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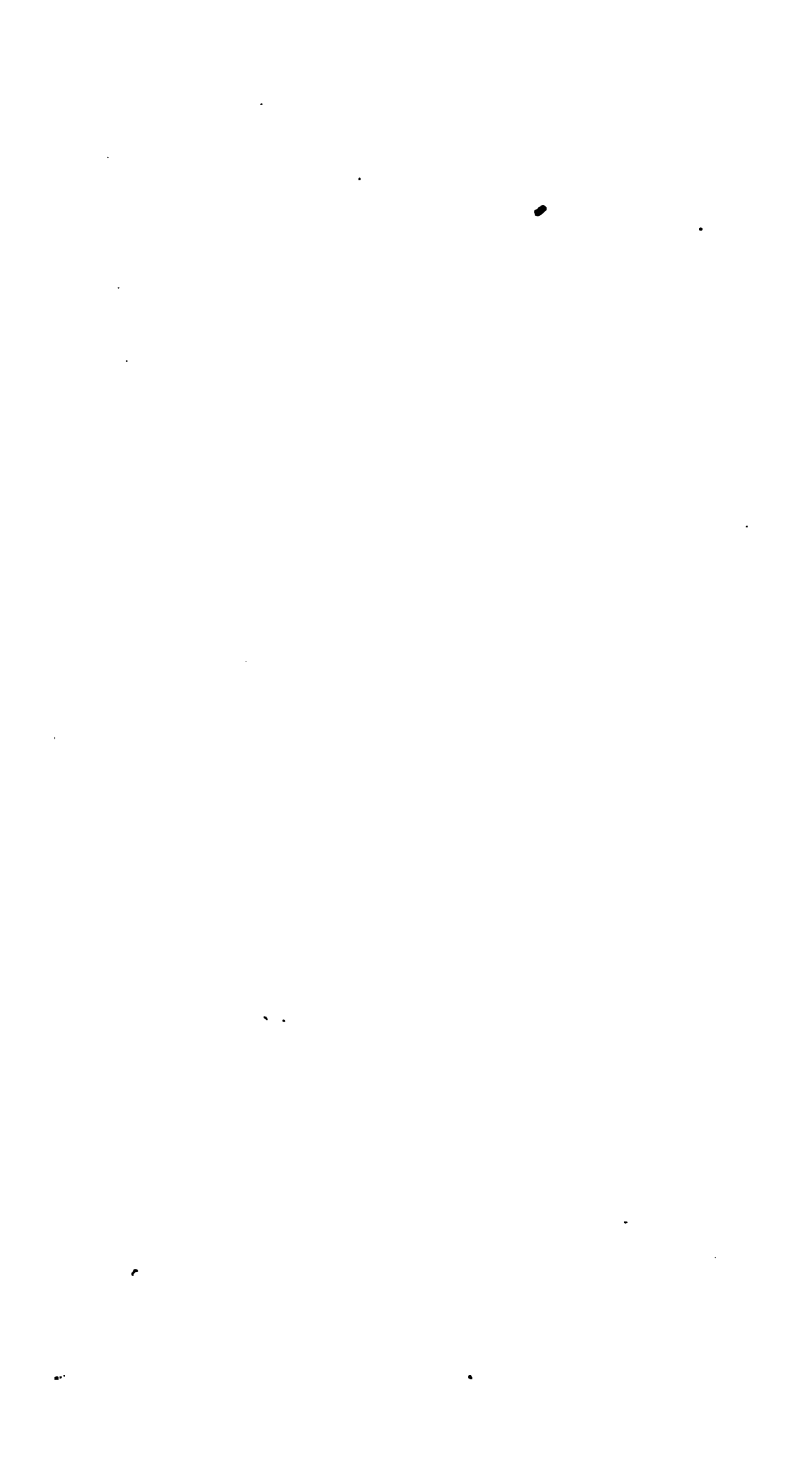
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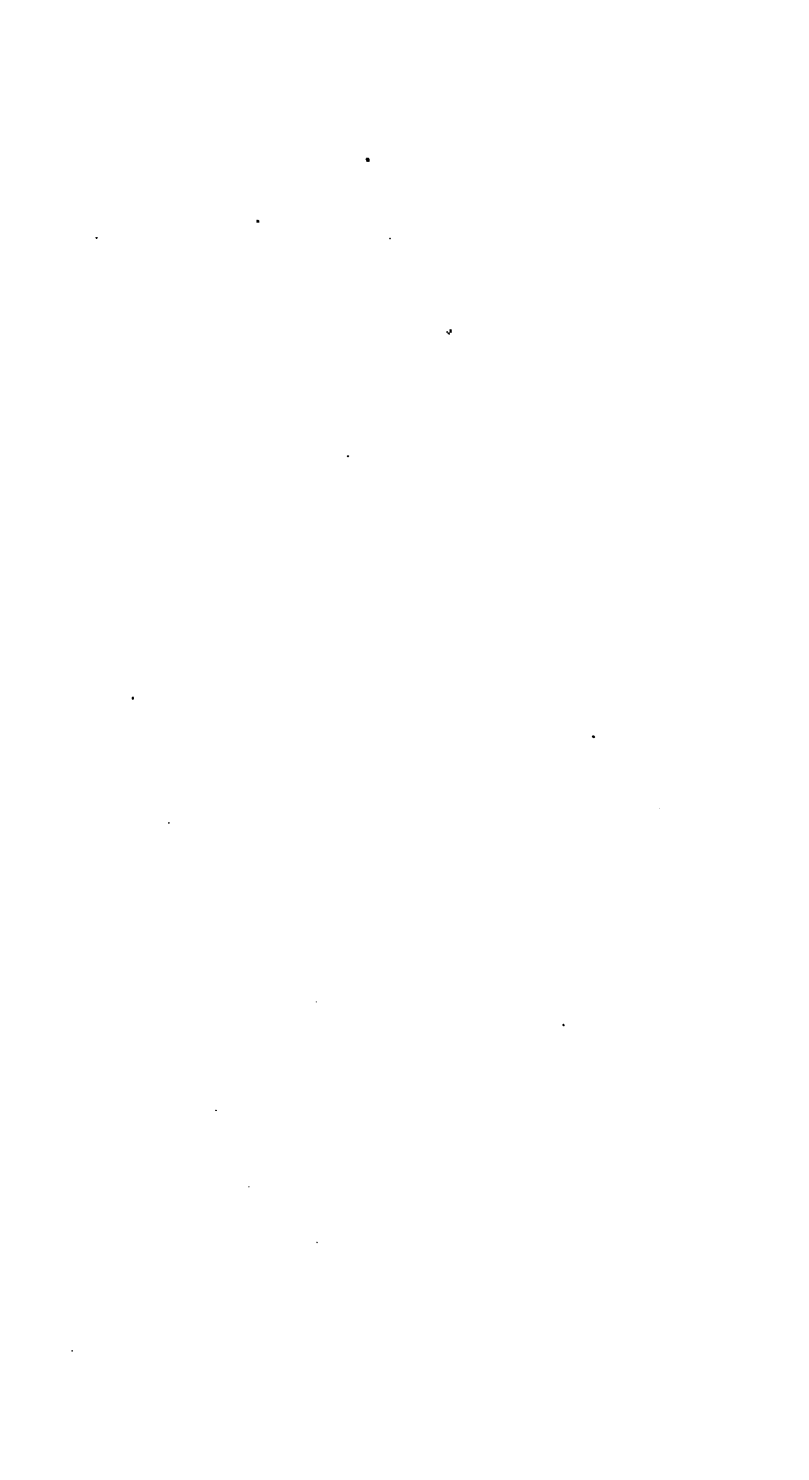
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Z I L L A H,

The Child Medium;

A TALE OF SPIRITUALISM.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MY CONFESSION; THE STORY
OF A WOMAN'S LIFE," ETC.

"There are more things in Heaven and earth
Than are dreamed of in your philosophy."
SHAKESPEARE.
"Do we, indeed, desire the dead
Should still be near us at our side?
Is there no baseness we would hide?
No inner villainy that we dread?
"Shall he for whose applause we strove,
We had such reverence for his blame,
See with clear eye some hidden shame,
And we be lessened in his love?"
TENNISON.

NEW YORK:
DIX, EDWARDS & CO., 321 BROADWAY.

1857.

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PREFACE.

IN the following pages, it has never been my intention to influence the reader either against or in favor of spiritualism. I am no believer in it myself, and probably shall not further investigate the subject. That the phenomena, bearing the title, are gradually assuming a most wonderful form, and are destined some day very materially to affect the prospects of this good, free land, no one can doubt, who remembers that, within a few years, spiritualism was unknown, and that, at the present time, there are not many families in the Union who do not boast a "medium" among their numbers.

Science has, in vain, attempted to penetrate this modern mystery. Opinions differ widely concerning it. Some have made it a religious creed, and pursue it almost unto fanaticism; others acknowledge its marvels, but disbelieve in it in every way as connected with the supernatural. There is still another class, which attributes the whole to the devil.

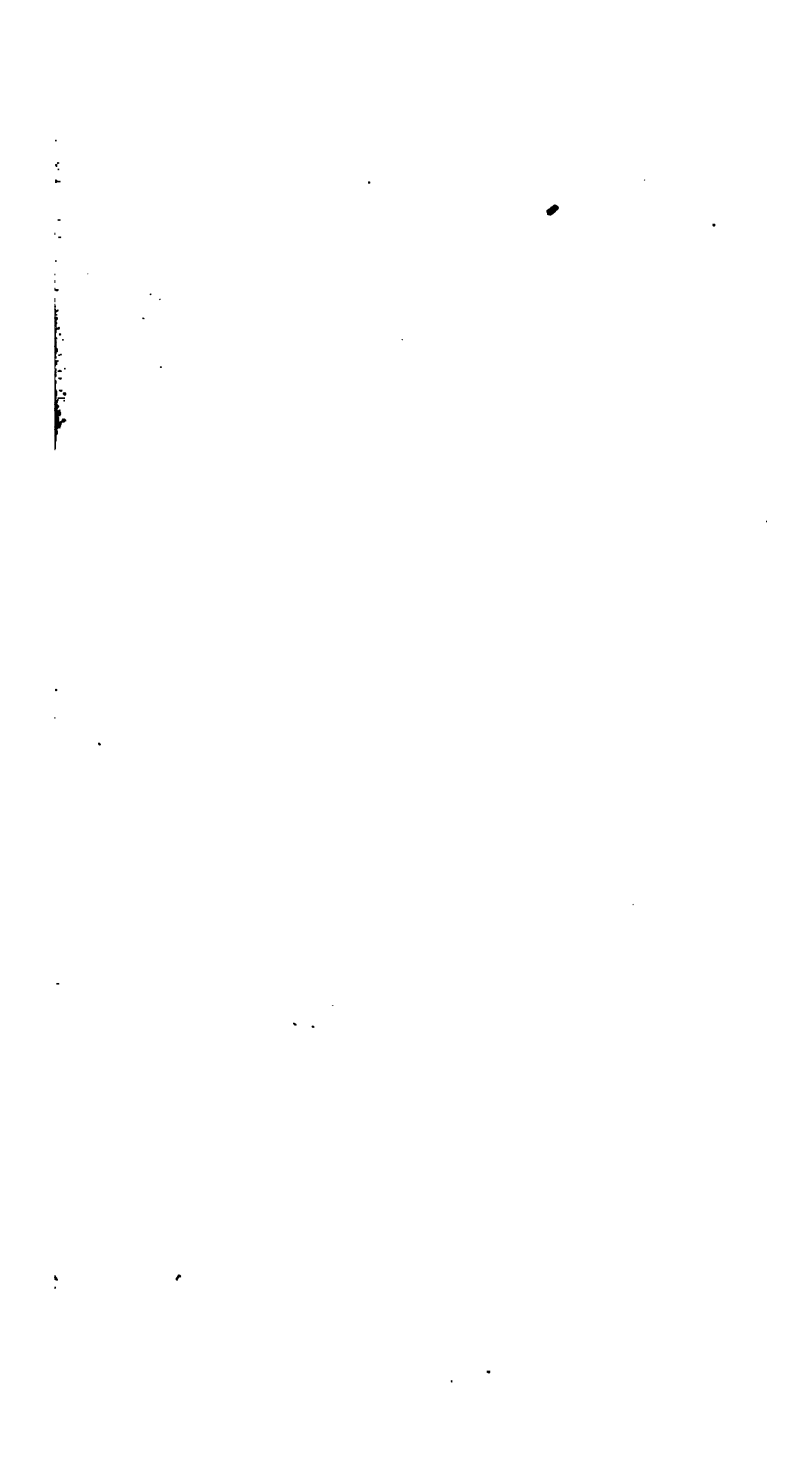
I have had no other object in preparing this volume, than to present to the public, in the form of a domestic story, the various incidents of spiritualism, which, from time to time, have fallen under my observation. Some of them I have witnessed myself, and for many of the others I have the best of living attestation.

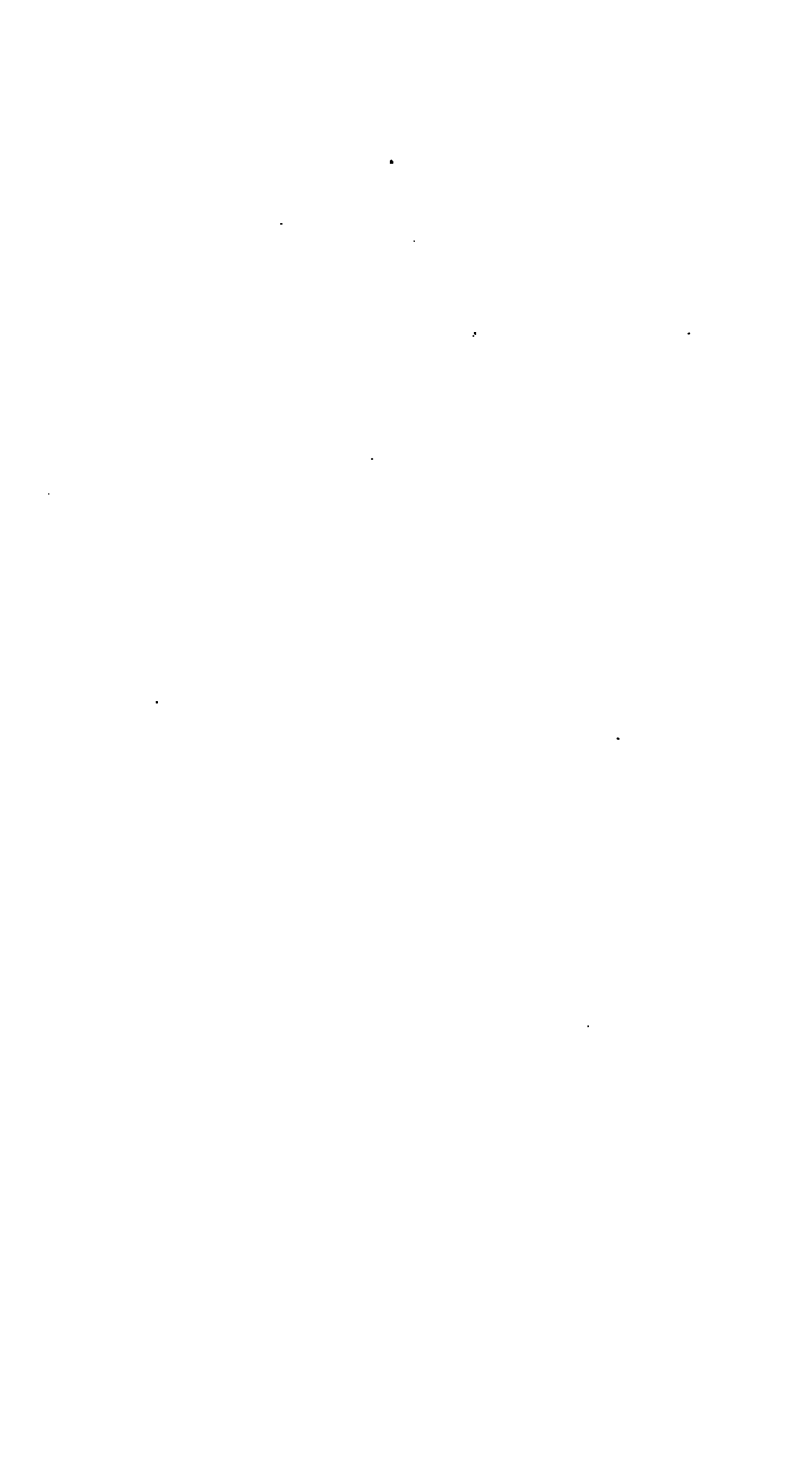
THE AUTHOR.

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and clear! No man will ever love you more than I! My very soul is beneath your feet, trample on it if you will—crush it down to humiliating dust. Child, child, how is it that you, so weak, so puny, so young, should sway my fate?” Mr. Ogilvie started up, and paced the room. A fierce light burned in his eyes, but their glittering glances, as they shone fitfully through his shaggy, overhanging brows, seemed fixed on vacancy. Faster and faster grew his walk, until he became momentarily oblivious of his surroundings. Once or twice he paused, looked silently from the windows with staring, fixed gaze, and then resumed his singular promenade. The girl thought to take advantage of his evident preoccupation, and noiselessly glided toward the door. Already the knob was in her hand—it began to yield—freedom was before her, when, very quietly, and without a glance in the direction where she stood, Mr. Ogilvie said, “Come back, Rachel.”

She obeyed, too nervous for independent action. She thought him going deranged—never before had she seen him thus. Tremblingly she took a seat near the door. Per-

haps something in her face, her attitude, spoke her fear. He read it with one look.

“Poor little child, I have frightened you—did you think me mad?”

Although she did not answer, he seemed to have found a revelation of her thoughts in her open, undeceitful face.

“Ah, Rachel,” he put forth, reproachfully, “you are wrong. Hark! what was that?”

A flood of delicious music, soft, throaty music filled the small apartment. A bird sat perched on the sill of the open window, singing as though his little heart would break, yet more for joy than sorrow. In a moment he was gone.

Mr. Ogilvie again turned towards Rachel, and said, eagerly,

“I will prove my saneness to you!” With impulsive haste he caught a sheet of paper from the table, and, resting it against the wall, wrote. There was an inspiration in those kindling eyes, which Rachel, girl as she was, and inexperienced in everything but the sweet, gentle ways of her opening womanhood, could not but see and feel. She ceased thinking of

herself; she even forgot her premeditated flight, and, with clasped hands and wonder-parted lips watched the quick, nervous dashes of her lover's pencil. The strength, the beauty of his Double Life, his Spiritual Vitality, animated his large features, and gave them a radiance almost akin to glory.

Mr. Ogilvie ceased writing, and, in a not unmusical voice read aloud this sonnet on

THE CREATION OF THE NIGHTINGALE.

Echo, a nymph of brown, fantastic beauty,
One eve sat idling at a fountain's side,
And, heedless of the sounds that far and wide
Called on her voice to do its wild, sweet duty,
She leaned her head against a mossy steep,
Closed her bright eyes wearily, and—went to sleep!
As punishment for this most dire offense,
The gods sent down a bird of matchless song,
Who perched the neighboring forest-trees among,
Sang as no earthly bird e'er warbled thence.
Woke from her dreams, the nymph, with startled air,
Rubbed with her dusky hand her sleep-bewildered eyes,
Then tried in vain to imitate those thrilling cries,
And stood rebuked, in mute, forlorn despair.

“Is it good—does it please you?” he questioned, when he had finished reading.

“Yes,” she answered, sadly.

This strange scene and this wild improvisation caused her uncontrollable alarm.

"See how cool I am," continued Mr. Ogilvie, smiling. "Were I mad, could I write—could I—" he started, for the bird sang again at the open casement.

Beyond, a scene of wondrous beauty met the eye. Through the ruggedly graceful trees, giants which the dews of centuries had nourished, the sea sparkled like living fire. Sails, moving peacefully onward, dotted its surface with their relieving whiteness; while on the opposite shore, which was distinctly visible, towered the great hills, the glorious blue hills of —, high waves dashing with the roar of a hungry lion over their eternal feet.

Mr. Ogilvie looked languidly forth. When he turned from the window, Rachel stood on the threshold of the open door. He did not attempt to follow or recall her, but simply seated himself where last she had sat, and buried his face in his hands.

CHAPTER II.

ONCE in her own room, Rachel's power of silent endurance gave way. She flung herself hopelessly on her bed, and wept tears of agony.

For months, nay, for years, had love for this man grown and strengthened in her heart. She knew him to be worldly, godless, yet she could not steel herself against him. The original goodness of his nature, his fascinations of speech, and latterly his kindness to herself, when she had so much needed kindness, more than at any other time of her life, each and all combined to compel her to regard him differently from the rest of her few friends. She had not resisted this passion as she might; until that day she had never dreamed that he loved her. She had supposed that her affection was both unknown and unreturned; had she imagined that it was not the vain, unrepaid thing she thought it, she would have striven, with all the strength of her being, to cast it from her.

For she knew, in her secret soul, that no woman could expect happiness, in this world or in the next, who united her life to that of Freeland Ogilvie.

Three weeks before, Rachel's mother had died in that very room, after a long, lingering illness. In a little grave-yard, on the road that led from Maplehurst (Rachel could see its white head-stones from her window), Mrs. Olio slept at last, in perfect, unbroken peace.

On the morrow Rachel was to go from Maplehurst, and begin the first actual labor of her life, hitherto a dim, aimless stagnation. She was to be a teacher. Her friends had secured for her a position in a village school a few miles distant, and it had been arranged that the next day she was to bid a long farewell to the place of her birth.

This fact, however, added no weight to her sorrow. She had never liked Maplehurst. It was one of those desolate villages which so abound in the State of New Jersey, displaying scarcely any fertility of soil or natural vegetation. It had ever seemed to Rachel both dreary and monotonous. Although it had always been

her home, it was too barren, too solemn to excite the love of natures like her own.

With pulses throbbing, and eyes aching from long weeping, she at last rose to open the windows for fresh air. She drew aside the curtains, lifted the sash, and looked forth. The sun was just setting, red and hazy, over the sea. The waves dashed forward on the shore, alternately white with froth, and golden with the reflected rays of the departing sunshine. The long shadows of the pine-trees that dotted the sloping bank grew purpler and intenser every moment, until, as the sun sank below the water-level, they were lost in the calm twilight. A ship, a solitary ship, floated out towards the main. Very drearily Rachel watched its tall spires and white sails, moving majestically through the gathering gloom. Years after, she could recall even the sea-gull that hovered over it. When it was gone, she covered her face and again wept—in her tears finding blessed relief.

She heard no one approach from without; but soon a voice uttered her name close at her side. She knew it but too well, therefore she

did not look up or remove her hands from her face.

“Poor child,” it said, compassionately, “how much useless suffering you cause yourself!”

“It is not useless,” she said, rising, “all suffering purifies.”

“Granted; but it is useless in another sense, little Rachel, and you will prove it so yourself.”

Mr. Ogilvie bent down until his rugged face nearly touched that of his companion.

“It is useless, inasmuch as you will yield.”

“Never!” she passionately ejaculated.

The half smile on his mocking lip irritated her.

“I may love you all my life, Freeland Ogilvie, but I will never marry you!”

“Do you really think so?” he asked composedly.

She did not reply.

His tone was confident. After a pause, during which he surveyed her countenance with cool minuteness, he added, in a careless tone—

“Love like mine is omnipotent. You shall see what wonderful things it can bring to pass.”

His manner, more than his words, maddened her. The slight power of self-control that she still possessed, broke down at this. Her face burned, her person unconsciously dilated. She stepped forth on the piazza (the windows reached to the floor), and coldly confronted him, scarcely feeling the same being that she had been but an hour before.

“Mr. Ogilvie,” Rachel began, “when you told me to-day that you loved me, although my sense of right warned me to beware, my affection for you was so strong, I dared to hope that some day I should be free to regard you as I chose—I hoped you might, in the future, be led to acknowledge your Creator, so that, if you still wished it, I could become your wife. But now I feel—yes, I feel—for the idea has come to me instinctively, that such expectation is in vain. I shall die before it is realized. All that remains, then, is mutual forgetfulness.”

Mr. Ogilvie did not seem in the least moved, and it was evident she had calculated wrongly on the effect of her words.

“Yes,” he said, presently, “you are right, Rachel, I shall never change. For me there

will never be such a being as God ; but do not think that shall be a bar between us. Do not imagine it for one single moment. I tell you it shall not be."

His vehemence grew alarming.

"At least," she hotly answered, "you cannot compel my choice. Thank heaven, I know my own heart."

"Not as well as I know it," was the prompt reply. "You are brave, you are self-reliant, Rachel, but you are, also, a true woman, dependent on your affections for happiness. You cannot do without me !"

"We shall see."

"Yes, Rachel, yes ; as you say, we shall see. I will not plead for your love—I shall not even ask it ; but you will give it to me."

"Never—never !"

"You are really pretty when you are in a passion. Your eyes gleam, your pale cheeks redden, your lips tremble ; and—what—weeping again ? Poor child, poor child !"

She did not try to repress the starting tears, but cried bitterly from very excess of wounded, insulted feeling.

He looked down upon her with repentant tenderness.

“Why do you struggle so, my child; why do you strive to break away from a power stronger than yourself? You will but chafe against the bars—you cannot escape. I have you, and I hold you: you are mine for all time. Attempt to free yourself as you will, you are mine. No one shall come between us, and live. Mine—mine entirely!”

He gathered her, unresisting, to him. He pressed passionate kisses over her forehead and eyes. She seemed to feel herself drawn, gently but irresistibly, to follow his will. His strong arms were around her in an embrace she could not repel. A strange sense of peace filled her soul—it was a sensation of complete, serene repose.

Rachel Olio was mastered.

A few instants he held her thus. Her tears ceased; the half-broken sobs she attempted in vain to repress, were the only sounds that disturbed the silence. The twilight was deepening rapidly. Above and around them fell the beautiful dusky glooms of evening.

"Rachel," he said, softly.

Never before had the name so vibrated on the girl's ear. She thought she heard it moving sound by sound, fainter and fainter, into eternal space.

"Rachel," he repeated—and this time she looked answeringly upward, through the shadows, to the face that was bent over her own—
"Tell me what sprite, what sort of thing this is I hold in my arms? A while ago it was all fire and passion; defiance flashed on me from its fierce eyes—the very eyes now looking so calmly in my own. Ah, Rachel, Rachel, said I not that true love is omnipotent?"

She did not speak.

"Rachel, my Rachel, nowhere in the wide world can you find such love as that with which I endow you. You are rich—rich beyond any other woman. My whole being is centred in you. Let me do something for you, Rachel, some good great deed, worthy of my love and yours. You will let me, will not you? Speak, child, speak! What shall it be?"

"I ask nothing of you," she murmured,
"but to live for me."

Strange answer; and how at variance with the last words she had uttered! What was it? What power had coerced her will?

Again he looked down upon her face. She did not see him, but she knew it, and, through the wild beating of her own heart, she heard him draw a long sigh of intense relief; then, folding her closer, almost crushing her in his vast embrace, he said:-

“I am content.”

They went in together. It was spring time, as I have said, yet a small fire burned brightly on the hearth of the little parlor. Rachel's two maiden aunts, Janet and Alice Hawthorne, who had been with her since her mother's death, were now in the room. Alice, an old lady of sixty-five, quietly knitting at a corner of the fire-place; the other, Janet, busied with the simple tea arrangement. The table, half-spread, stood in the centre of the room.

“Ah, Rachel,” cheerfully cried the latter, as she entered, followed by Mr. Ogilvie, whose suave brow slightly contracted at the sight of the two old ladies; “ah, Rachel, see how thy

last evening at Maplehurst is to be honored. We are going to have tea in the parlor!"

"And I am to be an invited guest, am I not, Miss Janet?" gayly asked Mr. Ogilvie, wisely banishing his vexation.

"Humph! I don't know about that. It is just as Rachel says. It is her last night. She shall have her own way for once."

"Sister," quoth old Alice, from her corner, "thee knows the child always has had her way. Her poor dear mother, who's past and gone, entirely gave in to her. 'Twas a great pity."

"Well, well," cried Janet, good-humoredly, "she is going to-morrow; let her take a little comfort while she can. Yes, it shall be as Rachel says."

"Then, I stay," said Mr. Ogilvie, half smiling, as he looked, meaningly, at Rachel across the table.

"Thee had better not be too sure," put forth Alice again; "the girl does not like thee over well."

"Oh, aunt, let him stay if he choose."

"I do choose, most decidedly," Mr. Ogilvie said, holding his large hands before the cheer-

ful blaze of the fire, "and especially as I see Miss Janet has one of her famous custards on the list of edibles."

"Better drop the 'Miss,' I think," she said complacently, as she laid the plates; "the fewer words the better. Rachel, close those shutters. This spring wind is blustry enough to shake the house itself."

Mr. Ogilvie quietly put Rachel aside, fastened the shutters himself, and, drawing a chair to the fire, silently motioned her towards it. Fearful of attracting attention, she dared not but obey. He then brought another, and, despite her mute entreaty, seated himself at her side.

"Ah!" he sighed with satisfaction, as he noted the red streams of fire, "ah, Miss Janet, my bachelor establishment will seem dreary enough, when I go back to it to-night."

"Why not marry?" laconically demanded Alice.

"I am really thinking of it."

"I hope thee will get a good wife," said Janet, lingering around the table to give the last finishing touches. "Rachel, thee must

cure thyself of that bad habit of moving so uneasily in thy chair."

"I hope so, too," Mr. Ogilvie said, half abstractedly.

"Will it be soon?" Old Alice Hawthorne laid down her knitting with the question. It was an unusual action, and proved her to be greatly interested in the conversation.

"Soon? Well, yes, I think so. However, as I do not know positively, you had better ask Rachel."

"Rachel!" cried both the aunts, in a duet of astonishment. Janet paused, with a plate of fragrant yellow butter in one hand and a dish of blackberry jelly in the other, to survey her niece, who felt herself coloring violently.

"Yes, yes," Alice said, "that's why he shut the windows for her!" and without another word she fell to knitting again, as though it were quite a settled matter.

"Rachel!" began Janet Hawthorne, with indignant warmth, "why did thee not tell me of this before?"

"Tell you what, dear aunt?"

“Come, don’t thee play innocence now. Why did thee not tell me thee was to be the wife of Freeland Ogilvie?”

Rachel was silent. She knew not what to say; and, besides, Mr. Ogilvie sat there relishing the scene as something so keenly enjoyable, rubbing his hands, leaning over the fire to hide his too evident satisfaction, and finally laughing outright, that, as may be supposed, her embarrassment increased.

“I did not think this of thee, Rachel,” continued her aunt. “Have I not always been kind to thee? Have I not cared for thee as my own child? I say, again, I did not think this of thee.”

“Ingratitude is the way of the world,” was Alice’s consolation. “I hope thee will make a better wife than thy girlhood would seem to promise.”

“Hush, sister,” commanded Janet, briskly; “the child has deported herself well enough, excepting about this concealment, and that I cannot pardon.”

The bright tears stood in her eyes, and, at the sight, Rachel forgot her own annoyance

altogether. She went to the sweet old lady, she put her two arms around her neck, and whispering how lately acquired the secret was, kissed her wrinkled cheek again and again.

Then she returned to her seat by him who, henceforth, was master of her fate. She did not shrink back when he took her hand, and gently drew her towards him. She was too happy, too content, to dream of rebellion, as, by the subdued fire-light, he smoothed her hair from her forehead.

"Yes," he whispered, putting her away with a half sigh and a whole smile, "she is sincere. The change is sudden—so sudden, I thought at first some elf had spirited her off, and sent Rachel number two in her stead. She will do, yes, she will do."

Half inaudibly as he spoke, Alice must have caught some portion of his words, for she exclaimed testily :

"'Tis a good thing the child goes away to-morrow, Janet, take my word for it."

"She is not going away," Mr. Ogilvie said, as coolly as though uttering a very commonplace remark.

"Why not?" Rachel asked, suddenly facing him.

"Because, to-morrow, you will become my wife."

He scarcely stirred from his position, and did not even raise his eyes, which were fixed dreamily on the fire.

"And pray, do you take my consent to this arrangement as a matter of course?" she demanded, her pale face flushing.

"Rachel!"

"Am I a stone, without sense or feeling, that my destiny is so completely without my control?" she continued indignantly. "I will not become your wife to-morrow, Mr. Ogilvie. You are mistaken; and I do go to school."

"It is you who are mistaken, Rachel."

"Not a bit of it. I never was more in the right in my life."

"Take care—do not tempt me to try my power."

"Power! I defy it," she said.

He smiled, but never took his eyes from the fire. It was a calm, glittering smile, and

aroused all the proud rebellion in Rachel's naturally passionate temperament.

"We shall see," she exclaimed recklessly.

"Ah, Rachel," he said, with the security of expected triumph, "you uttered those words once before to-day; do you remember them?"

She did, but too well. Janet had lit the lamps, however, and was now bidding them come to tea, so she answered not. Nevertheless, her resolve was taken.

The evening passed rapidly and pleasantly away. The discussion on the next day's probable events was not renewed. Since the calamity which necessitated Rachel's departure from her old home, she had experienced all the bitterness of utter desolation. The contrast—this excess of happiness, was almost more than she could endure. She had passed too suddenly from extreme to extreme, and she trembled lest her new-found peace should take to itself wings and flee away, so unreal did it seem. Conscience, lulled for the time, deluded perhaps, reproached her not.

The moment for parting came at last. Mr. Ogilvie had long been a favorite with both Janet

and Alice Hawthorne ; like Rachel, they had lost sight of his many faults and eccentricities, being blinded by fascinations which none knew better how to exercise effectively than he. It was evident they did not look unfavorably on the turn their niece's personal affairs had taken, and when at the old hall-door he bade her and them "good-night!" and, bending, left a sudden kiss on Rachel's forehead, impudently whispering the one word "to-morrow," they did not chide, much as the act must have offended their Quaker ideas of propriety.

Rachel stood on the piazza and listened for the last echo of his feet, as he took his way towards the lights of the village ; for her home was just without the suburbs of Maplehurst. Then she reëntered the little parlor. It was late. The fire burned low ; the hearth was strewn with fading embers. Alice was putting up her work ; Janet replacing the furniture in its accustomed position for the night.

"Aunt Alice, aunt Janet," she said, quickly, standing in perplexed uneasiness before them, "I must pack my trunk to-night."

"Then thou really art going?" questioned

Janet Hawthorne, peering at the girl over her spectacles.

"There's plenty time to get ready to-morrow," curtly remarked Alice; "to bed now, my child."

"But I desire to start very early in the morning, instead of the afternoon, as it was settled," Rachel remonstrated, half blushing beneath a very severe and curious scrutiny.

"Very airy in the morning," repeated her aunt Alice, significantly. "What! and see no one before thee goes?" with peculiar accent on the "no one."

"That is just it," she said, desperately; "I wish to leave here at sunrise, and, as you express it, auntie, 'see no one.'"

"Rachel is right!" now cried her aunt Janet, seemingly satisfied with a close investigation of her niece's face. "I like her spirit. Thee would not care to be compelled into matrimony thyself, before thee was ready, Alice, I fancy. Yes, Rachel, thee can start as airy as thee pleases: so now to packing—I will help thee."

Thus it was arranged.

CHAPTER III.

BEFORE daybreak Rachel was awakened by the patter of rain upon the roof. It fell softly and peacefully, like a veritable spring shower, and, by the time the first gray of dawn came solemnly through the windows, it had ceased entirely. She dressed herself quickly, rejoiced that it was over, because she desired to escape the disagreeableness of traveling in a storm, and, as circumstances made the journey inevitable, not even the rain would have prevented her departure.

For the last time in that old farm-house Rachel sent up her morning thanksgiving to the great Ruler of the universe, the Giver of mercies countless as are the stars of heaven.

The sun was rising when she descended. Breakfast was not yet prepared, and she went out to take a farewell of the farm. She had never left home in all her life before, and the knowledge of her approaching departure awoke

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feelings both new and strange, yet painless, because, as I have already said, Rachel did not like Maplehurst. Association was all that made it dear to her, and even that was now become as sorrowful as sweet. Mrs. Olio's recent death had thrown a melancholy over everything connected with the place, from which Rachel was thankful to escape, for her temperament was not naturally jubilant.

She left the house by a side-door, and walked rapidly through the garden to the open road, which she crossed, and entered a grove of locust trees, extending from it down a slight declivity. At the base of this hill ran a brook, whose foamy waves mingled just beyond this spot with the sea. The dash, the murmur of this rivulet, had ever been pleasant to Rachel. It was one of her favorite haunts. Over the mossy trunk of a fallen tree, which spanned the stream, she walked somewhat sadly to the opposite bank, and sat down on a gray old rock overhanging its margin. Tears, that she could not restrain, filled her eyes as she looked around. Never had that peaceful valley appeared so beautiful as then. The locust-trees were not yet in full

foliage, and the delicate green of the half-opened leaves glittered cheerfully in the bright, May sunshine, which flitted through the branches and fell in streaky, golden patches upon the long grass, moist and glittering with the early rain.

The voice of the little torrent was noisily clear, and far louder than usual, in consequence of its late accession. It dashed along its rocky bed, with a gurgling sound that filled the ear like music. A few birds twittered overhead, rejoicing alike in the sunshine and the balmy morning air. Gleaming brownly above the brow of the hill, through the trees, was the roof and quaint gables of the homestead. Slow, purple smoke curled gracefully from the chimney, melting gradually into space as it rose. A crowd of old recollections revived as Rachel gazed. She flung herself in an abandonment of grief on the wet grass. As she lay there, a new and charming landscape dazzled her eyes. Under the overhanging boughs, some of them dipping daintily into the brook itself, she saw the whole winding bed of the stream, as it coursed outward to

the sea, fringed here and there with tufts of blue spring violets. She even beheld the red sand of the shore, and the light, frothy line left upon it by the receding and advancing billows.

She forgot her grief—her journey—all—everything, in the loveliness of that sweet rural scene. She scarcely knew how rapidly time passed, and she was still lying there looking intently along the brook's rocky course, almost lost in a tranquil reverie, when a voice abruptly exclaimed from above :

“ Well, if that don't beat all !”

Glancing upward, Rachel saw her aunt Alice standing on the edge of the hill, and regarding her with an astonished and by no means pleased visage. She rose, somewhat ashamed, and smoothed her rumpled dress.

“ Breakfast is ready,” said her aunt, with ominous brevity, and turned to go back to the house ; while Rachel, discomfited at discovery, rather ruefully crossed the prostrate tree, regained the bank, and toiled up the well-worn path. As she passed the spring, where many a time she had pityingly driven thirsty Brindle

when she had seen her panting in the heat of summer noons, impulsively she dipped her hand in the clear, cool water, and drank. On hearing her aunt's voice calling from the roadside, she hurried onward. Old Alice Hawthorne was awaiting her in none of the best of humors, and, as her niece emerged from the path, she beckoned her impatiently to quicken her steps.

"Child," she said gravely, as Rachel stood beside her, "child, the spirit may be willing, but the flesh is weak. Does thee know that?"

"Yes, aunt," Rachel answered, wondering what was to follow.

"I don't like preaching, but thee must remember while away, that the devil finds plenty of work for idle haps to do; therefore keep thine busy. Thee is young—"

"Every day remedies that fault," Rachel said, smiling.

"And foolish," Alice proceeded, as though no one had spoken. "Give up thy dreaming on the grass, and if thee would keep Satan at bay, work! Work in the morning, work in

the noon, work at night, and," she added, moving away, "if thee must dream, dream of work!" The very border of her prim Quaker cap trembled with the energy of her words.

The two crossed the road together and entered the house, on the threshold of which they were met by Janet. At the door stood Mrs. Olio's little carriage, and, in front of it, now and then slyly cropping a mouthful of the freshly-budding hedge, was old Breezy.

"Is Robert to drive me?" asked Rachel, with a strange sinking of the heart.

"Yes," replied her aunt Janet, turning away and brushing her hand quickly across her eyes. "Come in to breakfast, Rachel."

The meal passed in almost total silence. It was quickly over. Then Rachel went to the kitchen to shake hands with old Dinah, who sobbed outright as she looked at the simple keepsake remaining in her own.

"God bless you, Miss Rachel," she cried, "and make you as good a lady as my poor dead missus."

At this Rachel's powers of restraint broke down completely, and, as the carriage moved

slowly from the door of the farm-house, for the first time she realized that she was homeless. She had been taught that tears were weak and childish things, from her very birth. The natural stoicism of her mother's disposition was always antagonistic to them, and she had endeavored to form her child's character, in this respect, upon her own. Yet Rachel had not the noble elements of womanhood, the grand, severe virtues that belonged to her mother, although possessed of strength of character; and, when she leaned back in the carriage and attempted to conquer her emotion, it was only with great effort that she succeeded.

The road, at first, wound through flat, lonely meadows, dotted at rare intervals with browsing cattle, but, after crossing the bridge that separated the outskirts of Maplehurst from those of Clarkstown, the next village, the face of the country grew less solemnly desolate. Fragments of forest land, rich, undulating pastures, and, finally, occasional gardens and white cottages gladdened the eyes. The young girl had never been so far from home before, and unconsciously she forgot her grief in the pleas-

ure afforded by new and varied landscapes. Fields of newly-sprouted corn waved gently in the breeze, the vivid green contrasting pleasantly here and there with patches of red, freshly-plowed land ; orchards, white with blossoms, sent wafts of delicious perfume through the carriage ; indeed, the whole atmosphere was heavy with the fragrance of spring vegetation.

While descending the steep and rough hill that overlooks and leads into Clarkstown, an exclamation of delight escaped Rachel at the grand prospect the elevation commanded. At that height the effect of all undulation was lost—hills and valleys lay far beneath like one vast plain, bathed in the clear goldenness of the morning sunshine. Farm-houses enlivened the edges of the winding roads, and half-hidden as they were by groups of blossom-covered fruit-trees, they lent variety to the long reaches of cultivated land. All things wore the green freshness of the new year ; on every hillside were glad prophecies of the plenty and glory of the expected harvest.

It was now nearly noon.

Lyster, the place of Rachel Olio's destina-

tion, was distant from Clarkstown some ten or twelve miles. It had been arranged by her aunts that she was to make this part of the journey by stage-coach; consequently, at Clarkstown, Robert saw her safely in a lumbering conveyance which was dignified by that title, requested the driver to leave his new passenger at the door of St. Mary's Lodge, and took leave of his young mistress. It was a rickety, ill-conditioned vehicle, and, as Rachel looked deplorably through the mud-bespattered windows after Breezy and the retreating carriage, she felt more desolate than ever. Her traveling-companions were two gentlemen, who paused in an energetic conversation as she entered, and a wan, delicately-formed and poorly-clad woman, with a little girl, apparently her daughter.

The moment Rachel's eyes fell upon this child, she felt that strange, inexplicable sensation of which she had often heard, but had never experienced before, of an irresistible and natural sympathy. She was impressed with the existence of some hidden link that was yet to bind that child and her together. The longer she

gazed on that fair spiritual countenance, the more she believed that the little girl was in some way connected with her own destiny, and she with hers. So positive was Rachel of the truth of this presentiment, that she at once received it as a certainty, mysterious and cloudy, but still a certainty. Every movement the little creature made, she watched with a close attention that was fast verging on fascination. Each unimportant word she uttered, held a wondrous charm. Once or twice their eyes met, and the half shy, half self-possessed smile the little stranger cast at Rachel, filled her with quiet but unaccountable pleasure. She learned her name, too, and for days afterwards was constantly repeating it, and striving to fathom why so suddenly the appellation had acquired the ring of rare, exquisite music.

The child was kneeling on the cushion of the seat, looking from the window, her white arms crossed on the sill, and her pretty face resting upon them. Presently her eyes drooped softly, slowly, like descending snow-flakes, and she slept.

“Zillah!” said her mother, reprov-
ingly

touching her shoulder ; and, as she awoke with a start, Rachel called the name over and over, wondering in what lay its new-found beauty, for she had never thought it pretty before.


She withdrew into a corner, and endeavored to amuse herself by looking from the dusty windows. Clarkstown was a manufacturing village, and the dingy, smoky dwellings did not invite attention. She was glad when the scene changed again to green pasture-lands and orchards white with bloom, that she might have something to divert her eyes from the modest face of her little fellow-traveler.

Towards three the coach entered Lyster, and, shortly after, the driver stopped before the gateway of a large stone building that was almost hidden from the road by a clump of maple-trees. Turning to Rachel, he said with a grin :

“ Here you be, miss.”

She thanked him, and paid her fare, rejoiced to find herself at her journey's end.

“ I say, miss, be you the new teacher ? ” the man inquired, as he deposited her trunk on the steps of the entrance.



“Yes; why do you inquire?”

“Oh, nothing; only I hope you’ll have a good time of it,” and, chuckling, he remounted and drove off, leaving the young teacher standing on the door-step, meditating his significant words. A break in the trees revealed a handkerchief fluttering from the receding coach-window, at which she had left little Zillah kneeling. Waving her own in return, she rang the bell. On being admitted, she was shown into a side-apartment to await the pleasure of Mrs. Helen Griscomb, the principal and proprietress of St. Mary’s Lodge, a lady somewhat celebrated for her literary tastes and successes with the reading public. It was a small and strangely-furnished reception-room. The carpet was in scarlet and white—the curtains in scarlet and white—and the brocatelle sofas and chairs in scarlet and white. A marble table stood in the centre of the floor—and on this rested a polished yellow skull, and a book upon modern phrenology. This was all the apartment contained—so, at least, Rachel thought at first; but she discovered her mistake, when, uncoiling from a dusky corner, there advanced

towards her the small figure of a deformed boy of about sixteen years old.

He gave her an awkward nod, and sat down on one of the scarlet and white chairs. The twinkle of his small, bright eyes filled Rachel with nameless dread.

"Pleasant day," he remarked, nodding again. She assented.

"Windy?" he asked.

"No, it is quite still."

"Like you," he said, and this time with a whole series of nods, his eyes glittering brightly through their half-compressed lids. "Come far?"

"Only from Maplehurst; about twenty-seven or eight miles, I should think."

The deformed boy went to the window and looked out; presently he returned and drew his chair in front of her.

"So, you're the new teacher, eh?"

"Yes."

"You're not half big or burly enough. The last could beat you twice over in size."

"Why did she leave; do you know?"

"Now—now, you think I am going to blab,

do you? She went because she was ready to go, I suppose." He laughed loudly, and then added, with his usual nod, "and I guess it'll not be long before you are wishing to follow. I answered you, now answer me. Got any friends?"

"Yes, certainly."

"Why do you wear that black frock?"

"For my mother, who is dead."

"Long?"

"Only a few weeks."

"What friends have you?"

"Two aunts and a brother."

"Where is he—your brother?"

"At school."

"Is he to teach, too?"

"No, he is to go to college by-and-by, and then become a lawyer."

"Oh!" he ejaculated, with a prolonged breath. Rachel thought her catechism ended, but she was mistaken.

"How old is this brother?" the deformed boy inquired.

"About your age, I should think."

"Phew! and while he plays, you, not much

older, have to work. Who pays for all this grand schooling."

"You have no right to ask, but I will tell you. The rent of my mother's farm. It cannot support us both, and it is best he should be well educated. I am thankful to do anything to help."

"Pooh!" he said disdainfully. "How old are you?"

Human patience could stand no more. "I do not think I shall inform you," Rachel replied coolly.

He opened his little bright eyes to their full extent, gave three or four furious nods and whistled.

"Well, you're tip-top! I like that, now. Do you know who I am?"

She said she did not, and did not care to know.

"Well, you can't help hearing, if I choose to tell you. I am Mr. William Henry Griscomb"—with particular emphasis on the "Mr."

Rachel was mute.

"What do you say to that?"

"Nothing."

"You are not as still as I thought you. I'd like to see you when you are mad."

"Should you? I am sorry I cannot gratify you on the spot."

"Hear her," he chuckled, "hear this little pale-faced thing! Oh, they're a match. How they will bite and snap and struggle! They're a match, ha, ha, ha!" The room echoed with his shrill laughter, as the door, painted in scarlet and white panels, swung slowly on its hinges, and a finely-formed woman, dressed in the same colors, entered. She was handsome, and becomingly attired. The red and white of her robe accorded well with her clear, almost radiant, complexion, and soft brown eyes. Her hair was dark, and drawn entirely from her brow, forming a simple but luxuriant knot on the back of the head. Her face was a full one, and, but for a singular expression around the thin lips, would have impressed the young governess most favorably. She introduced herself, with careless self-possession, as Mrs. Griscomb, and welcomed Rachel very kindly to St. Mary's Lodge.

"Dinner is just over. my dear," she said

smilingly, "and the pupils are dismissed from school for the day. Have you dined? No? Well, we will see what we can do for you. Willie, love, just run and tell Hannah that Miss Olio is come and wishes dinner."

Master Willie rose to obey, favoring Rachel, behind his mother's back, with sundry mysterious nods and winks.

"I hope you may soon grow accustomed to the ways of St. Mary's," remarked Mrs. Griscomb when he had left the room. "Things *will* seem a little strange at first, you know. Your duties shall not be so numerous but that you shall have much time to yourself. My scholars, as you may perhaps notice, are generally intelligent and ladylike. It has been my study to form their manners on, on—on my own; I having repeatedly been honored with the appellation of the Female Chesterfield."

Mrs. Griscomb flourished a snowy handkerchief in her most graceful fashion, and looked at the new governess for the effect of her rhetoric; but the governess neither spoke nor yet smiled responsively—her eyes were bent upon the ground, and perhaps as much for policy's sake

as from weariness. The pause that followed was broken somewhat abruptly by the sound of voices as if in altercation in the hall, and Willie entered in high glee, followed by a large, red-armed serving-woman.

"Shure, and it's not I that'll get another dinner *this* day," she said, addressing herself to Mrs. Griscomb; "servants is flesh and blood as thrue as ladies. Here I've been at the wash-tub the hull o' the mornin'—a bilin' the dinner the noon, and now ye goes and axes for *another*! I'll not stir one fut for it!"

She slammed the door and disappeared before her mistress could utter a word. William Henry laughed.

"Be still, you ungrateful boy," said his mother sharply; then addressing herself to Rachel, blandly as before—"Hannah is an old and tried retainer, Miss Olio; you must excuse her for my sake. Remove your bonnet, and I will, myself, get you something by way of lunch."

Rachel complied, and she led the way to the school dining-room, a vast apartment, the whole length of which was occupied by a table covered

with a cloth as spotless as snow. Mrs. Griscomb unlocked a side-board and placed some biscuits and cold meats at one end of the table, honoring the governess with her presence and conversation while she dined. Rachel was faint with long and unusual fasting, but the various events of the day had deprived her of all appetite. A glass of water and a single biscuit composed her simple repast, which, consequently, was soon concluded. Then she ventured to ask if she might be shown to her chamber, pleading the excessive fatigue produced by her journey.

“To your chamber,” suavely echoed Mrs. Griscomb—“Oh, certainly; I hope, however, you do not expect to tenant one *alone*. I have frequently noticed that such habits of isolation aid in the formation of a melancholy disposition. Solitude is known to have an unhealthy effect on the mind, Miss Olio. My former assistant found it wiser, as well as more agreeable, to room with one or two of the pupils. For your own good, I would suggest a similar arrangement.”

The young creature did not raise her eyes.

Perhaps the calm sorrow which her face expressed became a trifle more statue-like, but that was all. Most decidedly she found it "wiser" to acquiesce. She was too weary to care much what her destined dormitory might prove to be, and, taking her hat and shawl from the chair where she had laid them on entering St. Mary's Lodge one hour previously, she followed Mrs. Griscomb up three long flights of stairs. At a door fronting the landing-place of the last, her conductress rapped slightly, and entered without waiting for a response from within. It was a cheerful sleeping-room; the afternoon sun streamed brightly through the windows on the figures of two or three young girls, who were flitting hither and thither in the midst of toilet making. Delicately-tinted dresses lay spread on the several beds, and articles of school-girl ornament were scattered in graceful confusion everywhere around.

Mechanically Rachel sank upon a chair at the foot of the bed Mrs. Griscomb designated as thereafter to be her own; she saw not then the comfortless and scanty furniture, so different from the luxury below; she felt not the

sting of the half sneers, and the rude mockery of the three occupants of the room, and, although her eyes wearily sought the floor, I am quite sure it was not to contemplate the nakedness of the pine-boards.

Ah, hard, and cold, and gray, was the new life upon which she had entered!

She was aroused by the sound of the tea-bell. Her trunk was brought up, and, somewhat refreshed by an hour or two of comparative repose, she made a trifling change in her dress, and descended to the dining-room, at the door of which, thronged by a noisy, laughing group of girls, she encountered Mrs. Griscomb herself, who duly installed her in her future position at one end of the table, *vis-à-vis* to her own, and in most uncomfortable proximity to her son, to whom Rachel had taken an unaccountable distaste, notwithstanding she observed he was very popular with the pupils. She felt utterly bewildered as she glanced down the table during the meal, and realized her position as a teacher to these young creatures, some of them apparently very near her own age.

The food was plain, but well prepared and

abundant; a cup of fragrant tea operated like magic upon Rachel's tired head and exhausted frame.

The meal over, she noticed a singular custom that prevailed in the establishment. While the dishes, cloth, and fragments were removed by the servants, the pupils retained their seats, until, at a sign from the principal, four of the larger girls arose, took each an armful of books from a side stand, and distributed them among their respective owners. Lamps were then placed at proper intervals on the table, and, without the slight relaxation necessary after eating, study-hours began, over which period, Mrs. Griscomb smilingly informed Rachel, it was in future to be her duty to preside; "but," added she, "for this evening you are free to employ your time as you choose."

The cold scrutiny of forty pairs of eyes somewhat embarrassing her, Rachel availed herself of the privilege at once, and withdrew to the little room on the opposite side of the hall, where she had that day had her first and memorable interview with her principal.

A silver lamp, pendant from the ceiling by a

chain of the same metal, was now burning brightly over the marble table that held the skull; she drew up a chair and was soon lost in its accompanying treatise on Phrenology, the only book the room contained. She had been reading a long while, when she was interrupted by the entrance of a gentleman, who quietly seated himself at the table, drew a newspaper from his pocket, and began its perusal with the composure of one entirely accustomed to the routine of the place. She had not dared to look at him closely when he entered, but she now ventured to cast a stray, furtive glance or two over her book. The new-comer was not young, but bore with him a singular air of youth, and of an aristocratic independence that defied while it piqued curiosity. At the first hurried view, Rachel perceived two fine gray eyes, a prominent Roman nose, and a profusion of light bushy hair. The mouth indicated, to an extraordinary degree, inflexibility and sternness of character; looking a second time, there was visible a bitter and unmistakably misanthropic curl at its corners, which left a very disagreeable impression on the beholder. The whole

face was strongly significant of intellect, so much so that the expression had reached that point where it degenerates into sadness.

A want of expansion of chest, stamped him at once as a clergyman. Rachel was sure of it! And well she might be, for now-a-days a well chested minister is a rarity seldom to be met. And why? Is a good, healthy physical development unpastorlike? Heaven forbid! Do modern sermons show so colossal an amount of learning, classical, ancient, and rhetorical, as to compensate for the universal decay of strength? Alas, what learning can!

Very soon Mrs. Griscomb entered.

"You are early, to-night," she said, coldly observing the new-comer, and without any of the usual forms of greeting.

"Yes," he answered carelessly, glancing towards her, and immediately resuming his reading. Raising his eyes again, he said, as though he had forgotten something

"Will you introduce me to your new teacher, Mrs. Griscomb?"

"Certainly; excuse my negligence. Mr. Godwin, Miss Olio."

They exchanged bows.

"How did you know I was the new teacher?" rose at once to Rachel's lips; for the considerate kindness of this Mr. Godwin's manner placed her at once at ease. Mrs. Griscomb left the room.

"How? oh, I read it in your face, and you see it told the truth—as it should," he added smiling.

"I have never taught—I am sorry to possess the established governess lineaments."

"You need not be," he said; "for generally they express patience, resignation, and gentleness—three beautiful things."

"Say, rather," said Rachel, quickly, "stolidity, indifference, and hopelessness, which are not beautiful."

"Your view of the picture is on the dark side. I acknowledge, however, that the life is a wearing one."

"And a wearisome one," she said persistently.

"Sometimes, but not necessarily so. *I* am a teacher."

"Then you do not find it wearisome?"

"Well, on the whole, no; *cela depend*," and

he returned to his reading, seemingly for the purpose of putting an end to the conversation. Rachel took the hint and resumed her own, although she found it difficult to reawaken her interest. Presently she became conscious that Mr. Godwin was examining her with critical severity. She looked up from her Fowler, and involuntarily smiled.

"I knew it!" he said calmly, continuing his observation, which was not marked by the least impertinence.

"Knew what, Mr. Godwin?"

"That you are not indifferent to the chances and changes of mortality."

"Nor am I. I bless God that I am not," she said gravely.

"I have been looking at you for the last few moments, and I read hopefulness and ambition in your countenance."

"Ambition," Rachel repeated doubtfully; "I think you are mistaken."

"Impossible; I am never mistaken. You should wear your hair banded lower on your forehead to hide those formidable organs of construction, if you do not care for the reputa-

tion. Human beings can scarcely carry fronts like yours, without possessing something of an ambitious intellect. Do you like or dislike the idea of ambition in woman?"

"Dislike it," was the warm answer. "Her sphere has naught to do with fame or laurels. Yet," she added, laughingly, "do not think I intend to hide my light under a bushel, and, as you advise, wear my hair lower on my forehead. Whatever brain-wealth God gave me, I shall not strive to conceal."

"I do not and did not advise you, I—"

The scarlet-paneled door again opened, to admit Mrs. Griscomb.

Mr. Godwin coolly proceeded:

"That arrangement of the hair is becoming only to full faces like Mrs. Griscomb's; the effect in such cases is decidedly classic. Oval features, like your own, are best suited by less severity of style."

Rachel detected the irony—the implication of his words, and wondered at his daring, altogether losing sight of his incivility to herself in her great astonishment.

"Miss Olio," said Mrs. Griscomb, pausing,

door in hand, her voice slightly, very slightly toned by asperity, "it is, perhaps, right to inform you, at once, of my rules and regulations; no one enters here without express permission from myself."

Rachel rose immediately.

"In future you will pass your evenings with the pupils, superintending their studies. Mr. Godwin, the young ladies await you."

Haughtily motioning Rachel to follow, she crossed the hall to the dining-room, and resumed her seat at the table; as there seemed nothing better to be done, Rachel followed her example. The four monitors then collected the books, order and silence prevailing among the forty scholars. Mr. Godwin took up his position at a side-table, and appeared to await some signal from Mrs. Griscomb, which, when the monitors had finished their task, she gave by turning towards him and slightly inclining her handsome head.

A volume lay open before him, and he commenced reading in a cold, careless way that presented the idea of his thoughts being far removed from the words his lips uttered. Grad-

ually, however, he warmed to animation, until so expressive, so painfully real was the recitation, that more than one listener trembled at the awfulness of the picture it brought. It was that part of the book of Daniel which describes the impious feast of Belshazzar, and the handwriting on the wall. Rachel had never heard the human voice give such life to that or any other portion of Holy Writ. The scene came before her like a highly-wrought painting; not a color or a shadow was wanting—the feasting, the rioting, the golden vessels, the fine raiment, and the pale fingers of the ghostly hand, were all there in intensest reality.

Mr. Godwin's voice had a metallic ring that was both highly musical and very effective as regarded delivery. He seemed to modulate it without effort or premeditation.

The whole school knelt, while the same sonorous voice repeated a brief thanksgiving prayer, after which came dismissal for the night.

CHAPTER IV.

IT was a fearful, wild dream. The dews of terror started to the girl's forehead, yet, notwithstanding she exerted her very life to cry aloud, her voice died away in low, husky whispers.

Something clutched her sleeve—she turned to look—good heaven, it was the long white fingers of Belshazzar's ghostly visitant! Mist enveloped the snowy, spiritual wrist, mist hid all but the pale, unearthly fingers! With a cry of terror, Rachel started suddenly up, rubbing her bewildered eyes, and staring very intently at a shaggy, elfish apparition at her bedside. It was a little girl, some six or eight years old, still in her night-clothes, her unkempt hair straggling over a sleepy and unwashed face.

"Please, ma'am," she said, ceasing tugging at the sleeve, as she perceived Rachel to be broad awake, "please, ma'am, you're to dress me."

"Dress you?" Rachel repeated in surprise.

"Yes, ma'am."

"Who sent you to ask me, my little girl?"

"Mrs. Griscomb, ma'am. She said I was to go wake the new governess and tell her to dress us."

"Us?"

"The juniors, ma'am; there's only seven of us."

"Only seven!" the governess repeated in dismay; "is there no one else to do this for you, my dear?"

"No—Miss Porter always did, but she's gone now."

"And who is Miss Porter?"

"The other teacher—the old one, ma'am."

With a deep sigh the new one arose.

"Where is the juniors' room?"

"In the second story, the third door from the stairs."

"Very well, I will be down directly." The child withdrew; and, casting one lingering look of regret at her comfortable couch, Rachel began to dress. The occupants of the three other beds were still slumbering; she made her toilet

as speedily and noiselessly as possible, and went to lend her aid to the unfortunate juniors.

For almost an hour thereafter she was busied with rendering "only" seven little faces presentable, arranging seven little heads of hair, and robing seven little bodies. A weary, weary hour it was, and when she had tied the last apron-string, and could feel herself free again, she donned her bonnet, determining on a hasty walk in the school-grounds, which she had remarked the day before to be extensive and inviting in appearance. This odd nursery duty struck her as something unusual, and she mentally resolved to rebel against it for the future.

The morning was slightly foggy, but bore fine promise of a clear noon. It was cool, yet balmy and pleasant. The numerous fir-trees throughout the garden emitted a spicy odor that was both agreeable and invigorating. The air was strongly impregnated with it, and it affected the young girl's spirits like actual stimulus. She forgot her weariness, and ran gayly down an avenue, formed by these trees and a tall lilac hedge just bursting into bloom, towards a rustic observatory at its extremity.

Involuntarily the thought crossed her mind, how had her life changed since that day one twelvemonth before? Then she was a careless, unformed girl, almost a child in years, certainly a child in heart. Now, alas! too well she knew herself to have become a woman through her experiences of life and sorrow, two words which, with many, are synonymous. Likewise was she a laborer for her daily bread. She did not spurn the idea of work, for a sphere of noble action had never been uninviting; she rejoiced in the independence thus bestowed on her movements (what woman has not had, at some time of her life, a latent longing for independent liberty?), but she also dreaded veritable drudgery, and in the faint glimpse she had had of the routine of her new existence lurked a prophecy of drudgery of the most hopeless and abject character. A regretful and bitter sigh came welling to her lips as she thought of the old, careless days at the Maplehurst farm, when she and Fred played at hide-and-seek in the hay, and never knew a care; but, in a sudden mood of resolute calmness, she quelled it.

“I will not,” she said, mentally, “begin my

pilgrimage with weak murmurs against fate. I will take life as it comes—as God sends it—brightening it, if I can, or, if that is not to be, I can endure.”

The whole garden grew magically greener as she made this resolve, even the echo of her feet along the gravel path seemed music—Rachel Olio knew she had touched upon the true secret of happiness.

Reaching the observatory, she mounted the steps to the little tower, to take a hasty glimpse of the country around her future home. What was her surprise, on nearing the head of the steps, to find the room already occupied by William Griscomb, who, bending over a small table, appeared to be busy sketching—drawing materials, paper, pencils, crayons being scattered before him. So intent was he on his employment that Rachel thought her abrupt apparition unnoticed. She was cautiously descending, glad of the escape, when, in no very inviting tone, he called out,

“You! come back here.”

“I may be wanted at the Lodge. It is time I should return,” was the answer that reached him

from the foot of the stairs. The young girl was hastening onward, when he said, rather more pleasantly:

“I want you to look at a sketch of the school. Really, now, I should like your opinion.”

Seeing that Rachel hesitated still, the boy caught up a graceful handful of early violets from the table, and leaned nodding over the balustrade, holding them towards her as though to offer their acceptance.

“Will you come now?”

“Yes.”

It was too great a temptation; she was unable to resist the dewy beauty of those little, home-reminding flowers. No sooner had she entered the tower, however, than coolly locking the door to prevent her egress, and replacing the flowers on the table, he chuckled out:

“Ah, ha, I thought they would bring you! And now what have you got to say for yourself?”

“Nothing, excepting that you must show me your drawing quickly; for your mother will be vexed at my absence from prayers. She told me last night they were at seven.”

"What if they are? There is a good half-hour to spare before seven o'clock, and now I have you I mean to keep you."

He threw down his crayons, laid himself back in his chair, and regarded his visitor from head to foot. She saw that it was worse than useless to endeavor to cope with an obstinate, eccentric creature like this; only by her new creed of patience could she hope to succeed with him.

"Well," he said, never once removing his eyes, "how do you like your new place, miss—miss—I forget your name?"

"Very well," she said, trying to return his fixed gaze with one equally steady.

"That's a lie."

"You must not speak so to me," said Rachel, her eyes flashing indignantly; "I will not bear it from you. If you have anything to tell me, say it as you should, and I will hear you, but—however, I do not care. When you use language like that, you injure yourself far more than me."

The lad smiled scornfully.

"That's all very fine, but you know it's so."

“What is so?”

“What I just said.”

“That I do not like St. Mary’s Lodge?”

“Yes.”

“You are mistaken; I do like it very much indeed. This is a lovely part of the country, and the Lodge itself is a fine, picturesque building.—Let me see how you make it appear on paper.”

He slid his drawing from under her hand.

“The country is pleasant enough, and so is the Lodge, for that matter; but that is not what I mean, nor you either. It’s the people I spoke of, and you know it, too, so don’t deceive either yourself or me. Deception is as indecent a thing, in my opinion, as bad language.”

Confused with the manner in which he fastened her down to the evaded question, alighting on the prevarication like a hawk on a young chicken, she tried to draw him from the subject by suddenly holding out her hand for the sketch.

“Come, let me see the drawing—I am in haste.”

“Presently, not yet. Sit down.”

Rachel thought it best to comply.

“You are a spicy little piece, and I rather like you. You haven’t treated me very well, either to-day or yesterday, but, out of the pure kindness of my heart, I think I’ll tell you a thing or two that may help to get you in the good graces of the old lady. I say ‘get you in,’ because, although you may have been in at first, you are not now. Can you tell why?”

“I do not know what you are talking of, and I am inclined to imagine you do not yourself. Yes, you have shaded that gable end very well, but do you not think this cloud to the right should be a trifle lighter, and more broken at the edges?”

With a vexatious movement he turned the sketch face downward on the table.

“Will you listen to me, or will you not?”

“I will, certainly.”

“Very well, then. Take your eyes off those violets, and look at me. I am three times as well worth staring at, I can tell you. The other governess was a strong, able-bodied woman, twice your size and age, but not half as competent to take care of herself, I fancy, as

you, poor and scraggy as you are. You have a dash of the devil about you, that will help you along amazingly in resenting anything like imposition. The other was a weak-minded thing, who hardly knew if her soul was her own, and so it didn't *stay* her own very long. You need not open your eyes in that way; the hooped gentleman, I just mentioned, did not run away with it. I believe I told you once before, Miss ——."

"Olio," said Rachel, opportunely.

"Don't interrupt. I told you once before that I do not object to you, and so, if such a thing is possible in an establishment under my lady-mother's charge, I should like to keep you out of trouble. I rather guess you have had your share of that already—therefore listen: In the first place, avoid Richard Godwin as you would the very evil one. The old lady is steering on that track herself; give her a clear course, don't interfere and you'll be a thousand times better off than if you did." He ended with a short, keen laugh.

"Give me the key," said Rachel, in that unnaturally calm tone that forebodes passion, flush-

ing scarlet in the endeavor to keep down her displeasure.

"Going?" he asked, without stirring hand or foot. "Really, now, that's too bad. Do stay a little longer. You cannot imagine how lonely I feel out here o' mornings, or you would have compassion, and not deprive me of your company so soon."

"Give me the key, this instant," she said, trembling with a rising anger that was fast passing the limits of control.

"Well, now, that is prime!" William Henry Griscomb exclaimed, capering around the room, apparently in an ecstasy of delight. "I've got my wish—she's wrathful and a lovely front view I have of her, too! I hardly expected to be gratified so soon." He paused in his antics, and made a deep, burlesque bow. "Please accept, charming Mademoiselle Olio, the distinguished marks of my gratitude for your kindness in obliging me so speedily. I shall feel uneasy until I can repay you in your own coin."

He took up his pencils, deliberately placed paper before him, and began a hasty likeness

of poor Rachel's irritated face. A few sketchy dashes completed it, and he held it promptly up to view, with a broad grin upon his queer countenance, and his usual nod of satisfaction.

Despite her vexation, and her desire to get away, Rachel could not but laugh outright at the droll cleverness of the caricature.

"Good, isn't it?" he asked. "I've hit you off to a T. Now that you know what you look like, when in a passion, take my advice, and never try your hand at a second edition. It is enough to frighten anybody into fits to see you. If I were not a person of extraordinary nerves, I should have fainted on the spot. I'll be generous, and present it to you; hang it in your room, and look at it every morning, as a reminder."

"Mr. Griscomb, if you do not release me immediately—"

"Oh, don't threaten, for mercy's sake, don't threaten. Put on your most bewitching smile, and ask in your most agreeable manner, and I vow I shall have to yield, whether I choose or not! Come, it is worth the trial."

"I shall do nothing of the kind; I cannot

feign amiability, when I am tormented in this way."

"Oh, very well—as you please. Sit down, then, and take it easy; for you and I may have to pass the morning together—pleasantly, no doubt!"

He resumed his drawing. Rachel was ready to weep, between anger and anxiety to return to the Lodge; but she resolved to endure her martyrdom with every external show of indifference, hoping by such means to effect her ultimate escape. A book—Geraldine Endsor Jewsbury's "Zoe"—lay on the table. She took it up, and endeavored to read. She had succeeded in riveting her attention on one of the many charming passages with which that work abounds, when a singular sound, half snort, half gasp, made her glance rapidly from the book to her companion. That one glance revealed a frightful sight. William Griscomb's head was fallen forward on his broad, ill-shapen chest, and his face, where it was visible under his shaggy hair, was of a deep, livid purple. The pencil had dropped from his fingers, and a white frothy substance oozed from his lips, and

scattered over the table. His breath came hard and quick, as though tossed from him by mortal agony.

Rachel sprang from her seat and tried to raise his head, but, with heavy, unconscious powerlessness, it returned to its unnatural position. She called him frantically—she shouted his name in his ear, and received no answer but the same dreadful gasp of senselessness.

Almost paralyzed, she stood trying to calm herself sufficiently to think what she must do. Seldom had she endured such extreme pain as that occasioned by the effort to collect her thoughts. Her brain was on fire; she could not bring her ideas into subjection. Presently, with nervous, strong exertion, she cast off the singular sensation, and flew to the door for the purpose of procuring immediate assistance. It was locked. She shook it, she shrieked aloud, and listened for the reply that never came. She remembered seeing the poor lad take the key, but where he had put it she could not now tell. In bewildered haste she scattered about the papers on the table, but the key was not among them; she searched on the floor, and it

was not there. Meanwhile, her companion had slipped from his chair, and at that moment writhed on the ground in convulsive spasms that came and went with fearful precision. Bending over him, Rachel placed one hand on the livid forehead, while, with the other, she penetrated the pockets of his garments, emptying their contents hastily out. Alas, the key was not to be discovered! A second and a third time she examined them, and with the same success. Oh, what could she, what must she do, prisoners as they both were by the poor deformed's own perversity? Again to call for help was useless; the observatory was too far removed from the Lodge for her voice to be heard. She was, however, on the point of making the attempt, in the hope, if she again failed, to attract attention at the school, that some one in the adjacent gardens might hear her cries, when, to her great joy, she saw the end of the key protruding from the clenched, stiff hand of her late tormentor. Uttering an involuntary exclamation of grateful surprise, she knelt once more by the shuddering form of the prostrate boy, and endeavored

to take it from his grasp ; but his hand had the rigidity of a marble statue's. Concentrate all her waning strength as she would, she could not, for one instant, unbend those icy fingers from the precious key—they remained locked, cold, lifeless as ever.

“ Mr. Griscomb—William Henry,” she cried, “ for God's sake open your hand.”

No reply.

“ Loosen it—oh, loosen the key, I implore you !”

She might as well have spoken to walls of rock ; and she renewed her efforts to obtain it from him. It moved—it certainly yielded ! but no, the stony hand was firmer than before, and, with the force of the tightened clasp, the nails penetrated deeply into the smooth palm. Rachel sank back despairingly.

“ Miss Olio, open the door, quick, quick, open the door.”

She heard some one battering violently against the panels, and through the glass inclosure of the observatory she beheld Mr. Godwin standing on the platform at the head of the stairs.

“ Oh, I cannot, I cannot—it is locked.”

“ Undo it then ! For the sake of mercy don’t hesitate. Every moment is of vital importance to that perishing boy.”

“ He has the key in his fingers, I cannot make him let it go.”

“ Stand out of the way, then,” he said hoarsely. With a few blows from his doubled hands the upper half of the door, which was of glass, was shattered to atoms, and, before Rachel recovered from her astonishment, Mr. Godwin had bounded through the opening, and was raising the lad in his arms.

“ Go to the house,” he said, “ and tell them. I will be there with the boy as soon as I can.”

As well as she was able she passed through the broken entrance, and sprang down the stairs.

“ Stop, Miss Olio, stop,” Mr. Godwin’s voice rang out, and Rachel returned immediately. She found him at the door, striving to burst the lock.

“ Be tender with the poor mother. That is all.”

CHAPTER V.

THIS sudden illness occasioned a great change in the household of St. Mary's Lodge.

With an utter forgetfulness of self, which those who knew her best would least have expected, Mrs. Griscomb watched day and night by the sick bed of her only child. Rest, comfort, sleep, all was sacrificed on the altar of maternal love ; there was nothing too great for the power of endurance with which she seemed to be endowed—no amount of fatigue abated her zeal, or revealed the slightest taint of insincerity in that great love for her poor, deformed boy, which was the redeeming point of her hard nature, rendered pitiless, perhaps, by the circumstances of her life. Mrs. Griscomb had appeared to Rachel unlike, in all respects, to other women. Everything she had done in the brief space of their acquaintance had been different from that which others would have done, and now her openly displayed affection for her

afflicted child likewise had an air of originality. It was neither tender, calm, nor patient, although both deep and all-suffering. It was a strong, passionate, vehement emotion, like that of an infuriated tigress for her wounded young. Never was greater contrast presented than that between this mother and son: she, a fair, beautiful woman; he, dwarfed, grotesque, misshapen.

As I have said, a great change fell upon the household of St. Mary's Lodge—an inward, purifying change with Mrs. Griscomb, an external one with her pupils. For the time, Rachel Olio became the acting head of the establishment. This authority could scarcely have fallen into worse hands, from the fact that the inexperienced young girl knew nothing of the regulated discipline of the school routine. She had the wisdom, however, to determine that a moment's hesitation in deliberate action would at once lessen whatever respect her forty pupils might entertain for her, therefore, she grasped the helm with a boldness which, if assumed, was at least a creditable counterfeit. As she had foreseen, everything lay in beginning well; by de-

grees she won the confidence of her various classes, and, perhaps, a trifle of love beside. Beyond the aid she received from the few occasional teachers of the establishment, counsel and help she had none, and all the assistance bestowed on her labors by Mrs. Griscomb was the mere effect of her presence, as she swept daily through the school, to and from the sick room of her son. Some weeks passed thus. Rachel's physical health was such as scarcely enabled her to bear the burden of onerous duties. Many a time she flung herself on her bed at night too fatigued to disrobe, or find in slumber the refreshment her exhausted frame required. She contrived, however, to better her condition somewhat by taking the earliest opportunity of informing Mrs. Griscomb that a nursery-maid was required in the "Junior" department, and thus rid herself of the tiresome tasks inflicted on her by the seven. Meantime, she heard nothing from home. Her two aunts had never written a letter in their lives, and circumstances were not sufficiently pressing to call forth their epistolary powers now, notwithstanding that Rachel longed for tidings from them,

as a famished prisoner longs for bread and liberty.

From Freeland Ogilvie, too, no line reached her either in kindness or anger, and this, more than all, gave Rachel great unhappiness. But labor, labor, labor gave her little time for solitary reflection on the subject. Her aunt Alice Hawthorne would have lost all apprehension of an attack from a certain evil gentleman, could she have known of her daily industry. Rachel had fancied that Mr. Ogilvie would immediately follow her to Lyster. Fully prepared as she was for a triumphant display of girlish tyranny, had he done so, this utter neglect wounded her the more. Sometimes she thought her ungenerous flight deserved such punishment, and then, perhaps, her next idea was of the perfect justice of that flight to herself as well as to him.

Day after day, and evening after evening went by with their usual round of studies, and William Henry Griscomb was still dangerously ill. Rachel was becoming very weary of the monotony of her existence, when, unexpectedly, an incident occurred which gave her such food

for thought and conjecture, that for twenty-four hours she actually forgot to be miserable.

It was study hours. Around the long table sat the forty pupils busy with charts and books. The room was filled with light and shadow from the many lamps, whose flames vibrated in the soft breeze from the open windows. Rachel had taken from the well-filled case, at one extremity of the room, a fantastic, religious novel, and was wondering over the strained morality that obtruded on every page, almost to the insult of the reader's understanding, when, earlier than his wont, Mr. Godwin entered; every evening he visited the Lodge, to close the day with prayer, and a chapter from the Book of Life. He held by the hand a child, who, it needed not a second glance to inform Rachel, was Zillah, her little traveling companion. Zillah, the same, and yet changed, too. She would have known her uncommon and unchild-like face, however, among a thousand. Notwithstanding her extreme pallor and attenuation, she could not be mistaken. There was something about the little creature, then as before, that attracted Rachel greatly. Her face

was so expressively and sadly beautiful, despite a pair of very laughing, blue eyes, that a sensation of compassion drew the young teacher towards her. But it was not compassion alone. Long, disordered masses of soft, brown curls hung partly over her forehead and far down her shoulders, which were bare and very white. She held her bonnet in her hands and played with the strings, now and then casting furtive glances about the room from under the dark, curving lashes of her shy, averted eyes, from which an occasional tear rolled, glistening over her cheeks. She was not at all like a child. There was too painful a foretaste of the woman in the mournfulness hovering around the mouth, and in the general contour of the countenance. Her clothing, also, was inappropriate to her years, and very oddly arranged. Rachel half suspected she had been her own dressing-maid, for that day at least; and she repressed a smile, because she knew the child's precocious perceptions would detect both it and its cause, at the little frock worn reverse fashion, with the back fastened over the bosom, and the front turned behind. Around her neck was a woman's col-

lar, and a small handkerchief was pinned at her side in folds, the precision of which would not have done discredit to a Quakeress.

Mr. Godwin's manner, on this evening, was even more than usually erratic. Immediately on entering, he seated himself in an obscure corner of the room, and, placing the child upon his knee, abstractedly knit his brows in silence that no one dared to be the first to break—for there was not a living creature at the school, with the exception of Mrs. Griscomb herself, but stood in great awe of the Rev. Richard Godwin. Yet he was never unkind; perhaps he was one of those who carry to too great an extent the hauteur of good-breeding, mingling sternness and pride with that which should be characteristic of the perfection of nature.

At last, Mr. Godwin put aside his little companion, crossed the room, and, leaning over the back of Rachel's chair, said, with the eccentricity to which she was gradually becoming accustomed,

“Miss Olio, I have brought you a new Idea. Look at it and tell me what you think of its capacity to shoot. It's a queer Idea, but rather

original, I think. Give it room to expand, and you will have no trouble."

He did not smile—no judge could have been graver.

"Come here, Zillah," he said, holding out his hand to the child, who obeyed at once with a sweet, puzzled look on her innocent face. "Be kind to her," Mr. Godwin said with a touch of feeling in his voice; "for she is motherless!"

"I am not!" the little creature cried boldly, but, strangely enough, without so much as a glance at him; "my mother is a pretty woman, and I love her. I will go back to her to-morrow."

"Zillah," Mr. Godwin said gravely, "your mother is dead, as I told you. I have brought you here to live. You will try and be a good child, will you not?"

She answered by a flood of tears that awoke a chorus of sympathizing exclamations from forty mouths, the eyes to match having taken in the scene with large displays of irrepressible curiosity.

"She is not dead; my pretty, nice mamma;

take me home! oh, take me home!" burst convulsively from little Zillah.

Mr. Godwin stood regarding her with that peculiar, perplexed expression with which men usually look upon tears.

"Home! poor child, you never had any!"

He outspread his arms, she flung herself in the proffered embrace, sobbing brokenly as he stroked her long curls.

"Then she is really to remain here?" Rachel said, inquiringly.

"Yes, I will send her trunk to-morrow."

"What is her name?"

"You have heard—Zillah."

The words, the tone, impressed Rachel like evasion.

"Zillah! surely, that is not all?" she persisted.

He looked tenderly upon the little girl as she lay weeping in his arms, and softly uttered,

"Zillah O'Brian."

A delicate shadowy smile appeared on the child's lips, as he pronounced the words.

"Mamma's name. too!" she exclaimed.

"Yes," he answered, abruptly, and he was again the self-possessed man of the world, as cold, as severe of aspect as before. Placing Zillah in a seat, he took his accustomed place, and began the service for the night. And when prayer was spoken, that little child knelt and clasped her hands with the rest, raising her large eyes wonderingly upward. Someway, Rachel's imagination was so excited, that she would not have been surprised to behold wings unfold from her white, nude shoulders, and see her poise herself for a flight heavenward.

Rachel sat in the dining-room long after prayers were over, and the scholars were dismissed. She sat in the dining-room with her religious novel before her, endeavoring to arrive at some conclusion respecting its merit—a pair of smiling child-eyes glimmering on every page. The book was a strange one. It repelled while it fascinated; as often as she was tempted to fling it aside, so often some striking, artistic wording enticed her to proceed. She was compelled to acknowledge that here and there a vein of pure gold glittered through the dross; perhaps the best proof of the charm of

the book's literary workmanship was the fact that she could not persuade herself to relinquish it for sleep, although her eyes drooped in leaden weariness.

The door opened slowly and noiselessly. She did not hear it, but she sat before it and looked up at the unexpected movement, starting in astonishment as she saw little Zillah O'Brian entering the room, clad in her white night-dress, her eyes closed, and her hands tightly folded over her breast. The draught from the open door nearly extinguished the lamps, and swept her long robe flutteringly about her small bare feet.

"Zillah!" she called: "Zillah!"

She did not seem to hear, but walked rapidly around the apartment, avoiding all articles of furniture as readily as if her shut eyelids did not obscure vision.

Rachel touched her arm, attempting to draw her towards her, but, with one brief, imperious gesture, the child flung the girl's hand from her, as though contact with it gave her the most exquisite misery. Her movements were altogether unconstrained, and, at times, grace-

ful. Her face had an impassible sternness, greatly at variance with its natural innocent loveliness; it had neither the color nor the expression of life, but reminded one of beautiful Art-features carved by the hand of a Master.

At last Zillah paused in her walk around the room, and stood silently before Rachel's chair. Turning her still unclosed eyes towards her, she said, with a form of expression far above her years, and much sadness of enunciation :

"God created this beautiful earth! And why? Was it that evil should enter it to destroy it forever? Was it to make it the abode of sin and sorrow? No, no!"

Her childish voice rang out here like a clarion.

"All things work together for good, and man, in the end, shall be saved. What seems a chaos of despair shall be wrought into everlasting happiness!"

She broke off abruptly, and, with wild, frantic gestures, made passes either side of her head; an action frequent in professed "Mediums" when entranced. It is believed among Spiritualists to possess the power of casting the

subject into a profounder trance, and, although perfectly involuntary, to prevent, likewise, the interruption of external and internal influences.

The child's breathing gradually became so loud and convulsive, that Rachel grew alarmed. It was late in the night, however, and she did not like to alarm the large household by calling for assistance: besides, William Griscomb's room was situated on the same floor, and she shrank from disturbing his feverish and unequal slumber, which, unrefreshing as it might have been to a person in vigorous health, was an invaluable aid to his ultimate recovery. Therefore she satisfied herself with her own exertions.

She attempted to take Zillah's fragile form in her arms, for the purpose of carrying her back to her room, and was much astonished to find herself repulsed with a strength and force far superior to her own. Scarcely without a struggle, the little creature set herself at liberty, the fixed gripe of her fingers leaving purple traces on Rachel's shoulder as she did so. No sooner was she released, than, clasping her hands

again on her breast, she said, in a totally different strain from her first utterance :

“Why do you persist in believing this little child to be a somnambulist? Are you afraid to put faith in the thought of departed souls revisiting the earth? She is no somnambulist, but a Spiritual Medium, and entranced. I am the spirit of her mother. It will not be long before she follows me to the spheres of the upper world; her young soul is already hesitating between heaven and earth. I entreat you to deal gently with her while she remains with you, and teach her that death is but a sweet sleep, from which all awaken to a life that progresses towards immortal perfection.”

Were not this an age of wonders, it might appear like insanity, to chronicle events as seemingly impossible as the one just related, and those equally singular that follow. As it is, there can be no hesitation as to the propriety of the record, let those believe or doubt who incline as they may to credence or distrust.

As Zillah ceased speaking, her hands fell listlessly at her side, and her lips quivered with

faint, tremulous motion. A few moments of deep silence passed. With a sigh of weariness, the child slowly opened her eyes, a soft radiance dawning on her face when she beheld her friend. It came, and was gone instantly, like a ray of light passing through darkness.

"Who brought me down here? My feet are cold, and I do not like it. I feel afraid; has any one been here?"

"No one but you and me; and now I will take you back," Rachel evasively replied, wrapping a shawl around her and lifting her in her arms. She shivered, and acquiesced silently. Rachel carried her up the long flight of stairs and laid her by her slumbering mate.

"Now, Zillah, will you kiss me good-night?"

It was some time before she answered; and with reverent awe, that was inexplicable to herself, Rachel stood waiting for a word from this weird child. At last she gave it.

"Oh, yes!"

A little arm passed over her neck as their lips met, and immediately she sank back on the pil-

low asleep, tears rolling quietly down her pale cheeks. Poor, homeless, motherless Zillah! Innocent of guile, suspicious of no evil, rest on! The delusion of the world is to remain to you, forever and forever, like a thing unknown. "He giveth His beloved sleep!"

CHAPTER VI.

THE next day was the Sabbath. Oh, the beauty of a Sabbath in the country! The serene, peaceful Sabbath, the time of rest, God-given to man for purification and prayer! In the city the day never seems so truly good, so infinitely holy, as in the country. The sweet sound of distant village bells, the sight of cattle, released from labor, browsing in contented herds in the quiet of green fields, the very chirp of the countless insects, and the innocent songs of the myriads of birds, all breathe of a Sabbath morality which, in great cities, is lost entirely. The noise of active life ceases, naught meets the ear but the lingering echo of those calm church bells, floating on the unadulterated, healthful air to the distant farm-houses. "God made the country, man the town;" it is not unnatural to suppose that a greater blessing rests with the divine work than with that of mere Art, however glorious.

Rachel had been detained from going to church, each week of her residence at St. Mary's, by violent storms ; but the morning after Zillah O'Brian was entered as a pupil at the Lodge, she was glad to find, from the slanting rays that fell through the window and blinded her eyes as she awoke, that a fine day was to be expected. The church was one mile distant, and thither the whole school was accustomed to walk when the weather permitted. Mrs. Griscomb could not leave her son, and, consequently, the responsibility of the proprieties of the occasion devolved on the governess, who was equally annoyed and amused to find herself setting out for church at the head of a long procession of scholars, particularly as each of them seemed bent on taking advantage of her inexperience as a duenna. One awkward girl was constantly treading on her predecessor's heels, to the no small detriment of the faultless *chaussure* provided for the occasion. Others made a point of shaking their handkerchiefs at every lad of their acquaintance who happened to pass. To remedy matters, Rachel took the greatest offender in this way, a girl named Lily Barton, under

her personal charge, and made her walk beside her, at the head of the school. For a time all went well ; but presently two gentlemen, who knew the mirthful Lily, bowed as they passed, and the fair culprit, of course, returned the salute. They had almost reached the church door, when a suppressed giggle from two or three of the pupils caused Rachel to turn to discover the cause of the commotion. Alas ! despite her vigilance, there was Lily's handkerchief flying over the shoulder furthest removed from herself, although the girl was at the same time demurely conversing with her teacher on the serenity of the day. A little behind walked the two identical gentlemen, each displaying an answering signal. Rachel tried to look grave as she bestowed the deserved rebuke, but met with only partial success.

It was a small, fantastically designed building, of an antique style of architecture, which would have puzzled the wisest to determine. Yet it was striking, artistic, and displayed decided and refreshing originality. Ivy and other vines crept in thick masses over the roughly-hewn stone walls, and darkened, with their close em-

brace, the low, arched windows. Internally everything was plain and simple, as all houses of true worship are, yet there was not wanting a certain air of quiet elegance. The pulpit was strongly indicative of classical simplicity in its form and few adornments ; opposite it, at the other extremity of the church, was a small veiled gallery, containing an organ, and accommodations for a choir of singers.

They were early. Rachel seated her pupils as quietly as possible, and settled herself mentally and externally to listen, for the first time, to a sermon from the Reverend Mr. Godwin. Having nothing to occupy her thoughts, naturally her attention was attracted to the entrance, one by one, of the villagers. Among them she saw a face which, as she beheld it then, haunted her for years. It was that of a man, in the prime of his life, handsome, well-bred, and intelligent, but so inexpressibly sad, so full of evident stagnation and despairing discontent, that she turned away in horror at the thought that anything made by God should dare to carry a countenance like that.

The services began with slow, sonorous

notes of prelude from the mellow-toned organ. Throughout the aisles of the little antique church, up to the very rafters, floated the rare, sobbing music, penetrating all hearts sensitive either to good or evil, with that delicate sorrow which Longfellow affirms

—“is not akin to pain.”

It faded as the burden changed from sadness to jubilant hope, the strain ending in sudden staccato chords of triumphant joy.

All eyes were then turned towards the pulpit, and all heads immediately bowed, as Mr. Godwin arose and uttered a brief and impressive prayer. Every word that he spoke came to Rachel with a most precious balm. His sermon, afterwards, did not touch her like that honest supplication for Divine Mercy. Undefined by the arts of rhetoric, it passed from his lips up to heaven as the sincerest language in which man could address and adore his Creator. By contrast, the cold brilliancy of the sermon lost effect.

There was no lack of eloquence or ministerial

learning in this exhortation ; and although, as they left the church, Rachel heard many speak of it with lively pleasure, she was sure that Mr. Godwin himself was dissatisfied with it. It was like thin, fitful sunlight veiling a lowering December sky. She perceived that there was something beneath all this glitter of words, which few present understood. Was it private grief? was it some hidden agony warring against unnatural restraint?

When he ceased, she felt merely the silence ; there was none of that strange sensation at the cessation of impassioned, nobly earnest delivery, which she often afterwards experienced.

“Certainly,” thought she, as she prepared to marshal her forces, “that man is either very heartless or very miserable.”

The congregation was pouring itself silently out, when, in the usual organ voluntary, came an abrupt but slight pause, followed by deep stillness. Immediately a human voice, a man’s full and rare voice, commenced that celebrated solo from Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy’s “Elijah”—“If with all your hearts.” Perfectly in time and tune, although the accompaniment

was so subdued as to be scarcely perceptible, and at times ceased altogether, the voice issued from the choir, bearing to world-weary listeners consolation and peace. It was not the noble music nor yet the nobler words, "If, with all your hearts ye truly seek me, ye shall truly find me;" it was the expression, gathered from the two by that fine voice, and united in one glorious whole, till the very atmosphere seemed to thrill with its melodious wealth. On the last note of the solo, as it faded magnificently into silence, the organist recommenced playing, proving, by the perfect unity of the two sounds, the successful intonation of the unknown vocalist. Many curious eyes were directed towards the closely-veiled gallery, but the dark blue curtains were tightly drawn, and the mystery remained mysterious. Some casual movement, however, momentarily displaced a portion of the floating screen, and revealed to Rachel a glimpse of the dark, handsome face she had seen entering the church at the beginning of the services; and it was no less dark, handsome or dissatisfied than when she beheld it then. "Can it be," she asked herself, "that that soulful singing,

and that morose, unhappy countenance belong to one and the same individual?"

They were compelled, on account of numbers, to wait until the church was nearly empty before attempting egress, and, meanwhile, Rachel was joined by Mr. Godwin, hat in hand.

"How did you like it?" he said abruptly, and eying her keenly.

"Never in my life have I heard anything like that prayer," was her evasive answer. She possessed, in an eminent degree, that rare quality in very young women of exquisite tact.

"But the sermon—my sermon?" he questioned, half impatiently. "I ask your opinion, because, at this moment, I desire it above all things else. Pray do not consider it worth while to prevaricate to save my feelings."

She looked at him much surprised, the warm blood mantling to her cheek, and her black eyes undecided whether to take fire or not. The effort to keep a guard upon herself was beautifully perceptible.

"I am, then, to tell you—that is—you ask for the truth as I conceive it," she stammered, coloring still more deeply.

“ Yes.”

“ Well, then, I did not like it at all!” and her displeasure seemed to be somewhat relieved by these words briskly spoken.

“ Why?” he asked, betraying no token of wounded pride.

“ It did not touch me,” she answered readily. “ It was like snow in the sunshine, blinding the eyes with glitter, but very cold and unsubstantial in its actual self.”

“ Frankly spoken. I honor you for saying this,” with an amused smile; “ and now will you tell me (if you can) why it was cold and unsubstantial?”

She saw he was not making a bitter jest of her; his broad brow was unruffled.

“ I think it was because it was insincere—you did not feel what you said.”

“ Bravo! therefore what I said was unworthy of myself—that follows, does it not—that is the moral of the story?”

“ Yes, sir.”

“ ‘ Yes, sir,’ ” he repeated, going off into a reverie. “ Well,” after a pause, “ you are a strange girl, Rachel Olio; but I think I under-

stand you. I thank you for your courage; few women would have dared to speak as you have. Praise be to my lucky stars that all my hearers have not the discrimination, the nice sense of right and wrong, and the unerring power of acute criticism with which you seem to be endowed. Assuredly, the next time I shall preach for your especial benefit. Wield your weapons of analysis as you will, you shall find me armored. I am on my guard against you—remember that. How did the music please? *That* certainly was worthy of approbation."

Rachel expressed the pleasure it had given her, and inquired who was the musician.

"I do not know," Mr. Godwin answered. "It was a great surprise. Some stranger, I was told, who is passing the day in the place." He turned away, his attention being called by one or two parishioners who desired to speak to him, but joined Rachel for a moment again, as, on the way to his own dwelling, he found her waiting for admittance to the Lodge, the forty pupils gathered in groups around the entrance.

"How is Zillah?" he asked. "I did not see her at church with the others."

"She complained of headache to-day—her health does not seem to be strong."

"Ah, that is nothing. Delicacy with her is constitutional. By-and-by you will see her 'flourishing like a pomegranate,' as poor Byron used to say of his Allegra."

"Who died early—did she not?"

"Yes," he replied, with sudden gloom.

Rachel fastened her eyes glitteringly upon him, and almost unconsciously repeated those four lines from Hood's "Bridge of Sighs."

"Who was her father?
Who was her mother?
Had she a sister?
Had she a brother?"

Possibly the allusion to Byron's Allegra may have conveyed the idea to her mind, but scarcely were the words uttered than she repented them. They had been so innocently spoken that she felt she was never less accountable for any deed she had perpetrated in her life. Mr. Godwin colored, and said, as he retreated from the door:

"Before half an hour has passed your good

sense will have shown you the impropriety of making to me that quotation. Were I not assured of this I could almost resent it. Good-morning."

His prophecy was a true one. Never had Rachel regretted anything so deeply as those few suggestive words.

Ah, good, beautiful proverb of thinking twice before speaking once, was ever advice as wise as thine!

CHAPTER VII.

DEAR reader mine, do you ever start from a reverie and find yourself dreamily wishing you were a child again? As you hear the merry laughs of some gay-hearted youngsters at their play, do you not sometimes regret that *your* youth is past and gone? Ah, if you have lain on a sick bed, as I lay not long ago, and heard the quick buoyant tramp of little feet mingling with sweet young voices without your chamber door, you must have wished yourself a child. Eloquent visions of those fresh and reckless hearts must have penetrated your mind, and made the blinding tears of regret start to your eyes. Gone, gone away FOREVER!

Yet childhood has its trials as well as its guileless pleasures. People may rave as much as they choose about its unalloyed happiness, its unlimited light-heartedness and hopefulness, but who, really knowing what a sensitive and delicate thing a child's heart is, can believe

its many secret troubles do not, almost, counterbalance its joys. Who has so keen a sense of justice and injustice as a warm-souled child? Whose disappointments are as deep? Who feels a slight as bitterly? If its sorrows are trifling in their nature, is not the power to endure them weak and trifling too? Yet for all this, who would not willingly journey again to the green land of youth?

As Zillah O'Brian's character gradually unfolded itself to her new acquaintances, great was the perplexity how to understand and receive its many wild and erratic traits; with all her apparent innocent gentleness, she possessed not a little of childish spirit, which, from her extreme sensitiveness to ridicule, was the often-er aroused. Naturally, she was all that was lovable; through perversion only was she unamiable. By a singular arrangement of the laws of right and wrong, she would do anything for those who were kind to her, yet, in consequence of many a dire retaliating disaster, her companions were not long in discovering that she never forgot or forgave an injury. Her resentment was not, however, easily excited.

In general, she was noticeable for a charming frankness and truthful simplicity of manner as rare as pleasant. The child was of a remarkably religious and thoughtful disposition. She carried constantly about her person, a small pocket hymn-book, the gift of her mother, and whenever opportunity offered, during school-hours, or at other times, she would read aloud, snatches of sacred poetry, with a sort of abstracted, intense satisfaction that was both touching and amusing to witness. At night, one could hardly restrain either tears or laughter, to hear her pray for those of her schoolmates who had offended her sense of dignity, calling each one by name until she had an almost interminable list, and concluding with the fervently uttered words: "may the Lord have mercy on their souls!"

One day, Rachel Olio found Zillah perched up in the broad window-sill of her room striving to set some of her beloved hymns to music; having no particular clearness of idea on the subject of the adaptation however, the effort would have been a signal failure (her pretty, shaky little voice made perfect chaos of crotchets

and quavers), had not the young girl arrived to her assistance just as she was abandoning the attempt in despair. From that time Rachel devoted daily, an unoccupied and precious half-hour, to teaching the child to sing simple church melodies, such as suited the words of the cherished hymns. Zillah enjoyed this practice so enthusiastically that, whenever she found her friend disengaged, even for a few moments, she would ask wistfully,

“Please, don’t you feel like a Long Metre, Miss Olio?” and the appeal was seldom disregarded.

Zillah’s acquaintance with William Henry Griscomb began and terminated in an exceedingly summary manner. The circumstances of their first and only interview sent a ray of universal merriment throughout the seminary; no one heard of them, but blessed the eccentric child for thus breaking the tiresome monotony of the school-life. For herself, Zillah could never afterwards endure the mention of the deformed boy’s name; nothing could induce her again to enter his presence; neither bribes nor threats brought her a second time within

the limits of the chamber, where he lay faint and ill, his turbulent, ill-regulated mind preying on his slowly increasing strength.

It was in this wise : One morning, shortly after Zillah's establishment at St. Mary's Lodge, Mrs. Griscomb invited her, ostensibly for the purpose of showing her some engravings, to pass a few hours in her son's room, but, probably, the engravings were merely a pretext to detain the child for the amusement of the invalid during her own temporary absence.

"Come here, Twopence," was the gentleman's salutation as Zillah advanced tremblingly into the apartment, and looked about her in dismay.

"My name is not Twopence," she said, with sudden fearlessness, throwing up her head proudly.

"What is it, then?"

"Zillah."

"Zillah! An outlandish title! I'd rather be called Twopence any day. Well, Zillah, how do you like your new home?"

The little girl hesitated, and then answered from the perfect simplicity of her heart,

“Not much.”

“Not much?” repeated William Henry, laughing grimly. “Good! I like that. Ha, ha,—not much! Well, Twopence, you may sit down in that chair, and we will have some conversation on the subject.”

Zillah obeyed, her large blue eyes grave with wonder.

“So you do not care to stay here, eh?”

“No, sir.”

“That’s bad, too. Don’t you think, if we were to enlarge the house, and add a wing or two, that it might be big enough to hold you?”

“Sir?”

“Bosh, I am not going to repeat all that. You are not half as bright a Twopence as I thought. I’ll have to alter your name to Half-Penny, if you do not keep a sharp look out. Hand me that glass of water.”

She complied, and with some difficulty clambered back again to her high arm-chair, gazing all the while in the face of her inquisitor with a stare of such unequivocal astonishment, that he nearly choked himself in the effort to

swallow and laugh at one and the same time.

"Thank you, Goody. You may get down again and put the glass on the table." She did so, never once removing her eyes from his features. "Twopence," said the boy, grinning grotesquely, "I am glad you find me so handsome. As I am used to admiration, ha, ha, ha, you need not feel at all afraid of spoiling me. I'll keep. I am quite a beauty, don't you think so?"

"No, sir," was the answer delivered with unconscious seriousness

"No? Twopence, I am sorry to see you have such ridiculous taste. Now tell me—we will go into the details of the thing—is not my nose a charming nose? Speak out. I shall not eat you."

"No, sir; it is too little. It is not more than half as long as mine, and the end turns up so funny!"

"Twopence," said William Henry, gravely, "there is a reason for that. If *your* nose had undergone all the sufferings of *my* nose, I guess it would turn up too. Twopence;" in a sepul-

chral whisper, "what do you think was done to my nose when I was a child?"

"I do not know, sir. I hope they did not hurt you."

"But they did, Twopence; they did, awfully. You could hear me bellow two blocks off."

"How dreadful," said Zillah, sympathizingly; "did they cut it, sir?"

"Yes, my dear; in slices. To put in the soup, you know. Fine flavor."

"Oh," cried Zillah, greatly shocked, "how cruel, how very cruel! I would have bitten them, if I had been you—I would! Did they do it often—every day?"

"No," solemnly replied her ruthless tormentor, "not very often. Not more than twice a week."

Zillah reclined her head on her hand, as though lost in reflection. Presently she looked up and said:

"I don't think I should have liked that soup."

"Shouldn't you? Why not? It was very good, I assure you. I tasted it myself. It had

rather too much pepper, I acknowledge, but it was fine, very fine. Can you sing, Goody?"

"That is not my name."

"Twopence, then."

"Nor Twopence, either. I told you once."

"Bother. Don't keep me waiting all day, name or no name. Strike up."

"Hymns?" asked the child.

"I am not particular. Anything."

"Long metre or short?"

"Anything, I said. What a contumacious monkey you are."

Still keeping her eyes placidly resting on her companion, Zillah began singing, swaying herself, in time with the music, back and forth over the arm of the chair on which her small figure was perched. It was the Psalm commencing:

"Lead me to the heavenly pastures,
Lead me to the heavenly hills."

Zillah's little wavering treble staggered among the notes, like an ant astray in the Mammoth Cave; but, greatly to her own satisfaction, she went entirely through the four long verses.

"Do you think you will ever get there?"

she asked as soon as she had finished and regained her breath.

"Where?" demanded master William Henry, nodding at her from his pillow. "What do you mean, Twopence?"

"The heavenly pastures—do you think you will ever get there?"

"I? You are too inquisitive, Goody."

"But you'd like to, wouldn't you?"

"Bother—yes, I suppose so."

"And become an angel with bright wings, and wear a beautiful white dress?"

"Mighty pretty I should look in a white dress, shouldn't I! ha, ha. Tolerably good, that, Mrs. Methody."

"I am not a Methody," said Zillah, confused and indignant. "And as long as you call names you will never get the least bit o' sight of the heavenly pastures—*never!*" Saying this, the little missionary scrambled down from her pulpit, and, in great disgust, turned to leave the room.

"Twopence, Twopence!" cried William Henry, in a tone of mock sorrow; "come back here."

Relenting, she put her small, strange face in at the door again.

“What is it?” she asked.

“I’m a fine fellow, am I not, Twopence? You like me, don’t you?”

“Not a great deal, sir.”

“No? ha, ha, that’s prime, *that* is. Before you go, Twopence, sing me one more hymn—will you?”

“Out of the book?”

“Yes, Brownie.”

Zillah returned, much mollified by the invitation, and, remounting the arm-chair, leaned back in its luxurious depths until her fragile and diminutive person was well-nigh lost to view—the bright chintz colors contrasting vividly with the pallor of her transparent complexion. Then, producing the hymn-book from her pocket, she clasped her little hands reverently together, and sang—sang with all her heart and soul, now and then casting a triumphant glance at her auditor, who, convulsed with laughter, yet too feeble to vent it, could only lie quietly on his couch, and groan his delight, his thin features unconsciously distorting in the effort to propor-

tion his merriment to his debilitated physical powers. Observing this, Zillah suddenly broke off, and, with an air of wounded pride, said:

“You are laughing?”

“Laughing?” cried William Henry; “what an idea. Why, I’m as solemn as an owl. Go on, *do*, that is a good Twopence.”

She shook her head in sorrowful reproof, closed the book, and prepared to depart from the presence of one whom she evidently considered as so hardened in sin as to be beyond the reach of all recall. But the finale of the interview was to be the crowning point of provocation to little Zillah.

“If you must go, you must,” said William Henry; “but, before you do,” with awful gravity, “I want you to answer me one question; will you, Twopence?”

“Yes, sir, if I can. What is it?”

“This. Are you, or are you not, a relative of the old woman who performed a nightly operation on her numerous family, and was said to live in a shoe—cousin, aunt, or something?”

“No, indeed,” replied Zillah, indignantly,

scarcely comprehending his words, but perfectly understanding the implication, as most children do, under like circumstances.

"Well," said William Henry, "you do not know how relieved I feel to hear you say so. I was so disturbed by my suspicions on the subject, I am very glad to put them at rest. But, Twopence, my dear Twopence, do tell me, wasn't your mother a Methody, or something of that sort, eh?"

"A Methody!—my dear, sweet mamma, a Methody, *never*!" exclaimed the child, in displeasure.

"I think she must have been, Twopence," said her companion, with a sedate appearance of melancholy doubt.

"I tell you she was not," cried Zillah, who had not the least idea of the signification of the offending term, further than that it was intended as that of derogation. On no subject was she so sensitive as on that of the memory of her mother.

"And I tell you, Twopence, that she *was*."

"She was *not*," persisted Zillah, passionately.

"She was," contradicted her rejoicing persecutor.

Words of assertion and denial flew fast and furious between the two children. Zillah's cheeks glowed with hectic brilliancy as the dispute proceeded, and, in the impotency of her girlish wrath, she bit her lips till the red blood flowed from them down the neck of her dress. At last, stationing herself at the bedside, she said, emphatically:

"My good mamma was not a Methody, and you shall not call her so. If you say it again of her, I—"

"Hoity toity—I shall if I choose."

"You will?"

"I will—there!"

Without a moment's hesitation, Zillah sprang behind the head-board of the cot, made a desperate grasp at the boy's hair, and, tugging at it with no small force, cried,

"Now, will you?"

"Ow, ow—yes, you imp!"

"And now?" tightening her hold of the unlucky locks.

"Thunder—yes—let go you little panther."

He endeavored to raise his hands in self-defense, but could not lift them as high as the head-board; not only did he find himself too feeble to do so, but, owing to Zillah's advantage of superior position, he was doubly powerless. The cot-head completely shielded her person, while it did not, in the least degree, impede the progress of her vengeance. Every movement the poor victim made, only drew his hair the more painfully, and further augmented his calamitous situation. Zillah stood over her persecutor, the personification of outraged endurance, her eyes gleaming with anger, her long ringlets tossed backwards from her face, and her hands clutched determinately in the dark locks which she made the instruments of her retaliation.

"Say you are sorry," she exclaimed, "say you are sorry, or I will pull it out by the roots. Say you are sorry you called my mamma a Methody, when you know she is an angel in heaven."

William Henry gave a series of groans of anguish, at the anticipation.

"Pull, then, limb of Satan—ow, ow—for I will not say it, if I live forever."

Zillah poised herself carefully on the tips of her toes, preparatory to taking a fresh start, when, from some outer chamber, hearing her son's voice, Mrs. Griscomb, followed by old Hannah, rushed to the scene of action. Such a Babel of tongues, such unheard-of clamor, such a tableau as terminated the affair, is quite beyond the power of description. Master William Henry was alternately caressed and furiously reprimanded, and Zillah, receiving a heartily bestowed box on the ear, was sent off, under charge of Hannah, to be shut in her room for the rest of the day

"Bless her 'art," said Hannah, on rejoining her mates in the kitchen, "bless her 'art, as thrue as I live, no sooner had I locked the door, and pocketed the key, than she piped up one of her purty tunes jist as mild as ony lamb."

Do what she would, Rachel could not bring herself to mention to any one Zillah's trance powers. She felt it to be almost a duty she owed the child herself; she was unwilling to expose her needlessly to the notoriety that must inevitably follow the disclosure.

She was sitting in her room one day, in soli-

tude, whose rarity made it precious, when, from the door-way, a low, musical laugh, like a cloud of silver, filled the quiet apartment. Zillah stood there, thus heralded, holding up between thumb and finger two letters.

"For you," she said—dancing lightly around Rachel at just enough distance to keep the letters from her reach, but at last, smilingly, laying them in her friend's lap. Eagerly opening the one with the handwriting of which she joyfully felt herself familiar, Rachel read these strange and abrupt sentences :

"WEDNESDAY, JUNE 20, 18—.

"You flee from me, and for what? I have waited in vain for some explanation. Do you refuse to be my wife?—to fulfill your destiny? Yes! you fear my love—you desire to elude it and your promise! Be it so!

"FREELAND OGILVIE."

Again and again she glanced over these few words. They comprehended much—more than, in her sudden bewilderment, she could realize. What was it—what could it mean? she asked herself in a dismay of doubt, fear, and wounded feeling. Mist was over her eyes; she could not understand the motive of this cruel, bitter note;

and, certainly, she felt it was undeserved. Half unconsciously she longed for clairvoyant vision, that she might annihilate time and space, and look into the heart of this man for explanation.

Almost immediately, a numb, listless sensation came creeping over her faculties, until they seemed near suspension : but soon this changed, and her senses, particularly that of sight, widened and strengthened into painful acuteness. A conviction of the possession of power, beyond that which usually descends to the lot of humanity, pervaded her being. Oblivious of near external objects, she appeared to be wandering afar off in a sphere where happiness and truth were eternal. Then, slowly, with the indistinctness of an atmospherical illusion, dawned before her the face of Freeland Ogilvie. A cloudy veil alone trembled between them. Haggard and very pale, she saw him sitting by a table, his hands resting, palms downward, upon it, his head bowed on his breast, and his eyes bent anxiously towards his hands. Involuntarily she stretched out her arms, and, with a cry, beckoned him to come

to her—it was all so real, so vividly lifelike. The vision faded and disappeared, and, from her dream or delusion, or whatever it may be called, Rachel awoke with a start, her nerves trembling so convulsively that, for a while, she was deprived of power to alter her position, which was cramped and painful. Her fingers were clutched tightly together, and in their grasp lay the two letters, crumpled and torn. Mechanically she broke the seal of the second, but without examining it or caring for a revelation of its contents. Her eyes were fixed dreamily on vacuity; yet, to her amazement, every line, every curve of the pen in that unfolded letter became visible. Without looking upon it, she read it as plainly as she afterward perused it by natural sight. At this, she lost courage. She touched her arm, to see if it were real; she went to the little mirror, and closely examined her face, half expecting to find some other than her own. This sudden development of clairvoyant sight, was, to say the least, appalling. She fled from the room, and wandered out in the open air, hoping by this means to disperse the extraordinary influence that was operating

upon her. The day was fine, and a stiff breeze was blowing, that was most welcome to her fevered brain : for hours she walked she scarcely knew whither, luxuriating in the cool, elastic atmosphere. Through lanes and unknown roads, over the fields of the large, well-cultivated farms which are peculiar to the neighborhood of Lyster, she rambled, in perfect ignorance of her route ; for she was still in a state of excitement. At last she sat down under the deep shadow of a wide-spreading oak. A living spring bubbled among the long grass at her side, and she stooped and bathed her head and hands, watching the clear, sparkling water trickling off among the rocks. In searching her pocket for her handkerchief, to wipe away the redundant moisture from her face, she brought forth the letter. She had forgotten it was there. It fell from the fluttering handkerchief to her feet, and, as it lay there, she looked down upon it with absolute loathing, even experiencing a causeless hatred against its writer. She had found her wondrous gift of vision so terrible, that she felt it would give her unbounded pleasure defiantly to scatter that sim-

ple sheet of writing in fragments to the winds, in revenge for the innocent part it had played in the day's drama. But she could not. Something, half impulse, half fear, impelled her, irresistibly, to unfold it. Palpable and distinct, if proof were wanting, she had it, word for word, that letter was the same as that she had already had revealed to her; not a dash of the pen was missing.

And now for the first time the purpose of the writer in sending and inditing it dawned upon her. Then she was too frantic, now she was more subdued, and could read in calmness. For the moment she forgot everything, even her recent fear, in the great surprise which that letter conveyed. Thus it was:

THURSDAY, JUNE 21ST.

"My DEAR MISS OLIO :—I have scarcely known you six weeks, and possibly you may deem this letter an insolent presumption on so short an acquaintance. It is not meant as such, but as a simple and honest appeal, shall I say to your heart?—no, that is altogether too lover-like an expression for so staid an individual as the undersigned—an appeal to your understanding.

"During your brief stay at St. Mary's Lodge, I have been impelled to watch you narrowly, in fact, to criticise, with the cool eye of a close observer, your slightest action. I acknowledge candidly that I felt drawn towards you in the

beginning, and for that reason have been striving to discover of what materials such women as you are made. I am satisfied on this point. Frankly let me assure you, however, before I progress further in this letter, that I do not offer a first love, if, indeed, the high esteem I entertain for you can at all be dignified by the title, nor do I venture to hope that such an emotion exists for me on your part. I am far older than you, and have lived long enough to know what is called love for a sham and a cheat. I neither ask nor expect yours; if you think that you can honor me with your friendship and calm approbation, it is all I shall hope. A marriage founded on these, is, in my opinion, far more likely to conduce to the happiness of the parties concerned, than one where passion misleads the judgment, and blinds the eyes to the vilest of errors. God, by my nature, placed trifling out of my power; I am sincere in all I have here written. Likewise, are you a pure, straightforward, honorable woman. Return a woman's true and noble answer, worthy both of yourself and me—be it either in the negative or the affirmative. Take time to think—do nothing hastily that you may afterwards regret. I ask you to be my wife. No man will care for you more tenderly, more faithfully than I.

“Miss Olio—Rachel, I cannot avoid telling you how grand a creature I think you, although I believe you have more faults and fewer virtues than any woman living; those virtues seeming to me almost faults, and those faults almost virtues.

“Have no fear of wounding me by a refusal. Be courageous enough to say ‘no,’ if you *mean* ‘no,’ and, above all, remember I do not ask you to marry me through pity.

“Yours to command,

“RICHARD FAYETTE GODWIN.”

Had not this letter been so entirely charac-

teristic of Mr. Godwin, Rachel would have doubted its authenticity; for she was not able to recall a word, look, or gesture of his that could have given her, at the time, the slightest suspicion of his intentions. Circumstances had never caused her to think that his interest in her was more than that resulting from the natural, everyday association of commonplace men and women. However, it became less astonishing when she remembered he did not profess himself in this letter as anything more than a calm friend desirous of a nearer connection—so calm that Rachel's indignation was warmly excited at the idea of entering marriage with no higher foundation for happiness.

Beside, though he was often irritable and capricious in his manner towards Mrs. Griscomb, she had reason to suppose that Mr. Godwin was, in his own bizarre manner, attached to her. Perhaps she it was whom he alluded to in saying he had known love for a sham and a cheat. She remembered many things that served to strengthen the suspicion into certainty. Why had he called her to return, the day of William Griscomb's illness, and told her to "be tender

with the poor mother?" Why did he always openly defer to Mrs. Griscomb's opinion, and last, but not least, why did he spend so many of his evenings with her in her son's sick-chamber? Was his presence necessary there? It was all clear to her; and she worked herself into no very amiable mood at the idea of being made a *dernier ressort*; at being considered a harmless sort of a being through whom he might avenge himself on others.

She folded up the letter, and turned homeward. Soon, amid its shelter of majestic maples, she saw the walls of St. Mary's. The setting sun cast a red splendor on its shining windows that, in the distance, looked like shooting flames. The air was very silent. Neither bird nor cricket piped that sweet sun to rest. She was weary, weary in body and soul; and with no unwilling hand she opened the back garden gate, and passed in to the peace and shelter those four walls had to bestow. The lilac hedge had ceased to blow, and roses now filled the air with soft, luxurious perfume. On the observatory stairs, she sat down to rest, thoughtful of the day's events. The night fell dewy and

starry, but with an oppressiveness of atmosphere that was not rare in that part of the country. The air was heavy and breathless the very stars seemed to blink with the universal drowsiness. Presently some one passed on the path. Turning, she saw Mr. Godwin. He bowed, uncovered his head, and went by, without hesitation or speech. After listening till the quick, nervous echo of his steps subsided, she returned to the house.

At the door, looking doubly beautiful in the evening dusk, stood Zillah O'Brian, smiling her own sunny smile, and holding, in her long consumption-prophecying fingers, a small nosegay of scarlet columbines, pinks, adder's tongues, and the ever-beautiful but pallid blue violets. Her bonnet was hanging by its strings on the back of her neck; her face was flushed with the exercise of her ramble; her head was crowned by a rude wreath of half-opened brier roses.

"I waited for you to come in," she said, pressing the hardy blossoms into Rachel's hand; and laughing, as she sometimes did, without apparent cause, she bounded away. As Rachel

looked after her childish figure, a new thought struck her :

Her mother—Zillah's mother ?

She had forgotten that ! She was pretty—she recollected her well ; might she not—ah, Richard Fayette Godwin, in that young girl's wonder at the contents of the second letter, she had ceased for the time to think of the first.

That very evening, Rachel impetuously dashed off the following note, and awaited, impatiently, the first opportunity for delivery. She expected to see Mr. Godwin at prayers, and she not did care to keep either him or herself longer in suspense :

“ MR. GODWIN—

“ DEAR SIR :—I am thankful I am able to assure you, that, when I marry, it will be for a far better reason than that I ‘calmly approve’ of my life-long companion.

“ Truly yours,

“ RACHEL OLIO.”

This note was quite as characteristic of Rachel Olio, and her ardent but well-disciplined temperament, as Mr. Godwin's original epistle was of himself. In her deep annoyance, Rachel did not regard the brusque coolness of

her words, and was rather anxious than otherwise that their full effect should not be lost.

The evening arrived. While her pupils were busy with their studies, she laid her note carefully on the table that was generally appropriated to Mr. Godwin, sufficiently exposing it to sight to attract his notice, and yet not enough to excite the curiosity of those for whose observation it was not intended. He came earlier than usual that night, and from her station at the other end of the room, under cover of a newspaper, Rachel watched him as he took his accustomed place. Mr. Godwin espied the white envelope in an instant—the change in his face told that, but to Rachel's disturbed surprise he did not touch it, even to examine it externally.

"Much he cares," she thought indignantly; "I am glad I made it laconically cool—he deserves it—every word of it!"

It was not Mr. Godwin's habit to attract observation either to himself or Miss Olio, by making opportunities for private conversation; but on this occasion, much to the surprise of

the pupils, as soon as prayers were over, he deliberately approached her seat, waiting a moment before he spoke, until the few girls, who were lingering curiously around the door, should disperse to their rooms.

Rachel had hardly expected this, and in her heart was a little afraid of the interview. Mr. Godwin, on his part, did not seem to be in the least disquieted; Rachel actually found herself resenting his self-possession.

"Is this yours?" he asked, holding up the note with the seal unbroken. "I have not read it," he continued, as she uttered an affirmative, "for the reason that I believe you have written it prematurely. Had I the least doubt of its contents, I might have done so."

Oh, how irritating was the calmness of his steel-gray eyes. Even with her strongest effort to control herself, she scarcely succeeded. A half smile, too, mocked her from his lips.

"I am by no means anxious to receive a reply so soon; three days from now I shall take it thankfully. You have given yourself no time for consideration. I am sorry for this. Will you not allow me to wait a while?"

"Certainly," she answered, with returning promptness. "As long as you please." Immediately he proffered back the note.

"No, no, keep it," she cried hastily, and drawing away, "I shall never write you another."

"What, did you not say—" he hesitated, and seemed to be probing her character, as he had done on her first night at the school. Rachel colored and said,

"Keep it, and read it when you choose. It does not signify to me; as for any other, I beg to be excused."

She was sorry for these words just as soon as they were perpetrated, nothing loth now to see laughter quivering at the corners of his mouth. He tried to restrain it, but unsuccessfully. Evidently he did not wish to appear amused, and allowed it to pass off in a series of slight coughs.

"Then you give me permission to do with this note as I like?" he said, when the attack subsided sufficiently to allow utterance.

"Yes, it is yours, irrevocably."

"Behold its fate, then, oh, ye gods!"

He held the envelope in the flame of a lamp; in an instant it was in a light blaze; he threw it carelessly in the grate, where, each of them silently regarding it, it burned to ashes. Mr. Godwin was the first to speak.

"You are not vexed?"

"Oh, no, not at all," which was by no means the truth.

"You will acknowledge, perhaps, the necessity for writing again?"

"You have tried to make it a necessity, Mr. Godwin, but I do not see it. However, in a day or two, you will find lying on your table the exact counterpart of that note, word for word. I do not perceive what you gain."

Mr. Godwin looked rather discomposed.

"Nothing, in that case, but you will not do it, I am certain; I assure you," he continued, gayly, "I shall be obliged to destroy every communication that reaches me from you, until my presentiments inform me it is favorable to my cause."

"Under these circumstances, I shall order fresh supplies of stationery, because the conflagration will be endless. Good-night." She

took a lamp hastily, and turned towards the door.

"Good-night," he responded, "but stay; when did you receive my letter? I posted it but this morning."

"Zillah brought it to me late in the afternoon."

"Zillah! how strange, how very strange that she should have been destined to give you that letter?"

He sat down, his color coming and going, and pressed one hand on his breast.

"Are you ill, can I do anything for you?"

He did not answer, but Rachel brought him a glass of water. Mr. Godwin rose up at once, telling her that it was "nothing," and immediately went away.

But he had not blinded her as he had thought. Yet, with a heavy sigh, as she sought her room, Rachel felt that all this mystery was naught to her. Her own misery shut out all things else. How strange it is that at those times when generous sympathy is most expected of us for the trials of others, we are least able to bestow it; so true is it that perfect sorrow and perfect

happiness veil us alike in impenetrable selfishness.

That night Rachel Olio slept with a letter under her pillow, but it was not written by Richard Fayette Godwin.

CHAPTER VIII.

IN her many lengthy rambles around Lyster, Rachel passed frequently an old ruined farmhouse, whose quaint architecture as often excited her curious attention. It was built in true Dutch style, with deep, overhanging eaves, a peaked roof, and a veritably antique half-door, ornamented by a most miraculous knocker in the shape of a lion's face, a huge brass ring depending from his nose. Around this building Rachel wandered sometimes for hours, using it as a sort of an apology for the decayed grandeur of certain old French chateaux, whose ruins from childhood it had been her desire to visit in some more satisfactory manner than in dreams.

The place was rich in choice kinds of shrubbery and hedges, almost as venerable as the house itself, and quite as injured by neglect. There was a picturesqueness about the spot which was quite refreshing. Although nearly

three miles from the Lodge, Rachel found her way there at least once a week. One day, as she neared her favorite haunt, she was surprised to see the door of the farm-house standing wide open. A tall, dark woman lolled lazily on the threshold, and an unhealthy child rolled over and over on the soft grass growing in wild luxuriance close to the very door. There was a look of recklessness, of daring, even, in the woman's face, that did not particularly invite approach, or Rachel would have ventured to ask leave to go through the old house, the open windows indicating that such parts of it as were habitable were now unclosed and occupied.

In turning too suddenly, the child's leg doubled underneath its body ; it uttered a sharp cry of pain, and stretched its little helpless hands towards its mother. Rachel had not as yet quite reached the door-way, and her surprise was great to see the woman merely glance at the little creature in stolid indifference, without making the slightest attempt to raise it from the grass. The poor, forlorn infant uttered another and shriller cry. Still the mother stirred not, but looked on its prostrate form

with such a singular gleam of the eyes as Rachel had never seen before, and never desired to see again. It was terrible in its apathy, its hardened boldness.

“Do you not hear the child?” she exclaimed, indignantly. “How can you see it suffer, and do nothing to help it?”

She raised the moaning infant pityingly in her arms. In the struggle to free its twisted foot, the sprain in the rapidly swelling ankle must have taken place.

“Better leave the baby be, missus,” said the woman, in a tone half threat, half insolence. “Ye’ll get no good by troublin’ me or mine, I reckon.”

But the warm-hearted girl approached her, proffering the half-insensible boy; saying nothing, however, for her heart was so full that, had she uttered one word, it would but have aggravated the rising passion of the wretched mother.

“Ay, ay, it’s mighty fine of you, no doubt, to come a meddlin’. Put the boy down; I’ll not take him from you. Put him down, I say.”

Rachel laid the miserable, pallid baby at her

feet, and turned to go, satisfied that she was where speech was worse than useless. But her black, expressive eyes spoke for her; for the woman said, fiercely,

"And for what do you look at me so? Haven't I a right to do with my own as I wish? Tell me no, if ye can!"

The child tossed and groaned from excessive pain.

"He will die, he is dying?" broke impulsively from Rachel, and never had she felt so deep a pity.

"And what of that?" the woman exclaimed, bitterly. "Ah, ye little know how I've cried to God to make him die; and now, when He heeds me, shall I prevent? No, no! better to die and be rid of misery at once. What is the good of living to suffer starvation and learn sin; better to die, better to die!"

She stooped now, and took the babe in her lap, tears rolling down her face. Her previous words and mien had led Rachel to suppose that she was altogether hardened; and she was unprepared for any such display of feeling as this.

"Let me bathe that poor little foot," the

girl said, and she dipped her handkerchief in a tin basin of water standing near the door. The poor mother did not repulse her even by a gesture; the child lay moaning helplessly across her knee, as Rachel gently rubbed the swollen ankle. Its hollow eyes were closed, and, though low cries broke from it at intervals, it was seemingly unconscious of everything but its own physical torture.

The mother had been very beautiful, but hers was now a grim, stern face, in itself a history of her life. Poverty, despair, and wickedness were stamped upon it in characters that stood out like writing. But, thank God, even in the desert flows fresh, blessed water!

When Rachel had done, the woman clasped the child closely to her breast.

"My poor baby, did I wish your death? Was I so cruel to want you to die before my eyes, and I not raising one finger to help you? My own child!"

Rachel followed her within the room. She placed the little babe on a rough bed in one corner, and turned towards her visitor with the humbly spoken apology.

"I am sorry that I talked so to ye, miss. I hope ye'll forgive me. No one but the poor know what the poor has to suffer. You couldn't understand it if I was to tell ye what makes me so hard and cruel sometimes. I wish I was dead, I do."

"You should not say such shocking things, you should not think them."

"That's easy spoken," the dark, handsome creature said, contemptuously. "What do you rich folks know about the poor?"

"A great deal, I hope," said Rachel, with warm earnestness, her eyes glittering as they always did when she was excited. "Each one has trouble and sorrow of his own. You must not suppose because a man has money that he is happy."

"Happy!" she echoed the words with startling energy, and an indignant gesture; "does the man with money starve?—does he see his children famishing before his eyes till he wishes them in their graves to be at rest? Happiness, happiness, it isn't happiness we ask, but bread! Oh, this slow starvation! little, indeed, you know of the poor, if you think we dare to

dream of happiness. I say again, I wish I was dead. I don't care what becomes of me. It's my opinion I wasn't sent here to lead such a life as this, so the sooner it's ended the better. If it hadn't been for little Pete, there, and Jeemes, I'd a killed myself long ago. I would, I tell you."

She had worked herself gradually into great wrath. Rachel thought of a Fury as she looked at her black, disheveled hair and stormy face.

"How long have you lived here?" she asked, simply to divert her from her causeless anger; "it is a pleasant spot."

"Likely enough, ma'am. It's jist a week since Jeemes told me to come over, and it will be another I guess before he gets the chance to leave his work to see me and Pete again. He's as good a husband as ever was, but then he drinks a little to drown care. Poor lad, who can blame him?"

"I hope you do not have to pay much rent. The house is too old and gone to ruin. I see the roof leaks, too."

"Rent!" she stared at Rachel in amazement

that had in it a fine touch of the dramatic; indeed, the whole scene between these two women was strongly marked with vehement individuality. "And ye really thinks it's Jeemes Hill as pays rent, with his poor wages and drinkin', too! We're squatters."

"What?"

"Squatters, ma'am. I came down here and bursted the door and walked in, ma'am, with my bed and furniture strapped to my back; poor enough furniture it is, too. That's squatting."

"Why, then, you may be turned away from here to-morrow."

"Very like," she said, coolly. "'Twouldn't be nothing strange to me. I've tramped at an hour's notice 'fore now." She wiped with her apron a bench, the only seat the room contained, and civilly asked Rachel to sit down. "It's not a decent place for a lady like you, but you're welcome."

"I am not a lady," Rachel said, smiling sunnily, as she saw little Pete sob himself fairly asleep. "I am only a poor teacher, living at St. Mary's Lodge."

“ Well, now, it’s strange, but I thought you looked like it. I was a teacher once myself.”

“ You?” Rachel repeated, half abstractedly, wondering what there was about her that not only Mr. Godwin, but this woman also, should guess so accurately her position.

“ Yes, me. You needn’t be so astonished. I know something as well as other folk. I was young and pretty then, and had a plenty scholars. I used to teach all sorts of learnin’—readin’, writin’, spellin’, and geography. Grammar I set up to teach, but I didn’t understand it myself much, so, when the children asked questions that wasn’t put down, I used to frown, and tell them to mind their books! and they never discovered how little I knew about it. But one day the directors, they came, and catechised me all manner of ways; and as I couldn’t tell the answers, I had to give up the school. Jeemes happened along about that time, and I got married. Mother warned me it would be like jumping out of the fryin’ pan in the fire, and it has been. I have buried six children, miss, and it will not be long before the seventh goes, too. Starvation is rather depopulatin’.”

She spoke with a cool bitterness that was dreadful to witness.

"I will come and see you to-morrow, if you have no objections; meanwhile, will you take this, and buy whatever you like for my little friend Pete?"

Her eyes glistened as she took from Rachel the small silver coin. "Bread!" she enunciated, smiling grimly. Very sick at heart, the young girl left her, wondering how the day could be so bright, and the song of the birds so delicately sweet. Alas, great contrast had made the one far brighter, and the other more melodious than it had seemed a short half-hour before. Ah, how many thousands of times has the soul of humanity echoed Burns's touching lines—

"How can ye sing, ye little birds,
And I so weary, fu' o' care!"

The next day, after school hours, Rachel went over to the old house again. The door and windows were closed, and to all appearance her acquaintance of the previous day had disappeared from the place. She lingered to

gather some of the tall box-hedge to ornament her mantel-shelf—on her way home striving very hard to forget that there are such things in this world as poverty and sin. She had not gone far, however, when she met Mrs. Hill bearing in her arms her little puny babe. She passed almost sullenly, with a short “Good-day, miss.”

“Good-day,” answered Rachel, cheerfully. There was something in the woman’s faded, mournful beauty, that awoke the desire to know more of her. Joining her, Rachel said,

“I have just been to the house, but found it shut.”

“Ay?”

“Yes; I was sorry, for I wanted to see you. Have you been far?”

“Only to the doctor’s, a bit of two miles, I guess.”

“And you carried that heavy child all the way?”

“Ay, and for naught, too, ’cause the doctor sent down word that he never did gratis work for the poor; and I am back without seeing

him. Oh, but bein' poor is the blackest curse in this world."

"How is Pete, Mrs. Hill? I hope he is no worse."

"His foot hurts him a deal, I think, for he groaned all night long in his sleep. Sick I was to hear it—and serve me right, too, for lettin' my darlin' hurt himself. It was a bad day for him when he was born—better never see the light at all."

"Oh, Mrs. Hill, I am sure little Pete was not sent to you without a noble purpose. Try to think and believe so, and you will feel better. God works all things together for good."

"Ay, ay? the good is a long time comin'," she said sneeringly.

"It will come, if you only trust to Him." Mrs. Hill stopped walking and abruptly faced her companion.

"Mistress, if you come a preachin', I may as well tell you first as last, that you have made a mistake in the person. I've had enough of that from the parson, and a right sneaking hypocrite he was, too, that had a plenty of smooth words, but wouldn't give a

crust to save a body from starving. Ah, didn't I shake my fist at him one day"—she coupled her words with a practical illustration; "'and,' sez I, 'parson,' sez I, 'be off, and know enough never to try to preach to empty stomachs again. Fill 'em first, and talk afterward.' I'm much obliged to you, miss, but I'd just as lieves you would save your breath, too. Preachin' can't put bread in my mouth. Jeemes and me made up our minds long ago that it was all gammon, and so—ah, there's the lad now!"

With a shout of genuine, heart-felt welcome, she ran toward a large, stout man, whom in the distance she saw sitting on the door-step of the old farm-house. As he received his wife in his muscular arms, bared to the elbow, Rachel heard him say with a cry of desperate despair,

"Ah, Nance, what will become of us now! I am out of work again!"

And for hours afterwards she heard those words ringing in her ears.

There was a balminess in the air as she walked homeward, that infected Rachel with

the spirit of idleness. Whenever a tempting bank of moss, or a wayside rock, offered an inviting seat, she flung herself carelessly down, and appeared to forget that the sun was slowly sinking, and that there was still a mile or two between her and the Lodge. On coming to an old and half-ruined bridge that spanned a ravine in which gurgled a little noisy brook, she paused and looked wistfully over the rough railing with a touch of home-sickness, for the spot reminded her of Maplehurst. White speckles of foam and little glittering bubbles swept swiftly along its surface, as it flowed merrily onward—and the venerable forest trees that met over it in lofty arches, offered repose amid refreshing shadows. Conquering the temptation, she hurried on. It was dark when she reached the Lodge. The lamps were already lighted, and from many of the large windows poured a flood of pale light into the gathering darkness. Dismayed at her tardiness, Rachel was flying up the stairs to her room, when face to face she met Mrs. Griscomb, who, however, only nodded pleasantly, and said :

"You are late to-night."

"Yes," answered Rachel, "I am sorry. The day has been so uncommonly fine, I have been beguiled beyond my usual hour. It shall not occur again."

Instead of the grim rebuke which the girl had expected, lo! she received a smile, and a cheerfully toned remark! She was not so astonished at this as she might have been, for she had noticed lately the great good change that was working its spell on the beautiful proprietress of St. Mary's Lodge. Her son's illness seemed to have softened her nature. Refreshing dews had fallen on a dry, arid soil, and verdure was gradually appearing upon it. Never before had Mrs. Griscomb appeared so handsome—of such worth is kindness!

"How is William, to-night?" Rachel asked.

"Oh, so much better! He has been teasing to see you for the last three or four days, but I would not allow it, because your time is so arduously employed that every leisure moment must be dear to you."

"I will go to him for a while some day, with

pleasure," said Rachel, gratified at this consideration.

Mrs. Griscomb nodded and smiled again, and was passing on, her simple white morning wrapper floating around her fine form with a careless grace that no art could have enhanced, when she said, looking over the bright flame of the lamp in her hand:

"Oh, I came near forgetting. There has been a visitor here, for you!"

"For me?"

The young girl's heart leaped. Thank heaven! there was some one who remembered her; unhappy, discontented, desolate—she had still a friend!

"A gentleman, too; do you know that looks suspiciously?" and, as her lips parted smilingly, revealing white, regularly-formed teeth, Rachel thought her more beautiful than ever.

"Did he leave his name?" she managed to ask.

"Yes, but I forget it. He said he was coming again in an hour. This was some time ago. Perhaps he may be waiting for you in my reception-room at this moment."

“Now! who can it be?” she did not pause to hear more, but ran down stairs. Oh, the luxury of the thought that she had a friend, a friend who thought enough of her to follow her to Lyster! Reaching the reception-room, she threw the door eagerly open. It was very dusky, but she could see distinctly the figure of a gentleman standing by the centre-table, leaning upon it with one hand bent, while in the other he held aloft the skull, which he was regarding attentively.

Ah, even by that obscure light, she saw that he was tall, with long shaggy locks, and broad shoulders that she knew well; even by that obscure light she recognized Freeland Ogilvie. She had not dreamed that he was the visitor, and, at her start of surprise, he advanced hastily towards her.

“Is it you, Rachel? is it indeed you?”

“Yes, it is I. What can you want with me, Freeland Ogilvie? I thought we two were done with each other!” She spoke as she felt, bitterly, her slight nostrils dilating with pride.

“Ah, Rachel, fate is fate, and both of us must accept it. I cannot undo my destiny,

however I may have tried to do so. Putting you from me makes you only more valuable in my eyes. In my blind rage I could have struck you from my heart forever, but the blow only recoiled on myself. I do not ask pardon, I scarcely expect it, I am content to wait until voluntarily you bestow it. Now that I have seen you, spoken with you, and confessed my weakness, I am satisfied, and relieved of a heavy burden. Recall me when you will, I only crave—mercy.”

He took his hat from the table. Rachel made no attempt to detain him.

“Good-night, Rachel.”

“Good-night, Mr. Ogilvie.”

He did not go, but stood looking at her through the accumulating gloom.

“Rachel, will you not give me a kind word to speed me on my way?”

“Certainly. Tell me what to say, and you shall see with what alacrity I will repeat it.”

“Ah, well,” he said, almost sadly, “I have had my answer,” and he moved to the door. “Rachel,” still lingering, “why do you not ask me to come again?”

“Who ever heard of Freeland Ogilvie allowing an invitation to sway him in his comings and outgoings? How did you leave my aunts?”

He looked relieved at the question, and answered, quietly—

“In good health, yet wanting you to keep them brisk. The farm is let.”

“Let?”

A sort of cry escaped her with the word, and she sat down, unable to repress the startle the news gave her.

“My poor old home passed into stranger keeping?” at length she said. “When do you return to Maplehurst?” All idea of further coldness had flown completely from her mind.

“When I take you with me.”

“Ah,” cried Rachel, goaded into spirited reply by this symptom of returning despotism, “you have come, then, to settle in Lyster.”

“What, Rachel, old malice peering out again? Do you know I always liked you for that, even when it provoked me most? Ah, little woman, little woman, the richest, rarest beauty could not make me care more for you. The harder

I strive to rid myself of you, the closer you fasten upon me."

"Thank you," said Rachel, carelessly smiling.

The bell rang for tea.

"Rachel, will you walk with me to-morrow, after your school is over?" Mr. Ogilvie asked, earnestly. "I have much to say to you!"

She shook her head, but secretly longed for an opportunity for graceful concession.

"You must," he said, almost harshly, returning unconsciously to his old, dictatorial manner. But Rachel was near a partial disenchantment, and this "must" did not find her willing to bow to arbitrary government.

"I cannot," she said, closing her lips with a peculiar air of firmness that was growing habitual with her.

"Say, rather, you will not," was Mr. Ogilvie's stern answer.

"As you please."

He turned abruptly, coldly, and left the room. Rachel stood as he had left her, looking dreamily, wearily around, her proud head bent droopingly forward, her brow contracted, her

hands clasped tightly one in the other. Soon a violent ring of the hall bell startled her, and the color deepened on her cheeks, as she heard Mr. Ogilvie's voice say to the servant who opened the door—

“For Miss Olio.”

Immediately, Hannah entered the room, with a small package in her hand. Rachel burst the string, unrolled the wrappings with feverish haste, and, opening the small, inlaid box, cast a glance at the beautiful mass of pearls set in mourning-jet which it contained. The servant stood gaping in stupid amazement as she saw the young girl crush to the lid of the box, and, without a word of explanation, pass hurriedly into the hall, and thence to the front garden. Mr. Ogilvie was just closing the gate when Rachel impetuously joined him. Hers was no nature to shrink from humbling itself in an acknowledgment of wrong. Mr. Ogilvie scarcely seemed to recognize her, so unexpected was her appearance, as, proffering the jewels, she said :

“I cannot take them from you. Forgive me. I was wrong, and will walk with you whenever you wish.”

He looked down upon her in completely-restored good-humor, saying—

“ Ah, I have had the kind word, after all !”

But he did not touch the jewels.

“ Will you not keep them and wear them for my sake ?”

“ I cannot, indeed, I cannot. It would sting me to look at them. Your revenge was nobility itself !”

Before he could detain her, she had left the box in his hands, and turned towards the Lodge.

Having entered, as she stooped to fasten the door-bolts, her sad, expressive face lighted up with the consciousness of having obtained a victory over self, Mrs. Griscomb and Mr. Godwin descended the stairs, and the former, bidding Mr. Godwin a courteous “ good-evening,” entered the dining-room. When Rachel rose from fastening the bolts, she saw Mr. Godwin standing at her side, crumpling a small note in his hands, which she had no difficulty in recognizing as her own, which she had, only the night before, deposited on his table. It was an accurate copy of the first.

“How could you write me an answer as stinging and cruel as this?” he said, holding it up to view. “Did I deserve it—had I been insolent or presuming, that you must crush me with one dull blow? Was the offering of the greatest, noblest compliment a man may give a woman, only worthy to be rewarded by cold satire?”

She stood silent, one hand resting on the door-knob, the other hanging listlessly at her side; indeed, her whole appearance betokened apathy and indifference; there was not even the usual indignant flush upon her face that was the signal of displeasure at all things that wounded pride or provoked resentment. Any one who had seen her five minutes before, would scarcely have known her. Then she had been all fire, all vitality—now she looked fatigued, worn, depressed.

“Tell me,” he continued, “in what I have offended, that I may repair my fault; but do not cast at me words like these,” and he indicated the note.

“I cannot marry you,” she said wearily, yet serenely lifting her eyes, “and in justice to

both of us, I have told you so in that note. I regret that it displeases you, but I scarcely expect that it can create other than dissatisfaction. Some day you will recognize my perfect right to act as I have, if you do not now."

She went to the door of the tea-room, as though to signify the conclusion of the interview.

"You are cruel," Mr. Godwin said vehemently; "you are unkind—unwomanly—no one but yourself, who are unlike the rest of the world in your passions and your goodnesses, would have so written!"

It was strange to see the deliberate restraint under which Rachel's evident anger at these words seethed harmlessly. If she were ever beautiful, she was so then, as, erect, silent, almost statuesque in the extreme repose of limb and feature, Christian discipline triumphed over natural tempestuousness.

"Perhaps I deserve this," she said, with sorrow; and, slightly bowing, reached her hand to open the door, when it was moved from within, and Mrs. Griscomb stood on the thresh-

old before them. Nothing could be more changed than the expression of her face.

“You are wanted at table,” she said coldly. The young girl colored, and entered the room.

CHAPTER IX.

THAT night a flood of light from the full moon rested on the quiet village of Lyster. Silence was in the streets.

It was late, but in the sick-chamber of her son still watched the untiring mother. Glancing towards his couch from her desk, covered with books, manuscript, and writing materials, she saw that he slept profoundly. Imperceptibly the hours had glided away. Occupation had given them fleetness.

Passion darkened the handsome face of Helen Griscomb, and enkindled new loveliness in her flashing eyes. She was reading a newspaper eulogium of herself, which, to judge from appearances, was as exaggerated, complimentary, and displeasing as is generally even the best of criticism to its object. A frown lent sternness and tragic scorn to her charming Greek profile, as she glanced rapidly over these phrases :

"This lady and celebrated poetess is a native of that 'lovely West,' of whose manners and customs she writes so spiritedly in her 'Floria.' She is a widow, and beautiful. Far more widely known by her poems (sketchy and fugitive, which for years have been the favorites of editors), there is yet enough of originality and nerve in her prose writings to establish the foundations of some half dozen literary reputations. Mrs. Griscomb's works are eminently of a religious tendency. Every line she pens is brimful of fervent faith, and this communicates itself to the heart of the reader, as it were, unbidden. But little learning and art are visible on her pages. Cultivation seems to have done nothing for her, simply because there was nothing to do! She is a poet by nature. Her principal peculiarity is her imagination; and it is so curbed, so delicately used, that it has not only won unbounded applause for her in her native land, but commands admiration from the laurel-crowned heads of the Old World."

Laying down her pen, pushing, with disgust, the magazine away, she murmured, bitterly,

"To what does it all amount? Renown, celebrity, laurels—what are they to woman? They can never bring her happiness, peace, contentment—and fame is galling if it repel love."

She crushed together her manuscripts, she cast them on the floor and trod them under foot with a fury that gave her only a fiercer beauty than before. The sleeper turned uneasily on his bed, disturbed, and half-awakened.

She heard him not, but pursued her insane demolition. At length, raising himself on one elbow, and sleepily surveying the scene, William Henry Griscomb uttered an audible

“Hillo!”

This brought his mother immediately to his side, her black hair hanging, unbound, over her shoulders, from wrathful exertion, and the bright tears of scornful anger still trembling in her eyes.

“Mamzie, Mamzie!” he said, purposely distorting his strange features, “I have made a discovery.”

“A discovery! Of what?” said his mother, averting her face.

“That it does not agree with me to live on air any longer. The process is too decidedly fattening. Absolutely, I am in danger of being blown away.”

“Poor boy,” said Mrs. Griscomb, half laughing, “but one must follow medical advice, you know.”

“A fig for advice. At this moment I could digest a rhinoceros. Bah!” he ejaculated, as his mother brought forward a bowl of panada,

"I am sick of that trash. Now, mamzie, dear, if you do not wish to see me evaporate through the key-hole, just get me a huge, thick slice of bread, and a slight flavor of meat. Come, that's a good soul!"

"Oh, William Henry, how can you ask for such things? I wouldn't put them in your reach for the world. Low living, the doctor says—"

"Confound the doctor!" Collecting all his little store of strength, he made an adroit feint of rising—"If you will not, I must; for I don't at all like practical illustrations of starvation—here goes!"

Already one lean, skinny foot touched the floor, when, perplexed and astonished, Mrs. Griscomb said, authoritatively,

"Lie still. You try my patience too much."

"Then you will get the meat?"

"No, indeed! do you think I covet a relapse for you? Be reasonable, and, in the course of time—"

"Hang the course of time," interrupted William Henry, "and particularly Pollok's,

which few mortals ever had patience to read. Something I will have to eat, and that immediately. You'll get me reduced to the size of that bed-post directly." "With evident effort, he gathered a counterpane around his narrow shoulders, and stepped on to the floor. "Will you bring me something or not?" he questioned.

"You wicked child," half sobbed his mother, "you will kill yourself. Lie down, then, and, since you persist, the consequences be on yourself."

She lit a candle, and, satisfied at last to behold symptoms of yielding, the boy crept back to bed. Leaving the usual dim-burning night-lamp, Mrs. Griscomb went down stairs. The warm room was filled with solemn shadows, that swayed slowly back and forth on the walls, as the wind from the partially opened windows gently vibrated the flame. The sick lad sank back exhausted, watching wearily for his mother's return, when, without warning, the door opposite to that by which she had departed noiselessly opened, and the pale face of Rachel Olio appeared in the aperture. A black shawl

was thrown carelessly over her night-dress, giving her a weird, unearthly appearance.

"Hillo!" cried William Henry, starting up, regardless of pains and sickness, "what's the matter, little woman?"

"Nothing much," she said with composure; "where's your mother?"

"Down stairs, preparing a luxurious repast of unbuttered bread for her dutiful son. Bare feet, as I live! You're a pretty one, aren't you? There are my old slippers at the foot of the bed—put them on directly."

"Will she be up soon?" asked Rachel, uneasily.

"Yes," he said, a ghastly smile breaking over his thin features. "You did frighten me into fits, didn't you? That ought to be a warning to you. How am I looking? Handsome as ever, eh?"

"Oh, don't speak so," she said, faintly sinking into a chair.

"How you frightened me," he continued. "If it had not been for that black shawl, I should have taken you for a ghost; and, as it was, I almost thought it was a strong-

mind one, that had struck out a new style of attire. Poor things! I wonder if they ever long after the fashions? Ah, here is my lady mother, with all the delicacies of the season—won't you stay to supper?"

Mrs. Griscomb nearly upset the small tray she carried, at the unexpected sight of a third person.

"Rachel! Miss Olio!"

Rachel arose. "Can I see you in my room for a little while?"

"Is anything the matter? Yes, certainly."

"One of the pupils is ill," she said, quietly.

Mrs. Griscomb hastily placed the tray before her son, bade him eat sparingly, and, wrapping a mantle around her fine form, accompanied Rachel from the apartment.

"Who is it?" she asked.

"Zillah O'Brian."

"Zillah?"

"She has been walking in her sleep, and has said so many strange things, that—that—in short, I felt it my duty to call you."

"What, that child! walking in her sleep? How very singular."

“I am afraid,” said Rachel, “that she is something more than a mere somnambulist. She frightens me, positively. This is not the first time. I was lying asleep in my bed about an hour ago, when one of the girls gave a loud shriek. I started up, wide awake, and there, in the middle of the room, where the white moonlight from the windows fell full upon her, stood Zillah, in her night-clothes, flourishing her arms around her head, like a person unsettled in mind. I rose, struck a light, and tried to soothe her, but it was of no use. Oh, it is dreadful!”

“Dreadful, indeed; what can we do? I hardly know what is best. If she is really ill, a physician should be called. Stop a moment. This is the door of the servant’s room—I will just wake up Hannah, and tell her to go for Mr. Godwin. He does not live far, and—it can do no harm. Hannah will not mind it.”

“Ay,” thought Rachel, as she stood waiting in the passage-way, “it is always Mr. Godwin.”

“It is settled—Hannah is going,” Mrs. Griscomb said, as she rejoined Rachel; “poor

little thing! how sorry he will be to hear this!"

They reached the door of the chamber, and entered quietly. It presented a confused appearance. Rachel's three room-mates had arisen, and were partially attired. Zillah herself was lying on Rachel's bed, apparently asleep, but she started violently up as the two women entered, cleaving clingingly to Rachel, but avoiding Mrs. Griscomb, with every evidence of pain and repugnance. Her blue eyes were closed, as before described, her features were rigid as stone, and her little hands locked in a cold embrace on her bosom. Frequent sighs, that were very pitiful to hear, burst from her lips, but, other than this, she made no sound.

"She has been talking of the robbers, again," whispered Lily Barton, shudderingly, to Rachel, who paled very slightly.

"What is that?" demanded Mrs. Griscomb, quickly.

"I do not know whether it is foolish to repeat it or not, but when I left her to come to you, she was talking very wildly about thieves attacking the Lodge to-night."

“ Good heavens ! robbers—to-night ! ” cried Mrs. Griscomb, dropping with almost ludicrous dismay into a chair. “ What shall we do ? A houseful of women—not a man among us.”

“ You do not really put faith in the prophecy ? ” inquired Rachel, half smiling.

“ I hardly know. It is very strange. I have heard of people in the state in which this child appears to be, being gifted with second-sight. It may be—oh, what shall we do ? ”

She was interrupted by Zillah, who, in her little silvery voice, began singing broken snatches of sacred song, mingling one hymn into another—breaking off suddenly, and commencing again, with a sort of wild, nervous uncertainty. At last her breathing became more regular, her sighs ceased, and, in a moment, the tightly compressed lids opened, and she looked around the room in bewilderment.

She was lying in Rachel’s arms.

“ I am very cold,” she said, softly glancing upward in her face, with the broad, gentle smile so peculiar to her. She looked very worn and haggard, and could hardly summon

strength to whisper, "thank you," as Rachel placed her in the bed again, and covered her with the counterpane.

"Am I sick?" she asked, with the same ever-ready smile.

"I hope not, my darling. Why do you ask?"

"I feel so strange. I did not say my prayers, did I?"

"No; would you like to now?" asked Rachel, gently.

"Yes."

The child pushed away the bed-clothing, and, falling on her knees, clasped her hands, and simply but earnestly said:

"Please God to bless all the world, and Zillah. Amen!"

It was touching to see the little creature uttering her innocent prayer, regardless of the presence of her half-frightened audience.

"Am I to sleep here?" she asked.

"Yes, always—as long as you stay with us," replied Rachel, stooping to kiss her forehead.

"How good you are. That will be nice."

And even as they looked at her, she slumbered peacefully.

“What an odd child!” remarked Mrs. Griscomb, drawing a long breath. “I never saw any like her. When she raises her eyes and smiles in that bizarre way, I tremble with some sort of nameless fear, which I can neither understand nor describe. She is not long for this world.”

“Why is it,” asked Rachel, “when children have greater gifts than others, or are in any way more remarkable than the generality, that early death is always prophesied for them?”

She was looking half-mournfully at Zillah’s beautiful face, serene in its perfect repose. Over it strayed tangled golden curls, as sunny as the sweet sleepy radiance about the half-parted lips. A slight flush, “like roses crushed on ivory,” was on her cheeks. Her little breast heaved with regular but ominously deep respiration.

“I fear she will be ill to-morrow,” said Rachel: “now let us to bed again, Lily, Sara, one and all.”

Mrs. Griscomb took the hint, and left the

room—not, however, without a private signal to Rachel to follow.

“I am really alarmed,” she said, shrinkingly, as they stood together in the hall; “is there anything to be done?” It was wonderful how, in her hour of need, the strong, self-reliant woman turned naturally, as it were, to this young girl for aid.

“I do not know. You are actually putting faith in this?”

“Yes; I cannot help it. It fastens itself irresistibly upon me. If Mr. Godwin were only here!”

“If you think best, I will watch until he comes,” said Rachel. “You sent for him?”

“Yes, but neither Hannah nor he is yet returned. I am almost ashamed to accept your offer, but—but—”

She trembled so, from excessive nervousness, that she could scarcely continue.

“I am not afraid,” said Rachel, in her quietest tone. “If anything should happen, or Mr. Godwin come, I will call you. You had better return to your room, and do not, I beg of you, disturb yourself.”

Evidently relieved, and yet half ashamed of her terror, Mrs. Griscomb yielded. Rachel stood for a moment looking at the lurid path left by her principal's lamp in the deep shadows of the passage-way, then slowly descended to the dining-room; arrived there, the courageous girl extinguished her candle, and in darkness and silence began her dreary vigil. She was no disciple of Spiritualism. Her soul revolted at the creed, although she believed in the possible existence of communication between earth and heaven. To span the space between time and eternity by a bridge of tables, seemed to her impiety. In spite of herself, however, she found that she was placing credence in little Zillah O'Brian's prophecy; she did so against her reason, almost against her will.

A long while she sat there listening anxiously. The seven senses seemed mingled in one, so acute grew the power of hearing. Not a sound broke the quiet of the country air, save the chirp of insects and the dull surging of an awakening breeze. Softly turning the window-blind, she looked out. The moon was

going down, broad and red, behind the distant trees, investing the surrounding landscape with a sort of subdued splendor. No sunshine was ever so beautiful as that red, misty moonlight, fading softly into the dark night-glooms. Over the hill-tops still lingered the delicate, mellow glow; as it disappeared, reluctantly, regretfully, Rachel's eyes fell again to the confines of the Lodge gardens. She startled violently, as she saw the gate open cautiously, and some one, in the universal obscurity indistinguishable as to form or feature, advance noiselessly up the path.

Nearer, nearer that moving mass stole towards the house, and, with such extreme stealth, that Rachel concluded it could not be either Mr. Godwin or old Hannah; yet as, in a moment more, she saw two figures where she had imagined there was but a single person, and recognized the full garments of one as those of a woman, she flung from her as ridiculous all further idea of intruders, and groped her way to the hall in order to unlock the door.

But lo! after the little time had elapsed in

which with difficulty she felt her way from the room, she saw that already the front-door stood partially open. On the threshold was this mysterious couple, their low, inaudible converse just breaking the heavy silence and no more. Silently, like a very shadow, Rachel withdrew again to the shelter of the darkened dining-room.

"I am afraid. Let us go back," she heard some one whisper in female tones that sounded strikingly familiar. A man's restrained, sonorous voice roughly bade the first speaker "Stay quiet, and not be a fool," and immediately afterward Rachel felt the two brush past her in entering the apartment in which she herself was standing.

With a thrill of horror she heard the striking of a match—in another instant a broad but fitful blaze filled the room. Like lightning the girl turned, impetuously grasped the door, and, before she herself had realized the act, she had locked and bolted it upon its inmates.

She was standing in the hall, trembling with fear and nervous excitement, and listening to the sounds of sudden consternation within,

when, at the door-way, appeared Mr. Godwin and old Hannah.

“What is this?” she heard him say, in a tone of great surprise; “the door wide open at this time of night?”

He started as he recognized Rachel, who stepped forward to meet him.

“The house has been entered by thieves,” she said, briefly, with one great effort attaining a self-possession that at all times would have been unnatural in so young a girl, and was particularly so now.

“Thieves!—are you sure—is any one injured—are you hurt?” he exclaimed, involuntarily taking her hand.

“No, no one is injured,” she answered, withdrawing it coldly, “and nothing as yet has been stolen. They, the man and woman, are now locked in this room.”

Her vehemently-toned words did not seem to inspire him to action. He looked at her curiously.

“You are a strange girl. In all you do you are original. Is that the key? give it to me.”

She handed it to him at once.

"They cannot escape from the windows," she said, as he seemed to hesitate what to do first. "Being very high from the ground and dangerous for children, they have iron bars across them. So you see they are pretty well caged."

Mr. Godwin stooped, and attempted to fit the key to the lock.

"Stop," said Rachel; "first let me send Hannah for help. You ought not to risk encounter alone with such lawless people."

"Since when have you taken my weal or woe into your consideration?" he asked, bitterly.

He took his hands from the door while uttering the words, and Rachel instantly but quietly glided between him and it.

"Stand aside," he said, almost roughly.

"I shall not, until forced to do so," was the reply that met him fearlessly.

Hannah, meanwhile, at the first mention of help, had started off to arouse a neighbor, and, face to face, these two now stood, with no word passing between them; and thus they

remained until Hannah returned with the expected reinforcement.

Rachel then gave up her position and went up stairs, but not before. As the dining-room was at last opened, she caught a hasty glimpse of the boldly beautiful features of the woman, Nance Hill, who, meeting her eyes, turned away, ashamed to face the recognition, under such circumstances, of one who had befriended her in the time of need.

CHAPTER X.

"WAS it not a dreadful affair," said Mrs. Griscomb, the next morning at breakfast, as she languidly buttered her toast. She was arrayed in the most becoming of scarlet wrappers, her long hair falling in a profusion of soft curls over her delicately-colored cheeks; on her features lingered no trace of the previous evening's excitement.

Mr. Godwin, having remained through the night, sat at her side moodily sipping his coffee.

"And what a brave little heroine we had, too, in Miss Olio," she continued, casting a half sneer towards the object of her speech, who, at the extremity of the table, seated among her pupils, was scarcely conscious of the evil intent.

Still Mr. Godwin said nothing, seemingly being absorbed in self; but, on a servant entering

with a note for Miss Olio, that had just arrived, he aroused himself sufficiently to glance at it and her in that cold, suspicious manner which was so eminently his own. At that moment, too, the child Zillah came into the room. Seeing her guardian, she ran joyfully to him, holding out her hands. He took her in his arms, he kissed her forehead, her cheeks, her eyes, with a morose tenderness that smote the heart of Rachel with pity.

"At least *she* loves him," she said, inwardly, noting the gentle, answering caresses of the child. And, as the thought struck her, she was startled to hear Mr. Godwin say, as though the idea had sympathetically occurred to him, and gave him comfort :

"*You* love me, little blossom, do you not?" and the almost imperceptible stress he laid on the "*you*" did not escape her observation. She bent mechanically over her note. It was very brief, and ran thus :

"Amico mio, said you not yesterday you would walk with me? I shall keep you to your promise to-night; having just heard that the long-projected 'Camp-meeting of Spiritualists' is to open at that time in the fields a mile or so back of

St. Mary's. If you like, we will go that way, and learn something of this latter-day mystery. I cannot tell you how happy I am this morning.

"F. O."

Rachel laid down the note abstractedly, and fell into a train of dreamy thought. She forgot herself entirely, and was only aroused by various exclamations of astonishment from those around her. Glancing up, and feeling guilty enough to have been the actual object of this attention, Rachel saw that Zillah, whose seat was next her own, was spasmodically scribbling with a gold pencil, pendant from her neck, on the back of the note she had just laid down. She held out her hand for it, in great displeasure, as soon as she perceived it.

"Give it to me," she commanded.

But, although the child looked longingly towards her, she did not obey.

"I cannot," she cried at last, "I cannot make my hand stop, and it has written words here that I do not know."

Mr. Godwin had now come behind her, and, with a very skeptical smile, said, as he drew the paper from under her fingers:

“ People will say you are a writing medium, Zillah. What is all this ?”

He began reading, and presently made out these words from the back of the letter :

“ Give me fresh paper.

“ ZILLAH BLISS O'BRIAN.”

“ Zillah,” he said, sternly, “ are you deceiving us ? This is your mother's name. Did you do this of your own will ?”

The poor child's passionate denial seemed only partially to satisfy him. The school-girls, meanwhile, had gathered around, and Lily Barton slipped under the hand of the little medium a new sheet of paper. Immediately the small, childish fingers, that were still tightly clutched around the pencil, began to move back and forth with quick, convulsive action, that was exceedingly unpleasant to witness, from its extreme unnaturalness. Every one paused to look at her. At first she did not seem to be writing, but with bold, sudden dashes sketched angles and parallel lines—at the bottom of the sheet finally affixing a few characters that had the appearance of hieroglyphics. When she

had done, Zillah handed the paper to her guardian, apparently without the least volition on her own part. Both Mrs. Griscomb and Rachel saw the gleam of surprise that went over Mr. Godwin's face, as he received and comprehended this paper. He contemplated it closely, then folded it, and quietly placed it in his pocket.

"Zillah," he said now quite seriously, "I must try you. I want to bandage your eyes." Suiting the action to the word, he drew out his handkerchief, and fastened it securely over them. "Can you see?" he questioned. Scarcely content with her response in the negative, he took Mrs. Griscomb's proffered handkerchief and added that also. Then detaching the pencil from her neck, he said,

"I only do this, Zillah, to satisfy myself and others. If a power foreign to yourself can inspire you to write that of which you have no knowledge, it can also give us this test. I shall place this pencil somewhere on the table. You cannot, I am sure, see me do so. I want you to let your hand yield as much as it can to this strange influence, and, if it be possible, find me the pencil."

"I will try," said Zillah, passively. "Are you ready?"

"Not yet. Wait a moment. Now."

He had made some deceptive noises, as though secreting it among the breakfast dishes, at the same time with the other hand silently depositing it on a different part of the table

The quiet of the room was intense, so great was the universal interest in the success or failure of the test. Zillah did not move. Mr. Godwin looked rather elate as he saw her sitting thus motionless, her bright eyes veiled in the white bandages. At last there came a slight quivering of the muscles of her hand, which progressed rapidly into violence. With one nervous dash forward, Zillah's thin fingers grasped the pencil and triumphantly held it erect.

"I am satisfied," said Mr. Godwin, "and now, my birdie, you shall see what you have been doing."

He unfastened the handkerchiefs from her eyes, and took two papers from the pocket of his coat, one of which was that on which Zillah had written. Spreading them out on the

table, he called Mrs. Griscomb to look at and compare them.

“They are exactly alike,” she said, wonderingly; “how is this? I know by the peculiar firmness of the lines of this one, that it is the one Zillah just executed before our eyes, and yet the other is, with this exception, so precisely similar, that they can scarcely be distinguished.

“Yes,” remarked Mr. Godwin, “they are the same—even down to that figure three in this furthest corner. It is a most remarkable occurrence. I had, accidentally, this paper in my pocket, and, without ever having seen it, Zillah has copied it accurately in every particular. Look at it attentively, and you will see that it is a small map of Eastern Lyster. I drew it last night just before retiring, for a French friend who is unacquainted with the place. Here at the bottom are the words, ‘*Carte de Lyster Orientale*,’ which are also minutely transferred to Zillah’s copy. She does not understand French, and it is impossible that she has ever seen this map before; how, then, are we to account for it?”

"Zillah is a clairvoyante!" cried Mr. Griscomb.

"Or a spiritual medium," interposed Lily Barton. "I have an aunt who is a medium, and who is influenced in the same way."

Mr. Godwin took his hat.

"Zillah, my child," he said, kissing her and laughing, "we shall think presently that you are in league with the old gentleman."

Zillah smiled, but a shadowy, transient trouble darkened her fair young face.

The afternoon came, and with it Freeland Ogilvie. Rachel was dressed and waiting for him, and in perfectly cemented friendship they went forth together.

Zillah O'Brian stood in the door, looking after the retreating form of her friend with a sadly wistful eye, her strange, prophetic heart burning with the foreshadow of fate. At the gateway, Rachel caught this wan, regretful glance, and ran back to bestow a farewell kiss, thinking nothing, fearing nothing of the future that lay before them both, like an unseen, trackless wilderness.

Farewells and separations, too often, like Zillah's and Rachel's, are unknowingly made for all time.

Ogilvie's old dominion over Rachel was renewed; and likewise, on her part, the sense of happiness at being so guided and governed. As soon would she have disputed the right of the stars to shine as his to rule. Therefore, all was peace again.

The camp-meeting was but a little way from the Lodge. It was fine, from the eminence where the school stood, to look upon the fields beneath, and see the peaks of the snow-white tents shining in the last rays of the clear afternoon sunshine, and watch the scarlet flags streaming from them on the soft air. At intervals, too, came bursts of exultant music, that, at that distance, mellowed into mere detached sound, had the effect of echoes answering each other among the hills. It was at the hour when all things on earth are most beautiful—sunset. Laborers, hastening homeward, met Rachel and Ogilvie on their way, and cattle browsing at the roadside began to move slowly to their folds for the night. Village children

courtesied to them as they passed, and not a few pressed forward with some simple offering of flowers or fruit for the "schoolmistress." Mr. Ogilvie would have frowned them away, had he dared to do so; for his patrician pride was wounded at the thought that she, who was in future to become his wife, should be compelled to endure these things. But he suppressed his dissatisfaction, even smiling when Rachel persisted in placing some of her rosebuds in the button-hole of his coat, and rewarding her, as they proceeded on their way, by the recitation of the following poem, which he had found, he said, among some of the age-stained MSS. belonging to his mother.

The evening was one of those still, dewy ones which are the glory of summer, and a mild breeze was afloat that mingled coolness with the otherwise oppressive atmosphere.

No night, in all the beautiful year, could have been more appropriate, or more plenteous in its inspirations for the repetition of verse. So, at least, thought the twain. Ogilvie read

well. His companion felt this, more particularly at the lines

“Weep that unto yonder people
You have given living death!”

As she listened to them, she shuddered, from a concentration of sympathy which she found, at the time, impossible to resist.

The poem was called

AYXA LA HORRA.

“You know,” said Mr. Ogilvie, by way of preface, “that it is recorded in history, that when Boabdil, the effeminate king of Granada, wept at the farewell view of his dominions, ‘Ayxa la Horra,’ his celebrated and haughty queen-mother, reproached him in the following striking manner: ‘Ay, weep like a woman over what thou couldst not defend like a man!’”

At a mountain pass's entrance
Stood the little exiled band,
Banished, ay, and that forever,
From their fatherland.
'Neath them lay that proud Granada,
Now, alas! their own no more,
Looking lovelier to their vision
O, than e'er before!
On her once so happy valley,
On each distant dome and spire,

Lay the golden sun's soft splendor
In its dying fire !
And upon the laughing Xenil
Tossing, murm'ring as of yore,
In the olden days departed,
Lost for evermore,
Fell the varied, flitting gleamings
From the crimson, cloudless west,
Making jewels of the silver
Floating on its breast.
Oh ! lofty seemed Granada's beauty,
Smiling upward in her pride,
Though they saw the victor's banners
Streaming far and wide
On her palace walls and gardens,
Gaily flaunting in the air,
Though they saw the silver symbol—
Spain's bright cross was there !

On a jutting rock's high summit,
Crouching down upon her knees,
With her Eastern mantle floating,
Waving in the breeze,
Fiercely gazed a dark, proud woman,
Gazed, with flashing, fiery eyes,
On the hateful standards flowing
O'er her paradise !
Not a sound or word escaped her,
Not a stifled moan or sigh,
But her hands were clenched together,
Clenched, in agony !
Though her face was pale and haggard,
It was glorious to behold ;
For a calm, majestic beauty
Shone there as of old.

Suddenly, from round her tresses,
Tore she off the slender crown,
And, upon the rocks below her,
Madly flung it down !
" Why," she cried, while, wildly blowing,
Streamed her black locks in the air,
" When the real's gone forever,
Why keep the mockery here ?"
Clasping, then, her white hands tightly,
Raising up her burning eyes :

" O ! Granada ! hapless city,
Home of all I love and prize,
Allah keep, and save, and bless thee,
Break this heaven-accursed chain,
Lead thee to thine ancient greatness—
To thy glory back again !"

On her coldly classic features,
Mingling with their pale despair,
Beamed a look most pure and holy,
Such as angels wear !
But it came and passed as quickly
As a fragrant summer wind,
Leaving all the heat and passion
Which it found, behind.

Turning, with her dark lips curling,
In a with'ring, haughty scorn,
Gazed that cold patrician mother,
Of all softness shorn,
Where, bowed down with strong emotion,
Mingled sorrow, pride, and shame,
Stood Boabdil, ill-starred monarch—
Monarch but in name,
Looking on that distant city,
Lying far below his feet—

City of his lofty grandeur,
Splendor great as fleet—
“Weep,” she said, in tones so piercing,
That her hearers held their breath,
While, with outstretched hand, she pointed
To the vale beneath ;
“Weep, that unto yonder people
You have given living death.
Weep,” she said, while smiles disdainful,
Fearful, o’er her proud lip ran,
“Weep, like woman, o’er dominions
You defended not as man !”

Then arose the cries and wailings
Of the exiled group around—
Warriors and little children,
Women moaning on the ground—
Manhood, in meridian glory,
Blooming maidens, fair to see,
Childhood, led by withered fingers,
Age and infancy.
O ! those cries of woe and anguish,
Those lamentings of despair,
Waking all the wild, sad echoes
Sleeping in mid-air !

“I like it,” said Rachel, when he had finished. “Oh, Ogilvie ! what were the world without poetry written, as well as visible poetry ?”

“Like the night without stars,” replied Mr. Ogilvie, gazing upward to the blue vault that

was thickly a-glitter with its jewels, and murmuring Byron's fine lines, commencing

“ ‘Ye stars which are the Poetry of Heaven!’ ”

Rachel then repeated to Ogilvie the events of the previous night and morning, and the recital beguiled the rest of the time until they reached the encampment.

On payment of a small fee, which was, doubtless, only intended to exclude the rabble, they were allowed to pass through the entrance tent, and immediately afterwards found themselves in the midst of a very remarkable collection of people. Here was a group of “woman's rights” characters, some of them widely known as Spiritualists of the most vehement class, and there a knot of abolitionists. Artists, male and female, cold water advocates, authors, statesmen, scholars, students, with unkempt hair, spectacles and untidy stockings, newspaper reporters, and an infinite array of modern reformers generally, mingled harmoniously in this great audience of many thousand persons. All, for the time, were become enthusiasts, and not a few were laboring under that frightful, silent exercise

of "development" as mediums—contortions of the face, and crazed gestures of hands, feet, and arms, strongly characterizing these "manifestations." It would have sent a thrill through any heart to notice the thick sprinkling of mourning robes throughout that vast assembly, which predominance spoke, more plainly than any other outward token, of the purposes of the gathering. The "trancing" had not yet begun, and Rachel and Mr. Ogilvie took seats in silence, waiting patiently for the signal of commencement. The most wonderful order prevailed among these people. Not an unseemly word or deed could be detected. Here and there a shining "Star," brought from an adjacent city for the purpose, was seen on parade, evidently prepared to quell disturbance if any arose. Rachel observed that around the rudely constructed platform, that was to serve for a desk of delivery, was placed a number of long wooden benches. As yet they were unoccupied.

"Why are they kept vacant?" she asked Mr. Ogilvie.

Even as she spoke, an eccentric looking man,

with an exceedingly aspiring nose, mounted the platform and requested visitors to reserve these seats for "believing mediums," and gradually the places were filled by those for whom they were intended. A fine brass band enlivened the interval with music, which became more and more indicative of plaintiveness, as the hour of opening approached.

"Doubtless, for the purpose of harmonizing mind," gravely said Mr. Ogilvie, as he bowed to a passing gentleman, eminent both as a Spiritualist and for an elevated position in one of the learned professions.

As the great clock of the village struck the appointed time, and the last strain of "Home, Sweet Home," died upon the still air, simultaneously, as though moved by one common thought, the mass of "believing mediums" arose, a buzz of satisfaction fluttering all over the encampment. The moon had not yet risen, and the glare of the camp-lamps lent a haggard romance to the whole wild scene, for it was now quite dark, and the vast night-shadows were only broken by these artificial means.

"What next?" asked Rachel, with a smile of unbelief; "is this the beginning of the mystical trancing?"

But Mr. Ogilvie's eyes and attention were directed towards the platform.

"Hush," he said, "look, and listen to that woman. What a tragic actress she would make! There is the very soul of tragedy in the carriage of her fine head, and in her unstilted, natural gestures."

Rachel thought him jesting, but she looked, nevertheless, and, in a conspicuous position among the "believing mediums," discovered the object of her search.

She was, indeed, a fine, well-developed type of womanhood. Something past the meridian of life, she had still an air of freshness and youth. That she was very beautiful, no one would have hesitated to acknowledge, and yet it was a fierce, savage beauty, that made you tremble while you gazed. Her eyes were black, and as piercing in expression as any maniac's, alternately emitting sudden flashes of light that thrilled the beholder with dread, and glittering with the mild, innocent splendor of

childhood. She was very large, almost Amazonian in height, but this only added to the pride of her appearance. At a glance, you saw she was one of those women whom men very often admire most—yet never, by any chance, desire to marry.

She had become entranced, and, standing at the outer edge of the mass of “believing mediums,” was addressing to them weird declamation in a foreign language, that had the sonorous roll of Spanish, but which few of her hearers appeared to comprehend. Her gestures were frequent, and involuntarily struck Rachel as partaking of a martial character. The fitful lamp-light gave a charm to this woman’s gigantic form and fierce countenance, which it was impossible to resist, and her deep, full voice aided the effect very materially. Although all that she said was, to the larger part of her audience, unintelligible, the greatest excitement prevailed throughout the camp—and every moment so heightened it, that the President was fain, at last, to request order. For nearly half an hour this strange and beautiful woman continued to speak. To

all outward appearance, she was unconscious of the words her lips uttered.

When she had finished, she sat down, with such an air of bewilderment and exhaustion, that scarcely any would have doubted, had they been so inclined, that the part she had taken in the night's events was involuntary.

At the conclusion of this speech, an excited Spiritualist, an old man, who sat near Rachel and Ogilvie, drew a long breath of surprise and pleasure, and, rubbing his hands with an air of intense satisfaction, asked the latter if he understood Spanish ?

"I am sorry to say I do not," was Ogilvie's good-humored answer, "because, as nearly as I can discover, I appear just now to have lost a whole half-hour."

"Ah, sir," said his communicant, smiling, "it is worse with you than that. You have missed one of the finest evidences of the truth of Spiritualism that the world has ever seen. This medium was entranced by the soul of the old Spanish General Gonsalvo de Cordova, who delivered, through her, an exhortation to his armies before battle. Did you not notice the

exultation, the victory-inspiration of her gestures, and the clarion-like ring of her voice as she addressed the other mediums, who were entranced to represent the General's soldiers, rising simultaneously when she rose? It was altogether a perfect—a most convincing proof of Spiritualism."

The old man looked eagerly away as another voice now sounded from the platform, and, startled by a deep sigh from Rachel, Mr. Ogilvie turned suddenly towards her. She had become very pale, and her face wore a distressed, anxious look most unusual to it.

"Are you ill?" he asked, astonished.

"No," she answered readily.

Still this assurance did not remove his anxiety.

"Will it be too much, Ogilvie," she said, trying to smile, "to ask if you will take me home? I am perfectly well, but just now I had a presentiment that something had happened at the Lodge—some dreadful accident to that little child I told you of, and you saw at the gate, Zillah O'Brian. I feel as assured of it as that you and I are here together."

"Nonsense," he said, doubtingly, "the damp night-air has been too much for you, that is all."

"It is not all," she responded, with considerable firmness. "I tell you I am as well as ever I was in my life. I do not believe in presentiments generally, but in this one I have unaccountable faith. Pray do not smile, I cannot bear it."

"Certainly I will take you home," he said kindly, wrapping her shawl carefully around her. "To-morrow we shall see if I have not a right to smile, ay, and laugh, too—come."

She took his arm, and in silence they made their way through the crowd. At last they stood without the entrance-tent of the camp-circle, and, glad to be free of the oppressive atmosphere of the place and the light of the lamps, Rachel thanked Ogilvie so warmly for yielding to her whim, that, again, he smiled skeptically, and said he did not know she was so superstitious.

"Do you, then, love this child so much?" he asked, trying to retard her rapid progress.

"So much, yet not too much," she answered—
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ed; "she is motherless, and has no one to care for her, in all the world, but her guardian and me. She is so good, so beautiful, so affectionate, I could not love her less if I tried."

"And would not, I suppose, if you could; you make me jealous. Do not let her divide your heart, little woman. A whole kingdom or none, say I."

"Oh, Ogilvie! jealous of a child—a mere puny, loving little girl. Surely I have room for both."

"Perhaps so, perhaps not, you sprite; how your hand trembles—are you vexed, indignant? I cannot see you, but I know that pale face of yours is flushing warmer, and your eyes sparkling a trifle brighter than usual, and all for—nothing."

"You were not serious, then? I am glad of that."

"Serious? Yes and no. I am a strange fellow, Rachel, and if you cannot take me as you find me, be my good angel, and better my forlorn condition. Mould me as wax in your hands. I love you. You shall do with me as you will. Room for both! Yes, your large

heart could take in and do good to a dozen such worthless sinners as I am—but—Rachel?”

“Well?”

“Don’t do it! Let me tenant the blessed house alone.”

She smiled, gratified and amused; but the gathered darkness did not permit him to see it.

There was a long pause, broken only by the echo of their footsteps.

“How are the presentiments now?” he said, presently.

“You are laughing at me again. I shall not answer. I am acting upon the instincts of my nature, and so long as they are not morally wrong—”

“Good heaven!” he interrupted, starting violently, “what is that?”

He had bent down to scan her face; the action somewhat altered the range of his vision. Far along the sky, on either side, he saw a yellow, sullen glare of light.

He turned towards the encampment they had quitted but a short half-hour before, Rachel yielding her hold on his arm.

"They are on fire! The tents are burning!"

It was too true. Fierce tongues of flame were shooting athwart the calm evening sky, rising and falling with every breath of wind. They spread—they thickened! the whole camp was in a blaze! Shouts rose and died away upon the breeze, deadened by the distant roar of the flames.

Silently stood Rachel and Mr. Ogilvie, gazing on the awful spectacle. Between them and that red billow of fire moved dusky figures—men, women, and children—flying for their lives; and, far up in the heavens, the yellow light extended, like the gorgeous beauty of a sunset. Then, in a few moments, it faded and declined; the materials of which the tents were constructed were soon consumed, and pale flames, from low mounds of embers, were all that told of the terrible event.

Then, out on the air, far and wide, echoed the joyful cry,

"No lives lost!"

"Thank God!" said Rachel, in a low voice, as the sound swept along, borne by the passing

multitude, who but now were saved a dreadful doom.

"It is, indeed, a miraculous escape," said Mr. Ogilvie, gravely.

And Rachel then remembered bitterly, that he had no God to thank!

"No lives lost! no lives lost!" Triumphant, victorious music never filled the atmosphere with the glory of those three words!

They turned homeward again, and very soon were at the Lodge. Rachel sighed heavily as Mr. Ogilvie rang for admittance. Some way, she dreaded to enter.

"May I come in?" he asked.

"Not to-night," she answered, and Mr. Ogilvie did not insist.

She passed in, and stood for a moment hesitating at the door of the dining-room; then, as she pushed it open, a chorus of exclamations greeted her from the assembled scholars. Study hours for once were neglected, and they were standing around the room, discussing in groups the calamity which they had just witnessed from the windows. At her first hurried glance, Rachel saw that Zillah was among them, and

she experienced a sensation of sincere thankfulness as she perceived the circumstance. The child had fallen asleep over her books and maps, and, sitting down among the other pupils, to recount all she knew of the late disaster, Rachel did not disturb her slumber.

The evening gradually wore away in cheerful and girlish conversation, until Mr. Godwin entered to commence prayers, when at once all returned to their accustomed places.

Yet still Zillah O'Brian slept.

"Idle little thing!" said her guardian, smiling, as he smoothed the child's long, tangled hair, which veiled, like a net of gold, her delicate features.

But, uttering an exclamation, he started back in horror. The cold touch of that icy head! The fixed, statue-like position of the white neck and graceful shoulders! Alas, he had discovered that she slept in Eternity, not in Time!

Zillah was dead!

CHAPTER XI.

IT was on the afternoon of the day on which the remains of Zillah O'Brian had been committed to the bosom of our mother earth. In a green and peaceful country grave-yard not far distant, she reposed in that slumber that may never know but one awakening. No stone, until later years, was erected to her memory, and, for a long while, flowers only, sweet, innocent things, like her who lay beneath, marked the low mound. Now, many a stranger, loitering in that pleasant New Jersey village, pauses to meditate the signification of her monument, as he peers through the railings of the church-yard. It is simply a prostrate slab, bearing a ball of black marble, to which are affixed two wings of the same material, but of a spotless white. On the slab is this inscription :

"ZILLAH O'BRIAN.

"An angel for all Eternity."

It was, as I have said, the afternoon of the day of the burial.

Sitting upon the piazza of St. Mary's Lodge, was Rachel Olio. She was very sad at heart. She had loved Zillah deeply, so deeply that her death had seemed, as it were, to rive from her a portion of her own life. It was near sundown, and, looking listlessly into the lovely valley beneath, in which lay a white village, girt with the solemn beauty of green trees, she was glad of the hour of repose. The coming twilight and the deliciousness of the soft air were grateful to her worn, depressed spirit.

But soon the promise of a glorious sunset faded; the sky changed, its serene aspect melted into gray leaden clouds, that betokened the advent of a storm. Rachel was languidly marveling at and deploring this sudden change, when she beheld Mr. Ogilvie advancing up one of the front paths. He saw her on the piazza, and waved his hat in chivalric greeting. As he came nearer, she could not but observe that his face wore a dark, troubled appearance, that was not usual with it. His step, too, was quick and impatient, and this was with

him an unfailing sign of disturbed equanimity.

“Rachel,” he said, abruptly, “come with me. Do not delay. All is ready.”

His manner was excited, almost violent. Rachel did not understand the import of his words; but, as he uttered them, he smiled that rare, sweet, lingering smile, and, in her infatuated heart, there was no room for doubt or interrogation.

“Come,” he again said, holding out his hand to clasp hers, and there was that in his voice which made her feel she could follow him to the furthestmost part of this earth.

She had a light shawl resting on her shoulders. She folded it over her head, and, without a word, stood ready. He drew her arm within his, and thus strangely they set forth, both without consulting the gloomy, threatening skies, and one confidently careless of the purpose and destination of this strange ramble.

In his impetuosity, Mr. Ogilvie strode along so rapidly, that it required great effort on Rachel's part to keep pace with him. Over fields of untrodden grain, through unfrequented paths

and by-ways, he led her with stern, mute haste, treading all barriers under foot with almost insane vehemence. Once a farm-fence obstructed the path. Mr. Ogilvie took his companion lightly in his powerful grasp, lifted her over the bars, and, silently placing her again on her feet, proceeded onward as rapidly as before. Not a word had been spoken since they left the Lodge. She asked no explanation, desired none. She loved him too blindly to dream of demanding it.

Presently, Mr. Ogilvie became conscious that he was walking too fast for Rachel's strength, and, for the first time, he paused. This was fortunate; for the poor girl was almost exhausted, and panted for breath.

"Rachel—child—myth!" he cried, "why did you not stop me? What a wretch I am to cause you this suffering. In my haste I forgot even that you were with me. I was very wrong. Forgive me, I entreat you."

He seated her tenderly on the roadside grass, and, standing at her feet with uncovered head, seemed bitterly to reproach himself for his neglect.

"It is nothing," said Rachel, quietly, "I shall soon feel better. I am out of breath, that is all."

"I do not deserve to hear you say so. I would not harm my little friend Rachel, for all the wealth the world contains. Let him injure one hair of her young head who dares. I tell you, child, you are more precious to me than anything language may name. The Indian heathen guard their idols less zealously than I wish to guard mine."

"Come," said Rachel, rising, "let us go on."

Just then a vivid flash of lightning illuminated the lonely, deserted lane in which they stood.

Rachel had a constitutional fear of lightning, but she said nothing, expecting, of course, that, on this signal of a coming storm, her companion would at once proceed homeward. To her surprise, he again placed her hand on his arm, and resumed walking. The vehemence of his gait began gradually to return, and she perceived that he was once more oblivious of her presence. The lane they were following grew

every moment more wildly romantic. They were constantly obliged to stoop to pass under the heavy, overhanging boughs of the trees, and, frequently, the safe foothold of the path was interrupted by narrow and rocky chasms. It was nearly night, and the premature darkness of the gathering storm made these places very dangerous to cross. All signs of the presence of humanity had long before disappeared. A wilderness could not have been more impressively desolate than the lonely tract of country they were traversing. Rachel had noticed that the path had been rising for some time, and she was not surprised when an abrupt turn in it revealed a steep and rough ascent winding through the dense wood, over the face of a hill. The prospect of climbing this uninviting elevation, was, in her wearied state, no enviable undertaking, and she now thought it time to rebel. Very quietly she slipped her hand from Mr. Ogilvie's arm, and stood motionless.

"We shall get wet," she said, in answer to his glance of reproachful inquiry. "I do not think I can go any further."

"It is too late to return now," he answered,

“we shall soon reach shelter—the storm will break in a few moments.”

A shivering peal of thunder seeming to enforce his words, she yielded, and they commenced the ascent together. They had but half accomplished it, before they were obliged to pause to rest.

“Rachel,” said Mr. Ogilvie, in a low voice, “do not judge hardly of me for what may happen this night. If there is but little good, and much daring in my nature, try to—” a gust of wind swept away the remainder of the sentence.

On nearing the summit of the hill, Rachel saw, through the cloudy obscurity, a rudely-constructed house standing in a small clearing. A dim light shone from the windows, and towards it Mr. Ogilvie half led, half carried her. Arriving at it he unlocked and opened the door, and they entered.

It was a miserable, scantily-furnished hut, evidently the habitation of some poor laborer’s little family, to judge from the coarse garments hanging around the walls.

A small wood fire burned on the hearth, the

flame from which was all the light in the room, although lamps were evidently burning behind a partition curtain that reached from floor to ceiling, at one end of the cabin.

"We are alone," said Mr. Ogilvie, placing a seat for Rachel; "we can wait here undisturbed until the rain ceases."

He drew out a chair for himself, and, sitting down, gave a long, deep respiration. For some time silence reigned between them, which Rachel dared not be the first to break. She experienced fear, she knew not why.

A dull, sullen sound on the roof, told that the storm was commencing.

"It is raining," said Mr. Ogilvie, rising and going to a window. Then he came back and stood directly before Rachel. "Child, you strive in vain to appear apathetic. Your face is ever expressive of the truth. Do not attempt to deceive me."

It was true. The solitude of that deserted hut, so far up the mountain, and the increasing violence of the tempest without, appalled her.

"Shall we go?" he asked.

Her only answer was an eager "Yes," and she arose joyfully to follow him from the place.

"What! In this driving rain? Hear it how it pelts against the panes!"

"Yes, yes—oh yes! Let us go anywhere away from here. There is something in the air of this cabin that refuses respiration."

Mr. Ogilvie folded his arms, and, regarding her silently, smiled.

"A coward, Rachel?"

"I acknowledge it, I am! I cannot explain it even to myself, but I am, indeed, afraid."

"Yes, 'afraid,'" he repeated, "that is the word. Rachel, I thought you a woman, a true, noble woman, timid, perhaps, among the petty scenes of everyday life, but courageous in circumstances demanding actual courage. I have not brought you here without a purpose (I tell you it frankly), and now by weak, childish fear, you destroy the trust I placed in you. I have something to say to you—a confidence to repose in you which can only be reposed in you here; though I have waited, hoped, panted for this hour to come, I am to be disappointed, foiled at last."

Pride recalled Rachel's truant heroism. Looking daringly in his pale, wrathful face, she exclaimed,

"You shall not be foiled by me. Try and prove me!"

Thoughtfully he leaned his cheek on his hand.

"Listen, then?" he said. "Explanation is your due."

"Well?"

"Rachel, I have never asked you, in so many words, if you believed, even remotely, in modern Spiritualism, although we have often spoken together on the subject. Have you any—the least faith in it?"

"No," she answered; now completely reassured, despite the shadows on his perplexed brow.

"Child, I tell you, you *must*."

"Must! how can I, when reason forbids it?"

"You speak blindly, but it is natural, for you are unconvinced. The very vision you told me of, which you thought a sudden gift of second sight, what was *that* but a species of Spiritualism? Through our mutual relations there ex-

isted between us, at the time, strong sympathy. Naturally, then, your spiritual development progressed in a degree approximating to my own, and mine was progressing then ; for, at the exact hour that you beheld me in your vision, I was actually sitting at the table, exercising my powers as a tipping medium. So much for our affinities. I did not tell you of this before, because I thought the time was not yet come. What do you think of this now ?”

“That it is very wonderful. Yet clairvoyance is not Spiritualism.”

“Skeptic ! Will nothing convince you ? Tell me if you know the precise meaning of the word ‘medium,’ as used by Spiritualists ?”

“Yes, most certainly.”

“There are many varieties of mediums, some of them being possessed of greater power than others. Tipping, which is the lowest, rapping, writing, seeing, speaking, and healing mediums ; this is their progressive order, each being a degree higher, and surely that is best which is most calculated to ameliorate the fallen condition of man ; the healing medium has but to

lay his hands on the sick, and they become free from disease."

"Do you believe this?" demanded Rachel, doubtfully.

"I have proved it!" was the vehement reply. "I never use other physicians than healing mediums."

Rachel looked at him in amazement, but his countenance expressed no sign of insincerity.

"Rachel, although I do not acknowledge the existence of a God, or of any Almighty Being whatever, as you know, I confess to you now, that I do believe in a Hereafter—in the Eternal Life of souls released from their clay bondage on earth. Thus much have I gained from Spiritualism; for I am both a Spiritualist and a medium."

He paused, evidently expecting some words of womanly rebuke, argument, or persuasive entreaty; but she only colored slightly, her dark eyes gleaming for an instant like living fire.

"Well?" she said, at length, in the tone of one resigned to all the dreariness of fate.

Mr. Ogilvie did not speak, but dreamily

seemed to be trying to discern something floating in the air. Then he went on :

“ For months past I have been investigating privately this great mystery, carrying out my researches principally through my own mediumship. It is not too presumptuous to say that I have fathomed it. I am about to master it, as men never yet have dreamed of mastering it. Allured at first by mere curiosity, the fascinations of this wonderful tipping, writing, and rapping, fastened slowly but surely upon me. While striving to adapt these things to scientific purposes, I became, finally, a partial believer in the creed itself—that is, a believer as far as is possible without acknowledging one universal Creator. I will tell you, Rachel, how my attention was first attracted to Spiritualism. I was sitting one day alone in my room humming some little trifling melody, which, unbidden, had found its way to my lips. Suddenly, I heard a clear, distinct, well-harmonized voice, mingling a most musical contralto part with my own. I ceased singing, greatly surprised, and, at the same note, the voice ceased also. I searched the room, looked out of the windows,

but could find no one. As you may suppose, I was a little alarmed and very curious to learn what it might be. I began to sing again. Immediately the voice vibrated on my ear. I paused abruptly, and, as before, it was not to be heard. I made the experiment many times, and, at each trial, in perfect intonation, the voice sang with me! What was I to think? The circumstance was, at the time, inexplicable, and, for days afterwards, I was completely in the dark with regard to it. In a week or so, I received a visit from a friend, who, unknown to myself, was a writing medium. He informed me that the previous night a communication from the Spirit World had come through his hand for me, with a written injunction to himself to give it to me immediately. I had mentioned to no one, Rachel, the circumstance I have just related to you; judge, then, of my astonishment, as I read these words in a handwriting precisely similar to that of my dead mother. ‘My dear son—do not doubt for one moment that the vibrations you heard, on the sixth of May last, were made by a spirit voice. Your mother, Sarah Godfrey Ogilvie.’ Shortly

after this, I was influenced to become a medium, and I am now, although I have always kept the knowledge from you, among the most powerful ones of the time. Every day of my life I receive communications from departed friends, and I am happier and better for it. I understood your sternly religious principles so well, Rachel, that I have not dared to speak of all this before. To-night, now, or never, I determined to tell you."

"Is it possible!" said Rachel, sorrowfully, alarmed at the enthusiasm of his manner, "is it possible that you can put faith in the idea that the holy angels are to be disturbed from their heavenly repose, to come and go, at the call of wicked men and women?"

Mr. Ogilvie repeated slowly this word "repose."

"Spiritual Life is not 'repose,'" he said dreamily; "it is active as ours; inspirable, like ours, by hopes and ambitions as colossal, good and glorious."

Rachel thrilled with dismay at the mere prospect of such a heaven.

"Where, then," she inquired, warmly, "is

that 'rest from our labors' promised us in Scripture?"

"Do not let us discuss this subject now," said Mr. Ogilvie. "Every moment is precious. I must progress to the revelation which is the object of your visit to this place. Be still, and listen. Listen to a plan of redemption from death; listen to the grandeur of the immortality for mankind which I have wrought out from this imperfect thing they call Spiritualism. I have long been feverish with the desire to test my discovery; my days are but one wild eagerness of impatience. The time is now come. Triumph, victory await my call; for man, born of woman, shall live forever through me!"

His words, mien, gestures, struck a terror through Rachel, such as it is impossible for language to describe. She shrank from him, and yet, unaccountably fascinated, her eyes would not leave his face, glowing as it was with a giant beauty which had never rested there before. Mr. Ogilvie must have read her fears, for his manner calmed and his voice sank from its previous tone of exultation as he proceeded:

"I have pondered long and anxiously over the principle by which a medium endows his tools with action and partial vitality. If a mere table can be gifted, through his hands, with electric power that prepares it to become the temporary abode of spirits who manifest intelligence that proves, beyond all doubt, their ability to come back to earth, why, yes, WHY may not the human frame of the newly DEAD be inspired by the same means with breath and motion? Yes, yes! If the soul have power to revisit the world, and, through mediums, animate things fashioned by man, may it not return to its clay by the exercise of this same mediumship? Answer me that! Who shall prove that such things are impossible?"

He strode to the dark curtain which shut off a portion of the hut, and drew it aside with savage haste.

The lamp that was burning behind it revealed dimly the form of a low, rough bed, and, reposing upon the red woolen counterpane, Rachel saw the nude outline of a sleeping child.

Then, again, Mr. Ogilvie turned towards her,

calling her imperiously to come to him. With a passiveness at which she herself was astonished, Rachel complied with the demand; for, both in tone and wording, it was such.

“Look!”

She cast her eyes in mute obedience upon the white limbs of the child.

Good God! It was Zillah—dead, silent Zillah!

Rachel did not speak—she did not weep—she did not tremble! She stood without will, power, or sensation, and gazed upon the cold, statuesque figure of her whom she had that day beheld committed to the grave. A long while she remained thus. Then, on her benumbed brain dawned the full meaning of Mr. Ogilvie’s last words. As she looked on that little, sinless form, the awful desecration of his purpose flashed through her mind. She sank faintly to a seat, shutting out from her eyes, with her clasped hands, the peaceful, trusting smile on that dead child’s face. It stabbed her to the heart; for she could not but feel herself an accomplice in this sacrilegious plan. A cautious movement of Mr. Ogilvie caused her to raise

her head. The obscure light revealed his large form bending over the rude couch. One of his hands lay lightly on Zillah's sweet marble forehead, the other rested on the feet. He was looking steadfastly in the child's face, and seemed concentrating the whole force of his enormous will and strong intellect.

"Rachel," he said, gently, "sing something plaintive and melancholy; will you?"

The girl did not speak.

"Sing!" he repeated more forcibly.

Still she was mute.

A third time he spoke, and at the same moment he raised his head and looked at her with protracted, unflinching, magnetic gaze. A cold, singular sensation crept over her, as, unwillingly, she at last sang. It seemed to her as though she were submitting to some power which could not but be obeyed. She began a sorrowful ballad, the first that occurred to her.

"Not that!" exclaimed Mr. Ogilvie, impatiently; "how can that secular thing calm the nerves, concentrate the attention, and aid the solemn invocation of a departed spirit? Not that! Sing one of the most supplicating of the

hymns with which you worship the Being you call God!"

He had removed his eyes, and gradually her feeling of constraint passed away. Therefore, she now cried boldly,

"Freeland Ogilvie, deny it as you will, you are a believer in the Deity!"

He was earnestly regarding the lifeless figure outstretched before him, and he only said, softly—

"Hush! Do not speak!"

"I will speak," she cried, eagerly; "I will tell you that, in your secret soul, you own the existence of a God! If it is not so, why, then, do you tacitly acknowledge the virtue of the received forms of Divine worship as you did just now, when you bade me sing a hymn? Sophistical, sacrilegious man, your creed and actions contradict each other!"

She spoke loudly, passionately. Yet he did not answer. His large head was bent over the bosom of the child; his ear rested on it.

"Sing!" he said, raising his eyes to hers.

Rachel trembled uncontrollably, and—sang.

If time, place, circumstance can inspire a

human being, the awfulness of her surroundings inspired this young girl then. Music from the harp of a visible angel could not have thrilled her more than did the sound of her own voice, chanting lays of divinity, as she gazed with terrible and increasing fascination on that unholy scene. Suddenly, her fresh, youthful voice began to tremble; for, indistinctly sounding, as from afar off, the low, sweet voice which Mr. Ogilvie had described, mingled in harmony with her own. It was faint and uncertain, like a picture seen through mist; still she heard it! She paused, and there was solemn silence. She recommenced, and that soft contralto once more resounded mournfully through the room. Certainly it was not the mere effect of an excited imagination; the testimony of sense proved it to be reality. While she sang, unmoved by the phenomena just recorded, Mr. Ogilvie retained his hands upon the forehead and feet of little Zillah, occasionally bending his head to her breast to listen for the pulsations of the life which he daringly expected to renew. The intellectual grandeur which this man's face

expressed, the atmosphere of daunted mortality (in no other words can my meaning be rendered) with which the room seemed infested, filled the soul of Rachel with an involuntary emotion of sublimity that was neither fear nor admiration, yet resembled both.

She ceased singing, and was sadly watching his grand face, when she saw dawning upon it a wild, radiant joy. His brows smoothed from anxious uncertainty into the broad calm of hope, and his mouth worked with irrepressible excitement. Rachel glanced hastily from him to the child. Her white hands were locked on her little breast; all was still; nothing bespoke the change—the return from immortality to mortality, which Mr. Ogilvie's countenance had indicated. As she looked, lo! those pale hands moved with slight, tremulous motion; then slowly, shudderingly, unclasped!

Still Mr. Ogilvie continued his gaze.

“Arise,” he said, in a firm, commanding voice.

Rachel fell upon her knees, terrified into silence.

“Arise!” he repeated, and removed his hands

from Zillah's head and feet. But they remained motionless. Then he came beside Rachel, and, resting one cold palm on her forehead, said, solemnly :

“ You have seen—is the testimony of your eyes sufficient, or would you demand more ? Ask and you shall have ! ”

She averted her head in horrible loathing at the icy touch of his polluted fingers, and his unconscious quotation from Holy Writ.

“ Rachel,” he continued, “ this life must not be lost. What I cannot do, you both can and must. You possess that which I do not—a woman's habits—a woman's tact and delicacy of touch. I am a man, and unable to warm and dress this little child whom I have restored to being—that duty falls upon you. It was for that alone I brought you here. Be quick, quick ! or my efforts will have become of no use ! ”

“ I will not ! ” she shrieked, passionately, aroused at once to indignant rebellion.

“ You will not ? ” he repeated, glancing carelessly at her.

Again that stealthy, magnetic influence crept

over her soul and body. It was like a penetrating waft of chill, damp, autumnal air. She had no will but his; her own volition was completely conquered. He did not utter a word, but she felt herself impelled, through this intellectual and physical control, to obey passively. She staggered to the bed. She touched the nude arms and the long fingers; they were cold as death. The momentary, electrical life had come and gone.

"I will not!" she again cried desperately, loosening her hold of the thin hand.

Ogilvie seemed to relent, hesitating, as it were, between pity for his betrothed, and the allurements of his frightful ambition. Bidding Rachel sit near the fire, he piled on fresh logs, for, although summer, the room was far from warm, in consequence of the heavy rain. A little while he stood, regarding the pallid and innocent subject of his experiment, with an air of but partially gratified curiosity, then threw himself at full length before the now blazing hearth, and pillowed his head on Rachel's feet.

"I have succeeded," he murmured, "henceforth I am omnipotent."

Scornfully did Rachel regard him, yet she dared not alter her position.

His features glowed with an absolute glory ; great and uncurbed intellect was throned upon them. She thought, profanely, of a God.

“No,” she said, “no, Ogilvie, you have not succeeded !”

He sprang up, his countenance expressing mingled wrath at her boldness, and astonishment at the assertion.

Rachel proceeded :

“A mere electric spasm is not *life*. That shuddering movement was surely nothing more, as you yourself must acknowledge at this time to-morrow. And even if it were—what then? If you *had* gifted her with animal existence, is mere breath everything? God alone controls the SOUL, man’s passport for eternity, and never, NEVER can you recall *that* !”

These words irritated Ogilvie more than was apparent outwardly. He went to the bed—he pushed back the golden hair from Zillah’s forehead, and said, thoughtfully :

“Can it be? Are such things possible? The soul and body dwelling in separate

spheres!" and he knelt to contemplate more closely the marble face of that little child. He gave a sigh of relief. "It is not so," he said. "Taking it at the worst, this is but an imperfect result of the power I hold. I ought not expect success at once. Who shall say I have failed—who shall venture to say it?"

"I!" cried Rachel, bravely.

"You!" he contemptuously repeated. "You, a mere weak woman, whom I could crush with one stroke of my hand."

He grasped her by the shoulder, and shook her recklessly.

"Could crush, but you dare not," Rachel said, resolutely, as soon as she could speak.

"Do not say so—do not defy me. I dare, but I will not. Shall a prisoner destroy the bird that visits him through the iron bars of his cell? Shall a shepherd slaughter the lamb that he has sheltered in his bosom? No, Rachel, no!" He gathered her to him, and lavished caresses upon her as fond as his late grasp was violent. She was a very mite in his hands, and, although his touch was hateful to her, she had no escape.

“Lo,” he said, placing her at arm’s length, and contemplating her through his overhanging brows, “lo, this woman shall be immortal! If disease prostrate her frame, my hands shall snatch her back to life again. The gates of death are shut against her. Rachel, you are mine forever, mine for an earthly eternity.”

The poor girl could but sob convulsively. She was nearly frantic with the effects of all this horror. Again he pressed her in his arms.

“Conqueror of mortality,” he murmured, “all the bliss of earth is open to you! Enjoy it while you may. You have triumphed over the grave—you have power to lock its hungry jaws from those you will. Rachel, you shall be the bride of omnipotence, you mate with a man whom the age shall hereafter proudly name its benefactor.”

“Never, never,” she cried, in an outburst of the fear, the passion, the dismay that had gradually accumulated in her heart—“*never* do we two wed!”

She struggled in his arms, she attempted to release herself from their contaminating embrace.

"Be quiet, Rachel," he said, with something of mockery in his voice at her futile efforts, "be quiet. I have you. I hold you. You are mine."

"I am not ! I never will be. From this hour you are nothing to me. You have done with me and I with you forever !"

"Indeed, Rachel ! you have calculated vainly, if you imagine to distress me by such sophistry. Nothing on this earth shall hinder me from making you my wife, no not even yourself. You are *mine*. Rebel not against your destiny. As well battle with a god as with me. I tell you, you are *MINE*."

She burst from him with the desperation of insulted womanhood. There was the blaze of utter scorn in her eyes, and despair as well as energy in her newly-acquired strength. At that moment she ceased to love him. She felt, irrevocably, that so long as she might live, he could never again be to her that which, until that moment, he had always been.

"What now, Rachel?" Mr. Ogilvie asked, smiling tranquilly, but making no endeavor to retain her in his embrace.

“This !” she said, wildly, “that even Satan must shudder at the horrible daring of the aspirations you have revealed to me this night.”

She flew to the door. The key was in the lock. With the haste of fear she turned it, and bounded into the open air almost before Mr. Ogilvie had perceived her designed flight.

Rain was falling heavily, and the mountain path, dangerous at all times, was then completely lost to vision. Rachel dashed towards it with a frantic force, inspirable only by desperation. She could see but a few feet before her, as on, on she rushed. She knew not if she reached the path at all; for she heard, behind, the feet of her pursuer, and she ran she saw not whither. Suddenly she found herself falling, and amid the crash of forest boughs, and sensations of agonizing pain, everything resolved into oblivion.

CHAPTER XII.

WHEN Rachel awoke to consciousness, broad daylight glared full in her face.

She was lying helplessly at the foot of a dwarf pine-tree in a close thicket of tangled undergrowth. As she languidly opened her eyes, she strove, but vainly, to comprehend how she came to be alone in that desolate spot. She felt that she was faint and ill, and that a burning fever flashed fiercely through all her veins. She looked about in mute wonder. How had she been spirited to this place without her knowledge? Forest trees shut her in on every side—no path was to be seen—what could it all mean. Alas, too soon memory returned! The frightful scene in the hut on the mountain came vividly before her mind like a picture of sternest reality. She tried to rise and flee from the thicket, but, in the distress this attempt gave her, she fell back again to her first position.

Her garments were torn, soiled, and wet ; she had lain there all night, unsheltered, insensible, and with the heavy rains descending full upon her ; it was then at least ten o'clock.

Thoughts of an unknown death flitted through her brain. Was she, indeed, to lie there, helpless, alone, suffering, famishing till she perished ? Were there none near to hear her cries ? Was she, oh, pitying Heaven, to leave the sweet earth so young, with no friend to close her eyes ? She did not dread to die, she did not fear the awful parting of the soul from the body, but she knew meekly that she was not worthy yet to meet her Maker face to face.

As the sun neared his meridian, she collected strength to creep from the spot on her hands and knees to an open space in the wood, where the unobstructed sunshine might sooner dry her wet raiment ; but the effort to do so was very great, because her limbs were stiffened by exposure to the fury of the storm. Some partially ripened berries attracting her attention, she bent down the bushes, gathered and devoured them, overjoyed to relieve herself of the

intolerable thirst with which she was oppressed. They were cool and refreshing, and seemed, for the time, to allay her fever—never were morsels so delicious as they. Shortly after eating them, she fell, from utter exhaustion, into an uneasy slumber. Nature asserted her rights, and she slept until late in the afternoon, when, aroused as though by a painful dream that had reached its denouement, she started up suddenly from the soft, woodland grass, where she had been lying. A slow, cautious rustling of the dead leaves, with which the ground was thickly strewn, drew her alarmed attention. She looked anxiously around and saw the beautiful, glittering eyes of a snake, which, with out-thrust tongue and uplifted head, was moving its long, shining length stealthily toward her. With one reëchoing cry of affright, Rachel staggered to her feet, and, oblivious of all physical agony, darted from the spot, and, plunging wildly through the brushwood, paused not, until, with equal delight and surprise, she found herself standing, though panting and breathless, at the side of an open and evidently frequented road. Reaction came, and she sank

down exhausted. Her brain whirled, her sight vibrated, and insensibility again descended upon her overwrought intellect.

* * * * *

"I thought thee said she was better to-day," said Janet Hawthorne's kindly voice. "I confess I cannot see the amendment. She looks puny and weakly enough. She wants rest from all this dreary teaching, and she shall have it, too. As soon as she is able, we will take her back to Maplehurst, eh, Alice?"

Rachel slowly opened her now spiritless eyes.

"Hush!" cautioned another voice, that the young girl had no difficulty in recognizing as that of her Aunt Alice, "hush, she is awakening too soon, by half."

"Am I home?" Rachel asked faintly; "who brought me here?"

"No, child, thee is not at home, but thee shall be cared for the same as if thee was, until thee is able to go away from here. There, now, lie quiet, or thee will harm thyself. That would be bad."

"Is it you, Aunt Alice?"

"Yes, Rachel, and here's Janet, too, come to see thee."

Immediately a soft kiss was pressed on the sick girl's cheek, and she saw bending over her the mild, withered face of Janet Hawthorne.

Experiencing no feeling of illness beyond that of extreme weakness, for a while the past remained obscure, until, with a shudder of returning memory, Rachel recalled everything—her ramble up the mountain on that stormy eve—her terror, and her flight.

"Thee is well enough able to sit up a little time—would thee like it? Shall I help thee to this arm-cheer, Rachel?"

How glad she was to have the dreary meditation of that memorable night broken upon!

"Yes, aunt, if you will be so kind," and shortly she found herself established in the chair, which, from the circumstance of its being in scarlet and white, led her to conjecture that she was still beneath the roof of St. Mary's Lodge, although the room was unfamiliar.

"Is Fred well?" she asked.

"Yes, dear, and most anxious to see thee. I

have a letter for thee from him—shall I get it?”

The young girl signified eager assent, and her aunt went to a closet and brought forth the precious document from the bottom of her own best cap-box. Rachel took a long while to read it, notwithstanding it was written in large, boyish characters. Her sight wavered, and her head throbbed painfully. On finishing the dear record of school scrapes, and amusing adventures, she looked round and saw that she was alone with her Aunt Janet, Alice having noiselessly quitted the room.

She longed to confess the sorrow wearing on her heart, to her best earthly friend.

“Aunt,” she said, “I have something to tell you. Will you come sit by me?”

“Yes, love, but speak low, thee has no strength to spare.” The old Quakeress sat down, her hand fast clasped in that of the young girl. Few words sufficed; Rachel did not go into detail. She said her faith in Mr. Ogilvie was destroyed, that the thought of their union had become more repulsive than any other thing on the earth. She related his at-

tempt to recall Zillah O'Brian to life, and spoke of the immediate revulsion of feeling on her own part which that event had occasioned, pausing at this point, as she saw the horror on the face of the good Quakeress mingled with something that had wonderfully the effect of doubt.

"Aunt Janet," she cried wildly, "do not hesitate to believe me! I swear to you I am speaking the truth. I am not raving—I am well now, and simply stating a solemn, awful fact. I implore you not to doubt."

"I do not doubt thee, Rachel; no, not for an instant. But I am shocked, dismayed. Was there ever wickedness like this! I know thee is not speaking merely the fancies of an excited, feverish imagination, and for this good reason: Immediately after I came here, (and thee has been sick many weeks), it was discovered accidentally, that the body of thy little friend had been removed from the church-yard. Great consternation prevailed in the village, my dear, when this was made known, and, suspicion falling on the sexton, an avaricious old man, hardened by his dreadful way of life, it was

supposed he had been bribed to the deed. A mob gathered, and would have lynched him, as the world's people call it, but for the efforts of the good men of Lyster, and foremost among them was that Richard Godwin who conducts prayers at this very house. Don't thee interrupt, Rachel; let me tell thee all first. The strangest part of the whole thing was, that, a few nights after the riot, this little child's grave was again opened. The next morning, the marks being seen, the authorities examined it, and found that the cold, lifeless object of all the trouble and confusion had been returned. My poor Rachel!"

She sprang forward just in time to catch the fainting form of the girl in her arms. The dreadful sequel to her own tale had been the drop to much in Rachel Olio's cup of suffering.

That day, and the next, and the next passed, and there was no sign of amendment. But the stupor into which her aunt's injudicious and ill-timed recital had thrown her, began after this to wear gradually away.

One morning, as soon as her returning health

permitted conversation, Rachel asked to be informed how it had happened that she had been brought back to St. Mary's Lodge.

"My poor little one," said her aunt, "I will tell thee. Thee sees, one day Alice and I were sitting knitting at home, when in comes Freeland Ogilvie, his eyes all afire, and his hair flying about his face like a madman's. He said thee was sick, and he wanted us to set off with him at once, and come to thee. We were no laggards, Alice and I, and in half an hour we were driving this way with Freeland Ogilvie, in one of his own carriages. Then he told us a long story, how he had taken thee out to walk, and being overtaken by a storm, thee missed thy footing, in the darkness, and fell down a hill. He almost wept as he said he had thee taken to a laborer's cot for the night, and the next day brought thee back to St. Mary's Lodge to be nursed."

"It is false, every word of it!" cried Rachel. "How dared he say so! Perhaps he thought I might not live to utter the truth. It is false—false!"

"I believe thee, Rachel, indeed I do. Free-

land Ogilvie has never had the reputation of a really wise, good man. I have been beguiled in him myself. I am glad thy eyes are opened, and very thankful thee will not now become his wife."

"I have been sick?"

"Very sick. It is five weeks to-morrow, since we came here. Thee has been unconscious mostly, and I have much wondered to hear thee rave of ghosts and serpents. Often, thee started up in bed, and shrieked that thou wert poisoned by the bite of venomous snakes. But it is all clear to me now, dear child."

"Then Mr. Ogilvie must have discovered me as I lay insensible at the edge of that road," said Rachel, thoughtfully, "since he brought me back."

"Doubtless, my dear. And now, I fear this talking is too much for thee; thee must go to bed again."

The young girl's eyes filled with grateful tears as she said fervently,

"I thank God that I am no longer deceived. I was charmed, fascinated into a delusion that is over for the rest of my life. Aunt Janet?"

“Well.”

“I should be so glad to have it off my mind. I cannot,” shuddering, “see him, to tell him irrevocably that I will not marry him ; and yet, perhaps—ought I, do you think ? Is he in Lyster ?”

“Yes, he comes every day to inquire after thee ; but he has not seen thee since the afternoon he brought thee here.”

“Then I will write now and at once !”

Startled at her eagerness, yet scarcely daring to risk opposition, the Quakeress placed pen and paper before her niece. The evening of that day, Freeland Ogilvie held in his possession a note of formal and unchangeable rejection, concluding with a frigid request that St. Mary's Lodge might not in future be favored with his visits. Any one, to have beheld him as he read this letter, would have conjectured that it was of the most trifling, unimportant nature. He crushed it lightly in his hand, and, with a secure smile on his lips, said meditatively,

“Poor little Rachel, we shall see ! She cannot live without me, nor I without her. A month or so of quiet submission on my part

will soften her wonderfully, and she will recall me—the little tyrant.”

In a few days afterwards, he returned to Maplehurst.

A great change passed over the life of Rachel Olio. Her idols had been so rudely broken, that her true feminine nature almost sank beneath the trial. But, when the first bitterness had gone, she began to desire to live for others, and, in doing good to suffering mortals, seeking no return of affection or gratitude, to forget her own sorrow. There is a period of noble unselfishness, similar to this, in almost every woman's life. But it rarely comes until the best hopes of her existence are humbled. .

Ogilvie's strange influence over Rachel Olio's character ceased entirely. She seemed endowed with more than her natural force of intellect, to resist his hitherto irresistible will. By it, he had often, as it were, compelled her to cast away what barriers lay between them. Now she stood forever free of him. The temporary hallucination was over, never to return.

CHAPTER XIII.

ALICE and Janet Hawthorne went back to their quiet Quaker home, and, to their great regret, unaccompanied by their niece. Had they known her motive in this, the stern resolve, thenceforth to spare herself no duty, however severe, while she accepted no indulgences, however needful, they would, indeed, have wondered what had come over their delicate and once indolent Rachel.

For her, life henceforth was, she thought, only to be made endurable by the harsh exercise of complete self-sacrifice. There was vital wrong in this, but the humanity of her nature rebelled in vain. She deemed such rebellion the weakness of selfishness, and tried to overcome it. Poor, innocent Rachel!

One day, just two months after the departure of her aunts, she found, lying on

her dressing-table, this note directed to herself :

“ Long ago, I offered you the name of wife ; since then, my eyes have opened to a double error. First, to the enormity of marriage under such circumstances ; and, secondly, to the fact, that I loved you then—as I do at this moment—more than I have ever loved any one in the world.

“ Living for years in a state of misanthropic indifference, I have but just awakened to the glory of realities and possibilities ; and it is you who are lifting me from my darkness. I offer you now a hand and a heart—for God’s sake, give me hope if you can.

“ RICHARD FAYETTE GODWIN.”

Rachel’s first feeling, on perusing this note, was deep pity for its writer. He did but tell her what long before she had suspected, even when he knew it not himself—that he loved her. But with a sigh she thought, that she herself could never love again, and as for marriage without it, even on one side, that was as impossible with her as ever. She sat down and wrote a few words and dispatched them immediately.

Mr. Godwin returned this answer :

“ I have just heard, from Rumor, of your lately canceled engagement, of whose existence I never before had a suspicion. I was unintentionally in the wrong to write to you yet awhile ; had I known this fact, I should not have done

so. Your answer is precisely what, under the circumstances, I ought to expect, but your heart is now free—and while there is life there is also hope. “R. F. G.”

Strange to say, this pertinacity did not annoy Rachel. She put the note away, and tried to make the subject pass from her recollection. Meantime, she went about her duties in that quiet, patient way that spoke of trials met and conquered; yet was her vitality of character weakened by her late contact with the mysteries of spiritualism. She was aware of this herself, and fervently longed for her once ignorance of things, the knowledge of which was purchased at the price of moral courage. Oppressed with the burden of her experiences, she thirsted for the old times when she had no awe of the thousand hidden eyes watching her from those spheres above, of which Freeland Ogilvie had so often told her. At times her brain rebelled against the burden forced upon it, and she imagined she felt the darkness of insanity hovering over her.

But with the clear autumn came renewed vigor and strength, both of body and mind. The brisk, cheerful days of the departing year coun-

teracted the lassitude produced by the heat of summer—partially unsettled reason regained its throne, in regal triumph at its victory over things material.

Time passed on. It was now November. White, freshly-fallen snow lay on the ground. It had come early that year, and many leaves were still hanging crimsoned on their boughs. The trees were loaded with light, fleecy fragments of snow, among which these brilliantly dyed leaves gleamed out in the sunshine, like blood on a woman's fair face.

Winter seemed fairly to have begun his career. It was the day before that appointed for the trial of the Hills, who, owing to willful neglect on the part of the proper authorities, had long been awaiting it in close confinement in jail.

Rachel had often desired to visit this man and woman—and this day, the moment she found herself free from school restraint, she set out for the obscure part of the village in which they were confined. She found the spot without difficulty, and at the door of the prison very unexpectedly encountered Mr. Godwin. On recognizing her, he said, gently,

"It is of no use. They will not admit you to see these people. They must not be tampered with before their trial."

"It is not my intention to tamper with them," replied Rachel, somewhat proudly.

"I beg pardon for my unintentional offense."

He smiled, and, before she was aware of his design, had quietly placed her hand on his arm, and they were proceeding in the direction of the Lodge.

"I have spoken with them," he said, at length, "but only in virtue of my office as a clergyman."

And they walked on again in silence. Once Rachel made an effort to withdraw her hand, but the tightened pressure of Mr. Godwin's arm prevented.

"He is a tyrant," she thought indignantly, singularly out of humor with herself; "he is one of those who rule women by mere physical force. I, for one, will not submit!" and by a dexterous second attempt she placed her hand at liberty.

Mr. Godwin looked surprised, but said nothing, and did not at all lessen the space which

Rachel coolly placed between them as they passed along.

"Are you satisfied?" he asked directly, and with that accent of quiet amusement, which Rachel had so often remarked in his voice.

She did not reply.

Instinctively she felt that this interview was in some important respect to influence her life, and she determined, with all the hearty rebellion of her independent nature, that Fate should in no way be accelerated by herself.

"Why do you not ask me something of the Hills, since I have seen them and you cannot?"

Still no answer.

"Never was I so glad of any visit in my life," Mr. Godwin continued, "for I heard from them—from the woman I should say—of the goodness and kindness of one, of whom, in preference to all others, it is my happiness to hear."

Evidently Rachel disdained the insinuation. She blushed slightly, and gathering a fleecy handful of snow, crumpled it between her gloved fingers.

"The intelligence had not, however, the novelty of newness, because I was always aware

that you—that the young person I spoke of—had a benevolent and charitable heart, notwithstanding that her benevolence and charity never seemed to be extended to myself.”

She smiled.

“What could you expect?” she said, casting down her ball of snow, and facing him; “what could you expect as the result of a pertinacious persecution that gave me no peace? What could you expect?”

“Good for evil—the golden rule.”

“There are times when the exercise of the golden rule ceases to be practicable,” she said, coloring. “May your forbearance never be tried as you have tried mine.”

“You seemed to have survived it,” Mr. Godwin said, with the least touch of bitterness. “Rachel, all this is past and gone. You can scarcely wish more fervently than I, that—”

He ceased walking, looking earnestly at her drooped face.

“You are free now, and capable of giving me the unbiased, final answer which then you were not; because your heart, though not engaged, was preoccupied. Once more, and for

the last time, I ask you to be my wife. There is no other woman whom I respect and honor as I do you—there is no other to whom—”

“Respect, honor!” she echoed scornfully, turning away, and walking rapidly over the snow, “I wed no man for these.”

“Why do you interrupt?” he said, following. “What is love, if unfounded on respect and honor? On them is reared the highest, the noblest love of all; and thus, thus, Rachel Olio, I love you. It seems to me now as though I had known and loved you always. Will you show me something to live for, Rachel? something to enrich my blank, dull life? I am stagnating, perishing for lack of human affection, and you alone can give it me!”

She raised her head firmly. Steadfastly her eyes sought and met his own.

“Zillah?” she questioned, slowly, distinctly enunciating the two syllables. And she thought she saw a sudden pallor cross the calm, intellectual features of Richard Fayette Godwin.

“What of her?” he asked, unshrinkingly meeting her gaze.

“Nothing,” she answered: and as they were

now at the Lodge, slightly inclining her head, she left him suddenly and entered the garden.

The holidays were come. The glad Christmas was at hand, and St. Mary's Lodge was deserted by all, excepting here and there by a poor girl in that desolate plight—without a home. Snow was again on the ground, and the cheerful sound of jingling sleigh-bells filled all the brisk atmosphere. It was almost twilight. Alone in her room sat Rachel, striving for peace, internal peace. Seldom before had such harsh thought wrestled in her brain. Everything was doubt. Her way through life seemed to lie before her hidden in cloud and mist, and yet, beyond this obscurity, she knew that there lay a peaceful path, serene with sunlight and dew, over which, if once attained, her feet might wander securely evermore. But, as she attempted to penetrate the dusky barriers, the path vanished. Oppressed, saddened, she left her now dreary chamber, and went down stairs, thinking to drown thought in some old book of choice reading from the dining-room shelves. As she passed the door of Mrs. Griscomb's parlor, she heard that lady's voice from

within loudly pronouncing her own name. Under the impression that she was summoned, Rachel listlessly turned the knob and entered. Mrs. Griscomb was not alone. Standing before the large, bright fire was Mr. Godwin, and the girl detected at once the slight contraction on his forehead.

Mrs. Griscomb's cheeks were flashed, and her brown eyes brilliant with light; as Rachel came forward there fell a dead silence on both, which bore as much discomfort as meaning to the intruder.

"Did you call?" asked the young girl, simply.

"I! call you?" Mrs. Griscomb moved sharply around, and eyed her in keen, haughty derision. "No, why should I? but you have come in wise time; your intrusion, to say the least, is opportune."

Her short, forced laughter filled all the little room.

To Rachel no interpretation was necessary. Instinctively she understood all, as for a moment she stood irresolute, undecided whether to go or remain.

"You have arrived just at the moment to witness only the conclusion of the comedy," continued Mrs. Griscomb, "but, perhaps, your unobtrusive tact and womanly dignity will assist you to guess at the plot, though the denouement, to be sure, is not very suggestive."

"I think it is," said Mr. Godwin, dryly, "if I may be pardoned for my thought."

Mrs. Griscomb turned upon him with fierce, exaggerated asperity.

"You dare, you dare to say so? Go," she said, bitterly, "both of you. Proclaim to the world, as speedily as possible, the new tale of spicy scandal. Serve it up with delicate rhetorical condiment that shall make it palatable to all. Dilate largely on the beautiful widow, who, allured to the confession by a noble, saintly man, ventured at last to utter to him the history of her heart. Say with what lofty coldness the saint received the proffer of her hand; how he told her, beautiful as she was, that she was unwomanly, and wanting in the modesty of her sex. Speak warmly of the scorn with which he rejected her and her gold,

(for she was rich, although only an humble school-teacher!) but I implore you never breathe a word of his hypocrisy, nor even hint how a long while this seeming saint fawned before the widow, and at the same time in secret wooed her governess. It is not worth while to mention at all how nervously he hesitated between the two, drawn first this way and then that. These latter circumstances, my dear friends, will, I am sure, rest always between us; but for the first, who shall not say the world has a right to know them? Do I speak in riddles, Miss Olio, or can your broad and clear understanding interpret me?" A thin, mocking smile curled her lips, which, strange to say, only the more lit up her marvelous beauty. But it was like that ghastly, vivid lightning whose momentary effects are both magnificent and appalling.

Again the same deep, uncomfortable silence fell on the trio. Rachel looked uneasily towards Mr. Godwin, but his face, schooled into impassibility, revealed nothing. At length, quickly, impulsively he spoke:

"Rachel, do you believe me to be the wretch-

ed deceiver you have just heard me represented? Have you faith in me, or have you not?"

When was silence so startled before as by those impatient tones?

For a while there was no answer, and when it came it was tremulous and indistinct.

"I have faith in you."

"I thank God for that!" he said, fervently, "and I pledge you my honor that your confidence is not misplaced. Never, by word or deed, have I consciously endeavored to win the love of any woman but yourself, excepting once, years and years ago."

Rachel colored deeply at the last words. Articulating rapidly, almost wildly, she exclaimed,

"The present does not excite me, for I have faith in you, as I have already said. It only remains to all of us to deplore this mistake that has occurred on one side. But as to the past," she hesitated, then gathering together all her usual serenity of manner, "one thing must be openly divested of its obscurity. Zillah?"

"Zillah!" Mr. Godwin repeated, with a quiet smile, he would have repressed had it been pos-

sible, "and is that all? Why did you break from me so suddenly when you asked this question before? By my honor as a Christian gentleman, I declare to you that Zillah was naught to me. She was bequeathed to me on the friendless death-bed of her mother and soon became as dear to me as though she had really been my own child—daughter, as she was, of the woman whose falsehood has embittered all my past life. Do not start, do not tremble so, my child. I have loved none as I love you, with all the sincerity of a purified and experienced manhood. Are you satisfied?"

"Yes," she said, while her look was more eloquent than the word. And where all before was doubt in the breast of Rachel Olio, sprang up new-born Peace.

The setting sun until then had shone but dimly. At this moment it burst in glory from the cloudy masses that hid it from the world, and slowly descended to the blue west. The last golden rays fell through the casement on the three inmates of the little room, then solemnly faded into universal twilight.

CHAPTER XIV.

RAPIDLY the months vanished.

It was the day before the marriage of Richard Fayette Godwin and Rachel Olio. At the little parsonage all was bustle and confusion. Important with the responsibility of the simple feast, Janet and Alice Hawthorne were deep in preparation. Under their skillful hands the plain mansion was assuming a new aspect. The air was redolent with delicious odor from the steaming viands that were to grace the next day's festivities.

And wandering abroad were the two who, on the morrow, were to enter eternal wedlock. To enter it, not like those whose dream of the future is as of an undying, undisturbed felicity, but as those who, having stern knowledge of the vicissitudes of life and time, hope all things, and fear none. Each had felt the beatitude of first passion, broken now ; and for each, although

one as yet was very young, the mist that shrouds the realities of early existence was gone. Did they regret it? No! To those of real manliness and real womanliness, life is scarcely life until then. It is only then we are taught to look into ourselves even if it be as "through a glass, darkly," and it is only then that we appreciate the blessings of affection, of home, and of country. The older we become, and the clearer we thus behold things as they are, the more capable are we of truly loving, and the more worthy are we, through the purifying experiences of sorrow, to be truly loved in return. If this were not so, descending years would be a burden, and age an insupportable curse.

Wandering abroad were these two — out upon the moors, newly turfed and starred with spring flowers, under the freshly budded trees, along the banks of the replenished brooks, down by the sea-shore, in all places where aspects of beauty invited the eye and beguiled the step. There were hoary rocks on the beach, covered with depending beards of brown moss, and on these, in the earnestness of speech, losing cognizance of time, they rested many hours. Close

to their feet came rolling the waves, each successive billow tossing up the sand, and, with the white spray, flinging hither and thither fragments of shell and sea-weed. But what to them was all this? They saw it not. Rachel Olio was repeating the brief story of her nineteen years, and earth, sky, sea, might have resolved themselves into chaos again, for all they would have recked of the transformation. As, bowed over on her hand, Rachel's pale face rested smilingly,

"I have done," she said, and looked with frank significance towards her companion, who, when the billows receded, having written his name on the wet sand, stood now to watch them return again and obliterate, at one bold dash, the faint curving tracery. He cast away the palm-branch which had served him for pencil, and, as she ceased,

"I was born," he began in his turn, "far away from here. Out in the free, open country, the blessed country, where I hope to die, though death, my Rachel, would scarcely seem to be for you and me, whom to-morrow shall make man and wife."

"Perhaps," she interrupted, "for Death has his bridals, too!"

"Perhaps," he repeated, reverently baring his head, "for Death has his bridals, too. Let us always remember that." The pause that ensued was melodious with the slow surging of the sea on the white sand at their feet. At length Mr. Godwin spoke again:

"I was not a favorite child. My youth, unlike yours, was miserable; my father, like yours, died in my infancy. My mother, marrying again, placed her family, in blind confidence, under the control of her husband. She was so entirely good herself, it has often been a subject of wonder to me, how so fine and noble a nature could link itself, by bonds of affection, to one possessing the mind and the principles of my stepfather. It is the old, old story, Rachel, of unkindness and neglect. My mother clung to him through all. She suffered and endured. Her faith may have been shaken, but there was no outward revelation. Meanwhile, in ignorance, in moral darkness, I dreamed away my boyhood. I had no facilities of education—no books to read, or study—no inducement to rend asun-

der the hazy veil that clouded my mental vision. Having but little occupation, my life became a burden, and I grew weary of eternally dreaming dreams that were never to know reality. Then came an awakening. I felt my intellect devouring itself—spurred on by this, I burst my bonds and stood free from thralldom. My mother was wealthy. Since her marriage she had ceased to hold control of her fortune. I had, therefore, nothing to expect from her in the way of assistance; to my father I would have as soon appealed, as I would now, on the eve of our marriage, cast myself to the certain destruction of yonder seething flood. Therefore, I said, ‘I will work, I will EARN an education; I will rise superior to fate, and the world, regarding me in after-years, shall exclaim, admiringly, “a self-made man.”’ With this incentive I labored on. My days were wearisome, because of the physical exertion necessary to my object; but the *nights*, oh those nights! never was conqueror so happy in his victories as I was then. When the sun sank I was master of my time. I could devote myself to books; I could study. Sometimes dawn found

me just in the height of fervid and unwearied enthusiasm. Day and its duty, each was forgotten, and, as morning broke, I have gone to my labor fatigued and depressed in all physical senses, but exultant and triumphant of spirit. My zeal abated but little at the opposition of obstacles. It was my ambition to overcome them. I cannot describe to you the infinite delight I experienced when I became conscious of progress in my thorny, unassisted journey. I cannot describe it, because it is indescribable. As years passed, and I reached manhood, I knew that I was equal with, at least, the mass of my fellow-beings, in point of education; the polish of refined learning was not to be mine until later. In looking backward, I have often been struck with the significance with which the various events of my life combine, one with another. Now, what was then cloudy and obscure stands out in bold relief—the Divine Wisdom that creates all things to work together for good. I trace the hand of Omnipotence not only in every incident of that part of my existence which is departed, but likewise in those of the present. Sorrows have

been stepping-stones to blessings. Rachel, as I told you once before, the very blossom and sweetness of my best years passed from me in prison. I experience no shame at the word. It has ceased to wound. I feel myself as proud of martyrdom as did those of old, and I know now, by bitter lessons, hard, very hard to acquire, that all will, in the end, work to the glory of my Maker. Despite my trials at this moment, I can face the purest of my fellows and say 'I am as free from sin as thou. God made each of us.' It is your right to know all, detail by detail. And I give you now, as I gave you then, liberty, free, open liberty, to—"

"Ah," said Rachel, interrupting, with a smile, "you wrong me. There is no need. I proffer you now, as I proffered you then, Faith and Constancy."

He looked at her and caught the smile as it fell.

"I was a man," he resumed, "when my mother died. My step-father was an Atheist. During her life he endeavored to infuse his horrible belief into the gentle, yielding mind

of his wife, and, even on her death-bed, he thrust on her departing spirit his hellish doctrines. How well I remember that last, awful night! The apartment was large and brilliantly lighted. The rich curtains were looped back; bouquets of delicate spring flowers were scattered, in a woman's graceful way, everywhere. It had not the air of a sick-chamber, because my mother had been stricken down but that very evening. She had ruptured, suddenly, a blood-vessel. I had retired for the night; awakened, hurriedly, from slumber, I went down to her room. As I entered, her face was hidden from me by the pillows in which it was buried. Zillah Bliss, a relative of the family, and who was even then, as you know, my affianced wife, sat beside her on the bed, her head bowed on her bosom, her hands tightly locked one in the other. On seeing me, a quick gleam of something, which, if it were not hope, had all its beauty, passed rapidly over her features.

“‘Richard,’ she cried, wildly advancing to meet me, ‘Richard, save her—save her!’

“Before I could reply, a voice from the other

side of the bed uttered in a low, sonorous, but self-possessed tone,

“‘It is too late!’

“It was my father. On his hands were great red spots of blood; the pillows, the sheets were marked with it; and on the white dress of Zillah Bliss glittered, also, fresh crimson stains.

“‘She is dying,’ continued my father. ‘Aid is of no consequence now. Again, I say, it is too late. Ellen, my wife, dear Ellen, do you hear—you are dying!’

“I approached, I stood at her side. My mother raised her head, and, oh, the unutterable anguish writhing in her eyes, bright, almost unto fierceness, with the despair of death! The heavy masses of hair, flowing around her face, gave her ghastly complexion a still more unearthly hue. Life, I saw, was ebbing fast—mortality verging into immortality. Little as I knew of death, I recognized it then. My father sat on the bed’s edge, clasping one of those colorless hands in his own. He kissed the almost lifeless forehead, he bent over the dying woman with a repentant tenderness that seemed to crave forgiveness for past sin.

“ ‘Ellen,’ he whispered fervently, ‘do you—can you hear me? If you can, for the love of mercy, give me some signal.’

“She did not speak. The eyes, which were gradually assuming a dull, hazed appearance, closed wearily and opened again very slowly. A low wail burst from Zillah Bliss. My step-father turned upon her quickly, and said, with bitter imperiousness,

“ ‘Be still—I must speak with her.’ Then bending again over the bed: ‘Ellen, have no fear. Do not dread death. It is peace, unconsciousness forever and forever. A sigh, a brief struggle, and you have naught else to encounter. There is not, there cannot be another life in eternity—a God!’

“ ‘With a convulsive effort, my mother sat erect. For a moment she seemed possessed of perfect strength.

“ ‘God!’ she echoed hoarsely. ‘God there is none—no God—no God,’ and sank back on her pillows, exhausted. Blood burst anew from her mouth and nostrils. She strove to say more, but the words were drowned in the warm tide that bubbled over her chest. And

she, Zillah, stood there in marble calmness, and heard all this, she a young, untried girl. Her hands were locked again, her eyes fixed unswervingly on the carpet. Looking at her, you would have felt your very heart melt with compassion, so wild, so terrified was the expression of that sweet, girlish face.

“ ‘Ellen—Ellen, my wife!’ was all my stepfather spoke with his blanched, quivering lips. The momentary flush faded from my dying mother’s features. Whatever might have been the rights of her husband in that last solemn hour, I felt that I had mine also. I put aside his hand, but not in rudeness or wrath, and with my own gently wiped away the life-blood oozing from between my mother’s lips. I kissed them again and again. There was no struggle, but there was that gathering shadow on the white forehead which is so terribly understandable. Not a sound broke the deep silence of the chamber, but the indistinct and oppressed breathing of her whose lamp of life was even then vibrated by chill winds from the Valley of the Shadow of Death. I thought this breathing grew fainter, and I bent down to

listen more intently. My father waved me fiercely, jealously away.

“ ‘Touch her not,’ he said, ‘for she is dead!’

“ And I thought, indeed, that it was so ; for, even as he spoke, the faint respiration suddenly ceased, and a slow pallor crept over the still features. But in another moment I saw that life was not yet extinct. The eyes partly unclosed again in the same misty, powerless manner as before, and an indescribable radiance lit up, for an instant, the pale, handsome face—handsome, even then, but with an unearthly beauty.

“ ‘God!’ the colorless lips muttered, ‘God—there is a God!’ and a smile, whose utter serenity I have never seen equaled, played around the mouth. Then the shadow deepened, fell, and she expired. It seemed as though the soul had been half freed, and, returning, gave evidence of that eternity which it but partially had entered !

“ A woman’s voice sobbing, at length broke the dreary silence. It was Zillah’s. My father rose, and, approaching her, said,

“ ‘Zillah, be comforted ; death must come to all.’

“‘Comfort!’ she echoed, with a great flash of her black eyes, ‘you preach to me of comfort?’ She hissed the words with indignant, but smothered energy. She, too, knew him as he really was. She was aware of all his sins against his poor deluded wife. Ah, that woman, that proud woman! As she stood there in her tragic, excited beauty, I thought of an avenging Fate; her white, upraised arm glittered in the bright light of the lamps, and her eyes sparkled with scorn and detestation.

“Rachel, if you had seen Zillah, as I saw her in the daily, domestic routine of life, if you had **known her well, had watched the operations** of her frank soul, if, like me, you had beheld her grand, proud independence of deed and thought, her scorching and intense hatred of the petty meanness of her sex, like me you would have bowed down at her feet, joyfully conscious that your existence, mingled with hers, would thenceforth become purer. What large heartedness was hers! She was noble in all the elements of character. Her very nobility was her destruction. Do not, my child, fear the security of your own dominion, as you

listen to the praises, honest and sincere as are these, of a by-gone rival! In you, I behold, reverently, my equal. In Zillah, I worshiped a superior. For, neither you nor I could cope with such magnificence of intellect, as hers. Lofty intellect, stifled now under green sods! Queenly heart, stilled forever in the grave! Youth and loveliness, descended into unknown dust!

“To say that I loved her would be to asseverate but little. To assert that I gloried in her superb beauty, faded, when you saw her that day, by sickness and heart-wearing sorrow; to assert that I regarded her, in both frame and spirit, as one of the most perfect of God’s creatures, would be simply the truth unexaggerated. Yet, notwithstanding this, I would not exchange the dear present for the past! I had known her all my childhood; we grew up together—she, with her clear eyes fixed on fame—on distant laurel crowns that her genius panted, by external evidence, to merit—I making her the supreme goddess of my future manhood. Alas! her Creator destined her for fame and not for love! With all her beauty, her wit, her gen-

erosity, her talents, she possessed a cold heart. She was born to reign over regal imaginations and not become the queen of home. I said that her nobility was her destruction. You shall soon see how this arrived.

“My parents, in their youth, had been among the most intimate friends of those of Zillah Bliss. Before either of us saw the light, my father redeemed hers from the threatened publicity of secret sin and its consequent degradation. My father saved Weir Bliss all this—he rendered him independent of the thralldom of his crime, and bestowed upon him what was equivalent

to a new lease of life. Through this opportune aid, Mr. Bliss retained his position before the world—that clear-seeing world which harbors traitors for heroes, infamy for virtue, and never is the wiser! Poor world—poor deceived world!

“In the lapse of time Zillah and I became woman and man. She was as beautiful as the first morning of spring, while I was in the early prime of my freshest years. One day, one evil day, I went to Zillah’s home and told her the story of my love. She received it in

repressed but intelligible scorn. Her beautiful disdain was not derision, yet it wounded the deeper because of its superb disguise. I left her an humbled man, but the joy of living was not quenched. I was no weak coward, afraid of daily communion with lost hopes. I labored indefatigably and bravely on. If I were not patient, I was, at least, capable of endurance. Not long after, there came a letter for me from Zaybrook, the country residence of Weir Bliss and his family. It was from Zillah. In it she bade me return to her and assume the position I had demanded, and she had just refused. She assigned no reason for the singular recall, and it was very long before I discovered the motive which actuated it. Ah, well, things were in this state when my mother died. It was about the same time that, while examining some old manuscripts which had once belonged to my father, I chanced upon a yellow and venerable looking paper, which, on perusal, I found purported to be a will. Laying it aside, I read and re-read it at my leisure, until there remained no doubt on my mind that it was indeed the last and veritable testament of my poor father. It

here his signature and those of two of his friends as witnesses, and was drawn up in his own handwriting. The date was that of but a year previous to his death, which had taken place when I was very young. I had never heard of the existence of such a document (my father was supposed to have died intestate), and my surprise at the discovery was great, as you may conjecture, more particularly as I found my own interests, my own position, very materially affected by its contents. According to it, my mother was to have enjoyed, during her natural life, the sole use of her husband's estate (until then I never knew its actual extent), and on her demise it was to descend to their children, of whom, when that event really transpired, I was the only survivor. Thus I found myself the rightful heir of the entire, undivided property. A part of it I already held in ownership. I was twenty-one and had just entered upon its possession. It was personal estate, and my mother, by will, having bestowed her legal third upon her second husband, the remainder, which, by law, belongs to the children of men dying intestate, had descended to myself. Dur-

ing my youth my step-father had carefully concealed from me the fact of my heirship, that he might the more readily appropriate all interest moneys to himself; but being placed, by the death of my mother, and my coming of age, in a position which compelled him to render justice where justice was due, he, at last, honored me with a revelation. It was terrible to bear! To know that I had passed an unhappy life solely to gratify his taste for expensive luxury! In the fierce passion of an undisciplined nature, I thirsted bitterly for revenge. When I reflected that to him I was indebted for my miserable childhood, the privations of my youth, and my lack of education, I felt burning within me a hatred nothing could surmount. It grew morbid under further and continued provocation. If I could have drawn his heart's best blood, my insane and remorseless fury would have been appeased. When the will fell into my hands, I saw that my foe was in my power. A word, and I could wrest from him all he possessed! Produce but this unknown will, prove its genuineness (that seemed no difficult task), and he was penniless, and I was the heir of the

whole estate! Nothing but respect for my mother's memory stood between us. He had been her husband. That was enough. For a long time I held my peace.

"One day, stung by an insult, more unmanly, more gross than had ever been offered me, I yielded to my wild, yearning desire for retaliation. I could withstand it no longer. It was not my mother's fortune I coveted, but it was revenge I craved, and the one could only be obtained through the other. I would see him suffer as I had suffered! I would see him struggle with poverty as I had struggled!

"I placed the will in the hands of a lawyer for substantiation. As I expected, it proved to be correctly drawn, signed, and witnessed. It lacked in no technical detail of propriety. Rachel, you know the rest—the trial which ensued, the vile accusation of forgery for which I was arraigned and—convicted. My stepfather had money with which to strengthen and support his charge, and what cannot money accomplish? It is a king who is never dethroned. I do not know whether he really believed me guilty of the crime or not. He

was not one to be troubled with scruples of conscience. I neither condemn nor absolve. I only feel that it was through him I became acquainted with degradation. I was ably defended. The best counsel, the times afforded, was employed in my behalf, but the evidence of chance and circumstance was against me, and I LOST.

“No proof could be adduced that my father or either of his witnesses had ever mentioned the existence of such a will. He died almost simultaneously with one of these men, and the other, having gone abroad about the same time, was supposed, also, to have met the king of terrors, and to have been vanquished in the fight.

“Behold me, then, condemned to imprisonment that was equal in duration to one quarter of an ordinary life—to a felon’s labor, and, perhaps, a felon’s death! What thoughts ran within me as I recall all this! Would that I had rather perished in my innocent childhood! Not even sweet insanity put the glare of unconsciousness between me and my despair. I lived on calmly. Daylight, seen through prison bars, grew hateful to me. I could have torn my heart out. I could have

become my own assassin, and, with savage triumph, flung back my life to its source. But I did not dare! 'What of the future,' I demanded bitterly, 'soul, what of thy future? Leap, unannounced, all bloody and scarred with self-murder, into the white presence of God, of a judge more righteous than men, but as sternly just as he is immortal! Leap—and what then? Peace, think you? Joy, hope you?' 'Ay,' answered reason, 'but it will be the ghost of murdered peace, the real, gory phantom of annihilated joy. These, indeed, will be yours, haunting your footsteps forever.' "

A fiery smile curled Mr. Godwin's lip, and irradiated his whole face with ghastly and scornful illumination. But it slowly disappeared and all was as before. Perhaps, who can tell, in that brief moment he experienced anew the agony of the old temptation, and the triumph of the old victory. He resumed:

"One comfort, one ineffable consolation still remained. I was allowed, at night, a fragment of candle, and also, by some extension of clemency, which I believe is equally unusual,

pens and paper. I wrote—oh, what consuming words I wrote! I poured forth my whole soul, afire as it was with the fury of ten thousand devils. The labor of the day was forgotten. The clanking of my chains was music. My cell became a paradise—I was happy! One evening, just as I had lit my solitary taper, the keeper of the jail came to ask if I would receive a visitor, who, having a permit, desired to see me privately.

“ ‘A lady—she has been here before,’ he said with a grin and a brutal leer. He was of that class of degenerated, forlorn creatures the sight of whom causes one involuntarily to exclaim, in Alexander Smith’s fine phrasing,

‘God! what base ignoble faces—
God! what bodies wanting souls!’

I was powerless to resent all insult. I could but bow to my wretched fate. ‘Bring her up,’ I said. I knew it was Zillah Bliss. I had little on which to found the presentiment, yet I could not have been more positive that it was she. I had not seen her for months. Our last interview was a few weeks after my sentence

had taken effect, and I had been then nearly half a year in confinement. The prison regulations were strictly enforced. No one was allowed to visit and converse with its inmates, excepting by especial permission.

"I straightened my pallet, I heightened the flame of the pallid lamp, and, placing ready the only chair the cell contained, awaited the coming of my visitor. She entered. I was right—it was, indeed, she—Zillah Bliss, my affianced wife ; for, convict as I was, and in opposition to the will of her father, she had refused, in the magnanimity of her large heart, to release herself from the engagement—a vow made in prosperity.

"‘I can wait,’ she had said to me. ‘I believe you to be innocent. I trust sacredly in your honor. Trust in mine. You shall see that the term of your sentence shall not outlast my constancy. Yours once and I am yours forever.’

"It was these words—this hope that animated me in my awful lot. I confided in her as I would have confided in heaven. The prospective ten years of my imprisonment were

rendered endurable by this promise and by it alone. The solemn reality of my horrible life received a touch of splendor, gorgeous, princely splendor. One single star crowned the clouds, and it was doomed that I should see it sink—should see it pale into obscurity—for Zillah had come to ask to be set free from her vow.

“‘When I made it,’ she said, ‘I did not know that duty—my duty as a child—could or would interfere. I even thought I was acting by that duty. Richard, let me be frank. If I unmask myself—if I say to you I have never loved you other than as a favorite brother—you may, perhaps, in indignant wrath at my deception, more readily forget me; ~~for~~ I know you love me. Many years ago your father saved mine from a shameful discovery and the punishment of an outraged law. I was not aware of this the night I refused to be your wife. A few days afterward it was accidentally revealed to me, and—and, cannot you conjecture—do you not now perceive the motive I had in our engagement?’

“‘Sitting there in the broken shadows of

my cell, she looked a very empress, but one uncrowned and fallen from greatness. The obscurity was beautifying. A proud shame burned in the crimson of her cheek, and arched her white neck in humiliated grace. I remember uttering phrases of hearty reproach, which she meekly interrupted, and continued speaking someway thus :

“ ‘ I determined to marry you—to marry you through gratitude—the illimited thankfulness I have always, since then, borne to each member of your family. I thought to spend my life in making you happy. In no other way could I repay the vast obligation under which my poor father lived and lives. I tell you all this because I *must*. Such explanation stabs both you and me, but it has become a base necessity. I cannot shrink from it. Have pity upon me. Oh, Richard, a second time my weak, old father stands in danger of the world’s scorn ! A step, a word and he is saved or ruined ! ’ Her voice sank to a low whisper, her head bowed still lower on her breast, as she added, ‘ It is now for life or death ? He calls on me to avert ignominy ! Shall I refuse—

shall I hesitate? By becoming the wife of one who holds his fate at command, I can, I *must* rescue him! It is before me to win his blessing or his curse. A father's curse, oh, Richard; spare me it! Let me free—give me liberty; for I tell you, neither blessings nor curses, living nor dying shall make me voluntarily put my promise to you at defiance!

“Was she not a grand creature, Rachel. Surely there is something in adversity that creates gods. Your tamely happy men and women never yet benefited humanity by a noble deed or a lofty thought. It is always the children of sorrow who toss great intellects to the world. They are goaded on by the bitterness of their desperate hearts. And mankind applauds in blind enthusiasm, little recking the bloody inspiration!”

Rachel worked back and forth in her slight fingers a little glossy fragment of water-weed. Mr. Godwin scanned the broad expanse of sparkling river. It was like a sea of fire rolling restlessly against its confines.

“Well, Rachel, that was the last time but one I ever beheld Zillah Bliss. Of course the un-

equal bond was at once canceled. Within three weeks after this she became the wife of Miles O'Brian, a man of whom I knew nothing personally, and who is not even aware there is such a person as myself in the world, intimately as our interests have been connected. What the crime was which gave him control over Weir Bliss I never understood perfectly. That it was one of no ordinary magnitude I have little doubt. It has long been my conviction that, as Mr. Bliss progressed in years, he retrograded in uprightness. He is now dead. Strange that the daughter of so ignoble a man should have been so noble a woman!

"Time passed and the degrading actuality of prison-life closed all the avenues of delicate sensibilities. I ceased to love Zillah. Her memory became an odious recollection. I did not do her justice. I closed my eyes to the beauty of her sacrifices, and remembered her only as one who had deceived me when deceit was most difficult to be endured. In consequence of my misfortunes, my nature acquired, gradually, a misanthropical austerity of which I have often been but too painfully conscious.

Even now, black hatred of mankind occasionally revisits me. I strive against it ; God knows how humbly, how zealously. But when I reflect upon all the injustice, the torture, the despair I have suffered, something of demoniac rebellion will rise up within me, and refuse to be quelled save at the foot of the cross ! Rachel, my wife,—under supreme heaven, in your peaceful custody let me place these baleful passions. Be with me through the shadows—O, be my earthly consolation !

“To my beloved books I gave the entire strength of my soul. They were published, dated from within prison walls. With the rush of fire they whirled into popularity. They carried, far and wide, the peculiar but awfully important principles with which they were freighted. I did not desire fame, and the execration or the tearful blessing which my anonymous pages aroused brought to their unknown author neither pang nor pleasure. I write because it is my fate. Ideas battle for utterance which will not be stayed ; confinement renders them furious, and, at last, they burst all barriers, flowing as resistlessly onward as

flows inland water to the main. Silence is my destruction. I consume myself. I perish. Oh, that my voice might echo through all the earth, waking, with one great sound, its heavy and apathetic sleepers! Do not smile, Rachel, do not say, scornfully, it is the egotism of an author, when I assert, that that time shall yet arrive. For, else, the mission of my existence were incomplete.

"What remains to relate? You have already heard how, as the ten years of my sentence drew near their close, I was proved to have been innocent of the charge for which I suffered; you have heard how my father's early friend, the missing witness, returned from an obscure residence in the Old World, and rendered the testimony which, at length, brought honorable acquittal, and again bestowed upon me an untarnished name. Only five years previously, and I would have blessed this man as an angel from heaven; but at that late period, liberty had almost lost allurements. I sprang into freedom and the possession of wealth, having ceased to value either!

"I went abroad, seeking oblivion—forgetful-

ness. I thought to find relief in new scenes, in the landscapes of old Spain and Italy, and, indeed, in traveling amid Italian balminess and English fogs, among the artificial French and the heavy Germans, the peasants of Swiss mountains and the indolent orientals, I met comparative peace. I remained away from my native land for years. When I came back I had become another being. Not only was my health restored, but I had likewise passed into a new and purer phase of spiritual life. On my return, I commenced studying to enroll myself in the service of my King and Master, bestowing the fortune, a portion of which had cost me so dear, on the endowment of colleges and hospitals. I do not now retain its most minute fraction. Rachel, you wed but a poor clergyman, dependent on intellectual labor for his livelihood. God bless both you and him!"

"Amen," said the girl solemnly.

They arose and walked slowly from the seashore.

"Whatever glorious change Heaven may have wrought in my heart," continued Mr. Godwin, as they wound among the rocks, "the reforma-

tion was incomplete till lately. Something was wanting—something—a gift from Heaven to remove the sting from the past—in giving earthly peace to temporal years that for me are yet to be. I have found it! Rachel—wife—true heart—I have found it!”

“If, when I saw Zillah Bliss upon her death-bed, the wreck of all she had once been—fallen from the mental and physical loveliness which had made her the pride of her sex—if, in that solemn moment, I could have restored her health and our youth—the days when she was my all in all—my past, my future, my eternity—I would not have done so! For another and

truer, because calmer, love had boldly thrust aside the old. But, Rachel, that little child, who was solemnly bequeathed to me by her dying mother, and whose young life is, likewise, as a tale that is told—heaven bless it—let us hope that she may be to us three—the angel mother and ourselves—we who, of all others, loved her most—may be to us three as a connecting link—a bond that shall make us as one, though but two of the trio tread the good and generous earth. Lie lightly, little hands,

that shall be warm nevermore—lie lightly on that loving heart over which sweet herbs sway in the wind ! Zillah mother, Zillah child, rest in peace ! Things unholy, keep ye always from the twin memories of girl-saint and woman-angel !”

And silently they walked on together. Presently, in a low, inspired tone, Rachel Olio repeated these lines, fragments of a little poem which memory had long known and cherished :

“ WHERE ARE YE GONE ?

Old hopes, that once so brightly shone,
In childhood's long-departed years,
Old dreams that made our lives your own,
And swayed alike their hopes and fears,
Where are ye gone ?

Only your memory with us stays,
For ye have faded long ago ;
A sad, soft voice, from vanished days,
Repeats to us—O, words of woe !—
Where are ye gone !

Old friends, whose hearts were warm and true,
Yet never more may greet our own—
Old faces that our eyes renew,
Though we are here to-day alone—
Where are ye gone ?

HILLAH, THE CHILD-MEDIUM;

A solemn voice, from distant lands,
Sobs out the tale of each lost tie,
And tells us of the folded hands
That under waving grasses lie.

There are ye gone!

"Look!" suddenly said Rachel, starting,
"who is that?"

The winding path revealed the figure of a man emerging from another beaten track that crossed their own. He did not see them. They were partially hidden by a fragrant clump of white, blossomy elder foliage.

It was Freeland Ogilvie.

"Do not be afraid. The encounter is disagreeable, but flight is unworthy. Let us pass on," said Mr. Godwin to his shrinking companion. And on they went. Thus it happened, that looking carelessly around at the sound of footsteps, Freeland Ogilvie beheld these two! His face changed, and a dark tide rolled over its lineaments, developing into expressions of hatred and revenge as he gazed.

They came nearer, closer; the folds of Rachel Olio's dress swept over Mr. Ogilvie's feet, so narrow was the wood-path.

"Go," he cried, as they passed, "go to

your marriage feast, Rachel Olio, and my curse go with you! It shall pursue you forever. Throughout all your life—on your dying bed shall you feel and recognize it! My curse, my curse, my CURSE!"

He cast out these last words in a passion of bitterness that took from his voice all humanity. It was like the hoarse shriek of birds of prey gloating in horrible triumph over the death agonies of their victims.

CHAPTER XV.

THEY were walking one Sabbath afternoon, Edward Godwin and his wife, among the grave-stones in the little church-yard, reading the half-effaced inscriptions, and pointing out to each other whatever quaint and curious devices attracted attention. The services of the day were over, and the village worshipers had long since scattered to their quiet homes.

Everything in that secluded burial-ground bore the marks of age. The moss-covered monuments were overshadowed by venerable, gnarled trees, whose long branches swept the ground as they moved in the wind. Here and there the doors of some of the vine-clad tombs lay unhinged and broken amid the tall, rankly luxuriant grass; the action of the elements having spared but few dates and names that might reveal whose resting-places they had

once been. The white outlines of the church itself, boldly and sharply defined against the unbroken back-ground of the darkening evening sky, added to the sombreness of the neglected spot, seeming to stand there like a patient sentinel weary of solitude.

As though by mutual consent, Rachel and Richard Godwin finally approached Zillah O'Brian's grave. As they neared it, a man rose from beside it, where he had lain hidden in the grass, and rapidly disappeared among the ancient monuments. Rachel caught a glimpse of his face, and though it was swollen with weeping, she recognized the handsome, discontented features that had so startled her with their forlorn beauty, a long while before, the first Sabbath she crossed the threshold of her husband's church.

"It is Miles O'Brian, Zillah's father," said Mr. Godwin, in a low voice; and as they returned to the parsonage he repeated to Rachel a long, sad story of his unhappy career.

She listened to the account of O'Brian's desertion of his family, his wild dissipation abroad while his wife and child were starving in

ILLAH, THE CHILD-MEDIUM.

urity, and blessed kind Providence for her lot of secure tranquillity.

"I am glad he was weeping," she said, "for tears may have been those of repentance."





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