied society. Your nature is large, social in its proclivities, and has great needs. It is therefore wrong for one person to claim all of your society, and injurious to you to grant it."

"I know it, and, feel the truth, but society allows me no communion or association with women. I need their society more than all else just now-their thought, their inspiration."

"Take whatever comes in your way, when it is in order, and let society quibble. How is the world to be made any better, if each one goes on in the old way for fear of speech."

"Yet we cannot explain our course to those who do not perceive these truths, and our innocent enjoyment may be misconstrued."

"Can the higher ever be revealed to the lower? Can the less understand the greater? Never. Through the moral and natural worlds no recognition takes place, save when the lower comes up to a higher plane. The rose which needs more sunshine, more air, can never expect to reveal its need to, or be understood by one of the fungus order. We must work and wait, and expect to be misunderstood every day of our lives. We may be in order and in perfect harmony to some higher law, the relation of which to ourselves it is impossible to explain to our brother, our sister, or our friend. There would be no individual life, if there were no separate harmonies and methods of action. You need, my friend, more of woman's sphere to help you to live in strength and harmony with the one you are united to. She is mentally strong, and gives you of your own quality too much. Find your balance, your mental and spiritual poise, by mingling with those who supply your deficiency."

"You have given me life, Mrs. Wyman, and hope. If I had your independent mind, I might be my own helper."

"I may be the one to give you independence of thought and action, or, rather, to stimulate yours, for all have some independence."

"I feel stronger, now, bodily, than I have for a long time," he said, looking at his watch, "and hope I shall have the pleasure of seeing you again soon."

"Come whenever you feel to; you will always be welcome."

They bade each other good night; he, refreshed and encouraged by her thoughts and words; she, happier, as all are, by extending their life.

But we must turn another leaf, and look at life as it appears to the narrow-minded and opinionated.

"You have been gone a long time, Howard; I'm very tired," were the words that came from the lips of Mrs. Deane, as she looked at the clock, which was just striking ten as her husband entered.

"Not so very late, my dear. I am sorry your head aches; would you not feel better to go out a little oftener?"

"Howard, you know I am not able. Besides, I'm weary of society. I do not find any congenial souls here; the most of them are growing so radical I feel heart-sick and weary whenever I think of mingling with them. No, Howard, I must be left to myself; my home and my husband are all on earth I care for. By the way," she said, a trifle brighter, "have you heard that Hugh Wyman and his wife have been the means of separating a Mrs. Dalton and husband? I do wish that man

was at the bottom of the Red-

"Mabel!"

"Why do you always flare up so when I mention his name? I do believe that in your soul you care more for him than all the good men in this village."

"I do."

"You do? Then you are no better than he, in my opinion, and others, Howard; you will ruin your reputation if you associate with him."

"I wish I was half as good as he is; that I had one fraction of his independence and manhood to help me through life. O, Mabel, lay aside your prejudices, and learn to see life for yourself, with unclouded vision."

"You would have me mingle, then, with people who have no respect for the holy law of marriage; and people who talk as coolly of separation of men and women as they would of parting animals?"

"Who told you they were the cause of their separation?"

"Mrs. Ford. She spent an hour with me this evening."

"And you believe her, and think that she has all the facts of the case?"

"I do. She is a christian woman, and leads a blameless life."

Mr. Deane felt the peaceful state he had that evening gained, fast leaving him, and he sought his bed, hoping to lose in sleep the inharmony that swept over him. He did not, however, and morning found him unrefreshed and weak, the mind restless, seeking for something which it could not grasp, though within its reach.

"I think I will not go to the office to-day," said he, after trying to swallow a little breakfast.

"If you are too ill to work, you surely need a doctor. I shall send for Dr. Barrows when Charley goes to school," said his wife.

"Do no such thing. I am not sick. I only need rest."

"You would have your own way, Howard, if you were dying; but I really think you do look ill, and ought to have something done."

That "something" she could not do. She could not reach the mind which needed ministering to, because she had kept her own so impoverished.

Reader, did you ever have one attempt to do anything for you, and

while the labor was being performed, have your nerves strained to their highest tension, and the assistance thus kindly and obligingly rendered, wearying you far more than to have done all yourself? Such was somewhat the way in which Mrs. Deane administered to her husband's needs that day. She made him realize every step she took. She called him a hundred times from his meditations into her sphere of thought, concerning some petty detail or minor question. She professed to take care of him, but kept him ever caring for her.

"Howard, these blinds need new fastenings. Howard, the children's shoes are wearing out. Howard, I wonder if my new dress will fit; I fear it's spoiled. Howard, I must have fifty dollars to get the children's hats and dresses for next month, I'm behind-hand now. Now you are at home, do you suppose you could help me arrange some magazines I want bound?"

"I'm tired to death. I've been up and down stairs twenty times, at least, this morning," she said, as she handed him some drink which he asked to have brought up when convenient. All these questions, suggestions and requests added to his weakness, so that by night, he concluded he would have been far better off at his office.

When night came Mrs. Deane was too weary to bathe his aching head. They occupied, as they should not, the same room, and exhausted each other, and arose in the same debilitated state in the morning.

"Yesterday was a most fatiguing day to me," said his wife. "Are you well enough to go to the office, to-day, Howard?" He thought he was, and thanked heaven that he had strength enough to get there.

It was no wonder he sought what gave him life and strength. It was his right, and he followed the strong impulse of his being, and went often to the home of Hugh Wyman. He felt greatly relieved on learning that Hugh and his wife had no knowledge of the separation of Mr. and Mrs. Dalton, until it was over; and could not realize that it made no difference to them what judgment public opinion passed upon them. They looked only to the right and justice of the movement; he had not sufficient strength thus to brave the opposition of popular error. His vital life, the real breath of his manhood came to him only in the inspiring presence of Hugh and Arline. In their atmosphere he grew, therefore he felt drawn to them by a power that he could not withstand, and would not if he could.

The years swept on with majestic step. Many went over the silent stream; among them Mrs. Temple and her two children, leaving the home of Herbert desolate and cheerless. Dawn stood beside her to the last, and saw her go down to the valley, and then she could almost feel the pulsing of her new birth.

"How fast they travel home," said Hugh, when the rosy lips were sealed forever, and the poor stricken husband looked on the form that would never more spring to greet his coming.

"Where is she now?" Again and again the question would force itself upon Herbert's mind, until his heart so wearied with its long watching, and waiting, and hoping, sank overpowered with grief within him. Three days had worked a sad change in his family, by that disease which was laying parents and children in one grave, and left few households unvisited.

We have been so poorly schooled in the past, that it is not strange when one passes from this world, or state of existence, to another, that we should speak of them as having gone away, little realizing that loving hearts can never be separated: that what we call spirit life is but a natural continuation of this, with no "river" running between.

Words could not add to the impressiveness of the scene, when, as the friends met to look their last upon those they should know no more as of earth, the grief-stricken husband and father bowed himself and kissed the cold lips of the forms that once enshrined the spirits of his wife and children. Many mourners were there beneath the shadow of the cloud that had not as yet disclosed its silver lining; but when was read that beautiful psalm: "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want," every soul was lifted into the region of faith; that faith so calm and comforting to

"Hearts that are broken with losses,
And weary with dragging the crosses,
Too heavy for mortals to bear."

It seemed to Herbert to be Florence that they placed in the earth; he could not separate her from that lovely form of clay. How could he see her lowered into the grave, and his two darlings beside her? How bear this great grief? Not alone. Only by the help of Him whose ways are not as ours, and who doeth all things well. Long was the night of sorrow; it seemed as though day would never dawn, so deep and chastening was his grief.

"I would I had your faith to sustain me," he said to Hugh, a few weeks after the burial.

"It's the only thing which takes the sting of death away, and makes the tomb but a passage to the skies," was the response. "I would not be without its blessed, consoling influence for all this world can give, aside from the light which we daily receive into our lives from those who have passed the vale."

"Are they not about us the same, whether we believe in their presence or not?"

"No, not the same. You are not the same to your friend who has little or no faith in your life, and your motives of action, as you are to one who has full trust and belief."

"No, I am not. In order, therefore, that our unseen friends may

fully aid us, we must believe in their presence and ability to do so. Christ could not help some because of their unbelief."

"Even so. He who gives us no heed, has no communion with us. But the faith of which I speak, is not gained at once; it is of a slow and natural growth. Again and again must we thrust our hand through the darkness, ere we grasp the anchor. Often will the cloud envelope us, and all seem dark as night. There will be hours and days when Florence will come into your atmosphere, bringing her own state of loneliness and longing to be felt by you; days when you must both mourn that the veil is dropped between you; but above all, the sun of spiritual light will shine gloriously."

"Then you think that they suffer after they have gone?"

"I certainly do. It is perfectly reasonable to suppose that they mourn for us as we for them. Reverse the case. Suppose that you were where she now is, and that she were here, and that you made strong efforts to approach her, and having thus far succeeded, endeavored to impress her with the fact of your presence. If she recognized you, would you not feel rejoiced? and if she did not, would you not feel grieved, and all the more so, if instead of honestly admitting self-evident facts, she sought to evade them?"

"True; all that would be most natural. I have never thought of it in that light before. Do you think I may sometime feel and know that Florence is with me?"

"I trust, indeed, I know you will. In some unexpected manner some human instrument may be used to give your mind the test it needs."

"Will it be real to me? O, tell me if I shall feel and know that it is really her?"

"If genuine there will be no doubt in your mind. All this is something which must be experienced, and not told. A thrill will come to your heart and brain which you have never felt before, when you first realize the possibility of our departed friends communing with us, and this because the truth will be more intimately related to your inner self than anything you have before felt. Dawn is too much affected by the death of Florence, yet, to see her; too much in her own state. When she returns to herself-becomes disengaged from the anxious condition of Florence, she will see and bring her in communion with you; yet a stranger can do better, and give your mind more satisfactory evidence of her ability to speak to you."

"One of the conditions of this communion has been, that we must receive it through strangers. This robs it of its sacredness to me."

"You will never have that feeling after having once felt her presence through another. You will feel the blending of humanity more sensibly, and see how we are all conjoined, that there is very little that is yours or mine exclusively; yet we hold all things,

and all hearts that inspire us. Human souls belong to God and humanity. It follows not, because one is near us, blessing us with her daily presence, that she is ours, wholly. She belongs to humanity, and becomes ours through dissemination. It is like a truth which we give unto others; it is more within us, the more we give it forth. Whatever thrills me with joy, is far more to me when I have told it to a multitude. It is the same with those we love; the more humanity claims them, the greater they are to mankind, the more they become to us. Florence was more to you, because she was beloved by Dawn and myself. If she was much to you here, how full and replete with love will be her ministrations to you now. Her immortal spirit is with you each hour, and will act on you through all time. When you know that she is with you, you will feel the thrill of her joy, and your hours will be greatly relieved of their present loneliness. It is strange that for so many years we have laid our friends in the tomb and sat sorrowing at its door. But Spiritualism has rolled away the stone, as the angel did of old. It comes with its teachings and humble appeals to earnest, truthful souls. It reaches our daily wants, and is to us a life-book, not a musty, worthless creed. It is a stream of life, flowing from heart to heart; not for one only, not for a few, but for all. It winds by eternal habitations, and flows to the city of our God. Happy is he who drinks from this lowly stream, so untainted by the opinions of men, and clear and crystal. Herbert! happy will thy day be when thou hast tasted of its living waters."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

"Then you do not wholly ignore the church," said the village pastor to Hugh, after a long and earnest conversation upon religious and social topics.

"I do not. But I deny that its limitations and its dogmas can control the growing mind, and believe it to be wrong for the church to assume or desire to do so. As a great, leading guidance to popular thought, I would combine the church with the theatre."

"The theatre!" exclaimed the minister, holding up both hands in holy surprise. "You don't mean that we should turn the sanctuary into a play-house? I tremble for the age, sir, indeed I do, if such views are to be tolerated."

"Not turn the church into a theatre, but combine the two, and with the good that is to be derived from each, form a perfect temple."

"But the theatre is a temple of evil," remarked the pastor.

"Not so. Because it has at times been perverted and made to contribute to what we denominate 'evil,' is no reason why the theatre should be condemned. For the same reason we might condemn the church, for it, also, has in some periods of its history been made the means of base oppression and wrong-doing; it has drenched fields with blood, and slaughtered innocent beings by thousands."

"But that was not the true church."

"Neither in the former case, was it the true theatre; for the theatre, when confined to its legitimate purpose, is the greatest moral instructor the world has ever known. Were you accustomed to visit the theatre, as I know you are not, you would find that the triumph of the right is always applauded by the audience, while the tricks and momentary successes of evil-doers are invariably condemned. This proves more correctly the tendency of the theatre than all the homilies of those who spin fine-threaded arguments from the pulpit and the press. Why, my dear sir, the church itself is unconsciously passing to the theatre, and the theatre equally unconsciously passing to the church. Witness the fairs, the school exhibitions, the tableaux, and the private dramatic entertainments of the former, and the Sabbath evening services within the walls of the latter. Does not this condition point to the ultimate combination I have spoken of?"

The pastor sat for a long time in deep thought. At length he looked up to Hugh, as though relenting from his inward desire to be true to what was obviously the right, though contrary to public opinion, and said:

"I hope the day of its coming is far distant, Mr. Wyman; I fear your views would destroy all religious sentiment, and make us a godless people."

"What do you consider 'religion' sir?" responded Hugh; "merely attending to the outer forms, or living an earnest life?"

"Living a blameless life, to be sure, while attending to the outer forms; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together."

"Which is right, but which is the very smallest part of the christian's battle. What I call a religious life, is paying tribute to all the arts of living. Everything which contributes to the health and happiness of mankind, is to me of vital importance, and a chief part of my religion. My christianity leads me to build the best house I can with my means, and to furnish it in good taste, that the sentiment of its inmates may be uplifted. It extends to every department-to the food, the garden, the dress, the amusements, to every social want; in fact to everything which elevates the standard of life. Religion to me, is living in all that elevates,

therefore I love the temple in which we all congregate, and believe it ought to be decked with every form of art."

"I think you are right, thus far; I do not, myself, like the barren walls of the present style of churches."

"That is one step; you have taken that; I have taken another, and see that the drama is as much a part of God's method of elevating mankind as flowers and music. Ere long you will see it as I do. The church of the present day is too cold for me; it does not call forth the deep sentiment of my being, therefore I come near to God through Nature. When the church is divested of theology, and has enshrined the beautiful within its walls, I shall be happy to be among those who 'assemble,' for all need the magnetic life of assemblies to complete the cycle of their existence. I do not like a fractional life, one which seizes some parts and discards others. In the present age of transition, the best minds are thrown out of the sanctuary, waiting for the perfect temple, where they can worship in fulness of soul and purpose."

"Yet all are better for the assembling, are they not, even in its imperfect state, as you term it?"

"It is well and good for all, but not so essential to some as to others. Some natures are so alive to sentiment and life, so infused with religious thought, that they live deeper and more prayerful, more Godly in one hour, than others do in a hundred years. Every emotion reveals to such the presence of the Deity. To them each hour is one of worship, and every object a shrine. No words of man can quicken their feeling to a brighter flame, for such commune with God. The dew and the flower, speak unto them of their father's protecting care. The manifestations of their daily lives, replete with heavenly indications, tell that God is nigh. 'Day unto day uttereth speech,' and to such all hours are holy. The heart which is attuned to life, is full of worship. Every manifestation, whether of joy or woe, brings God near; and the world becomes the temple. Religion should come through life and be lived. It is in the dress, in the kitchen, in the parlor, in books, in theatres, in fact in all forms of life. Theology is dead to the people. They want the living, vital present, with no dogmas nor sectarian limitations to keep their souls from growing."

The pastor felt the force of Hugh's remarks, and the weakness of any argument he might bring to bear against them. The truth kept pressing upon his mind, and he felt that he might be obliged to relinquish his long-cherished opinions.

Thus we lose, day by day, one opinion after another. They wear away, and we lay them aside like worn garments that have served their purpose. The greatest error of the past has been the belief that opinions and surroundings must be continuous and unchanging. When we look to Nature we learn a different lesson. She is ever changing and reproducing. The world's opinion holds too many back. One dare not

go forward and live out his or her life, for fear of a neighbor or friend, and in this way is retarded the full flow of inspiration to all. Strength in one, is strength in many; and he who dares to strike out in an individual path, has the strength of all who admire the bravery of the act. Time is too precious to pattern; let each one seek to do his own peculiar work, for each soul has a separate mission upon earth, though we may all labor apparently in the same direction. Of a thousand persons taking the same journey, each would see something which none other would. Each soul we meet in life has a new voice, a new truth to utter, or a new method of presenting an already known truth to our minds. Each arouses a new sentiment within us, touches some tender emotion delicately, while another grates on our senses like harsh music, until we go searching for harmony and rest and we find treasures of thought within us which we should never have known had we not thus been driven to the depths of our being. All help us, then, to higher states; those who tranquilize us, and those who disharmonize us till we fain would withdraw to our soul's innermost for peace. We must look at life on the grandest scale, if we would find rest. A limited vision gives us nought but atoms, fragments floating in seeming disorder; but the mountain view gives the spirit all the vales and hills, and shows them as parts of an extensive landscape, a complete and perfect whole.

"I think it will be a long time before I can see these things as you do," remarked the pastor, after a long period of thought. "I fear your radicalism on on this and some other questions, Mr. Wyman, will injure society, if broadly disseminated."

"I do not think that you understand my views upon marriage, any more than you comprehend them on religious subjects."

"I hear that you give the fullest license to men and women, to sever their bonds and unite themselves to others."

"In one sense I do, sir; in another, nothing can be farther from me. I boldly assert everywhere, that men and women should not live together in daily inharmony, and give birth to children to inherit and perpetuate their angularities and discordances. You, yourself, if you spoke without prejudice and fear of the world, would say the same."

"But ought they not to try to live in harmony?"

"Most surely; but what if they cannot; if the magnetic life is consumed? If those whose union is so, merely in a legal sense, feel that in continuing that union they are daily losing life, power, and mental force, they should surely separate. I had much rather see such bonds severed than to witness the soul-harrowing sight I do every day of my life-parties fearing public opinion, and dragging each other down, living false and licentious lives-"

"What, sir! Licentious lives?"

"Certainly. Licentiousness is not all outside of wedlock. Every day and hour, children are being ushered into the world without love or true parentage-left in the hands of hired, and often vicious and ignorant servants, while those who should care for them, spend their time in folly and pleasure,--children undesired, enfeebled mentally and physically, with no love-sphere to enfold them-offspring of legalized prostitution, nothing more nor less."

"I think myself, sir," said the pastor, deliberately, "that many children are born thus, but how does this evil affect the other form of licentiousness, which is so on the increase?"

"It is very closely allied to it. Let married parties see that they give birth to pure, harmonious children, and the 'social evil' is blotted out forever. The evil of our life to-day is traceable to offspring, born of false and foolish mothers-of wild and reckless fathers."

"It's a great evil, I own, but how can we avert it?"

"By making our marriages pure and holy, and by changing our relations after the life of each is exhausted."

"But what would become of the children?"

"That is another question, and one which would settle itself. The order of all life is by steps; these we cannot overleap. One truth enfolds another. If the marriage system was perfect, or the relation between the sexes understood, we should not see, as we now do, manifestations which force us continually to question the existence of a God, and to be ever in search of the disturbing cause. Something is needed, sir, in our present social system to make us pure, and that something, is less restraint, and more personal freedom. We never become pure under restraint. All who know me, know that I seek to bring the sexes into pure and holy communion of spirit. Walls and partitions have ever produced clandestine movements. Boys and girls in schools should not be separated, but should meet each other daily; their studies, their sports be one as far as possible, thus blending their natures, not hiding them. If men lived more in the society of women they would be astonished to find how much purer and higher-toned their nature would become; how the mental assimilation was refining their wilder dispositions, their grosser passions. If such was your experience, you would tell me in one year that men and women do not mingle enough."

"I think you mean well," said the pastor, "and if I had your faith in personal freedom, I should almost dare to hope the earth might see better days."

"I wish you had my trust in man, and the God-life which is within him, waiting to be out-wrought through his deeds. But my faith cannot be transmitted to another; it is a matter of inward growth

with each. It comes to us when our souls soar above the labyrinthian forest of opinions and theories, high into the clearer atmosphere, untainted by the dust and smoke of our daily lives. Yes; on the mount must the vision ever come. We must ascend, if we would look beyond; but no words of ours can portray to another the glory of the scenes we there behold."

Hugh paused, and his face seemed glowing with light. The pastor went home to think over the words and thoughts of an earnest soul-words which sank deep within him, and displaced many of his own opinions.

"I do believe Hugh Wyman is a good man, after all that is said of him," he remarked to his wife as he opened his Bible that night for the closing service of the day.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

The years passed by and left Dawn steadily and peacefully doing her work, giving men and women each day extended views of life and deeper consciousness of their own powers. By the aid of friends and her father, she had succeeded in establishing a home for orphans, of both sexes, in a wild and beautiful locality, where all the varied faculties of their minds could expand. All were required to work a certain number of hours each day; then study and recreation followed. She became daily firmer in her belief that bringing the sexes together was the only way to make them pure and refined. Their labors in the garden and field were together; as also were their studies and lessons. There was a large hall, decorated with wreaths and flowers, where they met every evening and sang, danced, and conversed, as they were disposed; while each day added to their number. The boys were trained in mechanical as well as in agricultural pursuits, and it was pleasing to witness their daily growing delicacy of deportment towards the other sex, as well as the tone of love and sympathy which was growing stronger between them.

Dawn did not succeed in her effort at once; the majority laughed at and ridiculed her plan, but faithful to her inspiration, she continued on, and a few years witnessed the erection of a large, substantial building among the tall pines and spreading oaks. Parents who had passed "over the river," came and blest her labors for their children; and they who, though living on earth, had left their offspring uncared for, wept when they heard of the happy home among the verdant hills, where their children were being taught the only religion of life-the true art of living.

The leading idea and aim was to educate these children into a harmonious life, and to preserve a proper balance of the physical and mental by an equal exercise of both. The result of her efforts was most gratifying and encouraging to Dawn. Her success was apparent to all, even to those who at first sneered at her course. The mutual respect which was manifest among them; the quick, discerning minds, and the physical activity; the well-cultured fields, the beautiful lawns, the gardens brilliant and fragrant with flowers, the neatly arranged rooms, the books, the pictures and the various means of study, amusement and exercise: and around all, the gentle and loving spirit of Dawn, hovering like a halo of heavenly protection, combined to form a scene which no one could fail to admire. It taught one lesson to all, and that was: make children useful and you will make them happy.

Basil and his sister came often to the home, where Dawn seemed to preside like a guardian angel. It had been the wish of their lives to see such a home for orphans, a wish they never expected to see fulfilled. They gave largely to its support, and were never happier than when within its walls. Mrs. Dalton, whom the world pitied so generously, here found her sphere, as did many others who had felt long unbalanced. She taught the children music, drawing, and the languages, and extended her life and interest throughout the dwelling, to every heart therein. Thus the maternal was satisfied each day, and each hour she felt less need of a union which the wise world predicted she would enter into by the time her divorce was granted. Beatrice came and took Dawn's place whenever she wished to go to her home to refresh herself in the abiding love of her father and mother.

"I never thought sich a beautiful thing could be on airth," said Aunt Polly Day, one of the eldest of the town's people, to Dawn, the first time that she met her after the "home" was established. "Seems as though the angels had a hand in't, child, and only ter think, you're at the head o'nt. Why, I remember the night, or it was e'en-a-most day though, that you was born. Beats all natur how time does fly. It may be I shan't get out ter see yer home fer them e'er little orphans, in this world, but may be I shall when I goes up above. Do you s'pose the Lord gives us sight of folks on airth, when we're there, Miss Wyman?"

"I know he does. I feel that I have been helped by the angels to do this great work."

"Well, it's a comfortin' faith, to say the least on 't; and I don't care how much you and your pa has been slandered. I believe yer good folks, and desarving of the kingdom."

"I suppose no one ever feels worthy of the kingdom, Aunty; but we all know that if we seek the good and the true, that we shall find rest here and hereafter."

"Them's my sentiment, and I don't see how folks make you out so ungodly, if livin' true, and bein' kind to the poor is unrighteousness, then give me the sinners to dwell among. Think of all the things yer pa has given me, all my life, and there's old Deacon Sims won't take one cent off of his wood he sells me, when the Lord has told him in the good book to be kind to the widow and fatherless. He makes long prayers 'nough, though. Well, I s'pose he has ter kinder reach out to heaven that way, and make up in words what he lacks in deeds."

"He will make it all up, Aunty, when he has passed into the other life, and becomes conscious how little he has done here."

"May be; but it's like puttin' all the week's work inter Sat'day night. I reckon he'll have to work smart to make up."

Dawn could but smile at the quaint, but shrewd remark, and slipping a generous gift of money into the hand of the old lady, departed to spend her last evening with her father, and Herbert, who was now with them every evening, before going to her home among the hills.

How still and white his face looks, thought Dawn, as Herbert, at their request, seated himself at the instrument to play. One long, rapt, upturned gaze, and then the fingers stole over the keys.

Was it the music of the air, or some being of the upper realms breathing on him, infusing his soul with sound, that caused him to produce such searching tones, and send them quivering through the souls of the listeners? Now, moaning like the winds and waves; now, glad as though two beings long separated, had met. Then the song grew sweeter, softer, mellower, till every eye was flowing; on and on, more lovely and imploring till one could only think that

"The angels of Wind and of Fire
Chant only one hymn, and expire
With the song's irresistible stress;
Expire in their rapture and wonder,
As harp-strings are broken asunder
By music they throb to express."

The strains died away. Herbert sank back and spoke not; but on the white, uplifted face they read that an angel had been with him, one of the upper air. No words broke the stillness of that atmosphere; not a breath stirred its heavenly spell.

Without speech they separated, and the hallowed sweetness of that hour remained with them in their dreams, which came not to either until long after midnight.

From her own experience, Dawn saw that Herbert must mingle more with people, and become interested in life. She knew that it would not be well for him to think too much of the one whom the world pronounced gone, but who had come nearer than any earthly relation known.

"Come to my mountain home, and see my family," she said to him the next morning, at parting.

He partly promised by words, but his air of abstraction indicated that he had no intention of so doing.

What was that look which flashed over her features just then? Surely, the expression of his own dear Florence, pleading for something.

"I will come, Dawn, and very soon," he said, this time decisively.

Dawn's face lit up with another joy beside her own, as she pressed his hand and bade him good bye.

Not many weeks elapsed before Herbert fulfilled his promise to visit the Home. A murmuring sound of voices fell upon his ears as he approached the dwelling, and as he came nearer, the beautiful air of "Home" touched his heart with a new sweetness. The children were singing their evening hymn. Just as he stepped upon the portico the song ceased, and Dawn came gliding from the hall.

"Herbert! Welcome!" she exclaimed, with such an expression upon her face that no words were needed to tell him how glad she felt at his coming.

In her own little sitting room she had his supper brought, which he seemed to enjoy greatly, and then they walked in the garden till the dew hung heavy on the grass.

The days went by, and still he lingered. It was life to him to see so many children happy through labor and usefulness. Soon a desire to benefit them in some way took possession of his mind, and it was not long before he had so won their love by songs and stories of travel and history, that the evening group was not considered perfect without Mr. Temple, or "Uncle Herbert," as a few of the youngest ventured to call him.

How childhood, youth, and age need each other's companionship. How perfect is the household group which includes them all, from the infant to the white-haired sire. Homes without children! Heaven help those who have not the sunshine of innocent childhood to keep them fresh-hearted.

Through this sphere of life and love, he found his life revived. Gradually the sorrow-clouds passed away, fringed by the sunshine of hope which was rising in his breast.

Dawn was his strength and counsellor every day. Through her he learned how closely we are related to the other life, and yet how firmly we must hold our relation to this, that we may become instruments for good, and not mere sensitives, feeling keenly human

wants, but doing nothing to supply them.

"I intend to devote myself to life, and help the human family in some way," he said to Dawn one evening, as the twilight was robing itself in purple clouds. "I have caught my inspiration from you, and will no longer moan my days away. My treasures lie beyond, and I will strive to make myself worthy of the union when I am permitted to go over the silent stream.

"Do," answered Dawn, "and thus make her life richer and happier."

"I make her happier? Has she not gone to rest?"

"A kind of rest, I know; but does she not still live and mingle her life with yours each day? Therefore, whatever the quality of your thought and action is, she must partake of it, and for the time absorb it into her spirit. If your life is vague and full of unrest, her life will become so. On the contrary, if yours is strong and full of purpose, you give her strength and rest of soul."

"Is it so? Are we so united after death?"

"What part of Florence died, Herbert? The spirit passed out, carrying every faculty, every sense and emotion, to that land where many dream that we lose all consciousness of life, below, and remain in some blest state of dreamy ease. Not so. Our lives at death, so called, are made more sensitive to all we owe our friends on earth, and death is but the clasp that binds us closer."

"Your words stimulate me to labor and make my dear ones happy through my life. O, that like you, I could know that they at times are with me; or, rather, that they could come and give me that evidence I so much need, of their presence and their power to commune with us."

"I could not bring to you that evidence, because I know them and you, but I have a lovely girl who has just come to our Home, a stranger to you and to myself, who has this gift of second-sight, and if you wish, I will present her to you."

"Do so, for nothing would give me more happiness."

A young girl, with light hair, and blue eyes which ever seemed looking far away, was led into the sitting room by Dawn, and stood silent and speechless as soon as she had entered. Her outer senses seemed closed, as she spoke in a voice full of feeling these words:

"Be comforted, I am here; thy wife, Florence, and thy little ones. The grave has nought of us you hold so dear. Believe, and we will come. I whispered a song to your soul one night, and your fingers gave it words. Farewell, I will come again; nay, I go not away from one I love so well. 'T is Florence speaks to Herbert, her husband, from over the river called Death."

The child looked wonderingly around, then wistfully to Dawn, who motioned her to the door, that she might join her companions.

"Is she always thus successful?" asked Herbert, after a long silence.

"No. I have often known her to fail; but when the impression comes, it's invariably correct."

"Wonderful child. How can you educate her, and yet have her retain this strange gift?"

"I obey my impressions, and allow her to play a great deal. She cannot follow her class, therefore I teach her alone, short, easy lessons, and never tax her in any way, physically or mentally."

"You must love her very much; I long to see more of her wonderful power."

"You shall; but the hour is late, I must now send my children to bed and happy dreams."

There was soon a cessation of the voices, and cheerful "good-nights" echoed through the dwelling. When all was still, Dawn came and sat by him, and long they talked of the land of the hereafter, and its intimate connection with this life, so fraught with pain and pleasure.

CHAPTER XXXV.

Tenderly Dawn looked upon her little group each day, and all the maternal instincts of her nature sprang to the surface, as she thought of their lives coming without their asking, forced upon them to be battled out through storm and fire. Would that all parents might feel the responsibility of maternity, as that pure being did, who gave the richest, warmest current of her life to bear those children on. "He who has most of heart, knows most of sorrow," and many were the moments of sadness that came to Dawn, as she saw beings who were recklessly brought into life to suffer for the want of love and care. But, though sorrowed, she never became morbid. She lived and worked by the light that was given her, earnestly, which is all a mortal can do.

No season was complete to her which did not bring to her side Miss Bernard, who seemed the complement of her very self. One warm summer evening when the air was sweet with the breath of roses, they sat together; earnest words flowing from soul to soul, and their natures blending like the parts of a sweet melody; Dawn's high hope floating above the rich undertone of the deep life-tide on which the soul of her friend was borne.

"I have often wondered," said Dawn, as she clasped the friendly palm more tenderly, "if my life will be as firmly rooted as your own; if the same rich calm will pervade my being."

"If it be once full of agitation, it will surely be calm at last," said Miss Bernard, in that firm tone which indicates that the storms of life are over, "for we are like the molten silver, which continues in a state of agitation until all impurities are thrown off, and then becomes still. We know no rest until the dross is burned away, and our Saviour's face is seen reflected in our own."

The moonlight fell on her features just then, almost transfiguring the still, pale countenance. That holy moment brought them nearer than years of common-place emotions, or any of the external excitements of life. A tenderer revealing of their relation to each other flashed through their hearts—a relation which the silvery moon, and still summer night typified, as all our states find their analogies in the external world.

"I often query," said Dawn, breaking the silence, "what portion of your being I respond to?"

"I have often asked myself the same question. Dawn, of those whom I loved, and in my earlier years felt ambitious to become the counterpart of friends dear to my life. I have grown more humble now, and feel content to fill, as I know I only can, a portion of any soul. I can truly say, you touch and thrill every part of my being, if you do not fill it, and that just now you answer to every part. With some, my being stands still, I forget the past, and know no future. There is one who thus acts upon me now, though many others have stirred me to greater depths, and excited profounder sentiments,—this one calls forth the tenderest emotions of my heart and stimulates me to kindlier deeds. Thus do all in turn act and re-act upon each other, and what we need is to know just how to define this relation, for the emotions it calls forth are so often mistaken for those of love between the sexes, which marriage seals, and in few years reveals the painful fact, that what was supposed to be soul blending with soul, was only the union of a single thought and feeling, while the remainder of their nature was wholly unresponded to, its deepest and holiest aspirations unmated."

"Do we not answer to each other now, because we are aglow with life, and each susceptible to the others emotion?" asked Dawn.

"Something deeper," said her friend. "It is because we are both

illuminated by the divine essence which pervades all space and matter, as the air surrounds this globe. We are both full, and reflect each other's repletion. The theme is grand, and one which I would like to enlarge upon to-night, before our states are changed to those harsher ones, in which diviner truths are ever refracted."

"I feel the force of your last assertion most thrillingly," said Dawn, "for I know that a purely mental condition is antagonistic to spiritual light. How beautiful life becomes as we grow into the recognition of its laws, and learn of Him, who is law itself, and whose daily revealings, are the protecting arms around us."

"Fully realizing this fractional mating of which we have spoken, I am led to question if we ever find one soul who meets every want, or whether we wander, gathering from this one, and that one, until the soul has all its emotions sounded, all its sentiments aroused and responded to. In my deepest, most earnest questioning for truth, this answer seems to be the only one, which gives me rest. How is it with you, whose vision is clearer than my own?"

"I feel that no one soul can meet all the wants of another. Yet seeing this principle, sufficient light does not dawn on the method of its application."

"The light will come with the labor, as the fire flashes from the flint by strokes of the steel."

"True," said Dawn, gathering inspiration from the words, "And I have often felt that the world would be better to-day, if people agreed to live together while life and harmony inflowed to each, and no longer. I think the whole moral atmosphere would be toned and uplifted, the physical and spiritual beauty of children increased, and purer, nobler beings take the place of the angular productions of the day, if our unions were founded on this principle. And yet no one mind can point out the defects of our present system, and apply the remedy. The united voices of all, and the efforts of every individual must be combined, to accomplish a change so urgently demanded. All men and women should fortify themselves, and see that no being comes through their life, unless they have health and harmony to transmit. Maternity should never be forced; woman's highest and most sacred mission should never be prostituted, and yet this sin is every where. When every woman feels this truth, she will purify man, for he rises through her ascension. He needs her thought, her inspiration, her influence, to keep him every hour; and when the world has risen to that point, where minds can mingle; when society grants to man the right, to pass an hour in communion with any one who inspires him, we shall have made an advance towards a purer state. To-day mankind are suffering for mental and spiritual association. Give to men and women their right to meet on high, intellectual, and sympathetic grounds, and each will become better. We should then have no clandestine interviews, and few, if any of the passional evils which now burden every community, for the restraints which the jealousies and selfishness of the married have

established, in a great measure create these."

She paused: and the tall trees waved their branches as though in benediction on her head. Beauty was every where. There, in that summer night, who could utter aught but truth. The soft and gentle light of the hour, silvering with heavenly charms every rock, and tree and singing brook, excited no sophistries, but rather inspired the soul with divinest truths. Their words died away, but the spirit, the influence of their thoughts, will live through ages, and bring, perhaps, to those who read them, states peaceful and calm. That the relation between men and women needs some new revelation, we all know, but the light comes very slowly to us. We must work with such as is vouchsafed to us. Revelation comes to but few, and such can only work and wait, for the multitude. He who has toiled up the mount of vision, cannot reveal to the pilgrim in the vale, the things his eyes behold. The landscape view cannot be handed down, nor the emotions of the beholder, imparted to another.

The day is coming for true and earnest communion between the sexes, and the day is rapidly passing by when the glorious life which has been given us is misdirected and misapplied.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

Threads of silver shot through Dawn's silken hair, yet she grew more beautiful as the years matured her. The children under her care grew to be young men and women, and went out into the world qualified to live harmonious lives. She had taught them the true religion of life; had impressed upon their minds the importance of enjoying this life, that they might be prepared to enjoy the life that follows it; that to be happy now is to be happy forever, for the present is always ours, the future never.

"I have one wish more," she said to her friend, Miss Bernard.

"And pray tell me what modest ambition you have just now?"

"It is one I have long cherished. I wish to see a hospital for invalids erected within sight of this Home."

"You are so successful in seeing your wishes ultimated, I shall expect to see one in a few months."

"I should be glad to see a good list of names with generous

subscriptions by that time. I think if all the extra plate and jewelry of wealthy families, articles which do them no good, or rather the surplus (for the beautiful in moderation ever does us good) were sold, and the money given to such an object, very much might be done. I see, when I come in contact with people, the great need that exists for an institution where patients can be surrounded with all that is lovely and artistic, and their spiritual and physical needs attended to. Many need only change of magnetism and conditions, with the feeling that they have a protecting care around them, to change the whole tone of the system. Others are weak, have lost mental stamina, and need the tonic of stronger minds; while some need tenderness and love, and to be treated like weary children. Many would need no physical ministrations direct, but spiritual uplifting, which would in time project its force through the mental, and harmonize the body. There are many such cases."

"True, I know we need such an institution to meet those wants which you have so faithfully sketched; and if a few earnest men and women work for that end, may we not hope to see it accomplished, and the blue dome rising somewhere among these hills? I will contribute my part, and give a good portion of my time for its accomplishment."

"If all felt as you do we might surely see it in our day; but we will hope that the need will develop such a place, for the need is but an index pointing to the establishment of such an institution."

"I have often wondered if cases of insanity might not be treated more successfully than they are by scientific men."

"I feel that they could be under pure inspiration, and in nine cases out of ten, the disharmonized mind be restored to harmony."

"O, Dawn, let us work for this, and though we may never see it in our life, we shall have the consolation and happiness of knowing that we had a part in the beginning."

"And the beginning is the noblest part, because the least appreciated. The ball in motion will have many following it, but the starting must be done by one or two."

Their conversation was here interrupted by the announcement of a visitor, who proved to be Miss Weston, whom Dawn was delighted to see.

"I had a singular feeling," she said, to Dawn "as I came up the steps of the portico, what do you suppose it was?"

"I am not clairvoyant to-day. Be kind enough to tell me."

"I felt as though I was coming to a home, one which I should never wish to leave."

"And you need not, so long as you can be happy with me. I have long

needed some one like yourself to help me. Will you stay?"

"Dawn, may I?"

"Nothing would give me more happiness, because you have come in this way; of your own spontaniety-simply gravitated to my life-and when the exhaustion of our mental and vital forces demands our separation we will part, and consider that as natural and agreeable to each as our present coming together."

"O, if these principles could be understood and lived out, how happy, how natural we all should be; and happy because natural."

"The world is slowly coming to an understanding of them, and you and I may help its advance by living what we feel to be true lives."

"Dawn, you are life and light to every one, I shall stay here the rest of my life."

With the clasp of true friendship about them, they lived and worked together. Winter came, and they sat at evening by the fire-side and talked of the past, and the golden future for mankind. The textures of their lives were fast weaving into one web of interest. Dawn's excess of spiritual life flowed into Edith's, who never forgot the hour upon the seashore, and the awakening there of her spiritual trust.

Miss Weston proved to be one of those household angels who see things to do, and seeing, perform. Silently she slipped into her sphere of usefulness, and became Dawn's helper in the thousand ways which a woman of tact and delicacy can ever be.

Silently the pines waved over the graves of Florence and her children. The snow of many winters fell on their tasselled boughs, while her husband learned through the beautiful philosophy, that our loved ones find death no barrier to the affections. Gradually he learned the great lesson of patience, which must be inwrought in every soul-that all our experiences of life are necessary, and in divinest order; that everything which happens is a part of the great whole, and that none of the bitter could have been left out of his cup. The unrest, produced by what he once considered his loss passed away, as the recognition of life's perfect discipline flowed unto his vision.

The nearest person on earth, now, was his friend and sister Dawn, kin of spirit, heart and mind. Regardless of people's speech, he went often to her home, and received the sympathy he needed. To him, she was life and inspiration. Why should he not seek where he could find? It was her soul-life he needed, and long and earnestly they conversed of those interior principles which so few perceive.

"I have learned by experience what true relationship may exist between men and women," said Dawn to Edith, one day when every

moment had been given to Herbert, "and how God intended us for each other?"

"And I see how your own life is increased by giving it to others, as you are every day doing. If I had a husband, Dawn, I should enjoy him most after he had been in your society. Uplifted and toned by the life of another, he could be far more to me,--far dearer and vital. I wonder women do not see this great truth."

"They cannot on the merely human plane, which is ever selfish. Raise them out of that, place them on the mount of vision, and they would at once see it, and be glad to give their husbands the liberty of true women's society, knowing that they were extending their own lives in so doing. If men are unduly restrained, they take a lower form of freedom."

"It is too true. I can now see that had I been allowed the earthly alliance, I might have been selfish and contracted. I almost know I should. O, Dawn, how much life is worth to us all; how much we have to thank our heavenly father for,--most of all for the clouds with silver linings."

"I am glad that you see it thus, my friend, my sister. That is the soul's only sure position. Life is a great and glorious gift. If all its hours were mixed with pain, even to have lived is grand." Then with her eyes looking afar, as if discerning scenes invisible to others, she repeated these beautiful lines:

"Two eyes hath every soul:
One into Time shall see;
The other bend its gaze
Into Eternity.
In all eternity
No tone can be so sweet
As where man's heart with God,
In unison doth beat.
What'er thou lovest, Man,
That too become thou must;
God-if thou lovest God;
Dust-if thou lovest dust.
Let but thy heart, O man!
Become a valley low,
And God will rain on it
Till it will overflow."

Golden bars of light lay in the room. The sun was sinking peacefully to rest, like a great soul who had been faithful to every duty, and rayed out its life on the barren places of earth. In that calm evening, in the greater calm of their lives they sat, gathering rest for the morrow, and peace for their midnight dreams-dreams which brought to them the forms of their loved ones who had gone but a little while before, and who loved them still, rippling the silent stream with memory-waves, till they broke on the shore and cooled

their weary feet.

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