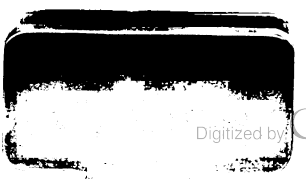

Library of American Novels, No. 2.

THE HEIRESS.

A NOVEL.

BY

T. S. ARTHUR.

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THE HEIRESS.

One cold afternoon in November, after the pleasant Indian summer had passed away, and the chilly season that immediately precedes winter had set in, a girl, whose age seemed not more than nineteen, paused before a large house in Walnut street, and stood for some minutes with an air of irresolution. Then she walked on, drooping her eyes to the pavement as she did so. Her face was very fair, but pale and anxious; her form slender and graceful; her dress worn and faded, yet fitting neatly her well formed person; her air and manner like one who had moved in a different circle than the one to which she now seemed to belong.

After walking on for nearly two squares, she paused, stood thoughtful for several minutes, and then turned and went slowly back. Again she was before the handsome dwelling we have named—again she stopped and remained some time in debate. At length she ascended the marble steps leading to the door, and timidly rung the bell—or, rather, attempted to ring it; but she drew the wire with too feeble a hand. The bell answered not to the effort. For nearly five minutes she stood waiting for the door to open. But, no one came. Now her heart seemed to fail her again, for, instead of ringing with a firmer hand, she quietly turned, and descending the steps moved with evident reluctance away, frequently pausing, however, to look back.

By this time the dusky twilight began to fall soberly around. It was perceived by the stranger, after she had walked on for some distance, and caused her to stop quickly, while a shudder ran through her frame, and she clasped her hands together with a quick involuntary motion.

"I must do it. There is no other hope for me," she at length said, with forced resolution. And turning back, she approached the house she had twice before hesitated to en-

ter. Now, without giving herself time to hesitate, she walked firmly up the steps, and rung the bell with a strong hand. A few moments elapsed, and the door was thrown open.

"Can I see Mrs. ——?" she asked, in a timid voice. For all her forced resolution had given way

"Walk in and I will see. What name do you send up?"

There was a slight hesitation.

"Tell her a young girl wishes to speak to her."

The waiter looked at her curiously, and then told her to walk into the parlor, and he would see if Mrs. —— was disengaged.

In about ten minutes the lady came down. What passed between her and the stranger is not known. Their interview did not last long. In a little while the latter retired through the front door, and was again upon the pavement. It had become dark, and the wind swept coldly along the street. The stranger shuddered as she felt its penetrating chill. The light of the next lamp showed that she was weeping bitterly. She walked on, now, with a quick pace, but, evidently, without any design, for she had not gone far, before she paused, and wringing her hands, murmured bitterly.

"Where shall I go? What shall I do?"

An elderly man passed at the moment. He perceived the movement, but did not hear distinctly the words that were uttered. Enough, however, was apparent to satisfy him that the young woman was in distress. He walked on for a few paces, and then stopped, turned around, and perceived her still standing on the pavement. His benevolent feelings prompted him to go and speak to her. He had advanced only a few paces, when, perceiving that she had attracted the attention of a man, who was about to speak to her, her heart bounded with a sudden impulse of alarm, and starting away, she ran with a fleet pace for nearly half a square, not once venturing to look back.

"Poor frightened creature!" murmured the old man. I would not harm a hair of your head for the world." Then adding with a sigh, as he resumed his walk—

"Ah me! If you are young, and innocent, and friendless, a city like this is a place of great danger. Or, if just stepping aside from virtue's path, with no kind friend and counsellor, your case is a hopeless one. Thou that lovest

the pure and the young, overshadow her with thy wing!" Save her from the snare of the fowler!"

The old man then slowly pursued his way. A walk of some ten minutes brought him to a large fine looking house, which he entered.

"Why brother, where have you been so late?" said a middle aged woman, in a kind, even affectionate manner, as he entered the richly furnished parlors, where were assembled the family, consisting of the father and mother, and two young ladies, their daughters, whose ages were about fifteen and eighteen.

"Here, Florence, take your uncle's hat and cane, and you, Ella bring down his slippers."

Neither of the young ladies performed the little service required with that warmth of manner that makes beautiful the devotion ol the youug to the aged. The uncle saw and felt this.

"No—no," he said. "The girls needn't disturb themselves. I am not tired."

"Yes, yes. Let them go; it is a pleasure to them," interposed the mother. "But what has kept you out so late?"

"Nothing in particular. I walked rather farther than usual, and so made it late in returning."

"It's chilly out; I hope you havn't taken cold brother?"

"Me? Oh no. I don't take cold easy. I'm not made of such tender stuff as your modern people. I'm worth, now, a dozen ordinary young men, and expect to outlive most of the present generation."

This was said half in jest, half in earnest. It was not responded to in the same playful spirit, although there was an effort on the part of the sister and her husband, to laugh at the remark. The youngest of the old man's nieces came in at the moment with his slippers. He looked at her steadily for an instant and then said—

"Ella, as I came along, this evening, I saw a young girl about your size and age, standing on the pavement, actually wringing her hands in distress. She murmured, in a plaintive, almost despairing voice, something that I could not hear, just as I passed. I walked on for a few paces, and then, so deeply had her manner impressed me, I turned back to speak to her. But the moment she saw me approaching, she sprang away like a frightened fawn. I caught a glimpse of her face. It was very young, and, I

thought, very beautiful. There were tears glittering upon her cheek. Ella, dear! thank God that you have a home and parents to love and protect you."

The old man's voice trembled. The incident had, evidently, impressed him deeply.

"Who could she have been?" said the father, speaking with interest.

"Some one who did not deserve either parents or a home," returned the mother of Ella, with some asperity in her tone. "Brother's sympathies are easily excited."

"A young girl, weeping in the street at nightfall, not deserve a parent's love or a sheltering home? I have not so learned my lesson in life, Mary. I would give one thousand dollars, more cheerfully than ever I bestowed any thing in my life, to know where that deserted, lonely, danger-encompassed girl is to be found."

"You take a strange interest, certainly, in a street-walking outcast." This was said by his sister with even more asperity than her former remark.

"I do not admit the allegation," was the firm reply. "I believe the person I saw to be innocent, but in distress. The single glance I obtained of her face, under the glare of a bright gas lamp, was enough to satisfy me of her character. Certainly I do take a deep interest in her, strange as you may call it —and, perhaps it is strange. But so it is. As I have just said—most cheerfully would I give one thousand dollars this night to be able to find her. Her appearance, her face, and the deep distress she evinced, have made upon my mind an uneffaceable impression."

"It is certainly a little singular," remarked the brother-in-law.

"So it is," returned the old man. "I cannot myself understand why I should feel, as I do, so strongly drawn towards that poor girl,—but the fact is, as I have said. It seems to me as if she must be bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh."

The tea bell rung, and broke the chain of conversation. It was not resumed at table. Somehow or other a feeling of restraint crept over each member of the family, which was so strong as to keep all silent and thoughtful.

CHAPTER II.

Mason Grant was a merchant engaged in an extensive business with the South and West. He lived in very handsome style, and was thought to be possessed of considerable wealth. Of his character as a man, little need be said. It will be enough to remark, that he had his share of selfishness, and that just in the degree that this prevailed, was he disregardful of all who could not, in some way or other, minister to the gratification of his ruling ends in life. His wife was a lover of the world—fond of effect, and desirous to be thought a person of consideration. She was, besides this, more deeply selfish than her husband—so selfish, that even her love of fashionable *éclat* was often overshadowed by it.

They had two daughters. In the preceding chapter, the family of Mr. Grant was briefly introduced. The old man, in whom the reader has doubtless felt more interest than in any of the rest, is a brother of Mrs. Grant, named Joseph Markland.

Mr. Markland married at a very early age one of the most beautiful, accomplished, and lovely women in Philadelphia. She died in three months. He never married again. At that time, his sister, or rather half sister, now Mrs. Grant, was but a child. A twin-sister, named Anna had married, a few years previous, contrary to the wishes of her friends, a young man of excellent character, but moving in a circle below that of her family. Incensed at her conduct, her father and step-mother, and even her brother, treated her with harshness and neglect, and absolutely refused to notice her husband in any way. A high spirited woman, she could not brook this. Deeply attached to the man she had married, and justly so, she resented as an indignity the contempt manifested for him, and cut herself off from all intercourse with her family. She lived with her husband in Philadelphia for some time, when they removed to the west. For years her family made no inquiries after her; when they did so, all efforts to find her proved fruitless. It was ascertained that she had gone to Cincinnati. But that was all that could be learned. After the lapse of ten or fifteen years, it was generally conceded that she was not living. At the death of her father, his will directed the investment of fifty thousand dollars for the benefit of her children, should it be found that any were living. At the expiration of a certain period, should no issue be discovered, the property was to pass

over to the children of Mary, his second, and only remaining daughter. One of the executors under this will was his son Joseph and the other, Mr. Grant, the husband of Mary.

Through the influence of Grant, whose interests, or, at least those of his two daughters, were too deeply involved in the peculiar provisions of his father-in-law's will, no advertisement for the children of Anna had been made, although old Mr. Markland had been dead for a number of years. The management of the estate of his father had been left pretty much in the hands of Mr. Grant, by Joseph Markland, the co-executor, whose advanced age made him willing to be freed as much as possible from the cares of business. His own fortune, accumulated by trade, was very large. It is true, that he had frequently urged upon his brother-in-law the propriety of advertising for the children of Anna, and the latter had so often promised that he would do so forthwith. But still the public notice had not appeared.

After tea, Mr. Grant, his wife, and Mr. Markland were alone, the girls having something to employ them in their own rooms. But few words passed between them, for none seemed inclined to talk. Mrs. Grant, especially, was very thoughtful. Something seemed to press upon and disturb her mind. Her brother was likewise in an absent mood. Both sat musing, with their eyes upon the floor, while Mr. Grant occupied himself with a book. This had continued for nearly an hour, during which time not a word had been spoken. At the end of this period, Mr. Markland said, looking toward his brother-in-law,

"I believe, Mason, there has been no advertisement yet made for Anna's children."

Mrs. Grant started at this, while the blood rose quickly to her face. She turned herself partly away from the light, to conceal the effect of her brother's unexpected remark.

"No, that is true. I have neglected to attend to it. But it shall be done," replied Mr. Grant.

"So you have been saying for the last fourteen years, and only a year remains for their discovery, should my sister have left any children. I am to blame for not having seen to this myself. I don't know what I could have been thinking about. It must be done at once, Mason."

"So it can. There need be no trouble about the matter. I will attend to it."

Let it be done, then, to-morrow."

"You are very much concerned all at once, brother," remarked Mrs. Grant, who had regained her self-possession.

"No one has believed, for the last twenty-five years, that Anna, or any one belonging to her was living. As to advertising, it is the merest formality that can be imagined. I don't see what can have put it into your head all at once."

"It is a simple duty that ought to have been done many, many years ago," quietly replied Mr. Markland. "There yet remains a short time in which that duty can be performed, and the sooner it is now done the better."

"Oh, as to that, the thing is easily enough done. I will attend to it," said Mr. Grant.

"It is too easily done," returned the old man, "and that is why it has been neglected for so long a time. I can see to it just as well as not."

"You don't believe that Anna or any of her children, if ever she had any, are living?" As Mrs. Grant asked her brother this question, she looked him steadily in the face.

"It is not impossible," he replied; "nor improbable either. Indeed, I shouldn't at all wonder if both she and her children were alive. However, be that as it may, I am going to do my part towards ascertaining the fact."

"Nonsense! You are always getting some notion or other into your head."

"Mary," and her brother looked at her half sternly as he spoke, "would you be willing to see your children unjustly possessed of the property willed to those of your sister?"

"Joseph, you don't know what you are talking about."

"You may think so."

A dead silence followed. Mr. Grant looked thoughtful, and his wife worried and perplexed, while the old gentleman fell into a state of deep abstraction. In the mind of the latter arose images of the past. His twin-sister was before him—his sister that he had so deeply loved in early life, and, at a later day, so shamefully neglected and wronged. In a little while he arose and retired to his own apartment. Closing the door after him and turning the key, he went to a closet and unlocking an old chest that stood in one corner, took therefrom a small box, and placed it upon a table. A bunch of keys was then taken from a drawer, one of these opened the box. A faint sigh heaved the bosom of the old man, as he raised the lid. The contents were various, and from their character, evidently tokens of remembrance. There was an old fashioned gold locket, enclosing the hair of some friend or relative. A diamond

ring—a brooch of gold—a watch and chain, and many other things of a like character. These were lifted out but not regarded. The old man sought for something else. At length his hand brought forth a small morrocco case which he opened quickly. It contained the miniature of a young and beautiful woman, upon which his eyes were instantly fastened with an earnest gaze, while his breast heaved more freely, and his respiration quickened. Suddenly he raised his eyes towards the ceiling, fixed them a moment, and then murmured,

"Strange! How like! How very like!"

In this attitude he remained for many minutes, when he again referred to the miniature he held in his hand, and gazed upon it intently, until his eyes grew so dim with moisture that he could see nothing but a faint outline before him. All the past, with its memories, had arisen. Early years had come back. Early affections were rekindled. The loved and lost were around him. But it was all a dream. And, a consciousness of this, even in the vision, pressed upon his spirit with a most touching sadness.

It was nearly an hour, before, with a heavy sigh, the old man closed the box and returned it to the place from whence it had been removed. But the miniature he retained, though he did not again look at it.

The occurrences of the evening had disturbed his mind a good deal, for he walked the floor rather quickly a very long time before retiring to bed. And it was an hour after he had done so, before sleep stole over his senses.

CHAPTER III.

"JUSTICE — simple justice — Mary, requires that it be done at once," said Mr. Markland, as he pushed his chair back from the breakfast table, on the next morning, rather impatiently. Mr. Grant had left a few minutes before; as he arose to go out, his brother-in-law had called his attention to the executor's advertisement, about which they had been speaking on the previous evening. This had elicited some remarks from Mrs. Grant similar to those already made, which Mr. Markland replied to in the above words.

"But what manner of use is there in it, brother?"

"What manner of objection can there be to it, Mary?"

"A very serious one. I have scarcely slept a wink all night for thinking about it. I don't see what on earth has led you to conjure up this matter, that has been sleeping quietly for years."

"But name this serious objection, Mary."

"To advertise for Anna's children will only be to call the attention of every one to our family, and cause the stigma your sister's conduct fixed upon us years ago, to be seen again in glowing colors. Now, the public have forgotten her, and her lapse from respectability, and we no longer suffer from her folly."

"Nonsense!"

"You can say so, if you choose, brother; but, as I view it, it is a very serious matter. I wouldn't for the world, have that whole thing called up again. It will be in every one's mouth, exaggerated in a thousand ways before a week goes by."

"Suppose it is?"

"Am I not a mother? Have I not two daughters just coming out?"

Mrs. Grant's voice here broke down; covering her face with her hands, she sobbed aloud.

The effect of this upon old Mr. Markland was to cause him to turn quickly away, and leave the breakfast room, and, in a little while, the house. In about fifteen minutes he entered the counting room of Mr. Grant. The merchant seemed very much engaged over some letters received by the morning's mail, merely nodding to Mr. Markland as he came in, and then resuming his employment of reading them.

The old man took up a newspaper, which occupied him for nearly an hour, when he laid it down, and glanced toward Mr. Grant. The latter was still very much engaged. Markland got up, and with his hands behind him, walked the floor of the counting-room for about twenty minutes. Still the merchant was as much occupied as ever. Not wishing to interrupt him in his business, the old man, who wanted to have the executor's advertisement prepared at once, and who had called in for the express purpose of having it done, left the counting room, with the intention of walking for half an hour or so, and then returning. As soon as he had gone out, Mr. Grant left the desk at which he had seemed so much engaged, and muttering something in an impatient tone, went out into the store, and gave sundry directions to his clerks and salesmen. He then returned to the counting-room, and filling up

three or four checks, to meet notes falling due that day, handed them to one of his clerks, and said,—

"If Mr. Markland comes in, and asks for me, say to him that I have gone to auction, and shall not be back before dinner time."

He then went away. Half an hour after, Mr. Markland returned, and received, in answer to his inquiry for Mr. Grant, the information that he had gone to auction, and would be out all the morning.

"Humph!" ejaculated the old man. He paused, with his finger to his lip, for some moments; then turning away, he left the store. On the street, he walked with the air of a man seeking to discover some one. His steps were slow, but his eyes were all about him. He walked up Chestnut street to Sixth, and then bent his steps north. In this direction he continued until he reached Spring Garden District, through many of the streets of which he pursued his way. Apparently disappointed in something, he went on toward the Northern Liberties, and walked there for nearly an hour.

By this time it was nearly one o'clock. Feeling much fatigued, Mr. Markland went down as far as Second street, and took an omnibus on the way to the Exchange. He had ridden for several squares, and was just passing Vine street, when, glancing back through the door of the omnibus, he saw, at some little distance, a young woman, walking in the opposite direction, whose figure and dress were so similar to those of the individual he had seen on the night before, that he was sure it must be the same person. As soon as possible the vehicle was stopped, and Mr. Markland was again upon the pavement. Though well advanced in years, he was active for an old man, and could walk at a very quick pace. His eye still rested upon the form that attracted his attention, as he gained the side walk.

"It is the very same," he said, half aloud, as he started in pursuit; but the girl walked with a rapid step, and he seemed scarcely to gain upon her at all. He was still some distance behind, when she reached Callowhill street, and turned up. Markland quickened his pace almost into a run; he soon gained the corner, but the girl was no where to be seen. Disappointed, he stopped, with his heart beating more rapidly than it had beaten for years. Why was it so? He could not tell; the strange interest he felt in the young girl who had a second time eluded him, was, to him, unaccountable.

"Shall I give her up so?" he asked himself, as he stood irresolute; after a pause, he answered,

"No!—no! I must see her, and know who she is. She must be somewhere close by; somewhere within half a block of the spot on which I now stand, and surrounded by circumstances that may require the instant interposition of a friend. Yes—she needs a friend! A young girl, innocent to all appearance, weeping alone in the streets of a large city at nightfall, needs a friend; and she shall have one if Joseph Markland can find her."

Saying this, the old man walked up Callowhill street, looking intently at every house, and trying to make up his mind, from the appearance of the different dwellings, which of them most probably contained the individual of whom he was in search. At length he stopped before one that, somehow or other, seemed to him most likely to reward with success his search. Knocking at the door, he awaited anxiously an answer to the summons. In a few moments it was opened by an old woman, with a sharp, wrinkled face, from which looked out a pair of small, glittering, black eyes. Her skin was dark and dirty—her dress soiled and in disorder.

"Well, sir?" was the salutation with which she met old Mr. Markland, looking at him, as she spoke, with a kind of defiance in her manner. Something in his appearance did not seem to please her.

"Did not a young woman enter here a minute or two ago?" he asked.

"No sir;" and the door was instantly shut in his face.

"Humph! She is here no doubt; but if in the keeping o that old hag, it is the lamb seeking shelter of the wolf."

This was said by Markland as he slowly turned from the closed door, and walked away, disappointed and undetermined what to do.

"And yet she may not be there," he added, in a slightly changed voice, pausing, and letting his eye run over several houses near by; another was selected and at this he knocked. The application was answered by a young woman, to whom he put the question—

"Did a young girl enter here, a little while ago?"

"Yes, sir," was the reply, with a look of surprise.

"Can I see her?"

"Yes sir; walk in." This was said after a slight hesitation.

"Do you know who she is?"

"O yes; she is my sister."

"Your sister!" with surprise and disappointment.

"Yes, sir; have you any thing particular to say to her?" The young woman paused as she asked this question, and looked into the old gentleman's face more intently. They had already entered the passage.

"I should at least like to see her; she may or she may not be the one of whom I am in search."

"I should think she was not. But walk into the parlor, sir, and I will call her down."

In a few minutes light feet were heard descending the stairs. Then a young girl, not over sixteen, entered; Mr. Markland rose, and looked her earnestly in the face; then recollecting himself, he said—

"Pardon the seeming rudeness of an old man; did I not see you going along Second street a little while ago?"

The girl shrunk back at the manner and question of Markland, while her face became suffused.

"Yes, sir," she said, "but why do you ask?"

"Did I not see you last evening, about nightfall, in Seventh street, near Washington Square, standing alone near a lamp?"

"No, sir," was the prompt and indignant reply.

"Then pardon me; I have been mistaken," returned the old man, in a disappointed tone.

No reply was made by the astonished girl, nor was even the low, respectful bow of Mr. Markland returned, as he gained the passage and retired through the door.

CHAPTER IV.

As Mr. Markland left the house he had entered so abruptly, a young woman stood at the window of a humble tenement opposite. His eye did not fall upon her, but she started back as she saw him step forth upon the pavement, saying, as she did so, to an elderly woman, who sat near—

"There! that is the very man of whom I told you. Driven with angry words from the presence of my aunt, as an imposter, I stood weeping on the pavement, when he passed me. Something in my appearance attracted his attention; for he paused looked at me for a moment, and then was approaching, when, frightened at the thought of being addressed by a man and a stranger in the street, I ran away as swiftly as my feet would carry me."

The individual addressed by the young girl arose, and stepped to the window.

"Where is he?" she asked.

"That is the old man, across the street. He seems looking for some one; he came out of the house opposite."

"Ah! who can he be? There, he has stopped, and is looking all around him and up at the different windows."

As this was said, the younger of the two stepped back instinctively.

"I wonder for whom he is looking. I will step to the door. Perhaps I can direct him."

"No—no—please don't," was quickly said by the maiden, as she laid her hand upon the arm of her elder companion.

"Why not?"

"He may be looking for me."

"Why for you?" This was said with a glance of inquiry, so earnest, that the blood mounted to the young girl's face.

"You know I have just come in."

"Yes."

"Perhaps he saw me in the street, and remembering me from the glance he had of my face last night, has sought to discover my place of abode."

No reply was made to this, other than a long, searching look into the maiden's face—a look that had in it something of suspicion. The effect produced was a gush of tears.

"Anna, child, what distresses you?"

This was asked in a voice of kindness and sympathy, that seemed to say—"Forgive me if I have wronged you by suspicion."

The girl retired from the window, without replying, and sinking into a chair, covered her face with her hands, and continued to weep bitterly.

The room in which were the two individuals last introduced, was a small front parlor, or sitting room, in a small house situated in Callowhill street. The furniture was poor and scanty, consisting merely of a small old-fashioned mahogany table, placed under a looking glass with a frame as old-fashioned as itself—four wood-seat chairs much worn—a rag carpet—a shovel and pair of tongs beside the fire place, where a few sticks of wood were burning—with a few other trifling articles needless to mention. But every thing was in order, and faultlessly clean. The elderly female who occupied this room was neat in her person,

although her garments were of common material. Her face was mild and benevolent, and her voice, when she spoke to her younger companion, gentle, yet firm. No one, at a first glance, could fail to discover that she possessed a good heart, and had, with it, good sense and discrimination.

She did not speak to the weeping girl for some minutes, during which time she stood thoughtful, sometimes with her eyes upon the floor, and sometimes with them resting on her young companion. At length she went up to her, and placing her hand upon her shoulder, said—

"Anna, you are aware that it is not two days since I first knew you. That we met under very singular circumstances, and that it is but right for me to be well satisfied in regard to you, before I give you my entire confidence. Lay aside all weakness, and think soberly and rationally. Be a woman, even if you are very young, for, hereafter, in life, you will have to act a woman's part, if all you have told me be true, which I cannot really doubt, although your story is a strange one. Think how much falsehood and imposture there is in the world, and how necessary it is for me and every one else to be fully on our guard. If you thus reflect, you will not be too deeply pained should I observe you closely, and notice every look, and tone and word. Your innocence will only become the more apparent, and my regard for you and confidence in you stronger. I am thus frank, in the outset, because I see that you are too sensitive for one in the condition you represent yourself to be in. You will meet with much, very much to wound you sharply, unless you rise above mere natural feeling, into reason, and act from its plain dictates. From my suspicions, if you are all that you say you are, you have nothing to fear. I will be your friend, and the little I have you shall be welcome to share. You shall fill for me the place made vacant by the ——"

The woman's voice faltered, and she became silent. The girl looked up into her face, and even though half-blinded by tears, she could see its muscles convulsed by strong emotion. This quickly subsided, and her new found friend resumed:

"You shall fill for me the place of one that I wish it were in my power to forget. Of one who left her mother's side and wandered away into strange and forbidden paths. But no—even if you take her place, it will only be for a time, and then I shall lose you as I lost her—No! no! not *as* I lost her. God

forbid! But your friends, I trust,—those who have a natural right to claim you,—will come forward in time. They cannot turn from you ever thus coldly and cruelly. Nature will and must speak, and its voice be heard."

Anna's tears were by this time dried. Looking with a glance of confidence and new-born affection into the face of the woman who had dealt so plainly with her, she merely said—

"Time, I trust, will give you to know that your good feelings have not been wasted."

"I feel sure that it will, Anna. Forgive me, if a momentary doubt stole over my mind. Truth, it is said, is stranger than fiction. And I believe it. All that you have related of yourself—of what has befallen you since you came to this city—might easily occur, and it, doubtless, has occurred. Life is a theatre on whose stage strange bewildering events are ever transpiring. I have seen enough to make me feel but little surprise at any new change of scenes.

Mrs. Grand, the name of the woman who here appears as the protector of a friendless girl, resumed the chair from which she had risen when Anna called her attention to old Mr. Markland, and taking up some work that had been laid down, commenced sewing upon it. Anna followed her example, after she had retired for a few minutes to wash away the marks of tears from her face. But the heart of the young girl was too full. She had not bent over her work many minutes, before the tears were blinding her and dropping upon the hand that in vain tried to direct her needle. Mrs. Grand saw this.

"Anna, child," she said, soothingly, "it is vain to give up so to your feelings. But, if you cannot yet control them, put by your work, and go up into the chamber. Perhaps an hour alone may restore your mind to a calmer state."

"No, ma'am," was replied. "I do not wish to be alone. I would rather sit with you, and sew. I will try to control myself. Though it is very hard, indeed, to think of my mother, whom I so dearly loved, and of my present condition, and yet be perfectly unmoved. Why am I not with her? Why was I left when she was taken away!"

Tears now flowed freely over Anna's face. Her words seemed to trouble Mrs. Grand, who, letting her work fall into her lap, drew her chair close to that of the weeping girl. Taking her hand, she said—

"My child, be sure of one thing, that to murmur at events over which we have no control, is to do wrong. There is One

who governs and guides in all the affairs of life for His creature's good, with unerring wisdom. Without Him, not a sparrow falls to the ground. He numbers the very hairs of our heads. His love is ever seeking to confer benefits. No event takes place without his permission, and, however seemingly evil an occurrence may be, He surely over-rules it for good. This separation that so deeply distresses you, is no accidental thing —nor has it taken place through an evil agency. The hand of a wise and merciful God is in it, and it will be better for you in the end that you have been so sorely afflicted.

"O no—no! It cannot be a blessing to lose my mother, Mrs. Grand; my mother, who knew me better than any, and loved me better than I shall ever again be loved. It is not good for a young girl like me to lose her mother."

"And yet, your's has died; has God done wrong to take her?"

There was a long silence.

"Anna, you have been taught to know that God in heaven is our best friend?—Is He to whom we are indebted for all the good gifts of life?"

No reply was made to this.

"You have read a great deal in your Bible?"

Anna was silent for a time, and then murmured—"Not a great deal."

"Then you must learn to read it very often; it will lift up your thoughts out of yourself, and cause them to dwell in a calmer region. It will teach you confidence in God, and enable you to see that He not only doeth all things for you, but doeth all things well. Would it not produce an entire change in your state of mind, if you could really believe that your mother's death was the best thing that could have happened to you."

"Oh, but that cannot be; it cannot be best for a young creature like me to lose her mother; how can it be, Mrs. Grand? Oh, no—no! do not try to make me believe that; my dear, dear mother! oh, that I had died with you!"

Convulsive sobs followed this expression of her feelings; deeply touched by her grief, Mrs. Grand drew the head of the weeping girl down upon her bosom, and more by affectionate caresses than words tried to sooth her troubled spirit into quietness. She lay thus almost motionless for nearly a quarter of an hour, when she gently disengaged herself from the arm that was thrown around her, and rising up,

retired with her hand partly shading her face, to her chamber.

CHAPTER V.

About one year previous to the opening of our story, on a stormy night in November, Doctor Milnor, a physician of some eminence, residing in Nashville, Tennessee, who had drawn up before a comfortable fire, in the midst of his family, was told that a young girl wanted to see him in his office.

"Oh, I hope you won't have to go out, father," said a bright-eyed little maiden, not over twelve, "you hardly ever spend a whole evening with us."

"And it storms so," added a younger child, looking serious.

"If you should not have a very urgent call, put off the visit until to-morrow morning," remarked Mrs. Milnor.

"O yes, do, father," said one of the children.

"I'll tell you all what I will do," returned the doctor, smiling as he arose, "after I have seen by whom and for what I am wanted."

Dr. Milnor left the room and went into his office. There he found a slender, timid-looking girl, who seemed not over fifteen or sixteen years of age. She arose from a chair as he entered; and, as she did so, turned her face to the light, and he saw that her features were soft and delicate, and that her face was pale, and its expression anxious. He did not remember that he had ever met her before.

"Well, my dear," the kind physician said, in a mild, encouraging voice, "do you wish to see me for any thing very particular?"

The stranger hesitated a moment, and said, timidly.

"My father is very sick."

And then looked earnestly in his face, as if half afraid to prefer a request that he would visit him.

"Who is your father?"

"Mr. Gray."

"Where does he live?"

"In —— street, not far from here."

"Mr. Gray? I don't remember him. But, is there any thing serious the matter? How long has he been sick?"

"He hasn't been well for a great while. But he has been

so much worse for a week past, that mother is afraid, unless something is done for him, that he will not ——"

The girl's voice trembled, so that she did not venture to utter the word that was on her tongue.

"Don't you know the nature of the disease of which he is suffering?"

"He has a bad cough, and gets thinner, and paler, and weaker every day."

"Is he much worse, just now?"

"O yes, sir. A great deal worse."

"Worse, since when?"

"Since yesterday. He got very wet in the rain, and has had fever and pains all over him. To-night he coughs all the while, and can hardly get his breath. You will come to see him, doctor, to-night, won't you?"

A man even less feeling and less conscientious in the discharge of his duty than Dr. Milnor, could not have hesitated a moment to comply with the almost imploring request of that young girl to visit her father.

"Yes, I will go with you at once," he replied. "Sit down for a few moments, until I get myself ready."

"You won't have to go out to-night, father?" said Mrs. Milnor, looking up into her husband's face, as he entered the family sitting-room, bright with happy countenances. The children's faces all expressed their hope that he would not be obliged to leave them.

"Yes," he replied. "Duty calls me, and I must go."

"But is the call an urgent one? The night is cold and stormy."

"Not too cold nor stormy to prevent a poor young girl from braving the rain and wind for the sake of her sick father."

"Who is she?" asked one of the children, her sympathies at once aroused.

"I do not know. But she has a sweet young face, and from its paleness and anxiety, I should say that trouble has visited her heart too early. But, she is waiting for me, and I mustn't linger here."

So, taking a light, Doctor Milnor went up to his room, and prepared himself to go out. It was but a short time before he joined the waiting girl in his office.

"My dear child," he said to her, now contrasting his own warm and heavy cloak with the thin shawl that was wrap-

ped around her shoulders, "you have come out too thinly clad for so cold and stormy a night."

The girl did not reply but moved towards the door, as if thinking, not of herself and the storm, but of her sick father. Doctor Milnor followed her, and they were soon moving down the street in the driving rain.

They went on in silence, the girl all the way a few steps in advance of the doctor, notwithstanding he kept quickening his pace, to keep up with her. In about five minutes they stopped at one of a half dozen mean-looking houses, in which none but the very poor lived. A rap quickly brought a middle-aged woman to the door. The doctor and his companion entered.

"This is my mother, doctor," said the latter, as soon as the door was closed, speaking with a graceful ease that surprised the physician. Nor was he less surprised to find in the mother a lady-like manner, that bespoke one of polished education.

"I have sent for you, doctor," she said, "to see my husband, who is, I fear, dangerously ill. He ought to have had medical aid earlier; but we are ——"

The woman's voice choked, and she turned away her head to hide her feelings.

The doctor remained silent until she recovered herself, and said,

"We have not felt able to call in a physician, and from that cause, I fear, my husband's complaint has been allowed to go on too long."

"How long has he been sick?" asked the doctor.

"His health has been failing for some years. But he has taken cold, and is now very ill, indeed."

"Shall I see him?"

"If you please, doctor. Walk up stairs."

Doctor Milnor ascended a narrow pair of uncarpeted stairs and entered a small chamber. Its furniture was of the poorest kind; yet all was neat. A faint light showed him a man lying upon a bed, with but a thin sheet over him, although there was no fire in the room, and the air was chilly. His breathing was very labored, for, with each exhalation of air, there was a strong motion of the whole body. His large eyes glistened as he turned them upon the doctor, who at once approached the bedside, and taking a chair, placed his fingers upon the pulse of his patient.

"Have you any pain?" he asked, after about a minute.

"Yes."

"Where?"

"In all my limbs, but particularly in my chest."

"You are oppressed in breathing?"

"O yes. I draw every breath with difficulty."

The doctor sat silent for some time, with his eyes fixed intently upon the man's emaciated countenance. He was about to ask some further question, when the patient began to cough violently. The paroxysm continued for nearly a minute, and left him completely exhausted, and panting as if he would suffocate.

The hoarse voice of the sick man, his deep, hollow-sounding cough, the pearly lustre of his large eyes, the cadaverous paleness of his whole visage, with the exception of circumscribed red spots on his cheeks, the thinness of his hair, which had evidently been falling for some time, and the violence of the fever, with deep-seated pains and oppressed breathing, spoke to the physician a too distinct language. The sick man, as he grew calm after the fit of coughing, looked intently into his face. He understood the meaning of his look, and turned his head, with a feeling of sadness, away. In his mind there was no hope for the invalid. The disease, exacerbated by the violent cold which had been taken on the day before, was rapidly advancing towards a fatal termination. He might arrest it, temporarily, by medicine; though even of this he was doubtful.

After sitting for a short time longer, he wrote a prescription.

"This will give you relief," he said; take one of the powders every hour until you are better. In the morning I will see you again."

The prescription was a mere palliative.

"Doctor," said Mrs. Gray, after the physician had left the sick room, looking anxiously at him, as she spoke, "what do you think of him?"

"He is a sick man, madam. But I think, after he takes the medicine I have ordered, he will become easier and have a good night's rest."

"Do you think it is——?"

"I will see your husband to-morrow morning, madam." said Doctor Milnor, interrupting the woman. "I can judge

much better then than I can now. The cold he has taken has increased all the ordinary symptoms of his disease."

And with this he bowed and withdrew.

CHAPTER VI.

"Let me go at once for the medicine," said the daughter, the moment Doctor Milnor had closed the door after him.

"Yes dear. But——"

And the mother paused and looked troubled. Then she went to some drawers and searched them carefully.

"I don't believe there is a cent in the house, Anna. How are we to get the medicine?" she at length whispered.

The girl's countenance that had been brighter since the doctor came in, fell, and her eyes were dimmed with tears. She stood thoughtful a moment, and then said in a low answering whisper,

"We must have the medicine."

"Yes; yes. But how are we to get it without money?"

"I will beg it, if I can do no better. Where is the prescription? If Mr. Martin will not put it up, and wait for us to pay him, I will go to Doctor Milnor."

"We must have it, my child. Get it if you possibly can." returned the mother, looking away from her daughter's face.

Anna put on her bonnet, drew her thin shawl about her shoulders, and again went forth into the stormy night. It was some distance to the nearest drug-store—only a few lights were here and there seen struggling with darkness, and the rain was falling heavily. A sense of fear took, momentarily, possession of her; but a strong anxiety on account of her father, and her desire to get for him the medicine that was to relieve the violence of his present symptoms, quickly dispelled this weakness. She moved on in the direction of the drug-store with rapid steps.

"Heh! stop! look here? Where are you going?" cried a man, sudddenly, whom she had not before noticed, as he started towards her from the opposite side of the street.

Anna stood instantly still from fright; her heart ceasing

to beat, as if she had suddenly become inanimate. The man continued to advance, and was within a few paces of her, when her heart's returning pulsations sent the blood again throughout her body, and restored self-consciousness. Bounding away like a frightened deer, she was soon beyond the reach of harm, if harm were intended her.

"Will you put this up for me?" she asked, timidly advancing to the counter, on entering the drug-store, and presenting the prescription that had been left by Doctor Milnor. There were two or three men sitting by.

The owner of the shop took the small slip of paper from her hand, and ran his eye over it.

"How much will it be?" Anna asked, in a low tone, leaning over the counter.

"A 'bit," was replied.

The compounder of medicines then began to put up the prescription. He had nearly completed it, when Anna, who felt sensibly her embarrassing position, especially as there were others present, bent over the counter again, and said in a faltering voice, but so low that no ear but his took in her words—

"I have no money to pay for the medicine. Won't you trust us for a little while?"

The pestle with which the apothecary was triturating one of the articles in the prescription, dropped from his hand, and he looked into the girl's face with surprise.

"Trust! Humph! Pay to-day and I'll trust you to-morrow." And so saying, he pushed the mortar from him, petulantly, and, walking from behind the counter, came around by the stove, and joined the little group who were discussing some grave political question.

Completely driven back into herself by the man's decided manner, Anna turned away and glided from the shop.

"Pretty cool, that!" remarked the apothecary, as the girl closed the door after her.

"What?"

"That young lady brought me a prescription, and when it was half put up, asked if I would'nt trust her."

"Ah?"

"Yes. And that is what I call pretty cool."

"I should think it was. You buy your medicines, I suppose?" remarked one, jocosely.

"I do: and pay for them into the bargain."

"What did her prescription call for?" asked a second person.

"An anodyne."

"The girl looked poor. I noticed her as she came in. Who is she?"

"I don't know, although I have seen her in here occasionally."

"Whose prescription is it?"

"Doctor Milnor's."

"And was intended to allay the pain of some poor suffering creature. I thought you had more of the milk of human kindness in your breast, Martin. You are the last person I should have suspected of refusing a little medicine to the sick."

Martin was a hasty man, but not deliberately unkind. This remark made him sensible that he had done wrong, and he confessed his error. But, it was too late to retrieve it. The applicant had departed.

On leaving the drug-store, Anna Gray took a wide circuit to avoid passing the particular place where she had been accosted by a stranger, who, to her mind, evidently intended no good. In doing so, she had to pass another drug-store. She was about to enter this one, and had her hand upon the door, when she recollected to have left the prescription at Martin's. Nothing now remained but to call again upon Doctor Milnor. Much as her sensitive and naturally independent feelings shrunk from doing this, love and duty urged her forward. Resolutely she bent her steps in the direction of his office.

The doctor had returned home, and was again enjoying the society of his family, when the servant opened the door and announced another call.

"You must not go out again. Indeed, you must not!" said Mrs. Milnor.

The doctor smiled, and then arose and went into his office.

"Why, what is the matter, my good girl?" said he, in surprise, seeing that it was Anna Gray again. "Is your father worse?"

No, sir. But ——"

"But what, child? Speak out. What more can I do for you?"

"We have no money to get the medicine." This was said with an effort and a burning cheek.

"Why didn't you say so when I was at your house? I would have sent it to you."

"Mother didn't like to do so. But I knew you would let us have it, and so I have come to you again."

"Certainly, I will, child. There, sit down, until I prepare it for you."

And the doctor took down his bottles, and in a few minutes had the medicine ready.

"Have you really no money at all?" he said, as he put it in the hands of the girl.

"Not now," she said, with an evident wish to avoid being closely questioned.

"Do you expect to receive a supply soon?" pursued the doctor.

"Yes—no—when father gets better he can earn something, and then we will pay you."

"Don't talk about paying me," returned Doctor Milnor, a good deal moved. "But if you have no money, now, how are you going to live?"

"We don't want much, and we've still got a little flour and meat in the house. Father will be better soon, I hope, and mother and I will take in sewing."

"Have you ever taken in sewing, as you call it?"

"O yes. But we hav'nt been here a great while. And we don't yet know any body from whom we can obtain it."

Doctor Milnor thought a moment, and then said—

"Run home quickly, and give your father the medicine. In the morning, I will call in again."

Thanking the kind physician with a mute, but expressive look, Anna turned away and left his office.

CHAPTER VII.

"HAVE you got it?" eagerly asked the mother of Anna, as she came in after an absence of over half an hour.

"Yes. Here it is. Martin refused to trust me, and I had to go to Doctor Milnor."

Mrs. Gray waited to hear no more, but took the medicine quickly from her daughter's hand, and hurried with it up to the chamber of her sick husband. As she did so, Anna heard her father's deep sounding, concussive cough, that to her ear was more than ever distressing.

After one of the powders had been given, the sick man seem-

ed to find some relief. Before half an hour had passed he was sleeping quietly.

"Now Anna, do you go to bed, dear," said Mrs. Gray, "I will set up with your father to-night."

"No, mother: you were up the whole of last night, and hav'nt lain down once to-day. You must go to bed and let me sit up. I can do it very well. The doctor said that he would sleep very well after the medicine. Oh, I hope he will be a great deal better in the morning. I am sure he will, for the medicine acted so quickly."

Her mother was by no means so sanguine; for she understood that it was nothing more than an anodyne that her husband had taken. But she did not wish to destroy the lively hepe that had sprung up in her daughter's mind, and therefore said nothing to the contrary.

Earnestly urged by Anna, she at length consented to lie down, though without taking off her clothes. Overwearied by long watching, and from want of natural rest and sleep, Mrs. Gray soon fell into a deep slumber, and Anna was left the only conscious being in that sick chamber. At first an indescribable feeling of loneliness stole over her. There was a pause in nature. Even her own heart's pulsations seemed hushed into rest. This feeling passed away after a time, as her thoughts became more active. These not being pleasant, she took up a book, and sought forgetfulness of herself in its pages. For several hours she read, with only the interruptions occasioned by the utterance of a heavy groan now and then, that struggled up from the breast of the sleeping invalid. At last, even these were intermitted, and her father slept more quietly.

About one o'clock, she laid aside her book. It had ceased longer to interest her. Rising from her chair, she took the lamp, and going to the bed upon which her father slept, held it so that the light would fall clearly on his face. Its expression caused her to start, and sent the blood flowing back upon her heart.

But she recovered herself in a moment. He was breathing easily—nay, as gently as a sleeping infant. Turning from the bed-side she replaced the lamp, shading it so that its light would not fall upon the sick man's face, and then retired to a chair in the shadow of the room. The storm had increased instead of abating with the progress of the night. It rushed and roared along the streets, and drove against the frail tenement which they occupied, with a force that made it shake to

the foundation. None will wonder that the young watcher, now that her mind had ceased to be occupied as it had been during the former part of the night, should feel a dark, superstitious, and undefinable fear stealing over it. Every deeper sigh of the storm, every mysterious moaning of the wind, every strange sound by night made audible, fell with a chilling sensation upon her heart. At last she arose, and went to the bed upon which her mother lay sleeping soundly, and crouched down close beside her. Here she reclined for hearly an hour, until sleep began to steal over her senses.

A moaning sound startled her just as she had become unconscious of external things. Rising to her feet, she stood bewildered for a moment. The sound came to her ear again. It was from her father. Stepping quickly to the bed upon which he lay, she bent over him anxiously. He still slept; and breathed easily — but every few minutes moaned as if in pain.

Sighing heavily, she turned away, and again shrunk near to her mother. But she felt no more inclination to sleep. Superstitious thoughts were again thrown into her mind. She felt as if some fearful vision would every moment rise up, and drive her mad. Images of more real things, after awhile, impressed her imagination. These were taking new forms every moment, when a deeper groan from her father again startled her. In a little while a strange distinct rattle thrilled her ear, causing her to spring to his bed-side with a quivering heart.

Her father lay motionless. She bent her ear down, but felt no breath upon her cheek. Turning to the light, she removed the object that shaded it from the bed, and then glided back. One look sufficed. Death's angel had set his seal upon the sick man's face. A long wailing cry filled the chamber, and the poor girl fell senseless upon the couch that supported her father's corpse.

CHAPTER VIII.

About nine o'clock on the next morning, Doctor Milnor left his house, and walked with a quicker step than usual, toward that part of the town where resided the poor family that had called him in on the evening previous. The storm that raged so violently through a greater part of the night had passed away, and the sun was shining brightly down from a clear blue sky.

The doctor looked serious and thoughtful as he pursued his way. The incidents of the preceding evening had affected him a good deal. His patient could not, he felt certain, live but a very short time. Disease had taken, evidently, too deep a hold upon his vitals. It was plain that his wife and daughter clung to him with a most intense affection; that they were willing to bear any privation so that he could be spared to them. And it was equally plain, that death would soon claim his victim.

"Who are they?" he asked himself, as he walked along—a question he had already put more than twenty times. "That Mrs. Gray is a woman of education and refinement. Far better days has she seen. Ah, me! How hard it must be for one like her to bear so great a change!"

With such thoughts passing through his mind, Doctor Milnor walked on, until he found himself at the humble residence of his patient. He knocked at the door, and waited for some moments, but no one came. He knocked louder; still there was no movement within. Lifting the latch he pushed open the door and entered. No one was in the room below. He knocked against the stairs. No one answered. He knocked again—the silence of death succeeded. His heart misgave him that all was not right. Opening the door that enclosed the narrow stairway, Doctor Milnor ascended to the room above, in which, on the evening previous, he had seen his patient. The truth was soon revealed. On a bed lay, sleeping the sleep of death, the man he had called to see. His wife sat by the bed side, her face buried in a pillow.

She did not stir as he came in. The daughter was lying upon another bed, with her face turned towards the light. It was deadly pale.

For a moment the mind of the physician was bewildered. But quickly recovering his self-possession, he first satisfied himself that life had fled the pulses of poor Gray. He then laid his hand upon the arm of Mrs. Gray, and called her name. Slowly raising her head, she looked up wildly into the doctor's face. Gradually the expression of her countenance changed, as her thoughts became distinct, and she murmured in a tone that was inexpressibly sad—

"Too late, doctor! Too late!"

"The Lord giveth, and the Lord taketh away," he replied, scarce thinking of the words he was uttering.

The striken wife did not reply; but the words gave her

strength. She arose to her feet, shuddering as she did so, and moved by a similar thought with that which prompted the doctor, passed from the bed of death to that upon which lay her daughter. As she took Anna's hand, the girl started up with a low, affrighted cry.

"What is the matter, Anna?" the mother asked, in a soothing voice.

"Oh, such a dreadful dream! Father! Yes, yes, it is too true!" and clasping her hands together she sunk back upon the bed, and wept bitterly.

"Anna, dear!" said the mother, forgetting for a moment her own deep sorrow in pain for her child. He is free from his terrible sufferings. We must think of his release, not of our bereavement. Our loss is his gain. Think of that, Anna."

But Anna wept and sobbed, while her whole frame quivered. Nearly ten minutes passed, before Doctor Milnor could get the mother and daughter calm enough to speak with him rationally.

"Let me call in some of your friends, now. You must retire from this scene. Your hearts are already sufficiently tried," said the doctor.

"We have no friends," was the low reply.

"Some of your neighbours," I mean.

"We know none. We are total strangers to all around us."

"I will find you neighbours," said the doctor, leaving the room as he spoke. He went out, and knocked at the door of the adjoining house. An old woman answered the summons.

"Mr. Gray, who lives next door to you; died this morning. Won't you, and some of your neighbours come in and lay him out?"

"Mr. Gray! I thought he wouldn't stand it long. He's gone then, is he? Ah, well! he's better off I should think. He's kept me awake for many an hour with his dreadful coughing. Oh, yes; I'll come in. Poor souls! How are his wife and daughter? I often thought that I would call in and see them in a neighbourly way, but they didn't look as if they had always been poor people, and, somehow or other, it seemed to me, that if I called in it would not be agreeable. I didn't think the poor man was so far gone, or I would have looked in at any rate."

"Then come in with me at once, if you please. Mr.

Gray has been dead for some hours, and they have been alone with his body ever since."

"Dear bless me! Is it possible? I will put on another gown, and be in presently."

"No—no. Never mind another gown. The eyes of the wife and daughter are too full of tears to see what you have on. Can't you get a neighbour to come with you."

"Yes, sir. Mrs. Gordon across the street will come in a minute, I know."

"Then run over for her, won't you?"

"Yes I will." And the kind hearted old woman went quickly across the street. In a few minutes she returned in company with another female, and to these Dr. Milnor left the duty of preparing the dead for burial, while he went to visit a few patients who required immediate attention. After looking in upon these, he called on a benevolent female friend, and related what had just occurred. She promised at once to go around among her acquaintances, and procure money enough to meet all the funeral expenses, and afterwards to visit the destitute and afflicted family.

"If I am not mistaken, they are without food," said the doctor. "Last night I was called in to see the husband and father. I prescribed for him, but they had no money even to buy medicine."

"So poor as that! Something, then, must be wrong with them."

"Nothing more, I think, than being in a strange place, and he to whom they had been in the habit of looking up for support, unable to afford it."

"I will see them at once."

"I wish you would. Good day. I will call upon you again this afternoon."

All that was necessary for the decent burial of Gray was provided by the kindness of strangers. On the day after, he was consigned to the cold earth, and his bereaved wife and daughter, who, almost alone, had followed his remains to their earthly resting place, returned to their cheerless home. There they found, deposited during their absence, supplies of food, clothing, and a small sum of money. The donor had departed.

CHAPTER IX.

After the death of Mr. Gray, his wife and daughter, through the kind interest of Doctor Milnor, were able to get sewing enough from families in the neighbourhood to supply all their immediate wants. Sad hearted, but with patience and industry, they worked on, day after day. A few ladies, whose sensibilites had been touched by hearing their story related by the doctor, visited them, occasionally, at first; but Mrs. Gray seemed to shrink with such evident sensitiveness from these intrusions, that they were soon discontinued, and, in one or two cases, with offended feelings on the part of the well meaning visitors.

"If she is poor, she is as proud as Lucifer," was the remark of one.

"There is something wrong about her," said another.

"I wonder if she were ever married to that man?" was the suggestive inquiry of a third.

"I don't know. But I feel very sure that she must have done something to cut her off from her family and friends; for any one can see, at a glance, that she has been well educated, and used to moving in refined circles. Perhaps she has married some one beneath her, who has dragged her down to his own dead level in society."

"Nearer the truth, no doubt. But there is no telling."

Thus was suspicion engendered. Its effect was, to make those who had felt, in the first instance, interested in the destitute strangers, lukewarm in their cause. At the expiration of a month or two, they found it less easy to procure sewing than at first. This lady and that, for whom they had worked, had nothing more for them to do. Finally, what little came into their hands was given so reluctantly, and in the form always of a favour bestowed, that poor Anna shrunk from the task of going after it.

"I don't think Mrs. W—— cares about our doing any more work for her," she said to her mother, on coming home one day, with a few coarse garments to make.

"Why not, Anna?"

"She seems as if she don't."

"Did she say any thing?"

"Not very distinctly. But her manner was very cold, and she said something that I could not clearly understand,

about their being plenty of people needing work that they know all about."

A shadow flitted over the face of Mrs. Gray. Her lips were tightly closed for a few moments. Then with a composed manner, and a calm voice she said,

"To eat bread earned in this way, Anna, is to eat the bread of charity,—that neither you nor I must do."

Anna made no reply. She laid the bundle she had brought home, upon a table, but did not unroll it. She felt as her mother did—honest and independent. She could work butnot beg; no, nor ask for work that was grudgingly given.

"It's the last lot of sewing they get from me," said Mrs. W—, in a worried tone of voice, as Anna Gray retired with the small bundle of work she had given her. "There are plenty of poor women, that I know all about, who stand in need of whatever sewing I have to put out. There is something mysterious about these people that I don't see through. Something wrong, depend on it."

An hour afterwards, while Mrs. W— was still thinking about Mrs. Gray, a servant handed in the very bundle she had given to Anna. It was accompanied by a note, tastefully written, and to this effect:

DEAR MADAM,—From something said by you when you gave my daughter the work I now return you, I infer that you did so with reluctance; and also, that you did not feel sure that we were deserving the privilege of even earning our food by honest labor. Forgive the sensitive pride, that even in extreme necessity cannot receive any favor not freely bestowed. I should lose my own self respect, were I to do so.

Respectfully yours,
ANNA GRAY."

Mrs. W— was much annoyed by the contents of this note, and angry at what she called the insulting presumption of the writer, who, she was very certain, was no better than she should be. It was shown to several friends, and commented upon in various forms, in nearly all cases much to the disparagement of poor Mrs. Gray.

"Some people," remarked Mrs. W—, "are like ill-na-

tured dogs, if you pat them on the head, you get your fingers snapped off for your pains."

"One who is really deserving," said another, "is always humble and thankful."

"Like Mrs. Gleeson," added a third. "It is really a pleasure to help her, she is so grateful. She seems as if she would kiss the very ground you stand on."

"How different from this Mrs. Gray," said Mrs. W—. "If what you have to do for her is not done in a certain way; if the etiquette of charity is not fully observed, she flares up in an instant, and flings your offering back into your face. I guess it's the last favor she gets of my hands, if she starves."

Mrs. W— considered herself a very benevolent woman, and so did many others. She was always active in public charities; but it must be told, that the charities of home were not always strictly observed.

It soon went through the whole circle of ladies who had assisted Mrs. Gray, that she had written an insulting note to Mrs. W— and refused to work for her, because her daughter had misrepresented something or other that had been said. Of course, all were very indignant, and all knew, from the first, that it would turn out just so.

During the week, Anna called on several persons for whom they had worked, but all treated her coldly, and none had any thing to give out.

All this passed without having found its way to the ears of Doctor Milnor. But even he did not remain long in ignorance. Meeting with one of the kind ladies whom he had interested in behalf of Mrs. Gray, about three weeks from the time of the difficulty with Mrs. W—, he said,

"How comes on poor Mrs. Gray and her daughter?"

"I don't know, I am sure," replied the lady, looking serious.

"When did you see her last?"

"I have not seen her for several weeks."

"Indeed!"

"No, doctor. Why, havn't you heard?"

"Heard what, Mrs. —?" asked the doctor, looking pained and surprised.

"How she served Mrs. W—?"

"No. How did she serve her?"

"Why bless me! I supposed you knew all about it."

"No indeed. I have not heard a word. But tell me. I shall be sorry if I am deceived in that woman."

"Deceived? Yes indeed; we are all deceived. She has acted very badly."

"Tell me what she has done?"

"Insulted Mrs. W— most grossly."

"How?"

"I will tell you. Mrs. W— sent her some work to do, and she returned it with an insulting note."

"Refusing to do the work?"

"O, certainly."

"That is strange. Do you remember the contents of the note?"

"Not exactly; but there was something in it about thanking her to keep her work to herself, if she grudged letting her have it, and all that kind of thing."

"Humph! I will see Mrs. W—."

"Do so, doctor. She will tell you all about it, and show you the note. When you see it you will agree with me, that she ought to be left to come to her senses by a little suffering. Some people in this world cannot bear the least good fortune."

Doctor Milnor called upon Mrs. W— on the same day; heard her version of the matter, and read Mrs. Gray's note. It must be owned that his impression differed in some respects from that of the coterie of benevolent ladies who had discarded the poor woman.

On the next day the doctor called to see Mrs. Gray herself, but, to his great surprise, found that the house in which she had lived was vacant. On making inquiry next door, he found, that, about a week previously, Mrs. Gray had sold off most of her things, and moved somewhere up the river.

The doctor went away in a thoughtful mood.

CHAPTER X.

Mr. Gray had lived in Cincinnati, for many years. At one time his circumstances were tolerably good; but a failure in business, and subsequent ill health, reduced him very low. A promise of employment led him to remove to

Nashville, where he died, leaving his family, as has been seen, in very destitute circumstances.

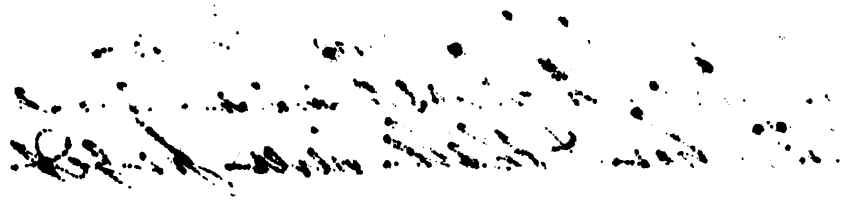
So soon as Mrs. Gray perceived that the kind feelings awakened in her behalf, were beginning to subside, and that she was actually regarded with something like suspicion, she determined to go back with her daughter to Cincinnati, where they were better known, and where she knew that they could at least procure work enough to keep them above want. Having no one to consult on the subject, nothing was said to any one. They sold off such articles of furniture as they did not wish to remove, and with the remnant of their effects, embarked for Cincinnati. No one asked them any questions, and they communicated with no one on the subject.

In Cincinnati they felt more at home, although the return to that city without the husband and father, who was so tenderly beloved, affected them with an inexpressible sadness. But the necessity of active exertion, and that exertion itself, diverted their thoughts, and buoyed up their minds. They soon found themselves the occupants of comfortable apartments, and with as much on their hands as they could do, although the work they obtained was not very profitable.

Nothing of more than ordinary interest occurred during the winter and spring. The mother and daughter continued to labor on, at work obtained sometimes from the shops and sometimes from families, managing, by so doing, to provide for themselves all they desired, and even to lay by a small sum of money for future contingencies.

Although so poor, as to be obliged to toil with constant industry, Mrs. Gray managed always to have a little time to spare in which she read to Anna, or caused Anna to read to her. Books were obtained from a circulating library at a very small cost; they were usually such as contained information, or set forth right principles for conduct in life. Occasionally a work of a lighter character was procured, as a kind of mental relaxation.

As before intimated, Mrs. Gray was a woman whose appearance and manner indicated one above the station she occupied. There was something of the lady in all her movements. She had evidently been well educated; was intelligent, and polished in her exterior. With Anna, who seemed deeply attached to her mother, she had always



taken great pains; and it was gratifying to her maternal pride to see her child growing up, into a modest, graceful, well informed young woman, fit to adorn any circle. Before her father failed in business, Anna had been taught music and dancing, and had taken lessons in French. In all these branches of a polite education, she had made considerable progress.

Time passed on. Spring came and went, and the summer was nearly gone, when Mrs. Gray was attacked with a prevailing fever, that brought her almost immediately to the verge of death. From this, aided by the wise prescriptions of a skilful physician, she slowly recovered. But it was the middle of September before she could leave her room. On the first day that she ventured forth, she took a heavy cold, which caused a relapse, from which she never recovered. In a few short weeks she sunk into the grave.

Some days previous to this afflicting event, she was in a calmer state than usual. The fever that had continued with a slow, but steady progress the work of destruction, abated. Her mind was clear, her eye bright, her voice firm. The great change filled Anna with hope.

"You are so much better, dear mother. Oh! I hope you will be well soon!" she said.

The mother looked earnestly into the face of her child.

"Anna," she said, after some moments had passed—"I have something to say to you, and perhaps this is the fittest time. I may never recover, and you should know all that pertains to my early history. It may be of use to you. There may still be living those who will love you and care for you, for your mother's sake. I know not that this is so; but, I will tell you all.

"My father was a rich merchant of Philadelphia. I had a twin sister and a brother, both of whom, but especially the latter, I loved with warm affection. Contrary to the wishes of my family, I married your father, whose only fault was, want of wealth, and high family connexions. For this act I was cast off. For a few years your father and myself lived in Philadelphia, and then we removed to this place. More than twenty years have elapsed since I came to the west. But once during that time did the least tidings from home reach me. It is nearly fifteen years, since I saw, announced in an eastern newspaper, the death of my father. I then wrote to my sister, but got no answer. She may, or she may not be living.

"The manner in which all of my family treated your father, made me indignant. I loved him, and was of a proud temper; I could, therefore, poorly brook contempt when it was cast upon him, and upon me for marrying him. This feeling of indignant pride, estranged me from all who had been dear from childhood.

"But, still there are natural claims as well as relationships. I fear, Anna, that I shall not be with you long. Get your pen and write down the names of Mason Grant, and Joseph Markland. Mrs. Mary Grant, the wife of Mason Grant, if living, is my twin-sister, and Joseph Markland is my brother. Joseph had an excellent heart. I was tenderly attached to him. Oh, I have so often and often wondered how he could rest, if living, without seeking me out. But, hearing nothing from me in so long a time, he has, probably, thought me dead. If ever I should be taken from you, go at once to Philadelphia, and seek out my sister and brother. They will love you, for their sister's sake, I am sure,—they will take care of you. Every one says you resemble me strongly; that will be to them the best proof of your identity. But there is another. Bring me from the bottom of my trunk a small box that you will find there."

Anna brought the box. Her mother opened it, and took out a small, richly set miniature, that the daughter had never seen.

"This is the likeness of my mother," resumed Mrs. Gray. "It was in my possession when I was married, and I have ever since retained it, as a most precious remembrancer of my earliest and happiest days. This, with your strong resemblance to me, will make your statement at once believed. Promise me, then, my child, that if I am taken from you, you will seek out these relations."

Anna promised in a faint voice; but, as she did so, a chilling shudder passed through her frame.

"Oh, do not speak of dying, my dear, dear mother!" she sobbed, falling upon her neck. "You will not leave me. What shall I do—where shall I go, when you are taken away?"

"All will be right, my child," returned Mrs. Gray, in a calm voice. "It will be better for you, I trust, and I shall be at rest."

Anna continued to weep in bitter anguish of spirit.

There was something so earnest about her mother, and at times so solemn, while she had been speaking to her, that she was deeply impressed with the feeling that a separation was near—a separation for which she was utterly unprepared.

That event was much closer at hand than either the mother or child had supposed. On the next morning she was taken quite ill, and in three days breathed out her last mortal sigh, her head resting on the bosom of her half distracted child.

CHAPTER XI.

It was impossible for Anna Gray to realize, until after the burial of her mother, the true nature of the loss she had sustained. Death, when at last it came, benumbed for a time her feelings. The shock was so severe, that its effect was paralyzing. But, after the body had been carried to the grave, and the few sympathizing neighbors who attended the funeral had departed, Anna felt a most distressing sense of loneliness and bereavement. This continued for several days. Then, thoughts of what she should do, and where she should go, began to possess her mind, and raise it above a state of brooding melancholy.

The promise she had made to her mother a short time before her death, filial love and duty required her to perform, although her own feelings were altogether opposed. She did not wish to know the relatives who had treated her mother with cruel neglect; who had, in fact, cast her off; much less seek them out, and apply to them for support and protection. But, her word had been given to a dying parent and that word she dared not violate.

With a most unconquerable reluctance, she set about making preparations for a journey to Philadelphia. Not a single person, among the few people with whom she was acquainted, knew any one in Philadelphia, or could give her any information as to where she should go, or how she should act on her arrival in that city. The amount of money that she received from the sale of a few articles of furniture, was barely sufficient, after paying two month's rent, and buying herself some necessary articles of clothing,

to meet the cost of her passage up the river and across the mountains.

"Suppose I cannot find them? What shall I do in a strange place?"—She asked herself on the evening before she started, and shuddered at the question. But she could only go forward and trust that all would come out right in the end.

A man who lived near neighbour, and who had been well acquainted with her father, went with her to the steamboat when she started, and put her under the captain's care, who promised to see her safely in the stage for Philadelphia, immediately on the arrival of the boat at Pittsburg.

No incident worth noting occurred on the passage up the river. At Pittsburg, she was placed, by the captain according to promise, in the eastern stage. After her passage was paid, she had only about three dollars left. She was the only female passenger among nine persons. Her heart trembled when she found herself thus situated; but for this there was no cause. She was treated with the kindest attentions during the whole journey of three days.

It was mid-day when they arrived in the city.

"Shall I get a carriage for you?" asked one of her fellow-passengers.

Anna started from the deep reverie into which she had fallen, and replied,

"No, sir, I thank you," almost involuntarily.

The man paused a moment, and then left her to look after his own baggage. She was now alone in a strange city.

"A carriage, ma'am?" "Any baggage, ma'am?" asked three or four porters and carriage drivers, passing up to the bewildered girl, as she descended to the street. She had a trunk, and she knew that she would have to employ a porter to carry it for her; so she engaged one, who took charge of her baggage.

"Where do you wish it taken, ma'am?"

This question awoke Anna to a full realization of her situation. "Where?" Alas! She was homeless. And worse had not so much as a dollar in her purse. The small sum that remained on leaving Pittsburg, had been nearly all expended for her meals on the road.

"Do you wish your trunk taken to a hotel or private house?"

The porter asked this question with evidences of impa-

tience, as he had waited for over a minute for an answer to the previous one.

"To a hotel," said Anna, faintly.

"Which one, ma'am?"

"Do you know where a Mr. Grant lives?"

"No ma'am," returned the porter.

"Or a Mr. Markland?"

"Does he keep a hotel?"

"I don't know."

"I never heard the name. But where shall I take your baggage?"

Anna's thoughts had been so much in confusion ever since her departure from Cincinnati, that she had not been able to determine what course to take on her arrival in Philadelphia. She was, therefore, utterly at a loss how to answer the porter's question.

"Can't my trunk stay here for a little while?" she at length asked.

"Oh yes, ma'am. I can put it in the office for you, and you can get it at any time. My name is Bill. Ask for Bill when you come for it; or, if I am not here leave word where it is to go."

The trunk was accordingly deposited in the rail-road office, and Anna started to go—she knew not where!

The sky had been overcast since morning. No rain had yet fallen, but the wind was from the east, and the air damp and cold. It was late in November.

Anna went forth, and took her way down Market street. She had yet settled upon no course of action. She walked along, because to stand still, while striving to think, would attract the attention she wished, as a timid girl, in a strange city, to avoid. On, on she went, square after square, until a sight of the river caused her to pause for a full minute in sad irresolution.

"Where shall I go? What must I do?" she sighed as she crossed over at Second street, and took a northerly course, which she pursued as far as Arch street, up which she directed her steps. After passing Fifth street, the appearance of the houses made her think that, possibly, her aunt might reside in one of them, if still living. With this feeble hope in her mind, she examined every door-plate, as she moved along, but the name of 'Grant' nowhere met her anxious eye.

At Thirteenth street she stood still, irresolute, for some time.

"Perhaps I may find the house on the other side," she said, and crossed over and went down as far as Seventh street. But the search was vain. On the corner of Seventh and Arch she again paused, looking up and then down the first named street. As she thus stood, a young man, dashingly attired, approached with his gaze fixed intently upon her. She did not notice him until he was within a few paces, and then, as her eyes fell on his face, and she perceived its expression, she shuddered and sprung across the street in a southward direction. The young man quickened his pace. She heard his footsteps behind her, and her heart beat rapidly. She kept in advance of him until she had nearly reached Market street. But he was now close by her side. Her heart fluttered—the cold sweat came out over her whole body—her limbs could scarcely sustain her. Every moment she expected to feel the rude grasp of a man's hand. If sufficient power had remained, she would have darted forward and ran on at full speed; but she felt more like sinking to the pavement than running. At length she found it almost impossible to keep on; her pace slackened suddenly, and the man who had been following her, passed onwards. When a few paces beyond, he turned partly around with a half curious, half impertinent stare; but one glance at Anna's countenance satisfied him that he had mistaken her character. In a minute or two he was out of sight, and Anna moving on with scarcely power to walk. She had been dreadfully frightened.

Since morning, nothing had been eaten by the unhappy girl. Want of food, anxiety, and sudden alarm caused her to feel very faint. For a few minutes it seemed that she would sink to the pavement. But she kept on as far as Chestnut street, up which she turned, and walked nearly as far as Broad street, examining the door-plates as she had done in Arch street, and to as little purpose.

As she returned, on the other side of the street, she saw cakes in a confectioner's window. Faint and weary, she entered the shop and asked for a cup of tea, which was served up with a slice of toast, in a back room. A girl of twelve or thirteen brought these to her on a waiter. Anna looked into her face, and saw that its expression was innocent and kind.

"Do you know a family by the name of Grant?" she asked of this girl.

"Grant?—Grant? No, miss, I don't know anybody by that name."

Anna commenced sipping her tea, and the girl retired. A few mouthfuls were eaten, and then the young wanderer leaned her head upon her hand, with her eyes cast to the floor, and fell into a deep state of abstraction. From this she was aroused by the voice of the attendant, who had returned.

"I believe there is a family named Grant," she said, "around in Walnut street."

"There is!" Anna arose as she spoke, her face flushed for a moment, and then became pale.

"Yes. They live in one of those large new houses below —— street. I remember the name on the door."

"Where is Walnut street?"

"It is the next street below.'

"And —— street?

"Just two streets above.

"Do you know anything about the family?"

The girl shook her head, and then remarked,

"They are very rich, no doubt."

Anna said nothing further. The girl retired, and she sat down to collect her scattered thoughts.

"They are very rich, no doubt." "A large new house." These words kept ringing in her ears, and caused her to cast her eyes down upon her own poor apparel.

"Suppose it is my mother's sister?—how will she receive me?" This question, never asked so seriously before, caused her heart to sink. It was full half an hour before she could summon resolution suffiicent to go forth in search of the dwelling that contained, or might contain the relative she sought.

It was after four o'clock when she left the shop where she had taken some refreshment. The air had become colder, and thick clouds covered the sky. The short afternoon had verged on close toward evening, the dusky coming of which was already perceived by Anna, over whose feelings a deeper shadow fell as her eye noted the rapid decline of day.

Following the direction given her, she turned off from Chestnut street, and passed down to Walnut street, up which she walked rapidly. In less than five minutes she

was before an elegant dwelling, on the door-plate of which she read the name MASON GRANT, with a thrill that passed through her whole frame. She did not ring the bell at once, but passed on to collect her thoughts and determine how she should address herself to her aunt. On, on she went, square after square, unable to settle any thing in her mind.

"Oh, if I had not promised my mother, and there was any roof here to shelter me, no matter how humble it might be, and any means by which I could support myself, no matter how hard the labor, most gladly would I shrink away from these proud relatives!"

This was the final conclusion of her thoughts, as she stopped suddenly and wrung her hands, forgetting at the instant that she was in the street, and her motions liable to attract attention.

Recovering herself, however, she lifted her eyes, and perceived that the shadows of approaching evening were growing more and more distinct. A shudder passed over her. Quickly turning, she retraced her steps, and, without allowing her imagination to dwell upon the shock of a first interview with her aunt, a thing from which she shrunk with an unconquerable reluctance, she kept steadily on until she again stood in front of the house of Mason Grant. But she could not ascend the steps that led to the door of this elegant mansion. Her thoughts again became confused, and again she passed the house, and walked on for nearly two squares. She then paused, stood thoughtful for two or three minutes, and finally turned and went slowly back. Again she was before the dwelling of her aunt, and again she stopped irresolute. At length she ascended the steps, and timidly rung the bell—or rather made an effort to do so; but she had exerted too little strength, the bell did not really answer to her hand. For nearly five minutes she stood as if fixed to the spot, but no one came to the door. She did not attempt to ring again. Her heart had failed her. Slowly she at length descended the steps, and moved down the street, turning every few paces to see if the door should open.

It was nearly dark, already the watchmen had lit their lamps, and the street was filled with persons wending their way homeward after having finished the labours of the day. Anna had walked on for a short distance, when she perceived that night was fast closing in. She stopped quickly, while a tremor ran through her frame.

"I must do it. There's no hope for me," she at length said, turning back and approaching the house she had more than once hesitated to enter. Without giving herself time to waver again in her resolution, Anna passed quickly up the steps and rung the bell with a strong hand. The door was soon opened.

"Can I see Mrs. Grant?" she asked, in a faltering voice.

"Come in, miss, and I will see."

Anna entered.

"What name shall I say?"

Anna's cheek flushed. She hesitated a moment.

"Tell her a young girl wishes to speak to her."

The servant left her in the parlor, and went up stairs.

"A young woman is in the parlor, and wishes to see you," he said, on opening the door of Mrs. Grant's room.

"Who is she?"

"She did'nt give me her name."

"What does she want?"

"To see you, ma'am."

"You should have asked her name, Jackson."

"I did ma'am."

"Humph! What kind of a looking person is she?"

"She looks like a poor young girl."

"Somebody after work, may-be. Tell her I will be down in a little while."

Anna sunk upon a chair, in the richly furnished parlor into which the servant had shown her, her heart fluttering wildly. It was several minutes before she saw objects distinctly. Every external sense was partially closed. Then her eyes wandered about the room, and she observed, with something of wonder, the elegance and splendor that surrounded her. From the costly furniture she raised her eyes to the walls that were decorated with pictures. The first that met her gaze was the portrait of a man who seemed to have just passed the prime of life. Every feature of the face was familiar to her as the features of a friend. Who could it be? Her mother's image arose in her mind. The question was answered. That must be her brother's likeness.

"This is indeed my aunt's house! How, how will she receive me?"

These words were scarcely murmured, when the door opened, and a middle-aged woman entered. Anna tried to

rise, but she had not the strength to do so. Mrs. Grant, for she it was, advanced close to her, regarding her, as she did so, with a cold look of inquiry. As Anna did not, because she could not speak, the lady said—

"You wish to see me, I believe?"

"Yes ma'am," was timidly replied.

"On what business, may I ask?"

The words were formal and cold as ice.

"You had a sister named Anna ——"

"What!" And Mrs. Grant started as if a pistol had been exploded close to her ear, her face flushing, and then turning quite pale.

Anna arose, and looked steadily into her aunt's face, (for her aunt it really was.)

"You had a sister named Anna," she repeated. "She removed to the west many years ago, and ——"

"Who are you that speaks to me thus?" exclaimed Mrs. Grant, in an angry voice, suddenly arousing up, and casting on the frightened girl before her a stern look.

"The daughter of Anna Gray."

"Who?" was uttered with a quick, convulsive start.

"The daughter of Anna Gray," repeated the visiter.

'And who is Anna Gray?" this was said with a slight sneer,—affected, not felt.

"You had a sister named ——"

"How do *you* know that I had. How do *you* know me?"

"Just before my mother died ——"

"When did she die?" quickly added Mrs. Grant, thrown off her guard.

"Less than a month since ——" Anna burst into tears as she tremblingly said this, but recovering herself as quickly as possible, she added,

"And on her death-bed she made me promise that I would come to this city, seek you out, and throw myself upon your protection."

"The girl is surely beside herself! This is a pretty affair! What do I know about your mother?"

"Oh, was she not your sister?"

Anna leaned towards Mrs. Grant with an imploring look.

"My sister, indeed! I have no sister. You have been deceived, if you think *I* am *your* aunt. Go and seek for her somewhere else. You will not find her here. A fine affair truly!"

Anna had already risen to her feet. These words caused her to stagger backwards a few paces, and lean against the wall. In a moment or two she recovered herself, and taking a long, confirming look at the portrait on the wall that so resembled her mother, she turned from the presence of the woman who had basely and cruelly disowned her mother, and left the house.

CHAPTER XII.

DARKNESS had fallen upon the face of nature, as Anna Gray retired from the house of her aunt. The wind swept coldly along, penetrating her thin garments and causing her to shrink in the chilling blast. For a few moments she stood, irresolute, upon the pavement. Then she moved down the street, but with no purpose in her mind. Where could she go? She was alone in a strange city, and it was night. The tears gushed from her eyes as she felt the sad reality of her condition. On she went, now, as her mind became excited with anxious fears, walking with a quick pace, and now, as despondency threw its shadows over her heart, pausing or lingering, paralyzed in mind and body.

"What shall I do? Where shall I go?" she at length ejaculated, standing suddenly still, and wringing her hands, scarcely conscious of what she was doing. A man passed her at the moment, and she became aware that he had noticed her. Her heart bounded quickly. The man looked back several times, and then stopped, and turned towards her. She felt as if chained to the spot. She wished to go on, but was unable to move. The man approached, until within a few steps. She saw his face distinctly. He was an old man. With a quick impulse she turned away, and ran down the street at a rapid pace, not pausing until she had gone nearly half a square. Then, glancing timidly back, she perceived that the stranger was not following her.

She had reached Seventh street, when she again paused to think. The night had closed in quite dark, for heavy clouds obscured the sky, and the air was thick and humid. It did not rain, although the vapor charged atmosphere was rapidly condensing, in a cold and clammy mist. The poor girl was, now, completely lost. From the time she had left

the cars in Market street, until she found the house of her aunt, she had retained a tolerably correct idea of the relative bearings of the different localities through which she had passed. But all had now faded from her memory. She was completely bewildered. And, as there was no plan of the city in her mind, there was no data by which she could determine where she was. This, however, mattered but little. To her, one place was as good as another. She knew no person in the whole city—she had no home.

Fearing that she might again attract attention, Anna walked on until she was moving along the pavement bounding Independence Square. No light beamed from any house opposite. Every shutter was closed, as if the inmates of each dwelling feared that some portion of the cheerful rays that lit up their pleasant homes, might beam upon the dim street, and chase away a portion of its gloomy shadows.

But few persons were abroad in that neighborhood. Anna felt a sudden alarm. A man approached, and bent down to look into her face as he drew up to her side. She started, and ran. But he did not attempt to follow her. With a heart fluttering like a newly caught bird, she hurried on until she passed Fifth street. Lights in some shop windows, throwing their welcome rays upon the street, restored her to some degree of calmness, after she had glanced hastily back, and assured herself that no one was coming after her.

At Fourth street she stopped again. All was dark ahead, and dark to the right. But many lights beamed from the windows as her eyes turned northward. Up Fourth street she turned, and walked on until Chesnut, Market, Arch and Race streets were successively passed.

"But where am I going?" she said, on gaining this point, stopping, and clasping her hands together. "I cannot walk the streets all night. I must find a shelter somewhere—But where?

A deeply drawn sigh was the only answer her heart could make. Just then, from a house opposite, came the sound of merry voices—the voices of happy maidens. Tears rushed to the eyes of the homeless girl, and fell rapidly over her cheeks.

"Perhaps," she thought, "they will give me a place to rest in for one night," and following the impulse that awakened this thought, she moved across the street, and lifted her hand to the knocker.

But, recollecting how strange would seem her request, and how improbable her story, she shrunk away from the door, and again moved along the street, more deeply conscious than ever of her hopeless condition. She had not gone many steps before the same happy voices that had inspired her with a momentary hope, fell again upon her ear. Again she stopped, listened, turned, and walked back, drawn by an impulse that she did not attempt to resist. Once more she lifted her hand to the knocker, and now she let it fall, but with a timid and scarce heard summons. In a little while, the door was opened by a middle-aged woman. Anna looked her in her face, but was unable to speak.

"What do you want?" the woman asked, in rather repulsive tones, seeing that the person who had knocked hesitated make known her business.

"I am a young girl, alone in a strange city, and without a single friend, or a place to lay my head, will you not shelter me for only one night?" Anna said, in quick, low, half distinct, trembling tones.

The door was instantly closed in her face. She stood again, in the midst of a strange city, alone.

The woman who had thus repulsed her, after shutting the door, retired into a small parlor, where were assembled about a dozen young women, and one or two who had passed the prime of life. They were quilting, and were full of life and merriment.

"Who was it, Mrs. Speare?" asked an individual of the company, looking up.

"Humph! Such a one I hope none of you may ever be," was the reply.

Curiosity was instantly excited.

"Who was it, Mrs. Speare? Who was it? fell from every lip.

The face of Mrs. Speare became serious.

"Some wretched creature, who looked as young as any one here, asking for a place to sleep."

Every countenance became sober.

"What did you say to her?" asked an elderly woman, taking off her spectacles, and letting them rest upon the quilt at which she had been at work.

"Nothing at all. I shut the door in her face."

No one spoke. But Mrs. Speare felt as distinctly as if

every tongue had uttered it, that all disapproved of what she had done.

"It would be a very foolish thing, indeed," she said, by way of justification, "to take into one's house a stranger, at night, who comes with a tale of being alone and friendless in a great city like this. Innocent persons are not without friends, and guilty one's don't deserve to have any."

"Did she say that she was a stranger and friendless?" asked the old lady who had before spoken.

"Yes. She said that she was a young girl, alone, in a strange city, without a single friend, or a place where she could lay her head. But anybody could say that. To me it sounds like a very improbable story.

The other sighed, took up her spectacles, wiped them, and placing them on her head, bent again over the square she was quilting, but made no reply. Mrs. Speare ran on about the girl she had turned from her door, and said many things by way of self justification. But no one took sides with her. The merry laugh did not again echo through the room. All felt pained to think that there was, at the very time they were blessed with home and friends, a poor girl wandering the streets without a house to shelter her. Before ten o'clock they separated.

Anna, so soon as she could recover her thoughts, after this repulse, went on again, but hopeless. The anguish she had before felt, subsided. She was prepared to await the issue, calmly. On, on, she went for nearly half an hour, seeing nothing around her, and fearing nothing. At last, loud voices aroused her. She looked about. She had reached the extreme limits of the city Only a few houses were thinly scattered around. A group of men were no great distance ahead.

All her fears quickly returned. With a throbbing heart, she retraced, hurriedly her steps, until she entered the more thickly settled districts.

By this time she felt so exhausted, that she could scarcely move on. Her head ached with a blinding intensity; and fainting flushes would ever and anon pass over her, compelling her, sometimes, to pause, in order to prevent herself from falling forward. Wearily she dragged herself along until she reached Callowhill street. The shelter of the market house tempted her. She could rest there, perhaps, and sleep, perhaps die—it mattered not. Sinking upon a butcher's block, she drooped her head upon the stall.

near which it stood, and spite of all the discomfort by which she was surrounded, and the consciousness of her exposed condition, was soon fast asleep.

CHAPTER XIII.

The elderly woman, who had expressed more strongly by her manner than in words, her disapproval of Mrs. Speare's conduct in shutting the door so rudely in the face of a stranger who had asked humbly for shelter, felt troubled whenever a thought of the incident crossed her mind. The reader will understand why this was so, when told, that she had a child who was wandering in forbidden paths. Mrs. Grand that was her name, started for home, unaccompanied by any one, about half past nine o'clock. She lived in Callowhill street, not far from Second.

She could not help looking around her, constantly, and narrowly observing every female she met. As she passed into Callowhill street, her eye ran along the market house.

"What is that?" she said, pausing as she saw something she was unable to make out distinctly.

Crossing over to the market house, she walked down it for a few yards.

"Bless me!" she ejaculated, stooping by the stall upon which Anna had sunk down exhausted, and where she was now sleeping soundly. "It is a woman! And a young creature, too," she added, a new interest awakened in her heart. "Perhaps the same that Mrs. Speare turned from her door so thoughtlessly."

Mrs. Grand laid her hand upon Anna, and spoke to her kindly. But even kind words, that half an hour before would have been so welcome, were not heard. More effectual means were taken to arouse the sleeping girl.

"Mercy! where am I?" she exclaimed starting up, on being heavily shaken by Mrs. Grand, and looking eagerly at the individual who had broken in upon a slumber that was sweet, for it brought unconsciousness.

"In a very unfit place for a girl like you," replied Mrs. Grand, in as firm a voice as she could assume.

"Would to heaven I had a better place in which to find rest—even if it were the rest that knows no waking!" returned Anna, in mournful accents.

"Who are you? And what are you doing here?" asked Mrs. Grand.

"I am a stranger in the city. I came here to seek friends; but have found none."

"Will you go home with me?"

"With you?" Anna looked earnestly into the face of, Mrs. Grand, upon which the light of a lamp fell. "Yes, if you will only shelter me for a single night, and then advise me how to act."

"Come then." And Mrs. Grand placed her hand upon the arm of Anna, who did not hesitate a moment to accept her kind offer. They walked on in silence, until they came to a small house near to Second street, the residence of Mrs. Grand.

As soon as they had entered, the woman who had taken Anna home with her, assisted her to remove her bonnet and shawl, and then, after looking her sometime in the face, to read the character and the quality of her mind, as far as it was possible for her to do so, said,

"And now, what is your name, child?"

"Anna Gray."

"Where are you from?"

"Cincinnati."

"Cincinnati. Are you sure?"

"Yes, ma'am. I left there two weeks ago, and arrived in this city to-day."

"That is a long journey for one like you to take. Who came with you?"

"No one. I came alone."

Mrs. Grand looked incredulous. Anna saw and felt this, and the color rose to her face."

"It may seem strange to you," she said, in a voice that trembled, "but it is true. My mother died a few weeks ago, and, on her death bed, made me promise to come immediately to Philadelphia, and seek out her brother and and sister, if living, and throw myself upon their protection. I left the west, with barely enough money to bring me to this city. I arrived to-day, and found my aunt, but she called me an impostor, denied that my mother was her sister, and sent me from her presence. It was dark when I left her house, and I have since wandered about the street homeless and hopeless, until, overwearied, I could bear up no longer, and sunk down exhausted where you found me sleeping."

The simple earnestness of this brief narrative, more than half satisfied Mrs, Grand of its truth. She, however, questioned Anna closely, and led her on to relate the principal incidents of her life, and the minutest particulars of all that had occured since her arrival in the city. Late as was the hour, she prepared for her some refreshments, and then took her into a small but neatly arranged bed-room, and bidding her good night, left her alone.

Since she had been aroused from her brief repose in the market house, the mind of the unhappy girl had become clear and calm. After Mrs. Grand retired, she sat down and mused long over the events of the day. So anxious and alarmed had she been since she found herself homeless and a wanderer in the streets of a large city, that she had been unable to think soberly about any thing. Now she revolved in her mind the occurrences which have been related, and sought to arrive at some definite conclusion in regard to her future course. But this was a vain effort. Her aunt—she was satisfied that Mrs. Grant was her mother's sister—had repulsed her with much feeling. Why should she do this? What motive could prompt so cruel an action? Pride? It did not seem possible that this could be the reason. But, what other could there be? Anna could think of none. She had seen the portrait of her mother's brother—was he living? And if so, ought she not to seek him out, and make herself known to him? For hours before she at length fell asleep, were her thoughts thus busy. But she could arrive at no fixed conclusion.

It was long after day light when Anna awoke on the next morning. She was dressed, and sitting by the window when her kind-hearted protector came in. A deep crimson covered her face, as she looked up, and then suffered her eyes to droop to the floor. She felt that the circumstances under which they had met were such as to create suspicion in regard to her, and this thought caused a degree of confusion calculated to awaken doubt in almost any mind. Mrs. Grand looked at her closely for a few moments and then said in a kind voice,

"Did you rest well, Anna?"

"O yes, ma'am, very well," she returned, tears coming to her eyes.

"Do you feel better than you did last night?"

"A great deal better. My headache is entirely gone, and I am very much refreshed."

"I am glad of it. Come, breakfast is all ready."

Anna went down stairs with Mrs. Grand, and shared with her her morning meal. After they had risen from the table, and while Mrs. Grand was occupied in washing up and putting away the breakfast things, Anna said—

"The great favor that you have shown a perfect stranger, emboldens me to ask still another."

"What is it, child? Speak out freely," replied Mrs. Grand, with a look and tone of encouragement.

"I have told you, frankly, all the circumstances by which I am now surrounded. I need one to advise and direct me. I am willing to earn my own living by my own labor; but where shall I go for employment? Will you think for me? I will be governed by your directions, for beside you there is not another living being in this city to whom I can look for counsel."

"All that I can do, my young friend, shall be freely done," replied Mrs. Grand. "In the mean time remain where you are, in welcome. If nothing better offers, you can assist me in sewing for awhile. I earn my support, by the labor of my own hands. If you can sew quickly, and are willing to work, you will be no burden to me."

"Oh, gladly will I devote to you all my time, if you will give me but a home," Anna, replied with warmth.

"You tell me you have a trunk at the rail-road depot?" Mrs. Grand said, after a pause.

"Yes. My trunk is in the office there."

"Had you not better have it brought here?"

"If you are willing."

"I am, certainly. Do you know your way there?"

"No, ma'am. But you can direct me."

"Suppose I go with you?"

"It must be a long distance from here. I am afraid it is too far for you to go."

"Would you like me to accompany you?"

"Yes above all things," quickly replied Anna.

About ten o'clock Mrs. Grand and Anna went for the trunk. They had it taken to the house of the former.

So far everything tended to confirm in the mihd of Mrs. Grand the statement made by the young stranger. Still, she kept her mind active, and observed all she said, and every movement with the closest scrutiny.

"Will you take this little bundle for me to No. — Se-

cond street? It has to be left there before one o'clock, and it is now half past twelve. You will save me a walk, and I feel rather tired," Mrs. Grand said to Anna, as they both sat sewing towards the middle of the day.

"O yes," was smilingly replied. "Give me the direction, and I will go there for you with pleasure."

Mrs. Grand gave her the direction, and Anna took the package as she desired. It was in returning from this errand, that old Mr. Markland, her uncle saw her, and remembered that she was the same individual he had seen weeping in the street on the evening before.

CHAPTER XIV.

"I called in at the store, this morning, to get that advertisement prepared," said Mr. Markland, during the dinner-hour, on the day after his unsuccessful effort to discover the residence of the young stranger in whom he had become suddenly, and, to himself, unaccountably interested. "But you were too much engaged, I suppose, to attend to it. Will you have time this afternoon?"

"I expect so," coldly replied Mr. Grant.

Nothing more was said. After dinner Mr. Grant said to his wife—

"What in the world has come over your brother? Can it be possible that he has a suspicion of the real truth? Can the girl he spoke of having seen last night, be the one who called upon you? And does he really dream that she is Anna's child?"

"Heaven only knows! You mustn't put out the advertisement."

"I may not be able to help it. Your brother seems bent on having it done."

"And the moment it appears, the whole matter is at an end."

"Yes." And Mr. Grant arose, uneasily, and commenced pacing the floor.

"Sixty thousand dollars," he said aloud, yet speaking to himself. "It will ruin me."

"Ruin you!" ejaculated Mrs. Grant, in a voice of alarm.

"Yes, Mary. Ruin me!" returned Mr. Grant, passion-

ately. "I have had that money in my business for years, and it cannot now be withdrawn."

Several minutes elapsed before any thing more was said; Mr. Grant continuing to walk the floor in an agitated manner. At length he paused before his wife, and said,—

"I wonder if it is possible to find this girl?"

"I don't know. Why?"

"We might get her out of the way, possibly."

"How?"

"I can't tell. But, it might be managed, I think. We might hire some one to offer her inducements to return to Cincinnati, or go to some other place, where the advertisement might not meet her eye."

Mrs. Grant shook her head.

"That is a vain hope," she said. "The girl knows, or suspects the truth, and I fear we cannot get rid of her. What I most dread is, that she will find out Joseph. In that event, all is over."

"Yes, all will be over, then. He will insist upon an immediate payment of the legacy, which cannot be done."

"Let him pay it himself, then; he is able, and equally responsible with yourself. If it comes to that, he will not be so very eager for an immediate adjustment. In the meantime, the girl can be kept in ignorance of the real truth, long enough to arrange matters."

"Long or short, Mary," returned her husband, in a quick voice, "I never can nor will beggar my children for the sake of this girl, or any one else. I am not, if all my affairs were brought to an issue, worth sixty thousand dollars."

"Then Anna's child cannot and shall not have a dollar. She has been raised to help herself, and let her still continue to do so. To make her suddenly rich, would be as great an evil as to reduce our children to poverty."

There was an angry bitterness in Mrs. Grant's tone as she spoke.

"But, stave off this advertisement, day after day, if possible. You may yet succeed in delaying it long enough to make our position secure."

"Depend upon it, I will try. Your brother will have to be much more decided and peremptory than he now is, before I yield."

When Mr. Grant went to his store, he found Markland already there. He was at a desk, writing—

"Here is the form of an advertisement, Mason," he said, handing the merchant a paper as the latter came in. Mr. Grant took it and read—

HEIRS WANTED.—If Mrs. Anna Gray, daughter of the late Thomas Markland, of Philadelphia, or any of her children, be living, this is to inform them, that under the will of said Thomas Markland, they are entitled to a legacy of sixty thousand dollars. By the provisions of the will the heirs must be forthcoming before the 1st of November, 18—, else the sum above named will revert to the residuary legatee.

JOSEPH MARKLAND, } *Executors of the late*
—— —— } *Thomas Markland.*

"If you like the form, just add your name to the advertisement, and have it inserted in The —— Gazette, and The —— Advertiser, to-morrow morning," said Mr. Markland, after he had read it to Grant.

The merchant took the paper, and conned it over, deliberately.

"Yes; I suppose this covers the whole ground. I will see that it is done."

"You won't neglect it, Mason?"

"Neglect it?" in a half offended tone. "No, certainly not. Why should I neglect it?"

"Very well. We will see what comes of this," said the old man to himself, as he left the store of his brother-in-law, and, scarcely thinking why, walked up Second street, until he came to the neighborhood where he had seen Anna in the morning. His eyes were all about him, but the form he so much desired to see, did not present itself. With a feeling of disappointment, he returned home, where he did not arrive until after dark. Tea had been served earlier than usual, and Mr. Grant had gone out. Mrs. Grant was in her own room. Ella waited on her uncle at the table; but was silent. There was a look and manner about her father and mother that had, insensibly, thrown a shade of pensiveness over her gay young heart. Mr. Markland's mind was too much occupied to notice this. After eating lightly, he arose, took a lamp, and retired to his own apartment.

"Strange that the thought of that girl should press itself so constantly upon me!" he said, seating himself by a table in a musing attitude. "Can it be possible that she is ——.

No, I will not think so. It is mere romance. And yet, in real life, things have occurred far more improbable. There must be cause for this suddenly awakened interest in a total stranger. Anna's child? No! Still even that may be. Oh, what would I not give to know the truth! Ah me! What a heavy burden of reproaches is mine! How could I have grown cold and indifferent towards one so worthy the name of WOMAN as my twin-sister? Pride, pride—thou art a hard-hearted demon! My life for years seems to have been a false dream—a state of moral insensibility. But I am awake now—fully awake. And if justice can be done, it shall be done. To-morrow, the notice that should have been given years ago, will be made. If this young stranger be Anna's child—strange thought!—she will at once come forward and prove her identity. She is innocent; of that I am sure. And innocence is the ground-work of all virtues and graces. But in a city like this, with snares all around, who can tell how soon her unwary feet may be entangled? Heaven defend her!"

CHAPTER XV.

IT was hardly sunrise, the next morning, when Mr. Markland descended from his room, and went to the door for the newspapers. He first opened the "Advertiser," and ran his eye hurriedly over it. But nowhere could he find the notification for which he was in search. The "Gazette" was next examined, but with no better success.

"This is too bad!" exclaimed the old man, throwing down the papers, and beginning to walk the floor with a quick, nervous step. "Too bad! What can he mean by such outrageous conduct? Does he really intend to put me off still, as he has done for years? Has he actually a design in all this? We shall see. That advertisement must and shall be made, and that, too, forthwith. All is not right, I begin to fear. Mason has had the use of this money so long, with the hope, probably, that it would, in the end, be possessed of right by his children, that he has come to look on it as already his own. But, if Anna or any of her children are above ground, this illusion must vanish from before him. We shall see! We shall see!"

Impatiently did Mr. Markland wait, until his brother-in-law came down.

"I don't see that advertisement, Mason," he said, with a stern look and voice, pointing to the newspapers.

"No," replied the merchant, blandly. "After you went out, I looked more carefully over the advertisement, and found that it was inaccurate in its statements."

"In what respect, Mason?"

"In one respect, at least. It says that Mrs. Anna Gray, or her children, are entitled, if living, to a legacy."

"Well?"

"This you know is a mistake. The will states that the property is for her children, if she should leave any. She has nothing to do with it."

"It doesn't matter at all. If Anna is living, and has children, they will doubtless share with her. If she is living, and without children,—I should think her entitled to at least some benefit in her father's estate."

"The will is explicit, Joseph, as you well know. If no children of Anna's are found, the testator's will was that the property should go to my children; and I have no right to rob them of a dollar. And of course, shall never consent to do so."

"No matter. If there was a slight error in the form, it need not have delayed the notification. It committed no one."

Still, it is much better to be correct in all these matters. I wish to be so."

"Well, well," was the old man's impatient reply, "draw up an advertisement yourself, and word it as carefully as you please. If it gives the main facts, I will sign it. But there must be no more delay. Remember that. To speak out the plain truth, Mason, I don't like this dilly dallying, if I must so call it. This putting off making an advertisement on one pretence and another. It doesn't look well. The thing has got to be done, and it might as well be done at once, without further parlying about it. It can't be possible that you wish to keep this money, even if the true heirs are living."

"That is speaking rather plainly, Joseph." Mr. Grant's face crimsomed over.

"It is. But, much as I wish to think otherwise, appearances force me to this involuntary conclusion. Why didn't you

mention this defect yesterday, when I handed you the advertisement?"

"I didn't notice it then."

"Why didn't you leave word for me to that effect last evening. I would have put it all right, and had it out this morning?"

"Humph! I didn't see that it was a matter of life and death."

"It may be a matter of more importance than that, Mason."

"I don't know. It seems to me that you have got into a wonderful hurry all at once. If you had been so disposed, you could have had the advertisement inserted years ago. But I don't know that you ever showed much concern about it."

"I left the thing in your hands too much. I have spoken hundreds of times about this legal notice, but although you promised as many times to attend to it, the thing was never done. I begin, really, to think that it was a predetermined system with you. To say the least of it, when viewed in connexion with your present apparent shuffling, it looks very much like it."

"Joseph! You must'nt speak to me after that fashion." The merchant was excited.

"Mason—you must't make me a party to any of your underhand designs."

"I tell you, that I will not allow you or any one else to make such insinuations against me," retorted Mr. Grant.

"Put it out of my power to conceive such thoughts, by doing your duty at once as an executor of my father's estate. I am tried beyond my patience, and will not be trifled with any farther. I had set my heart upon seeing that advertisement this morning. I had reasons for wishing to have it appear just at this time. But it is put off on a frivolous pretence—I can call it by no better name. I shall be in to see you immediately after breakfast. Have the form ready, and we will both sign it, and, to prevent any more delays, I will make a copy myself, and take the advertisement to the printing offices."

"Very well. Come in as early as you please."

Mr. Grant turned away and went up stairs.

"I believe your brother is beside himself this morning," he said to his wife.

"He didn't find the advertisement?"

"No, and he is outrageous about it. The fact is, the thing will have to be done; but I tremble for the result. That girl

will surely see it. Don't you think he said he had very particular reasons for wanting it to appear this morning. What can he mean? Is it possible that he suspected the girl he saw in the street to be Anna's child. It really seems so. The old Boy seems to possess him."

"Verily he does. It is no better than a wish to rob our children. I thought he had some affection for them. But it seems he hasn't a particle. Who knows, but if this low-born creature is found, he will leave her every cent of his money. Oh, I wish she had been dead before she came this way to ruin all our best hopes. Too bad! too bad!"

"Yes it is too bad." And the husband fairly stamped about the floor.

"Can nothing be done? Must the advertisement appear?"

"It cannot be prevented. If I put it off another day, he will publish it himself."

"Can't you word it so that it will not attract much notice?"

"I have thought of that. But your brother designs to have it tell, and will not be satisfied with any thing that is not clear and explicit. I fear that there is no hope for us. But, let the worst come to the worst. Possession is nine points of the law. I have the sixty thousand dollars, and let her get it if she can!"

Grant set his teeth firmly together, and smiled with a grim smile of defiance.

"Yes: let her get it if she can. Not one cent will I give up."

"Trust me for that."

CHAPTER XVI.

After the silently passed morning meal, Mason Grant left the house, and with his eyes upon the ground, walked slowly and thoughtfully to his store.

"I will try it, at least. There is nothing like trying," he muttered to himself, raising his head with an air of confidence after he had passed one half the distance. "I have heard of such a thing before. If it can only be done, the thing is safe, though it is a ticklish experiment. But, every man has his price. Money is a strong argument."

Half an hour after he arrived at the store, Mr. Markland came in. His face wore a grave, resolute expression. The form of the advertisement was already prepared.

"Will that do?" asked Grant, after the old man had read it over.

"Yes. But are you certain there is not some hidden defect in it, which will not be discovered until it is too late."

"Joseph, I will not permit you to talk so!"

"No matter. I'll take it in myself, and then I shall be sure that all is right."

"That is not at all necessary. I will see that it appears to-morrow morning."

"I am afraid to trust you, Mason Grant." The old man knit his brows sternly.

The angry feelings of the merchant came near boiling over. But he controlled himself with a strong effort, and said, with a forced smile,

"You are unjust to me. Mr. Markland. I don't wish to delay this matter, as you allege. And now, I insist upon putting this advertisement in myself, to show you that you are in error."

Still Markland persisted.

"I then claim it as a right," said Grant. "It is the only means left me to show you that you have wronged me, and I must be permitted to use it."

After some minutes reflection, Markland at length consented, saying as he did so—

"Remember! If this advertisement does not appear to-morrow morning, I will, before the day is half over, have it posted on the houses and fences all over the city; and on the next day, have it in every newspaper that is published. As I said before, I have my own reasons for wishing it done immediately."

"Never fear. It shall be done. But is there any use in having it in more than one paper."

"Certainly there is. It ought to appear in three or four papers. And especially in several western papers. But two will answer for the present. If no good result comes, then broader wings can be given to it."

Mr. Markland then went out.

"Two papers," mused Mr. Grant. "I think one can be managed; but two? I'm afraid." And he shook his head.

Business requiring immediate attention occupied him for an hour. After he was free from this, he wrote a note, sealed it, and sent it out by one of his clerks. Half an hour after, a man, rather commonly dressed, came in and asked for him. He was directed back into Mr. Grant's counting-room.

"Good morning, Layton. Take a chair," said the merchant, blandly.

The man sat down, with a look of expectancy on his face.

"Do you know the pressman at the —— office?" asked Mr. Grant.

"Very well," replied the man.

"Intimately?"

"Yes. I have known him for ten years."

"What kind of a man is he?"

"Clever. But a little free in his way of living."

"Drinks?"

"Yes. Occasionally."

"Has he a family?"

"Yes."

"Large?"

"A wife and three children."

"Hard work for him to make 'em comfortable, I suppose?"

"They don't live in much splendor, ha! ha!"

"I suppose not. Very well. So far so good. Fifty dollars would be an object to that man!"

"I should think so; or to any journeyman mechanic with a wife and three children."

"Just so. To yourself for instance?"

"No doubt. Fifty dollars! I don't think I ever owned as much at one time, in my life."

"You can own that much to-morrow, and so can your friend into the bargain, if you can prevail upon him to do me a little service."

"What is it?"

"A mere trifle. Here is an advertisement. For certain reasons I do not wish it to appear, and yet it must be put in type. Can you not prevail upon your friend, after the regular edition of the paper is off, to take out some of the type and put this in its place, and print me a single copy."

"Is that all? O yes. I'll guarantee that?"

"And will you, when the regular carrier leaves the paper in the morning at my house, have it removed, and the copy containing the advertisement put in its place?"

"Certainly I will."

"Then, so soon, as it is done, I will give you a check for one hundred dollrrs. The money you and your friend can divide."

"That's just the ticket! I'm your man."

"But there must be no failure."

"You need'nt fear any."

"So far so good. But there is the —— newspaper. The same thing must be done there."

The man looked grave.

"What is the prospect?

"Rather slim! R——, the pressman in that office, is a hard customer to manage. He is one of your independent kind of fellows, who prides himself on his honor, and all that."

"Humph! Has he a family?"

"No. But he has four hundred dollars in the saving's bank."

"Indeed! That's bad."

"It's a fact. I don't believe he could be brought over."

"Not for a hundred dollars?"

"No, nor for five hundred, if he once got his pluck up."

"Every man has his price."

"But it isn't always money, Mr. Grant."

Both of the men remained silent for over a minute. Layton broke silence by saying—

"I can tell you what I might try to do."

"Speak out."

"R—— has one fault."

"He will get on a Jerry now and then."

"Ah!"

"And then he sprees it for three or four days. I might try to make him drunk. When this happens, a man in the office has to take his place, who would sell his soul for five dollars."

"He shall have twenty, and you fifty more than already promised you, if the thing is done."

"For my soul?" And Layton looked Mr. Grant in the face with a mock serious air."

"If you please to call it so," was the grave reply.

"I'll see."

"See to it quickly, then. Not a moment is to be lost. If I had only thought of this before, there would have been no difficulty whatever."

"None at all with two or three days ahead of me. But trust me to do my best as it is."

"You shall be liberally rewarded. I will say a hundred dollars, if you will put this R—— out of the way."

"A strong inducement. Depend upon it I will work hard. Good morning!"

"Good morning! Let me hear from you as soon as all is in a fair way."

"Aye! aye! You shall be fully advised."

And the two men parted.

CHAPTER XVII.

"Ah! Layton. How are you now?" said Mr. Grant, as the individual he addressed entered his store, about five o'clock in the afternoon. "Have you been able to do any thing?"

"All right at the —— office."

"So far so good. But what of R——; that is the name, I believe."

Layton looked grave.

"Have you seen him?"

"Yes."

"Can't he be managed?"

"I'm afraid not. He has just come to work, after spreeing it awful hard for a week, and is as serious and penitent as a condemned criminal. I asked him to go and take a drink with me; but he said 'no,' with a decided shake of the head."

"Bad—bad," returned Grant, knitting his brows.

"What is to be done? Is there no way to get him off?"

"I'm afraid not. For weeks after he has been on a spree, you can't prevail on him as much as to look at a glass of liquor. He seems to loath it, and himself too, for his folly."

The merchant cast his eyes to the floor, and mused long in deep perplexity of mind.

"You shall have two hundred dollars Layton, if you will keep this advertisement from appearing," he at length said. "It is of the very first importance to me that it should not see the light. Think again. I am sure you can aid me if you will only set your wits to work."

"It might be done," was replied to this, n a slow, thoughtful voice, after some moments had elapsed.

"How? Speak out freely."

"At some risk, however."

"I will compensate you for all risks."

"I know. But the thing may fail, and I get into trouble without aiding you at all."

"What do you propose? Or have you any new plan clearly defined."

"Not clearly."

A pause followed. Something seemed to be upon the mind of Layton that he hardly dared venture to speak out.

"Don't be afraid of me. I am prepared for any thing. The advertisement must be kept out at all hazards."

"It will be a dark night. I might knock him down as he goes to the press-room to-morrow morning at two o'clock!"

"Humph!"

"How does that strike you?"

"It will do, if it can be done so well that your other friend will be obliged to run the press."

"There need be no fear about that. It can be done so effectually that he will keep his bed for a week."

"Do it then, by all means. But have you nerve enough?"

The look that Layton cast upon the merchant, satisfied him that he had nothing to fear on that head.

In order to provide against all unforeseen contingencies, Layton secured the prospective co-operation of the man who would have to take the place of R—— at the press, by a promise of twenty-five dollars in the event of suppressing the advertisement.

About half-past one o'clock on the next morning, he glided from his lodgings, carrying in his hand a stout cane. Heavy clouds covered the sky—the air was dense and humid—the lamps struggled feebly with the darkness. Layton hurried along the deserted street until he came to a dimly lighted lane, which ran from Second to Third street, down which he turned, and, after walking about one fourth of the square, retraced his steps to Third street and stood for nearly five minutes, listening with fixed attention. He was about moving away, when his ear caught the sound of distant footsteps. A man approached. Layton drew back into the alley until he had passed. As he went by, a hurried glance satisfied him, that it was the pressman. In a moment after a heavy blow from the villain's cane laid R—— bleeding and insensible upon the pavement.

Instantly retiring into the alley, Layton glided down with

quick but noiseless steps, and emerged in Second street. He then walked leisurely along, secure in his own mind, against suspicion. His accomplice at the printing office waited until fifteen minutes beyond the usual time of the pressman's arrival, and then took the form from the foreman and made it ready for the press. Only a few revolutions of the wheel had been made, and a few perfect copies of the morning paper thrown off, when the assistant pressman gave orders to stop the machine. He held a note in his hand; how he came by it he did not tell, nor did any one inquire. It purported to be from the clerk in the office, and directed that a certain advertisement which had been handed in should not be inserted. After reading it aloud, he gave vent to sundry invectives against the foreman, who had already gone home, for not having seen and attended to the note before the form was made up. He then unlocked the form and removed the advertisement—re-arranging the matter, and filling up the space with something else. The few copies that had been worked off were thrown aside. Just as the press was again started, the door of the press-room opened, and R—— himself staggered in. His coat and vest were literally soaked in blood. There was a deep wound on the side of his head, and one ear was nearly torn off. He could give no other account of his situation than that he had been knocked down by some unknown person.

The accomplice of Layton was shocked at this apparition. He had expected some result: what, his mind had not fully anticipated. He knew that R—— would be waylaid, and knocked down; but he had not calmly reflected on what might be the consequence. When he saw him covered with blood, and beaten, as it appeared, so terribly, he was greatly alarmed; for he was himself guilty of the outrage to an extent far beyond what would be pleasant to him, were his participation in the affair to become known.

A physician was called in, who dressed the wound, and pronounced it not to be dangerous. R—— was then taken home. He did not leave the house again for a month.

CHAPTER XVIII.

On the following morning, both old Mr. Markland and Mason Grant arose earlier than usual. The heart of the former was set at rest on finding the long promised notice in

the "Gazette" and "Advertiser;" but the latter could not be satisfied until he had gone out and examined other copies than his own of these two morning newspapers. The advertisement was in neither of them; but in one was this paragraph.

"POSTSCRIPT.—*Daring outrage.*—As Mr. R—— the pressman belonging to this office, was on his way to the press room this morning, about two o'clock, he was knocked down in the street by some person unknown, and most shockingly beaten about the head and face. No cause for this daring outrage can be assigned, as the villain who gave the blow did not attempt to rob the man he had knocked down."

Grant smiled with inward satisfaction at this paragraph. It indicated the resolute character of the man he had gained over to his interests.

At breakfast time, all appeared to be in better spirits. Mrs. Grant understood from her husband the underhand game that was playing, and, therefore, she was not troubled. Markland thought all as fair as it appeared. After breakfast he went to Mr. Grant's store, and waited with a good deal of interest for the result. He could not but believe, spite of every intruding doubt, that the stranger he had seen was the child of his sister, and that she would see the advertisement and at once come forward. But the whole morning passed and no one appeared. The old man looked sober, and eat but little at dinner time. He went back to the store, and waited all the afternoon, but to as little purpose as he had spent the morning.

On the next day the advertisement again appeared, but, as before, suppressed from the regular edition. The whole scheme had worked to a charm for Mr. Grant. Layton received the reward of his villany, which was shared with his accomplice in the business. Poor R—— suffered severely. He was out of his head when the doctor called to see him on the morning after the assault, and had considerable fever. For a week after, fears for his life were entertained. But a healthy system reacted on the disease under which he was suffering, and he slowly recovered. It was a month before he was able to go out. Layton was never suspected.

After the lapse of several weeks, Mr. Markland suggested the propriety of having the notice for heirs published in two or three western papers. Mason Grant thought it unnecessary. The other did not press the subject on him, but quietly cut from two of the newspapers, which he had preserved, the

advertisement and sent a copy to a paper in Cincinnati and to one in Pittsburg, accompanying each with a five dollar bill and a request to publish the notice three times a week for five or six weeks.

Nothing more passed between the old man and his brother and sister on the subject. The latter thought themselves safe, while the former was waiting in anxious expectation for some intelligence from the West.

One day Mr. Grant found among his letters by the last mail one addressed to "Joseph Markland and Mason Grant, Executors of the late Thomas Markland." It was post marked, "Cincinnati." Hurriedly breaking the seal he opened and read it. It was a reply to the notice before mentioned, and stated the fact already too well known to Grant, that a daughter of Anna Gray was in Philadelphia, and suggested the propriety of the Executors advertising for her in that city.

"Confusion!" muttered the merchant between his closed teeth. "What does all this mean?" and he crumbled the letter in his hands. "Can there have been any deception about that advertisement? Is it possible that Joseph has given it an additional circulation without my knowledge? I will know, the moment I see him. What right has he to act in this matter without my concurrence?"

"No, no," he said, in a less agitated manner, after thinking for a few moments, "I will keep my own counsel, at least for the present. This letter never meets his eyes—never!"

To put all chances of such an occurrence out of the question, the letter was immediately destroyed.

Two other communications, of a similar character, were received, and, in like manner, consigned to oblivion. What Grant most dreaded, was, that some one in the west would write directly to the girl, or send her the advertisement, marked. If this should be done, and she receive it and present herself, all would be at an end.

Weeks and months passed away, and no one came forward to claim the legacy. Old Mr. Markland had walked the town over and over again, at all hours of the day and evening, in the hope of meeting once more with the stranger who had interested his feelings so much, and awakened in his mind so many memories of the olden time. But no trace of her was seen. And he gradually began to fall into the belief that all had been a mere temporary excitement of his imagination. That Anna and her children were in another and a better world. At length he ceased to speak on the subject; and he

thought much about it, it was not with sufficient force to lead to any further action.

Five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten, and eleven months passed away. Mr. Grant and his wife breathed more easily. Still they felt anxious. Until the expiration of the period limited by the will, there was danger. Anna's child was, in all probability, still in the city, or, she might have gone back to the west, and there received information of the good fortune that awaited her. All was afloat, until after the long looked for period, and might be wrecked in an instant.

Of one thing they were careful, and that was never to speak of the subject in the presence of the brother. If he casually alluded to it, but little was said in return, and the theme of conversation changed as quickly as possible.

CHAPTER XIX.

Meantime, Anna Gray had found a home with one who loved her and cared for her as tenderly as a mother could love and care for her child. But a very short period elapsed before Mrs. Grand saw the purity and truth of her character, and gave her to feel that she had the fullest confidence in her.

Anna devoted herself with feelings of grateful affection to the task of lightening the burdens of her maternal friend. She worked for her and with her diligently, thus adding to her little store, instead of abstracting from it. Weeks and months went silently, and almost unnoted, by, without any further effort on the part of Anna to make herself known to her relatives. It often crossed the mind of Mrs. Grand that it would, perhaps, be no more than justice towards Anna for her to see if they would not do something for her. But her own independent feelings revolted at the thought of asking favors of those who would be likely to turn away with contempt, as they had already done in anger. Once or twice she hinted at the subject, but Anna would not listen to any thing of the kind for a moment.

"I have no claims upon them, and I cannot, therefore, urge any," she would reply. "In calling upon my aunt, I fulfilled the promise made to a dying mother. She would not own me. She turned from me as she had before turned from my mother. Shall I go to her again? No! no! While I have health, my own hands will bring me all I need."

To language like this, Mrs. Grand had nothing to object. It was but a response to her own feelings.

Mrs. Grand was a woman who had seen many vicissitudes in life, and passed through many very painful trials; but out of all, so far, she had come, like gold from the crucible, brighter and purer for the ordeal. Some, as they grow older, appear to become selfish, impatient, penurious, irritable; or, exhibit some other defects of character, that make them burdensome to all. It is not that their characters have really changed with age. It is only, that, with age, external restraints, such as love of reputation, of the good opinion of the world, have become less active. These have lived to no good purpose. They may have accomplished much in the world during the period of active manhood; but the best, and highest, and most important work given them to do—self-conquest, and self-elevation—have been neglected. Ah, it is a sad sight to see the true interior states of the aged becoming manifest, when those states are thoroughly unregenerate! It is a sad sight to look upon an old man, and feel that he has lived in vain.

But Mrs. Grand had not lived in vain. She entered upon life with a profound respect for religion; and yet she was not what is called a "pious" woman. That is, she was not one who talked much about her own elevated state, or guaged her religion by her feelings. In her external deportment and appearance, she differed but little from those around her. The broad difference was in her principles of action. She performed all her duties in life with a profound regard for justice and judgment. Her religion was not a mere Sunday religion—it suited all days, and its spirit pervaded, benignly, all her works. It was founded upon the two commandments on which hang all the Law and the Prophets—"Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbor as thyself."

With a basis like this to her character, the trials of life could only elevate, strengthen, and purify her. And such was the result. As years came stealing quietly on, and external influences became less and less active, no unseemly aspect of mind was presented. Her intellect was clearer, her whole character was softened, and all her passions were under the control of right reason.

Mrs. Grand was, therefore, a woman just suited to guide and counsel a young girl like Anna Gray. Anna's mother, amid all the painful vicissitudes of her life, had been sustained

by a feeling of pride. As to religion, she thought of it but rarely, and derived from it no support. What she did not herself possess, she could not present to her child. Anna, therefore, had never been taught to look upon life with the eye of Christian philosophy. To enable her to do this, was the work of her new found friend. But it proved a difficult task. Religious ideas, if not presented to the mind in childhood, rarely ever enter it fully. It is the prayer said beside the mother's knee, with the lesson about heaven and the angels, and the deep reverence expressed to the child in regard to God, that does this work most effectually. It is a law of moral life, that all which succeeds partakes of the quality of that which precedes. The child, it is proverbially said, is father to the man; and this is true according to the law just mentioned. Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined, is another axiom expressing the same thing. The first ideas a child receives, give his mind a certain form, and as form modifies all influent life, whether vegetable, animal, intellectual, moral or spiritual life, it must be that the man's whole character will be modified by the peculiar circumstances, ideas, and impressions of his childhood. Let a child's earliest thoughts be directed to God as a good Being, who sends his angels to take care of him while he sleeps, and who protects him from harm at all times; who makes the sun shine, and the fruits grow; who loves the good and is angry with the evil; and no matter how much he may stray from the paths of rectitude in after life, he can never in this world wholly lose a regard for religion, or a certain reverence for God.

On the other hand, if a child is not so instructed, and he, yet, have inherited certain qualities of mind that make him a good citizen and an honest man, no matter how anxious he may be to believe the truths of inspiration, and to rest with confidence in the assurance of a Divine over-ruling providence, he will find it very hard to do so. He may, after awhile, see clearly, and feel in the profoundest depths of his heart that there is a God, and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek him. But, it will be after passing through a dark night of doubt and fear, before the day star arise, and the morning break joyfully upon his spirit.

Anna Gray did not understand, very clearly, the first ideas that were presented to her mind by Mrs. Grand. The effort to make her see that in the death of her mother there must be a dispensation of good, entirely failed.

"No—no—It is not good for a young girl like me to lose

her mother!" was replied with all the deep pathos of conscious truth.

But Mrs. Grand did not despair. There was good ground in Anna's mind. In the morning she sowed her seed, and in the evening withheld not her hand, trusting that it would find an entrance somewhere, and spring up and produce fruit. She did not attempt to blind her understanding and subdue her heart with a religious awe by the presentation of mysterious dogmas that must be believed or the soul sink, irretrievably, into ruin. No—hers was a milder faith. Love was its ruling principle—love to God and love to the neighbor. She knew that it was good that saved—not blind faith. Good of life from a religious ground. And so she endeavored to make Anna both see and feel. She did not press the subject upon her; but led her mind, almost insensibly, to reflect upon the relation that exists between the creature and the Creator.

Her end in doing this was simple and good. She believed, and believed truly, that only just so far as any one came into true moral order, which must involve an understanding of divine and moral laws, and a life according to them, could there be safety on earth amid its thousand evil allurements. For Anna she felt a genuine affection, and that prompted her to seek her good—yea, her highest good. She knew but one way to do this, and in that way she sought, diligently, to bless with the choicest of blessings the gentle, pure-hearted girl that Providence had committed to her care.

CHAPTER XX.

Some months passed, before Mrs. Grand was able clearly to see the fruits of her labor. The result had been so gradual, and almost imperceptible, that, even while looking for the signs, she did not perceive their presence. They were first apparent in a calm elevation of countenance, and a more cheerful tone of voice. While looking for an expression of sentiment she had passed by these. But when she did notice them, her heart warmed with emotions such as only they who seek, unselfishly, the good of others, can feel.

Nothing of particular interest to the reader occurred for nearly ten months from the period Anna came under the roof of Mrs. Grand, further than the gradual reception of higher truths into her mind than she had ever before known. But

then an event took place, than which nothing could have been more afflictive. Mrs. Grand was taken suddenly ill, and died, after suffering for three weeks the pains of a malignant disease.

Thrown again upon the world, friendless, Anna Gray was once more compelled to look around her for a sheltering nook where she might hide herself from want and danger. In losing Mrs. Grand, just at a time when she had created in her mind a thirst for pure and elevating truths that were to give her character a just basis, and form it upon a right model, she felt most keenly the bereavement. When her mother died, she lost a natural guide and counsellor—now she had lost a spiritual guide and counsellor.

"I am indeed alone!" she murmured as she sat weeping in the little room where, for nearly a year, she had listened to the words of wisdom as they came in such gentle and earnest tones from the lips of Mrs. Grand. The solemn services for the dead had been performed, and the body carried forth and buried. The few friends that had come to pay the last sad tribute of tears to the virtues of one whom to know was to honor, had departed, and Anna was left alone. Though cast down in spirit and afflicted, she did not yield herself up to murmuring despondency. She had been taught a better lesson in life, and that from the lips of her now so sincerely mourned. But it was impossible not to feel sad in her affliction, and to be infested with doubt and fear for the future.

The slowly falling twilight, as evening came stealing on, deepened the gloom that, spite of all she could do to rise above it, oppressed her heart. Darkness came down, and she felt more than ever alone. She lit a lamp, but to her the light was not a cheerful one, and failed, as of old, to dispel from the room night's dusky shadows. Fears of a superstitious kind, do what she would to dispel them, stole over her.

"Oh, I cannot stay here, alone," she said aloud, as these fears grew more palpable, glancing timidly around, and inwardly trembling lest from the shadows of the room should start forth some fearful vision.

"But where can I go?" she added. "I have no other home, and, even here I cannot remain long."

A rap at the door caused her to start, and the blood to curdle in her veins. This was only for a moment or two. Her self-possession quickly returned, and going to the street door, she opened it and found that a young acquaintance named Laura Woods had called to see her.

"I thought you would feel very lonesome," Laura said,

"and so I have come round to stay with you all night if you would like me to do so."

"It is very kind in you," Anna returned, with a full heart, warmly pressing the hand of Laura. It was all she could say. They had been acquainted for only a short time: but the oftener they met, the more they felt drawn towards each other. Laura was, like Anna, an orphan, and, like her, almost friendless. She had a very delicate constitution. To the eye of one skilled in detecting the marks of a hidden disease, her bright eye, her pure complexion and semi-transparent skin—her narrow chest and stooping form accompanied by a frequent, but not painful cough, would have been a too sure premonition of decline.

Laura staid with Anna that night. Her thoughtful regard for her peculiar situation awoke tenderer feelings in the breast of Anna than she had yet experienced. A fuller confidence was the result. She opened all her heart to Laura, and she, in turn, told of her bereavement and trials in the past—her hopes and fears for the future. This sealed them fast and tenderly united friends. Laura had been engaged for the past two years in going out and sewing by the week in a number of families. She had more work than she could do, and it was soon agreed between her and Anna, that they should take a room together, and while Laura went out to sew, Anna was to remain at home and work. Laura could always get as much as Anna could do from the families in which she was sewing. Every evening she was to come home.

This arrangement was entered into. Anna took care of the room and worked at home, while Laura went out to sew by the week. What they earned was common preperty, and used as their wants required,

One Saturday evening, about six weeks after Mrs. Grand's death, Laura said to Anna,

"I am going to a new place on Monday, and where do you think it is?"

"I am sure I cannot tell, where?"

"To your aunt's."

"Yo Mrs. Grant's!" exclaimed Anna, rising up quickly.

"Yes. Mrs. T——— for whom I have been sewing, recommended me to her, and I have promised to go."

"Did you see Mrs. Grant?"

"Yes. She was at Mrs. T———'s to-day, and engaged me."

"And you are going?" said Anna in a bewildered manner.

"Yes, I told you I was."

"So you did. But what you say has confused me so that I can scarcely think. When did you say you were going?"

On Monday."

"I thought you promised me that after you had finished for Mrs. T——— you would rest for a few days. You are not at all well."

"I know. But Mrs. Grant says that it is indispensable to have me at once, and so I shall have to wait another week before taking rest."

Anna looked sober. The past came back too strongly upon her. Her mother's wrongs and suffering, and the insult and cruel repulse she had received at the hands of her aunt, were remembered too vividly.

"I wish you would not go there, Laura," she said, giving way to her feelings.

"I have promised, you know," was calmly replied.

"True. And it is weakness in me to feel so."

"To tell the truth, Anna, I am glad for your sake, of the opportunity this will afford me to learn all about your mother's relatives. You have spoken of her brother—he may be living, and, if so, I will learn for you where he is. He may have a truer heart than his sister."

"He cast off my mother. I want, therefore, no favors at his hand," Anna replied firmly.

"Of that he may have long ago repented. It will be your duty, at least, to give him a chance of atoning for the errors of the past."

Anna shook her head. But even while she did so, arose the wish in her heart to be received by her uncle, for her mother's sake, if he were yet alive.

CHAPTER XXI.

On the Monday following, Laura went, as she had agreed, to the house of Mrs. Grant.

Anna strove to feel indifferent, but this was impossible. Try all she would to banish from her mind the thoughts of her aunt, and the probable result of Laura's engagement to sew for her, they constantly intruded themselves.

As the day wore on from morning until noon, and the forenoon towards evening, she found, her hand less true in per-

forming its task, and her heart less calm and even in its pulsations.

At six, Laura was to be home. But long before five o'clock, Anna was compelled to lay aside her work, for the simple reason, that her trembling fingers could hold the needle no longer.

When, at length, her friend returned, she was able to assume an air of external indifference. Laura said nothing about Mrs. Grant, or her family, for some time after she came in, and Anna, though all eagerness, (an eagerness that she struggled in vain to suppress,) to hear what had transpired through the day, asked no questions. At last Laura said, after looking into her face, steadily for a moment:

"How strongly you resemble your cousin Florence."

Anna started at this unexpected remark, while a deep flush passed over her face.

"Whom do you mean by my cousin Florence," she asked, quickly recovering herself, and looking somewhat sternly at Loura.

"I mean the daughter of your aunt," was replied. "There are two grown up girls—your cousins—Ella and Florence. The latter resembles you very much in her face; but there the likeness ceases. She is a proud, vain girl. I did not see much of Ella."

"Did you see my uncle?" asked Anna, striving, as she spoke, to prevent the interest she felt in the question from showing itself in the tones of her voice.

"No," was replied, "I eat my dinner with the housekeeper, and, therefore, did not see all the family."

"Did you learn whether he was living with Mr. and Mrs. Grant?"

"No, I had no opportunity to ask any questions of the housekeeper at the dinner table."

"Did you hear his name mentioned."

"No."

"He may not even be alive."

There was a touch of sadness in the tone of Anna's voice, as she said this, that revealed the true state of her feelings.

"I cannot tell; but I will learn to-morrow," replied Laura.

Anna made no further remark on the subject.

"How have you felt to-day?" she asked, sometime afterwards.

"Not very well," Laura said. "I was troubled with a dull aching in my breast all the afternoon. Once or twice quick flushes of heat went over me, and then I grew faint. I was

afraid, sometimes that I wouldn't be able to keep up until night."

"You must not go out to-morrow," Anna said, in a concerned voice.

"I have promised your aunt, and do not wish to disappoint her. I hope I shall feel better in a day or two. Mrs. Grant has promised to have some work ready for me to bring home to you in a day or two."

"To me!"

"Yes, to you." Laura smiled. "I did not tell Mrs. Grant that you were her niece. I only told her that a friend of mine, who did not go out to sew in families, could do something for her if she wished it."

On the next morning Laura felt even more indisposed than on the previous evening. Anna urged her not to go out, but she could not be induced to remain at home. For two or three days she held on with great difficulty. But her overtasked strength at last yielded. She came home on the evening of the third day, quite sick. The pain in her left breast had increased—she breathed with difficulty—her skin was hot; and she had an irritating, dry *hacking* cough.

She had told Mrs. Grant, on leaving her house that evening, that she was afraid she could not return; but proposed taking some work home, to which the lady assented. She brought with her a small bundle which was given into the hands of Anna. It contained several garments that were to be made.

The illness of Laura, for whom Anna now felt the tender love of a sister, banished from her mind all thoughts of her relatives—thoughts that had haunted her, and disturbed her spirits for several days. She had turned herself towards them, with reluctance. She turned from them again, without a lingering regret, and gave up all her mind to the care of Laura, for whose fate her heart trembled to its centre.

At first, it seemed that rest was all the sufferer needed. She slept through the night, and awoke on the next morning, apparently refreshed. Her pulse was calmer, the pain in her breast not so acute, and she breathed easier. But on attempting to rise, a dizziness caused her to sink back upon her pillow, while a deadly paleness overspread her face. In a little while she recovered from this, and was able to sit up in her bed; but Anna would not permit her to rise. She drew a little table up to her bed side, and set upon it their morning

meal. Laura tried to eat, but she could only swallow part of a cup of tea. Her stomach loathed all food.

After breakfast she tried to sit up and sew. But she soon had to relinquish the attempt. The efforts to concentrate her mind upon her work, caused her head to swim, and a faintness to come over her.

"It will not do, Laura. You are too sick to attempt any thing now. I must take your work from you," Anna said, when she saw the effect of the sick girl's efforts; and by gentle force, she took her sewing from her hands, and removed from the bed, where it had been placed, her work basket.

"But your efforts will not be sufficient to support both of us," Laura returned, her eyes filling and her voice trembling.

"Mrs. Grand has often said to me, when I have given away to a desponding spirit," returned Anna, in a low, earnest voice, "that we are all the children of a Father, who is not only able to take care of us, but who loves us with a love far surpassing all human love. Give yourself up to Him, Laura. Feel that you are in his hands—all will come out right at last."

A gleam of light passed over the face of the sick girl.

"My heart thanks you, Anna, for those words," she said, with much feeling. "How they cause to rush back upon me the memories of long past years, when such lessons were taught me by a mother, called too early away from her child."

"Say not *too early*. Does not *He* (and Anna pointed upwards,) know best?"

"Was not your mother called from *you* too early?" Laura looked with a steady eye into the face of Anna.

"My heart says *yes*. But enlightened reason says *no*," was the reply. "It was long before I could assent to the truth of what Mrs. Grand so earnestly strove to impress upon my mind, that all things are under the direction of a wise and benevolent Providence, and that nothing is permitted to take place that is not for good. But so varied were the illustrations she gave me, and so often did she bring home to my mind facts and principles that I could no longer doubt. It is, it must be true. The death of my mother seemed the deepest wrong that could have been inflicted upon me. I murmured against it bitterly. But I see, already, that it was for good. To be spurned by my aunt, when I was homeless and penniless in a strange city, had in it, to my mind, no sign of any thing but evil. But what I have gained of moral strength of character, and a knowledge of the laws of Divine Providence, from an association with Mrs. Grand, I would not give for all the favors

such a woman as my aunt is, could possibly bestow upon me. Had I been permitted to choose my course in life, I would have remained in Cincinnati, but I obeyed a mother's dying injunction. When I arrived in this city, I had but one hope, I saw but one refuge—my relative's favor; my relative's protection. I obtained neither. It has, I am free to acknowledge, been better for me that I was cast off by them. Trust me, Laura, all is right. We are alone upon the earth, but we have a father in heaven."

Before Anna, who was holding in hers the hand of Laura, had ceased speaking, the eyelids of the other, from beneath which tears were glistening, had dropped low upon her pale cheeks; but the whole expression of her face had become softened and a faint smile played about her lips. A strong pressure of the hand was, for some moments, her only response. Then she said, in a low voice, that struggled to restrain its calmness,

"You are right, dear Anna! We shall be cared for. *You* will be cared for."

Laura's feelings here overcame her, and she sobbed aloud.

Anna understood too well the meaning of the last sentence, a meaning that forced itself upon her, suddenly, as prophetic, and caused every fibre of her soul to thrill with anguish. Her own heart, too, overflowed. Twining her arms about the neck of Laura, she laid her cheek to hers, and mingled her own tears with those of her weeping friend.

CHAPTER XXII.

"One week more, and all will be safe," was the remark of Mason Grant, as he drew his chair before the well filled grate, where glowed the first fire of the season. "I shall then sleep soundly, what I have not done for the last twelve months."

"I wish that girl had been dead, before she came here," was the reply of Mrs. Grant, who was alone in the parlor with her husband. "How freely I shall breathe in a week from to-day!"

"Yes, freely indeed! I shall then be happy. What a long time of anxious suspense I have had! I wonder if your brother thinks the period of limitation so near?"

"I should think not."

"We mustn't for the world, give him a hint of the fact.

Ten chances to one, if he wouldn't go to advertising in every newspaper in the city, and have this girl coming forward at the last moment."

"He is insane enough to do any thing, it seems. But, has it never crossed your mind, Mr. Grant, that all danger is not past even after we are safely beyond the day of limitation?"

Mr. Grant looked alarmed.

"What do you mean?" he said.

"My brother is rich."

"Well?"

"And a bachelor."

"I know."

"We have, naturally, large expectations for our girls."

"We certainly have."

"When he dies——"

Mrs. Grant could not help feeling a touch of shame, as she uttered her thoughts. A slight glow tinged her cheeks.

"When he dies, the bulk of his property will revert to Florence and Ellen, if——"

"If what?" quickly asked her husband.

"If this girl of Anna's does not come to light."

"What are you talking about, woman?"

"If Anna's child should present herself, and we do not pay her the legacy left by my father, even after the day of limitation is past, my brother is just the man to will her his entire property when he dies. I know him."

This was said in slow, measured tones.

The lips of Mason Grant were drawn apart, and he looked, with a bewildered air, into the face of his wife. It took him some moments fully to comprehend her meaning. When he did so, he became very pale, struck his hand hard against his forehead, and muttered a bitter invective against Anna Gray.

The door opened at the moment, and old Mr. Markland came in.

Instantly the cloud passed from the brow of Mason Grant, and he spoke to his wife's brother in cheerful tones. But the old gentleman appeared thoughtful, and replied only in monosyllables to the remarks that were made to him.

"Mary," he said abruptly, during a pause, and turning to his sister as he spoke, "can you tell why it is that I think all the time about Anna?"

He looked steadily into his sister's face, from which the color slowly retired.

"Do *you* think of her?" pursued the old man.

"Think of her? Why should I think of her? You ask strange questions, sometimes, Joseph." There was petulance in the tones of Mrs. Grant's voice.

"Do I? Humph! I am a strange kind of a man altogether."

With an offended air Mr. Markland arose, and slowly left the room. Mr. Grant called after him in a hesitating voice, but he was not heeded.

On entering his own room, where a light was burning, Mr. Markland seated himself by a table, and sighed heavily, as he leaned his head upon his hand.

"Poor Anna!" he at length murmured—"What would I not give to know the fate of you and yours. Strange, how your memory presses on me at this time! Where are you? Do thy feet yet press the walks of busy human life?—or, has thy gentle spirit passed long since to the company of those who love thee better than did thy earthly friends? Ah! If I could only know! If I could only know!"

CHAPTER XXIII.

While thoughts of his long absent sister were thus pressing themselves upon the mind of old Mr. Markland, the only child of that sister was passing through another of the deep trials by which her young life had been so freely marked.

At the moment he sat down and sighed heavily over the memory of the loved and lost that could return no more, she stood eagerly bending over the dying form of her only friend and companion. Laura knew that her hour had come. But her heart was firm, her lip calm, and her eye bright to the last.

"I shall have a brief, sweet sleep, Anna," she said, in a low whisper, as she looked up. "And then life will continue on again—conscious, active life. I shall not be far from you; though you will not be able to see me with your bodily eyes; but love will make us present."

Anna could not reply; she could only press the hand of her departing friend and weep.

"Can you not smile on me in this parting? sweet sister!" murmured Laura. "I cannot bear these tears. It is hard, I know, for you to be left alone. But only press onward with a firm, true heart for a little while, and we will meet again. Oh, if you could see the light that I now see—could only feel

how intimately near you are ministering spirits, to support you in trial, and guard you in danger, you would not weep. Life is called a warfare, and a pilgrimage—but in it we have the Invincible to fight for us, and the All-seeing to direct our steps. Be of good courage, my sister!

'Our troubles and our trials here
Will only make us richer there.'

"Remember the beautiful hymn we have so often sung together.

'Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust him for his grace;
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face.
His purposes will ripen fast.
Unfolding every hour;
The bud may have a bitter taste,
But sweet will be the flower!'"

The last words were more feebly uttered, but the eyes of the speaker were fixed steadily upon Anna's face! In a few moments her lips moved again, but no sound touched the low bent ear of her friend. A deep silence followed. Then Laura tried again to speak.—Anna listened eagerly—

"All will be well—fear not—good cheer—shall meet—"

Still her lips moved, but nothing more could be heard. A moment or two, and—the silver chord was loosed and the golden bowl broken!

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE illness of Laura had prevented Anna from making up the garments which had been brought home from Mrs. Grant's. The bundle lay for several days, unopened, upon a table, and was then handed to a poor woman in the neighborhood to make, who knew something of Anna's history. On the night that Laura died, this woman completed the work, and was rolling it up in a newspaper—the same in which it came—when her eye rested upon an advertisement that attracted her attention. She read it over, and sat in a thoughtful mood for nearly a minute.

"Bless me!" she at length exclaimed, suddenly. "Can it be possible? Yes, it must be—it is! Anna Gray, here is good fortune for you!" Rolling up the paper, she thrust it

into her pocket, and taking from a closet her shawl and bonnet, she drew them on, and left the house, hurriedly. It was an hour after dark. Her steps were bent towards the residence of Anna and her companion. Her hand was upon the door, and she was about to enter, when a sudden thought caused her to stop.

"She is a strange girl, and might not——" Her thoughts were uttered no farther. But she turned away, and walked down the street, with an air of irresolution. Gradually, as she kept on, her step was firmer, and in a few minutes her manner was that of one who had determined upon a certain course of action. Ten minutes' walk brought her to the house of Mason Grant, in Walnut street. She rang the bell with a firm hand; a servant came to the door.

"Can I see Mr. Markland?"

"I suppose so, if he is in," was replied in an indifferent tone.

"Will you see?" There was something peremptory in the tone of the woman's voice, that made the servant stare. He left her standing in the door, and went up to Mr. Markland's room. Mr. Markland had entered it but a few minutes before, and was sitting by a table in a pensive mood, his thoughts on his exiled sister, when the servant informed him that a woman wished to see him at the door.

"Who is she?"

"I do not know, sir."

"What does she want?"

"She only asked to see you."

"What kind of a woman is she?"

"She looks like a poor woman."

"Where is she?"

"In the hall."

"Tell her I will be down in a moment."

The servant withdrew.

"I wonder who she can be, and what she wants with me at this hour?" muttered the old man to himself, as he descended to the hall a few minutes after the servant withdrew.

"Mr. Markland?" said the woman in an inquiring voice, as he approached her.

"That is my name; what is your wish, madam?"

"You advertised ——"

"What?" Mr. Markland interrupted her, eagerly, catching from her hand, at the same time, the newspaper which she drew from her pocket.

"You advertised for heirs to the estate of Mr. Markland."

"Well! what do you know about them?"

"I know the daughter of Mrs. Gray."

"You do! Where is she?" quickly replied the old man. "Is all right with her? And her mother? Where is she?"

"Dead. She died ———"

At this moment one of the parlor doors opened, and Mr. and Mrs. Grant, who had heard voices in the hall, came out.

"When did she die?" asked Mr. Markland. The woman had paused at the appearance of other members of the family.

"About a year ago, in Cincinnati, and her only child, a daughter, has been since that time in this city, laboring with honest hands to earn her bread."

"It is all false! It is a trick! The woman is an impostor" shrieked Mrs. Grant, in a wild and agitated manner.

"No, madam," was calmly replied. "It is the truth, and well *you* you know it."

"Where is she? Tell me quickly! I will go to her this instant," said old Mr. Markland. "John! bring me my hat and cane."

They were brought.

"Now lead the way. I must see Anna's child."

"No, no brother, you shall not go!" Mrs. Grant seized his arm, and endeavored to restrain him. "It is all a trick. You will run into danger."

"Let go of me, woman!" Mr. Markland jerked himself away, as he said this sternly. "Not a word, Mason!" he added, as the husband of Mrs. Grant made a movement to interfere with him. "I think I know my own business, and want no dictation. Lead the way, madam, I am ready."

With this he left the house, and hurried off at a quick pace.

"Follow him! follow him!" urged Mrs. Grant. But her husband retired into the parlor, and throwing himself into a large chair, let his head sink upon his breast, and sat in sullen silence.

A rapid walk of some ten minutes brought Mr. Markland and his guide to a small house, in a retired court. Without knocking, they entered, and went up stairs, with quiet steps.

"She lives here," said the woman, in a whisper, with her finger on her lip, as she laid her hand upon the door of a room in the third story.

"Knock, then," was the old man's reply, in a low husky voice.

The woman rapped lightly. But no one answered to the summons. She knocked again, and louder than before. All remained silent within.

"Open the door," said Mr. Markland, in a quick, excited voice.

The door was thrown open, and they entered. By the light of a small lamp, they saw a female lying upon a bed. She did not move, nor appear conscious of the presence of any one. Mr. Markland went up to the bed side, but started back with quivering limbs, pale lips, and an ejaculation of horror. Beyond the reclining figure, and at first concealed by it, rose the rigid outline of an ashy face—death-marked!

For a moment or two Mr. Markland stood like one suddenly paralyzed. Then grasping the woman who had accompanied him, by the arm, he dragged her to the bedside, and said in a low, deep, thrilling whisper.

"Which is my niece?"

"This, the living one."

"Thank God!" was the old man's quick ejaculation. Then leaning over, he lifted the prostrate girl from the bed, withdrawing as he did so, an arm that had been twined around the neck of her who was now unconscious of all earthly things. Anna was only half insensible. The movement roused her.

"Mercy! Where am I? Who are you? What does this mean?" she exclaimed, struggling to release herself from the arms of Mr. Markland, and speaking in an alarmed and indignant tone.

"What is your name, child?" asked Mr. Markland, with a forced calmness, allowing her to disengage herself from the arm with which he had raised her from the bed, but still holding her hand in his.

"My name is Anna Gray."

"And your mother's name?"

"Anna Gray?"

"Where is your mother?"

"In heaven." This was said in a meek, low voice, while her eyes were cast upwards.

"What was your mother's maiden name?"

"Markland."

"Where is your father?"

"Dead."

And your mother was from?"

"This city."

"Have you relatives here?"

"I have an aunt."

"What is her name?"

"Mrs. Grant."

"Have you ever seen her?"

"Yes."

"Does she know you are in this city?"

"Yes."

"How do you know?"

"I called upon her; but she spurned me as an impostor!"

"Gracious Heaven!" exclaimed the old man with indignation.

"But how can you prove that you are not what Mrs. Grant said you were?" he resumed more gravely.

Anna turned away, and took from a drawer a small morocco miniature case, and handing it to her interrogator said—

"That will prove the truth of all I have said, to any who have a right to know the truth."

Eagerly and with trembling hands did old Mr. Markland open the case he had received.

"My mother! Oh!" was his sudden ejaculation, staggering back a few paces, as if from a blow, with his eyes fixed upon the miniature.

"Enough!" he said, in a few moments, recovering himself, and advancing towards Anna.—"Enough! You are my long lost sister's child! I see her image, now, in your young face. Thank God! You are found at last."

Mr. Markland threw his arms around Anna, and drew her to his bosom, where she lay and wept like a child weeping on the breast of a parent.

CHAPTER XXV.

After Anna had, by the exhibition of his mother's miniature, removed from the mind of Mr. Markland all doubt of her being the daughter of his sister; and, after the first wild joy of his heart had subsided, Mr. Markland asked if there were not another room into which they could retire from the chamber of death where they now stood.

"We have no other room," replied Anna.

Mr. Markland mused for a few moments. Then he said:

"I will return for you in half an hour."

"To-night I wish to remain here with——," and she glanced towards the bed.

"No, my dear child! no," quickly returned Mr. Markland. "Let others perform these sad offices for your friend. You have suffered enough."

"You are right, sir," spoke up the woman who had guided Mr. Markland to the house. "Let me take her place here. I will see that all is done that need be."

"Is not this enough, my child?" Asked Mr. Markland, in a subdued voice, for he was touched by the pure, unselfish love manifested by Anna for her departed friend.

Anna leaned her head upon his shoulder and sobbed bitterly for a few moments. Then she lifted her face and said—

"I will go with you, if I may return to-morrow."

"You shall be free to go and come at your own pleasure."

Mr. Markland then withdrew. On gaining the street, he walked slowly along, with his eyes to the ground, debating in his own mind what immediate disposition he should make of his niece. It was nearly ten o'clock at night. He could not take her to his sister's, and it was too late to make arrangements for introducing her into a good boarding house. To let her remain at her present lodgings, was, in his mind, out of the question.

"Yes, that will do," he at length said, half aloud, and quickened his pace—he had come to some hurried conclusion. After walking, briskly, for the space of ten or fifteen minutes, he came into Chesnut street from Fifth street, and turning down, kept on as far as Third street. In a few moments more he was at the clerk's desk in the Mansion House.

"Have you two good chambers and a parlor vacant?" he asked.

"Yes, sir. Two of the finest in the house."

"Have them got ready immediately. I wish a small fire in the parlor."

"Yes, sir. Will you enter your name?" The clerk handed him the travellers' entry book.

"Joseph Markland and niece," were the names he entered.

"I wish a carriage immediately," said the old gentleman, as he handed back the pen.

The bell was rung and a servant directed to go for a carriage. As soon as it arrived, Mr. Markland entered it and gave directions to the driver to take him to the place where he had left Anna.

In a little over half an hour, the bewildered girl found herself in an elegantly furnished parlor, which she was told was, for the present, her home.

After she had related her whole history, and, that of her morher, whose memory was watered, during the narration, with many tears, she retired into the chamber provided for her, and sought the blessing of sleep. It did not come for many hours. The events of the evening had been of too exciting a nature.

Mr. Markland did not go back to the house of his sister, but occupied, for the night, the other chamber taken with the parlor.

In the morning, when he met Anna, he found her dressed with a degree of neatness that he did not expect. She had on a silk dress of light, but plain colors, which fitted neatly her well formed, graceful person. Her hair she had arranged with taste, and, indeed, had seemed to study, as much as was in her power, to appear, in her new position, to the best possible advantage, for her uncle's sake. As she arose to meet him, he was charmed with the ease and grace of her motions and the innocent beauty of her young, intelligent face. Tears were in her eyes as she looked up to her uncle. Tenderly kissing her, he enquired how she had passed the night—expressed again and again his pleasure at having found her—and then causing her to resume her seat, he took a place by her side, and entered into a close conversation with her, that was simply a renewal of the conversation of the preceding night, and related to the past history of Anna.

Breakfast was served for them in their private parlor. After the meal was over, Mr. Markland placed a well filled purse in the hands of his niece, and told her that, if she wished to go, he would take her, in a carriage, to the house were the body of her friend lay, and leave her there as long as she wished to remain; and that he would, in the meantime, see that all necessary arrangements were made for Laura's burial.

Anna could ask no more. The whole day was spent in performing the sad offices required for the dead. On the morning of the following day the remains of her departed friend were committed to the grave. She wept as she stood by the side of the deep chasm that received the inanimate body of one whom she had loved as a sister, but she wept, leaning upon the arm of her uncle.

CHAPTER XXVI.

On the morning of the fourth day, and after the wardrobe of Anna had received important, but hasty additions, Mr. Markland made his first appearance at the house of his sister, since the night he had left it so abruptly.

Mrs. Grant did not seem either surprised or glad to see him. A deep, gloomy shadow was on her face. She asked no question as to where he had been, or why he had remained so long away. She did not say a word about her niece.

"Mary," said the old man, after a few moments of silence, with a stern face and voice—"I have found Anna's child, thank God! her orphan child, whom you spurned, heartlessly from your door, when she had no home, and was alone in a large and strange city——"

"And I wish you joy of your discovery!" sneeringly replied Mrs. Grant, with a malignant expression of countenance.

The old man started to his feet, his face flushed with instantly excited indignation.

"A lovelier girl never——"

But he restrained himself, and did not utter the retort that was on his tongue.

"Perhaps," he said, as soon as he could control himself enough to speak, "you forget that Anna Gray is to take her place in society by the side of yourself and family—and worthy is she to take that place. Perhaps you forget—"

"I don't wish to hear a word on the subject. It is an offence to me!"

Mr. Markland arose and left the house. He saw that his sister was beside herself with anger, and he knew very well the cause. He next visited Mr. Grant. Him he found in a very different mood. Calm, but gloomy.

"I have discovered the daughter of Anna, as you are aware," he said to Mr. Grant.

"I presumed that was the case."

"You knew, Mason, all along that she was in the city."

"I did."

"Exposed to every danger."

"Of that I knew nothing."

"Rather say you cared nothing," replied Mr. Markland, sharply.

"Have it as you please. I am in no mood to dispute about words just now."

"You and Mary seem to be in a strange temper about an event that should give you joy."

"Humph!" The lips of Mason Grant parted, but he did not smile—he could not.

"I am at a loss to understand the meaning of all this, Mason," said Mr. Markham, sternly. "Is it possible that the necessity of paying over to this niece her portion of her grandfather's estate, has disturbed you both so deeply?"

Grant was silent.

"But I need not make such a supposition. Nothing else could have had this effect."

"That proportion she will never get," gloomily, but in a decided tone, replied Grant.

"What?"

"She will never see a dollar of her grandfather's property. Do you understand?"

"What do you mean?"

"My estate will not pay it. Can you understand that?"

"I understand what you say; but do not credit the declaration."

"You can satisfy yourself at any moment. Are you ready to make the investigation?"

"I am. And it shall be made rigidly, depend upon that. It will be a desperate case, look you! Mason, if I don't get out of your hands the amount I suffered to be placed there, confiding to your honor as I did. You had no right to risk the loss of this money in your business. You should have been satisfied with the use of it, safely."

"We will not bandy words about that," abruptly replied Grant. "What's past can't be mended. This girl cannot get the legacy left by her grandfather, nor even a portion of it, without ruin to me, and I will fight hard before I am brought to that issue. Too much depends upon my maintaining my position. I must look to my children, and the effect upon them of bankruptcy. Do you understand?"

"Perfectly."

"You see, then, that I am desperate."

"I see it. You have played the fool, and now you are going to play the ——"

"Stop sir!" ejaculated Grant, in a deep quick voice, his face growing almost black with passion.

"The villain!" coolly added old Mr. Markland, steadily fixing his eyes upon the excited merchant.

The hand of Grant was suddenly raised, from an impulse to strike to the ground the man who had assailed him.

But the calm, steady eye of Mr. Markland remained fixed upon him, and he quailed under it.

"Mason Grant," said the old man, speaking emphatically, "we part here. Our paths in life diverge from this point. When you do justice to Anna Gray, and when my sister and her children come forward and do her justice, then I will cross the threshold of your house. Not before. As one of the executors of my father's will, I will see that the orphan girl does not lose her portion. Good morning!"

CHAPTER XXVII.

THREE months have elapsed, and we find Anna under new and very different circumstances. Instead of a friendless stranger in a great city, she is now the mistress of a large and elegant house, which has been purchased, and beautifully furnished by old Mr. Markland for himself and niece.

Every day endears her more and more to the heart of the old man, her uncle. He has provided for her the best of teachers, and she, more for her uncle's sake than her own, is devoting herself to music, to the study of French, and other branches of a polite education, with affectionate assiduity. Gradually he is introducing her into society, and she charms wherever she goes. Her history has not been concealed.

As yet no intercourse has taken place between her and Mr. Grant's family. She sometimes alludes to them, but, on this subject, her uncle is always silent. She believes that it is the pride of Mr. Grant that is in the way of harmony; the real truth she does not know, and her uncle thinks it best, that she should remain in ignorance on that head. His own large fortune is already secured to her, and that will more than make up to her the loss of her grandfather's legacy.

The fact that his sister knew that Anna was in the city under such peculiar circumstances, and yet concealed the

knowledge of it from him, was something that old Mr. Markland could neither forget nor forgive. Indeed, the conduct of both herself and husband, during the preceding year, exhibited so deep a moral perversion, that Mr. Markland wished to meet them no more.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

. . . . . "WHO is that charming creature leaning on the arm of young W——?"

"Don't you know?" This was said in a tone of surprise.

"I never saw her before, to my knowledge. I have been absent from the city, you will remember, for some two years."

"True. You know old Markland?"

"Very well."

"That is his niece."

"His niece? Oh no! There are his nieces in the other room."

"You mean the Misses Grant."

"Yes."

"Her name is Gray, not Grant. And she is a niece."

"He has but one sister, Mrs. Grant."

"He had, it appears, another—a twin sister—who, because she married below her position, as it was thought, was thrown aside many years since. She died, about two years ago in Cincinnati, and made her only child promise, on her death bed, that she would come to this city and seek out her relatives, She did so, but was not successful at first, I believe in finding them. For nearly twelve months she supported herself with her needle, when her uncle discovered her by some fortunate accident. He has been educating her ever since."

"Quite a charming piece of romance!"

"Isn't it. The old man is as proud of her as if she were his only child. Look at him! See—his eyes are all the while upon her."

"And well he may be. She is a lovely being. I don't know when I have seen so sweet a face,—how beautifully blended in it are innocence and intelligence. I must get introduced."

"It's too late, now," said the friend, smiling.

"Why?"

"Young W—— has already secured the prize."

"Are you in earnest?"

"Yes. That matter is pretty well understood."

"He's a fortunate fellow."

"In more ways than one."

"How?"

"Old Markland is worth a plum. He will get a double fortune—a woman in a thousand and a handsome estate into the bargain."

In about an hour, the friends who held this conversation, met again. It was in a brilliant party.

"There is one thing that I can't understand," one of them said.

"What is that?"

"I have noticed Mrs. Grant and her daughters pass near this Miss Gray several times during the evening, but they don't seem to know her."

"I can explain that."

"Give me the benefit of your explanation, if you please."

"They have wronged her, and, therefore cannot forgive her."

"Humph! A strange reason."

"The true one, nevertheless. Or, I ought to say, that Mr. Grant has wronged her out of some fifty thousand dollars, it is said."

"Indeed!"

"Yes. Her mother could not be found when her family repented of their treatment towards her. On her father's (Anna's grandfather's) death, he left fifty thousand dollars to her children if any should be discovered within a certain number of years. Mr. Markland and Mr. Grant were the executors under this will. In case no heirs were found, the children of Mr. Grant were to inherit this property.

"By some kind of hocus pocus, Grant managed to prevent any advertisements for heirs from appearing until the latest moment. But when they did appear, they were effectual. Anna was found, through their means, just one week before the day of limitation."

"And secured her legacy?"

"No. Mason Grant was entrusted with the property, and refused to give it up. He had so long looked upon it

as the property of his children, that he could not feel like relinquishing it."

"Impossible!"

"It is true, I believe. The Grants, I am told, affect to believe that this young lady is an imposter, and, therefore, refuse to acknowledge her as a relative. But no one who looks into her face can believe her capable of imposture."

"No. I will exonerate her from that offence."

"The true reason of their conduct is to be found in the fact, that the moment she is acknowledged, the odium of the conduct of Mason Grant will fix itself upon the whole family."

"I understand it all, perfectly."

"But all this will avail them nothing. The whole matter is pretty well understood in all the circles where they move. Young W—— had began to pay some attentions to Ella Grant, when Anna made her appearance with her uncle. Her superior charms quickly won his heart, and he is now her acknowledged lover."

"Success to his suit, say I! He is worthy of her hand; and one glance at her sweet face is sufficient to satisfy any one, that she is worthy of his."

The subject of their remarks, passed near them, at this moment, leaning upon the arm of W——, and the friends ceased speaking.

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But little more of interest to the reader can be related of Anna Gray. Mr. Grant's family kept aloof, and Mr. Grant held fast to the legacy left her by the elder Mr. Markland. But it did him little good. In a few years he failed in business and became very much reduced; and not long after, died. When trouble came upon them, Anna, now Mrs. W——, drew the veil of oblivion over the past, and visited her aunt and cousins. They received her coldly—the coldness arising from a consciousness of having wronged her. But the angel-sweetness of her character soon subdued their feelings, and her cousins soon learned to respect, esteem, and then to love her.

Anna fills, now, a high place in the social circle, and is beloved by all. A few years since, her uncle died, leaving her the whole of a handsome estate—which would have been equally divided between herself and cousins, had not Mr. Grant so wickedly wronged her. In seeking the

worldly good of his children without regarding justice to others, Mr. Grant only did them an injury. This was a natural result—a result that always takes place, no matter when, or where, or how the attempt is made to secure the temporal well being of any one at the expense of the rights of another.