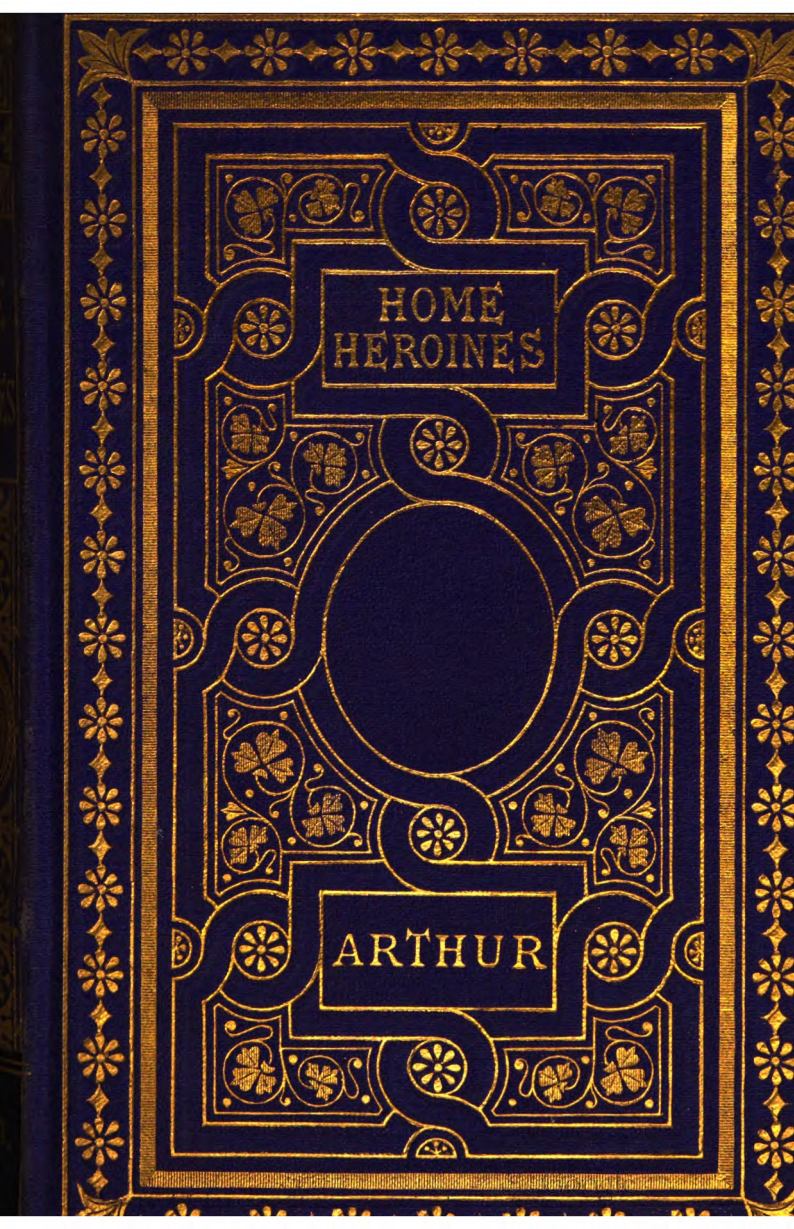
HOME
HEROINES
ARTHUR

HOME HEROINES.

SAINT BARBARA.

HOME HEROINES:

TALES FOR GIRLS.

BY

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AUTHOR OF 'LIFE'S CROSSES,' 'ORANGE BLOSSOMS,' ETC.

EDINBURGH:

WILLIAM P. NIMMO

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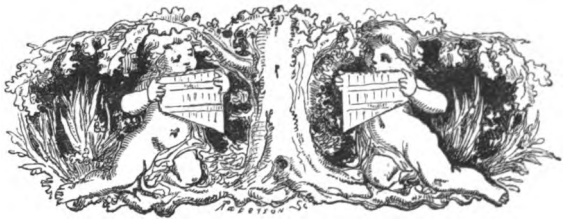


SAINT BARBARA.

'WHAT a queer little body!' exclaimed one lady to another, as a girl passed through the room where they were sitting. She was leading a child by the hand, and carrying another in her arms.

'Our Barby,' was answered.

'Where in the wide world did you discover this funny specimen of humanity?' laughed the first speaker. 'She looks as if she had been copied from one of Punch's caricatures.'

'Oh, we've had Barby for a long time; and I don't know what we should do without her.'

Now, Barbara was not very comely to look upon. Truly, as the lady had said, she was a queer little body. Almost dwarfish in stature, her head was so large as to look out of all proportion. Not a feature in her face seemed rightly adjusted. One eye was

lower than the other, and set at a different angle from its neighbour; and both were singularly small for the size of her face, which was broad and round. Her nose was neither Roman nor Grecian, and yet it made a prominent feature, and had a very decided expression. The mouth was large, but not coarse; the chin delicate and receding. Barbara's manner of walking could hardly be called graceful. Her short, round, thick person—she was all waist or none, as you might choose to have it—swayed from side to side in a duck-like manner. There is a word which exactly expresses the gait, but we will not use it. We are not holding 'little Barby' up to ridicule.

'I know very well what I would do *with* her,' said the visitor.

'What?'

'Send her to a menagerie, or anywhere else.'

'Why so?' The lady looked a little serious.

'Oh, because I wouldn't have such a hideous-looking creature about me. I would not like to trust my children with her. One glance at her face and person is enough. No beautiful soul can be enshrined in so deformed a body. Depend upon it, nature never hangs out a sign like that, except in warning.'

'We know Barbara,' was the confident, quietly-spoken answer.

'You may think you know her. And so we

thought we knew our kitten, until one day its sharp claws were in baby's face.'

'What an elegant silk!' said the lady to her visitor, changing a subject that was growing unpleasant. 'Where did you get it?'

'At Robinson's.'

'Has he more of the same style?'

'Yes. There were two or three charming patterns when I selected this.'

And then the conversation went ranging away upon themes out of connection with our present subject—the humble, homely Barbara.

It is just ten years since she entered Mrs. Grayson's family. She was then only twelve years old. It was not much that Barbara could remember of her parents. They were poor working people, who did not manage to get along well; and Barbara's earliest memories had not, therefore, many sunny gleams to brighten them. She was not more than six when her mother died, leaving her, an unlovely child, to the unwilling charity of strangers. The six years that followed were marked by many sufferings. The poor child rarely had a kind word said to her by any one. Mrs. Grayson first saw her in her kitchen one cold winter morning with a milk-pail in her hand.

'Bless me!' she exclaimed to the cook, after the child went out. 'What a singular-looking girl! Who is she?'

'Some oddity that our milk-woman has picked up,' replied the cook.

'How long has she been coming here?'

'About two weeks; but I'm really getting to like the funny thing.'

Once seen, Barbara's image was not likely to fade from the mind. Mrs. Grayson thought of her several times during the day, and on the next morning dropped down early into the kitchen. Barbara came in from the frosty air just as Mrs. Grayson entered, her face almost purple with cold. She set down her milk-pails and stood up between them, almost as cylinder-like in form as they, though by no means proportionally taller. There was an almost ludicrous expression of suffering on her singular face.

'Why, you're nearly frozen, child,' said Mrs. Grayson.

'Indeed, and it's bitter cold, ma'am,' replied the little girl, putting to her mouth ten red finger-tips, which protruded from the worn woollen gloves that covered her hands, and blowing with an energy that made her breath almost whistle against them.

'What is your name?' asked the lady.

'My name's Barby, ma'am.'

'Barbara.'

'Yes, ma'am; but they call me Barby.'

'Have you a mother?'

'No, ma'am.'

'Nor father?'

'No, ma'am.'

Barbara's answers were made in a prompt, even, rather musical tone of voice, in which was no sign of weakness.

'How long have you been carrying milk?' asked Mrs. Grayson.

'Two or three weeks, ma'am,' replied Barbara. 'Susan got sick and went away, and Mrs. Miller said I must go out and serve the customers till she got better.'

And the child stooped as she spoke, and taking the cover from one of her pails, began filling the cook's pitcher with milk. This done, she replaced the cover, and without stopping to be the recipient of any further kind inquiries, braced herself up to the work of carrying the two heavy vessels, and went trudging away on her round of duty.

'It's a shame,' said the cook, 'to put such work on a mere child. But some people have no mercy.'

Mrs. Grayson sighed, and went in a thoughtful mood from her kitchen.

One morning, toward the end of January, when the snow lay thick upon the ground, the cook tapped at Mrs. Grayson's door, and said:

'I wish, ma'am, that you'd just come down and look at Barby.'

'What's the matter with her?' asked the lady.

'Well, I think, ma'am, that you ought to see her,' replied the cook.

'Very well. I'll be down in a moment,' said Mrs. Grayson, who hurried on her morning-wrapper, and descended to the kitchen.

There stood little Barbara between her milk-pails, just stooping to the task of lifting the heavy burdens. The cook had been trying to keep her until Mrs. Grayson came down, but Barbara had no time to lose, for customers were waiting; and her sense of duty, or fear of punishment—which may not be known—was too strong to let her wait, even though the hope of seeing the lady who had once spoken to her kindly was trembling in her heart.

Mrs. Grayson saw at a glance that hardship or sickness had been making sad work with the child. The round, healthy face had changed to one of suffering and emaciation; and there was a shrunken look about her figure that contrasted strongly with its former plumpness. As she raised her eyes, Mrs. Grayson saw in them a look that moved her sympathy.

'I wish, ma'am,' said cook, 'that you'd just look at Barby's feet.'

'I can't stay a minute longer!' And Barbara stood up straight, lifting by the act her pails a few inches from the floor. 'I'm late now; and people want their milk.'

'Let them want it,' said cook, dogmatically, stepping forward as she spoke, and taking out of Barbara's little hands the two heavy pails, which she placed on a table beyond her reach.

'Oh, but Mrs. Miller will be angry!' urged the child in distress. 'And then, you know, people want their milk. They can't have breakfast until I get round.'

'Now, ma'am,' said the cook, 'just look at them feet! Did you ever see the like of them in all your born days?'

She had grasped Barbara by the arms and placed her on a chair, and now lifted one of her feet, which was covered with the remnant of a woollen stocking and an old slipshod leather shoe. Through rents and worn places in the wet stocking shone the fiery skin, which was cracked and ulcerated.

'Bless my heart!' exclaimed Mrs. Grayson, sickening at the sight. 'Take off the stocking, Jane,' she added.

The stocking was removed, exhibiting the extent to which the foot was diseased. There were great cracks in the heel, the edges of which were of a dark purple, as if mortification were threatened. The whole foot was of a deep red colour, and the tense skin shone as if polished.

'Only chilblains, Mrs. Miller says,' remarked Barbara. She did not speak in a tone of complaint.

'Let me see the other foot,' said Mrs. Grayson.

Jane removed the old shoe and stocking, and exhibited a foot in even a worse condition.

'How do they feel?' asked the lady.

'Oh, ma'am, they itch, and burn, and hurt now, dreadfully,' replied the child.

'Draw me a bucket of cold water, Jane.'

'Yes, ma'am.' And Jane turned away quickly.

'Oh dear!' said the child in distress. 'Give me my shoes and stockings. All the people are waiting for breakfast. I'll never get round in time, and they will be angry.'

'Put just enough hot water in to take off the chill.'

Mrs. Grayson spoke to Jane, not heeding Barbara.

'Will that do?'

'No; it is too warm. I merely want the chill off.'

'Do let me go!' urged Barbara. 'All the people will be angry.'

'There, put your feet in,' said Mrs. Grayson, as Jane set the bucket on the floor in front of the child.

'Mrs. Miller 'll beat me.' And tears ran over Barbara's face.

'No, Barby,' said Mrs. Grayson kindly, 'Mrs. Miller shall not beat you. I will see to that.'

'But you don't know her, ma'am, as I do.'

'I'll tell you what I do know, Barby,' said Mrs. Grayson, as she knelt on the floor by the singular-looking child who drew so strongly upon her sym-

pathies, and held her feet in the water. 'I know that Mrs. Miller will never hurt a hair of your head.'

'But what will the customers do for their milk this morning?' Barbara was as much troubled on this head as on that which involved consequences to herself.

'Do without it!' was the firm reply. 'You are not going from this house to-day.'

'Oh dear, ma'am, that won't do! I dare not stay; I must go round with my milk.'

It was in vain that Barbara pleaded for freedom to go forward in the way of duty. She was under the control of those who were stronger than her, and quite resolute. After keeping the child's feet in cold water for nearly ten minutes, or until they had ceased to ache and burn, Mrs. Grayson dried them with a soft napkin until all moisture was removed.

'Now stand up, Barby.'

But, in attempting to bear her weight, Barbara cried out with sudden pain, while the blood started from many gaping sores on her feet.

'You see, Barby,' said Mrs. Grayson kindly, 'that there is to be no more serving of milk to-day. Jane,' she added, 'can't you take her up to the little room next to yours? There is a bed in it, you know.'

The cook's heart was in all this. So she lifted Barbara in her strong arms and carried her up stairs, followed by Mrs. Grayson.

'I think she has fever,' said Jane, as she placed her on the bed. 'Just feel how hot her hand is!'

'Yes; I noticed that,' replied Mrs. Grayson. 'The child is very much fevered. In fact, she's sick enough to be in bed, instead of on the street carrying milk-pails; and in bed we must place her. So, do you take off her clothes while I go for one of Helen's wrappers.'

'Indeed, ma'am,' objected Barbara to this, 'I can't lie here; Mrs. Miller will be so angry; and what will the people do for their milk?' This was the question that troubled the poor child most of all.

'Do without it, and who cares!' answered Jane, who was getting provoked at Barbara's great concern for her customers.

'I care,' said the child, speaking in a firm voice. 'They expect me, and I've never disappointed them. Everybody's breakfast will be waiting.'

'Not everybody's,' replied Mrs. Grayson, smiling. 'But don't let that trouble you. What can't be cured must be endured.'

'I wish Mrs. Miller knew about it,' said Barbara, still pursuing the theme.

'Where does she live?'

Barbara gave the direction. It was not far away.

'I'll send her word to come and get her milk-pails,' said Mrs. Grayson.

This satisfied the child, who, now that this strain was off her mind, was showing more and more exhaustion. Jane removed her soiled and scanty garments, and laid her under the bed-clothes.

'I do believe I *am* sick,' said Barbara, in her artless way, lifting her eyes languidly and looking at Mrs. Grayson. 'What a kind lady you are! God will bless you for being good to poor little Barby.'

Her voice, which was singularly soft and sweet, died faintly away, and her lids fell heavily over her eyes. Mrs. Grayson, who was touched with pity for the strange child, and who felt her interest increasing every moment, laid her hand upon her forehead. It was burning; and the sunken cheeks bore the deep blush of fever.

Two weeks passed before Barbara was able to sit up. During the first week she was delirious for nearly three days; and the physician said that her life was in danger. In the beginning he feared that she had an eruptive fever; and there was some anxiety on the part of Mrs. Grayson for her children. But this apprehension soon gave way; and then her two little ones, Jenny and Katy, made their way to Barbara's chamber, and spent most of their time there. At first her uncomely face repelled them, but, when she spoke, the charm of her voice drew them towards her, and they began to like to go into the room beside her.

The love of children was a living thing in the heart of Barbara; and she was delighted to have Jenny and Katy in her room. As soon as she was able to sit up, she amused them by various little arts and devices which she had learned, and read to them out of the books which they brought to her. In the beginning of this intercourse Mrs. Grayson watched Barbara very closely, and questioned the children minutely as to what she said to them. She was soon satisfied that all was right. That although she had been brought up amidst rudeness, temptation, and exposure to vice, she was untainted by the atmosphere she had been compelled to breathe; that she was pure in heart as one of her own little ones.

'Barby,' said the lady to her one day, after she was able to sit up in a chair for several hours at a time, 'how would you like to live with me?'

A flash of light went over the little girl's face, and she looked at Mrs. Grayson in an eager, hopeful bewildered manner, as if she half thought herself dreaming.

'I'm in earnest, Barby. How would you like to live with me?'

'What could I do, ma'am?'

'My nurse is going away. Don't you think you could take her place?'

'I love Jenny, and Katy, and the baby,' was Barbara's answer.

'That's one qualification,' said the lady.

'And I'm strong when I'm well.'

Mrs. Grayson thought of the two great milk-pails, and was satisfied on that head.

'And I'll do just what you tell me to do.'

'Very well, Barby, I think we may consider it settled that you are to live with me as my nurse. If you love the children, and are strong, and will do just what I tell you, I can ask no more.'

'But,' said Barbara, a troubled look coming into her face, 'may be Mrs. Miller won't give me up.'

'Why not?'

'She says I'm bound to her. A lady asked me once if I wouldn't come to her house and live. When I told Mrs. Miller, she got very angry, and said that if I dared to go away she'd bring me back.'

'Did you ever go anywhere with her, and put your name, or mark, on a paper?'

'No, ma'am.'

'Then you're not bound to her.'

'Oh yes, I am, though. She made me promise on the Bible, a good while ago, that I'd live with her for five years. And it isn't two years yet. I didn't want to do it, but she made me.'

'Why did she exact this promise from you, Barby?'

'I don't know, ma'am, unless it was because I was always a-working and a-doing, and got through with almost as much work as two girls.'

'And you think yourself bound by that promise?'

'Yes, ma'am. If Mrs. Miller won't give me up, I must go back to her. I promised on the Bible, you know.'

'And to keep your promise you are willing to take up your old hard work again of feeding and milking cows, and carrying milk, instead of coming into this nice house to nurse children whom you love?'

'Yes, ma'am, if Mrs. Miller won't give me up,' replied Barbara, firmly but sadly. 'I promised on the Bible that I'd live with her five years, and I've only been there two years.'

'But, if I understand it, Barby, Mrs. Miller forced you to make that promise.'

'She said she'd beat me if I didn't do it.'

'Then she compelled you.'

'But, ma'am, you see I needn't have promised for all her threats. I could have stood the beating, and held my tongue, if she'd killed me. That's how it was. So, as I've promised, I'm bound.'

Struck with the child's mode of looking at the question, and still more interested in her, Mrs. Grayson determined to let matters take their course between Barbara and Mrs. Miller, in order more thoroughly to test the character of this singular child.

'I must send for Mrs. Miller,' she said, 'and have a talk with her. Perhaps I can induce her to give you up.'

Barbara was not sanguine; and Mrs. Grayson noticed that her face wore a troubled look. Her heart had leaped at the promise of a better life, in contrast with which the old hard life she had been leading for years looked harder than ever.

Mrs. Miller, who had already called several times to ask about Barbara, but who had not been permitted to see her, was now sent for. The child shrank back and looked half frightened as the hard, coarse, determined-looking woman entered the room in company with Mrs. Grayson, and fixed upon her a pair of cold, cruel grey eyes. Something like a smile relaxed her withered face as she spoke to Barbara.

'I have sent for you,' said Mrs. Grayson, 'in order to have a talk about Barby.'

Mrs. Miller nodded.

'Is she bound to you?'

'Yes, ma'am.' Promptly and firmly answered.

'Would you like to give her up, if I'd take her?'

'No.' Mrs. Miller uttered the little word resolutely.

'In what way is she bound?' asked Mrs. Grayson.

'She's bound all right, ma'am—fast and sure,' replied Mrs. Miller, showing some impatience.

'And you can't be induced to part with her?'

'No, ma'am.'

'Not for her good? I would like her for a nurse; and that will be so much easier for her, you know.'

'She's my girl, Mrs. Grayson,' replied the woman

to this; 'and I don't think it right for you to be trying to get her away from me. What's mine is mine.'

'I'm sorry,' said Mrs Grayson; 'and particularly on Barby's account. But, if you won't give her up, why—'

She paused and looked at Barbara. There was an expression of hopelessness upon the child's face that touched her deeply.

'No, I won't!' Mrs. Miller finished the sentence. 'And now, ma'am,' she added, 'Barby has been a trouble to you long enough, and had better come away.'

'She is not well enough to be moved for two or three days yet,' said Mrs. Grayson.

'I don't know about that,' replied Mrs. Miller. 'She's strong. I reckon she can walk home with a little help. Come, Barby.'

Barbara made a motion to rise from her chair.

'Barby can't go to-day,' said Mrs. Grayson, speaking in a tone of voice that meant quite as much as her words.

'Not if *I* say so?' interrogated Mrs. Miller.

'Not even if *you* say so!' Mrs. Grayson spoke firmly, though she smiled, in order not to arouse the woman's bad temper.

'She's my girl, not yours,' said Mrs. Miller.

'Sickness has made her mine until she is well

enough to be moved with safety,' was replied. 'And I must insist upon the right which I possess.'

'When do you think she will be well enough?'

'In two or three days, I hope.'

'Say in three days?'

'Yes.'

'Very well, ma'am. Send her home on Saturday.'

'You'd better call on that day,' said Mrs. Grayson.

'I shall be very busy on Saturday. Can't you send her home?'

'I would prefer you to call,' replied Mrs. Grayson.

'I'll be here, ma'am,' said the old woman, rising. 'And see here, Barby,' addressing the little girl in a severe tone, 'don't let there be any shamming on Saturday. I shall be here for you very early.'

During the next two days Barbara gained strength slowly, and on Friday was able to go down stairs and about the house. The children were delighted at this, and kept with her all day. Mrs. Grayson observed her closely, and was surprised to see her so cheerful, and so interested in all that pleased Jenny and Katy. She was very quiet in her manner, and from a certain soberness of countenance, and drooping of her eyes when not doing or saying anything, it was plain that she was not insensible to the great change that awaited her on the morrow.

Saturday came, and Barbara got up early, though still weak from her recent sickness. When Mrs.

Grayson came down stairs, she found her all ready to go with Mrs. Miller, now momentarily expected.

'And so you are going to leave us, Barby?' said the lady, looking at her kindly.

'Yes, ma'am,' replied Barbara, with a little faltering in her voice.

'We don't want you to go, Barby.'

'Thank you, ma'am.' Barbara looked grateful. 'But I am bound to Mrs. Miller, and you know she says I can't leave her.'

'Barby!'

'Ma'am!'

'Mrs. Miller has no right to keep you. You can leave her if you wish to do so.'

But the little girl shook her head, and answered:

'I am bound to her, you know.'

'Only by a promise which she forced you to make. She can't hold you for an hour if you choose to leave her. You can stay here and become nurse to the children, and Mrs. Miller can't help it.'

'I promised on the Bible,' said Barbara, with great seriousness; 'and that makes me bound.'

Mrs. Grayson did not think it right to press the matter any further. A child's conscience is a tender thing, and already she had tested Barbara's sense of duty nearly beyond the warrant of humanity.

Mrs. Miller had promised to come round early in the morning, and she was as good as her word. In this

pause she came in. Barbara turned to Mrs. Grayson, and put out her hand to her, looking up thankfully, even with love in her homely face. She did not speak. Her heart was too full. Mrs. Grayson took her hand, and held it tightly.

'Well, Mrs. Miller, so you're here for Barby,' said the lady.

'Yes, ma'am. I said I'd come this morning. Come, Barby.'

Barbara drew back her hand, making an effort to disengage it from that of Mrs Grayson. But the latter did not relax her hold.

'I think, Mrs Miller, you'd better let Barbara remain with me. She is not right well and strong enough yet, and may become sick on you hands.'

'Never you fear about that, ma'am. She is not going to get sick. Come, Barby'—the woman's voice showed impatience—'I'm in a hurry!'

'Barby,' said Mrs. Grayson, 'go up stairs for a little while. I will call you when we want you.'

Barbara hesitated, and looked at Mrs. Miller.

'Jane, take her up stairs.'

The cook had Barbara out of the room in a twinkling.

Mrs. Grayson fixed her eyes on Mrs. Miller steadily for some moments without speaking.

'I don't understand this, ma'am,' said the latter sharply.

'I wish to say a word or two about Barby that may as well not be said in her presence,' replied Mrs. Grayson. 'Taking the condition in which I found her a few weeks ago as the result of your way of treating the poor child, I cannot see that it will be altogether right for me to let her go back into the cruel bondage from which sickness has released her.'

Mrs. Miller's grey eyes flashed, while her cold, wrinkled face grew dark with anger. 'She's bound to me, and I'll have her, dead or alive!' she said fiercely.

'Bound only by a promise which you extorted from her by threats, and which you wickedly made her confirm by laying her hand upon the Bible.'

Mrs. Grayson spoke with severity.

'Who says so?' demanded the woman, confronting Mrs. Grayson with something of menace in her attitude.

'One who will not lie,' said Mrs. Grayson, steadily and bravely returning the almost threatening gaze that was fixed upon her. 'But we will not bandy fruitless words. Barby is not going back, Mrs. Miller. Even if she were bound by law, I would be a witness against you on the charge of cruel treatment, and have the indenture broken. And now I make you this simple proposition. In order to set the child's mind at rest, I will buy from you her services, on condition that you release her from the promises extorted by threats two years ago.'

'What will you pay me?' demanded the woman.

Mrs. Grayson drew out her purse, and taking from it a five-pound note, held it up between her fingers, saying, 'That.'

The woman shook her head.

'Very well, that or nothing.' Mrs. Grayson put the money back into her purse, and made a movement as if she were about to leave the kitchen.

'I want my girl!' said Mrs. Miller, almost savagely.

'Barby will never go back to your house!' There was a resoluteness in Mrs. Grayson's voice and manner which left no doubt as to her being in earnest. 'Your cruel abuse has cancelled all right to service from her on any plea. I have offered you five pounds as an inducement to release her from a promise she gave you under compulsion two years ago, and which weighs upon the child's mind. If you receive the money, well,—so much gain to you; if not, I will take measures to satisfy her that you broke faith by cruel treatment, thus setting her free.'

'If I must, I must,' said the woman, doggedly, at last. 'Give me the money.'

'Jane.' Mrs. Grayson spoke to the cook, who had returned. 'Bring Barby here.'

The little girl came in with Jane, looking paler, and showing plainly the signs of a strong mental conflict. It was clear that habitual self-control was giving way.

'Barby,' said Mrs. Grayson, 'you are not going back to Mrs. Miller's. She gives you up to me.'

There was no start, nor sudden lighting up of her face, nor marked expression of joy.

'Is it so, Mrs. Miller?' queried the lady.

'Yes,' growled rather than spoke the old hag, if we must call her so.

Barby sat down without speaking, covered her face with her hands, and remained as still as a statue.

'There!' Mrs. Grayson held out the note. The woman seized it eagerly, and left the house without a word.

'Barby,' said Mrs. Grayson, kindly.

But Barby did not stir.

'Barby!'

No response or movement.

'See, Jane! Quick!' exclaimed Mrs. Grayson, in an excited tone.

The cook sprang forward, and was just in time to catch Barby as she fell over from the chair on which she was sitting.

Long repressed excitement, followed by a sudden reaction, had proved too much for the feeble child, not yet recovered from a prostrating sickness. She had fainted.

'Is it really true, ma'am,' asked Barbara, looking

up at Mrs. Grayson, half an hour afterward, from the bed where they had laid her, 'that I am going to live with you? Or was I only in a dream?'

'It is true, Barby. Mrs. Miller has given you up to me.'

The child continued to look at Mrs. Grayson for some moments, with an expression of love and reverence on her face, as one might look at an angel. Then she kissed her hand, and turned away to hide the signs of feeling which she could not control.

Here is the story of 'little Barby's' introduction to this lady's family, where she had been living for ten years when the reader was introduced to her as a 'queer little body,' looking for all the world as if 'she had been copied from one of Punch's caricatures.'

Mrs. Grayson, with all her good sense and good feeling, had a vein of ambition as well as pride in her mental constitution, and these drew her into fashionable life and inspired her with social emulations. As Barbara gained in years, strength, and intelligence, her position in the household of Mrs. Grayson, as nurse to her children, became one of the highest responsibility. Her pure, deep love for these little olive plants, and her innate sense of right and duty, caused her, after the first strong emotions of gratitude began to subside, to give up her life to their good. The mother's fondness for society took

away largely from her interest in her children, and left them for the most part with Barbara, and subject to her influence. Homely as she was, to the verge of caricature, awkward in her movements, and with something that struck you on the first glance as ludicrous in her whole appearance and manner, these children had a respect and an affection for her which gilded over what was plain even to repulsion in the eyes of strangers, and made her seem to them almost beautiful.

Mrs. Grayson meant all that her words implied, when she said, 'I don't know what we should do without her.' And yet, with all her native kindness of heart and high estimate of Barbara's qualities, she was proving, in her way, almost as hard upon her as Mrs. Miller has been. Not cruel, exacting, unkind, and brutal, like the latter—compelling exhaustive labour by force and punishments—but so neglecting her own duties as to let more than a double share fall upon Barbara. In sickness and in health, this patient, loving, earnest girl was the untiring nurse and companion of the children—six in number at the time she first passed under the reader's notice. For her there were no days of release from the routine of care and duty. Cook, chamber-maid, and waiter, all had their afternoons, once a week, and their half-Sundays. But the children could never spare Barby. Nor had Barby any wish to be spared. An afternoon

to herself, weekly, or a half-Sunday, was not in all her thoughts. How could such a thought find entrance when the heart had no desire? What would the dear children, who so loved and depended on her, do, if she were away taking rest or seeking pleasure? No, no; there were no half-days nor holidays for Barby. The mother could make her daily round of calls, and have her daily ride for health and mental recreation, and the mother could spend evening after evening at opera, ball, or party, but Barby the nurse must never leave her precious charge. The mother could forget her sick child in the attractions of public and social life; but the patient, loving, devoted, conscientious nurse never for a single instant of time!

No wonder that Mrs. Grayson said, 'I don't know what we should do without Barby.'

But human flesh is not imperishable. The nerves and muscles are not wrought of iron. You may tax the mind and body too far. The student, enamoured of his books; the artist seeking to throw upon canvas or cut in marble the beautiful ideals that charm his imagination; the sterner mathematician, bending all the powers of his mind to the elucidation of propositions and theories; the ascetic thinker, seeking the way to heaven through a denial of nature's legitimate wants,—these, and other devotees, may destroy themselves, as to natural life, through a neglect of its

orderly demands, and thus become, in the eyes of the world, martyrs to art, science, or religion. And so may the humble nurse—thinking only of the children who need her care—waste her strength, and become a martyr to her undying love. But she will not get into the calendar of saints, for her life is hidden from public view. There is nothing about her that the world recognises as heroic.

So wasted the vital powers of 'little Barby,' under the exhausting, never-ceasing duties that fell to her lot. You rarely saw her without a baby in her arms; and few nights of unbroken sleep blessed her weary eyelids. If the children were sick, fretful, or restless, it was Barby, not the mother, who sat up through the dreary hours; and none thought to relieve her from duty on the next day, that Nature might have a chance to win back her departed strength. She never complained, never spoke of weariness, never told of the hundreds and hundreds of wakeful hours she passed, while all the household, except some sick or fretful little one, was sleeping.

'Have you noticed Barby's cough?' said the family physician, one day, to Mrs. Grayson.

'Not particularly. She has a slight cold, I believe,' replied Mrs. Grayson. Then observing that the doctor looked serious, she added:

'Why did you ask? Is there anything peculiar in her cough?'

'Yes; it isn't a common cough. You'd better see that she doesn't expose herself.'

'I thought she'd only taken a little cold,' remarked Mrs. Grayson. 'She's often up at nights with the children. Do you think she requires medicine, Doctor?'

'It is always best to take things in time,' the doctor replied.

'Shall I send for her?'

'Yes; I think it will be well for me to ask her a few questions.'

So Barby was sent for. She came down from the nursery with a great chubby baby in her arms, and two little ones holding to her dress.

'Barby,' said the lady, 'the doctor wants to ask you about your cough.'

'Me! My cough?'

She spoke in evident surprise.

'Yes, Barby,' said the doctor, kindly; 'I noticed to-day that you coughed frequently, and I thought I would ask you about it before I went away.'

'Oh, it's nothing,' replied Barbara; 'nothing at all; only a little tightness here'—laying her hand across her breast.

'How long has it been troubling you?'

'I've had it a good while.'

'And it grows worse?'

'Not much.'

'Have you a pain in your breast or side?'

'Yes, sir; always a little in my right side; but I don't mind it.'

'How do you sleep?'

'Sound enough, when I once fall asleep.'

'How soon do you get to sleep?'

'Never much before one or two o'clock.'

'How comes that, Barby?' queried the doctor.

'Willy frets a great deal in the first part of the night, and I have to be up and down with him.'

'But you sleep soundly after that?'

'Yes, sir; until about five o'clock, when little Georgy wakes.'

'And you get up then?'

'Not always. I can generally manage to keep him in bed. But the dear little fellow is fast asleep by seven o'clock in the evening, and it's no wonder he is awake bright and early. I often feel condemned because I don't get up with him; but I wake in such a sweat, and feel so weak, that I can't always force myself.'

'Wake in a sweat?'

'Yes, sir.'

'Always?'

'Always, now.'

'You never told me this, Barby,' said Mrs. Grayson, in some astonishment.

'I never thought of telling you, ma'am. It isn't anything to complain of,' replied Barbara.

'How long have you had these night-sweats?' asked the doctor.

'For two or three months.'

'That will do, Barby,' said he, in a kind tone of voice. 'I will send you some medicines. This cough and these night-sweats must be broken.'

The doctor and Mrs. Grayson looked at each other in silence, while Barby retired from the room.

'I am taken by surprise,' said Mrs. Grayson, seriously.

'Rather a bad state of things, madam,' responded the doctor, with gravity. 'That girl must be looked to, or she will slip away from you one of these fine days in a twinkling.'

'Not so bad as that, Doctor!'

'Yes, just as bad as that; so you'd better look to it that she dosen't lose quite so much rest. Nature won't bear up under the exhausting demands to which it has been subjected.'

Mrs. Grayson said that she would make some different disposition of things in order to give Barby more time for sleep. And the doctor went away, promising to send a package of medicine.

A new *prima donna*, with an unpronounceable name, was advertised to appear at the opera that very evening, and Mrs. Grayson was going to hear her. And so, naturally enough—or, we might say, unnaturally enough—she forgot, in thoughts of her

own pleasure, the pressing needs of her patient self-denying nurse. No different disposition of things, as promised, was made, by which Barby could get a few hours of refreshing sleep during the first part of the night. Not even a thought of her humble dependant found its way into Mrs. Grayson's mind until, on going to her chamber, between one and two o'clock in the morning, she heard Willy's fretful cries in the nursery, with interludes of coughing from Barby.

'There!' she said to herself, reproachfully; 'if I haven't forgotten that girl! I meant to have made some arrangement by which she could get more sleep. I must see to this without fail to-morrow.'

Quieting conscience with this good resolution, Mrs. Grayson retired, and soon lapsed into profound slumber, though Willy fretted on, and Barby coughed for an hour longer.

Attention having been called to Barby with so much seriousness by the doctor, Mrs. Grayson observed her closely on the next morning, and saw, with concern, what she might have seen at any time within the previous two or three months, if she had looked carefully, that her face was pale, her eyes dull, and her whole appearance that of languor and exhaustion.

'How do you feel, Barby?' she asked.

'Very well, ma'am,' was answered.

'Then your looks and words do not agree,' said Mrs. Grayson. 'How did you sleep?'

'Pretty well.'

'Did you cough through the night?'

'A little.'

'What time did Georgy wake up this morning?'

'About the usual time.'

'Say five o'clock?'

'Thereabouts, ma'am.'

'Did you have to get up with him?'

'Yes, ma'am. I don't think the dear little fellow was quite well.'

'How long were you up with him?'

'Off and on, until day.'

'What of the night-sweats you told the doctor about? Did you have them?'

'Yes, ma'am. I always have them.

'Well, this won't do, Barby,' said Mrs. Grayson. 'The doctor says you mustn't lose so much rest. I shall have to make some arrangement to relieve you of either Willy or Georgy at night. You must get more sleep, earlier or later.'

Barby did not reply. As she stood, with her eyes upon the floor, her name was called from the nursery.

'Yes, dear,' she answered, and hurried back to her charge.

So ended the interview. But the nurse was not forgotten. Several times through the day Mrs. Gray-

son thought of her, and turned over the ways and means of relieving her from the exhausting demands nightly made upon her strength. Difficulties naturally presented themselves. The children were used to Barby, and so much attached to her, that it was not probable either Willy or Georgy, the troublesome ones at night, would submit to being taken from her room.

The experiment was made on Willy, in order to give Barby a chance to gain sleep during the first part of the night. But he rebelled, of course; and, instead of fretting between sleep and wakefulness, screamed to the full capacity of his lungs. This was worse for Barby than the care of Willy; so, after enduring the baby's cries for half-an-hour, she could hold out no longer. Leaving her bed and throwing on a wrapper, she went to Mrs. Grayson's room, and took, almost by force, the screaming little one from her arms. No sooner were her tender, loving tones in his ears than Willy's cries changed to murmurs of delight, as he nestled his head down upon her bosom.

'Dear pet lamb! They sha'n't take him from his Barby!' And with these assuring words she ran back with the hushed child to the nursery, and laid him in his crib beside her bed.

So that experiment proved a failure, and was not attempted again. The next trial was with Georgy, the five o'clock boy. After he was asleep, he was removed to his mother's room. Mrs. Grayson did

not get home from a party until past one o'clock. It was two before she was lost in sleep. At five she was awakened by Georgy, who wanted to get up.

'Georgy can't get up now,' said the mother, half asleep and half awake.

'Barby! Where's Barby? I want Barby!' cried the child, in a voice that expressed both passion and surprise.

'Hush! be still. You can't go to Barby!'

But the mother might as well have spoken to the wind. Georgy only cried the louder.

'Do you hear, sir? Stop crying this instant!'

No impression.

'You Georgy!'

The tempest raged more fiercely.

'Stop this instant, or I'll punish you!'

The threat may not have been heard. It certainly was not heeded. Mrs. Grayson felt too uncomfortable, under the double annoyance of broken sleep and stunning cries, to be able to keep a very close rein on patience.

'Did you hear me?'

She had left her bed and gone over to the one occupied by Georgy.

'Hush this moment, sir! I won't have such goings on!'

Mrs. Grayson was unheeded. Patience could hold out no longer. The hand which she had uplifted in

threatening came down upon the rebel with a smarting stroke.

'Oh, no! Please, ma'am, don't do that!' And a hand caught her arm that was a second time upraised. It was the hand of Barbara.

'Please, don't!' pleaded the distressed nurse, who had left her bed and come to the door of Mrs. Grayson's chamber on the first sign of trouble. She had not stopped to throw on a wrapper, but, in her thin night-clothes, moist with the perspiration that made sleep a robber of strength instead of a sweet restorer, ran down stairs and along the cold passage to the chamber where the strife she dreaded had commenced.

'Go back to your room, Barby!' said Mrs. Grayson, with anger in her voice. 'How dare you interfere!'

'Barby! Barby! oh, Barby!' cried the child, in a voice of anguish. 'Take Georgy! Oh, take Georgy!'

Hurt by the tone and words of Mrs. Grayson, Barbara retired slowly toward the door; seeing which, the child stood up screaming after her wildly, and fluttering his little hands as if they were wings to bear him to his beloved nurse. The tender heart of Barbara was not proof against this appeal, and she returned with hesitating steps.

'Didn't I tell you to go to your room?' exclaimed Mrs. Grayson passionately.

'Yes, ma'am; but I can't go. Let me take Georgy, won't you, please?'

The voice of Barbara was low, imploring, and husky with feeling; her face pale and distressed.

'Barby! Barby! Take Georgy!'

The odds were against Mrs. Grayson, and she yielded. Georgy sprang into the arms of his nurse, who, with tear-covered face, bore him from the room.

'I think, ma'am,' said the chamber-maid, soon after breakfast, 'that you'd better go over and see Barby.'

'See Barby! Why? Is anything the matter with her?'

'She's in bed yet.'

'In bed!'

'Yes, ma'am. And I think she's very ill.'

Mrs. Grayson waited to hear no more, but went over quickly to the nursery, where she found Barbara in bed.

'Are you sick, Barby?' she asked, kindly, laying her hand upon the girl's forehead, which she found hot with fever.

'Yes, ma'am,' answered Barby, in a dull, half-unconscious manner.

'How long have you felt sick?'

'I had a chill this morning.'

'After you came from my room?'

'Yes, ma'am.'

'Have you any pain?'

'I feel so tight here, in my breast, that I can hardly breathe.'

'Is there pain as well as tightness?'

'When I take a long breath.'

And then Barby lay very still and heavy.

There was no mistaking the fact. Barby was seriously ill. Some little resistance was made by the children on attempting to remove them from her room; but they yielded when told by their mother, with a hushed, serious voice, and a sober countenance, that 'Poor Barby was sick,' and must be kept very quiet.

When the doctor, who was immediately called, saw the sick girl, his looks betrayed concern; and when questioned earnestly by Mrs. Grayson on leaving her room, he said that it was an attack of acute pneumonia.

'Then she is in danger?' said Mrs. Grayson, a pallor overspreading her face.

'In great danger, madam,' was the emphatic reply.

'What is to be done?' asked the lady, turning her hands within and around each other, like one in pain and bewilderment of mind.

'You must keep her perfectly quiet, and give the medicines I leave in the order prescribed,' said the doctor.

'Will you call in again to-day?'

'Yes. I will see her before night.'

'And you think her really in danger?'

Mrs. Grayson's voice betrayed great anxiety.

'No good can arise from concealing the fact, madam. Yes, the girl is in danger, as I have already told you.'

'Don't neglect her, Doctor!' Mrs. Grayson's voice choked. 'Oh, if we lose Barby, what will we do?'

True, true, kind-hearted, but not always considerate lady! what will you do without this humble, unattractive, unobtrusive little body, whose face, figure, and movements excite mirthfulness or ridicule in strangers? You have forgotten Barby in your fashionable pleasures—forgotten her with a cruel forgetfulness, through which have been sapped the very foundations of her life; and now, we fear, consideration has come too late. What will you do without Barby? Did you only think of yourself and your children in this extorted exclamation? Perhaps yea, perhaps nay. The human heart is very selfish —very.

'*I* will not neglect her, madam!'

Did the doctor mean anything by this emphasis of the pronoun? Doubtless, for he looked steadily at Mrs. Grayson until her eyes fell. He had not been in attendance for years in her family without comprehending the position and duties of Barby.

Reader, we will have no concealments with you—this sickness is unto death! Yes, even so!

A mysterious Providence.

Nothing of the kind! The burdens of Barby were too heavy for her, and she has fallen by the way; fallen to rise no more—fallen, just at the period when her heart was most in her duty, and those to whom she ministered most in need of her loving, patient care. Ah! if she had been rightly considered; if there had been for her, in the heart of Mrs. Grayson, a tithe of the regard in which Barby held her children, this sad martyrdom would not have taken place. But she did not mean to wrong Barby. None knew her better or valued her more. Did not Barby owe everything to her? See from what a life of cruel hardships she had rescued her. True—all true. Yet does this mend the wrong? Your house will burn down as surely from a thoughtless exposure to fire as through the torch of an incendiary. Destruction waits not to ask the why or the wherefore.

Day after day the fatal disease progressed with a steadiness and rapidity that set medical skill at defiance; and when at last it became apparent to all that the time of Barby's departure was at hand, a shadow of deep sorrow fell upon the household of Mrs. Grayson.

What would they all do without Barby? She

had grown into the whole economy of things; was a pillar in the goodly frame-work of that domestic temple; and how was she to be taken away without a loss of strength and symmetry?

But death waits not on human affairs. The feet of Barby were already bared for descent into the river whose opposite shore touches the land of immortal beauty; and in spite of skill, care, regret, and sorrow, the hour of her departure drew near, until it was at hand.

True to the last, Barby's thoughts dwelt always on the children; and she felt the disabilities of sickness as an evil only in the degree that it robbed them of the care she felt to be so needful to their comfort and happiness. If she heard Willy cry, or Georgy complain, she grew restless or troubled. Every day she had them brought to her bedside that she might look at them, and utter, were it ever so feebly, a word of love.

'Dear, dear! Won't I be well soon, Doctor? What will the children do?'

How many times was this said even after hope had failed in the physician's heart! At last the time came when concealment from Barbara of her real state was felt to be wrong, and the duty of communication devolved upon Mrs. Grayson.

'Barby!' she said, as she sat alone by her bedside, forcing herself to speak because she dared not

any longer keep silence. 'Barby!' She repeated the name with so much feeling that the sick girl lifted her dull eyes feebly to her face and looked at her earnestly. 'Barby, the doctor thinks you very ill.'

'Does he?' The tones were untroubled.

'Yes; and we all think you ill, Barby.'

'I know I'm very weak and sick, ma'am.' She sighed faintly.

'If you should never get well, Barby?'

'That is, if I should die.' There was no tremor in her feeble voice.

'Yes, Barby. Are you willing to go?'

'If God pleases.' She said this reverently, as her eyelids closed.

'And you are not afraid to die?'

The eyes of Barby opened quickly.

'No, ma'am,' she answered, with the simplicity of a child.

'You have a hope of heaven, Barby?' Mrs. Grayson tried to speak calmly, but her voice did not wholly conceal the flutter in her heart.

'Children go to heaven?'

'Yes.'

'I love children.'

She said no more. That was her answer. After a pause Mrs. Grayson said:

'The doctor thinks you will not get well.'

'As God wills it,' was her calm response.

'You have done your duty, Barby.'

'I have tried to, ma'am, and prayed God to forgive me when I failed.'

'You have read your Bible often?'

'Every day.' A light gleamed over her countenance.

'You loved to read that good book?' said Mrs. Grayson.

'Oh yes. I always felt as if God's angels were near me when I read the Bible. Will you read me a chapter now? I haven't heard even a verse since I was sick.'

Mrs. Grayson took from a table Barby's well-worn Bible, and read, with as firm a voice as she could command, one of the Psalms of David. She did not attempt to make a selection, but opened the book and read the first chapter on which her eyes rested. It was the twenty-third.

'The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall

follow me all the days of my life : and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever.'

Mrs. Grayson shut the book and looked at Barby. There was light all over her wasted countenance, and her dull eyes had found a new lustre.

'It is God's word,' said the sick girl, smiling as she spoke ; 'and I always feel when it is read as though he was near by and speaking to me.'

She closed her eyes again, and for a little while lay very still. Then her lips moved, and Mrs. Grayson bent low to catch the murmur of sound that floated out upon the air.

'Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil ; for thou art with me.'

All was still again. Mrs. Grayson felt as she had never felt before. It seemed to her as if she were not alone with Barby, and she turned, under the strong impression, to see who had entered the room. But not to mortal eyes were any forms visible. And yet, the impression not only remained but grew stronger, and with it came a sense of deep peace that lay upon her soul like a benediction from heaven. All things of natural life receded from her thought, taking with them their burden of care, anxiety, and grief.

In this state of mind she sat for many minutes like one entranced, looking at the face of Barby, which actually seemed to grow beautiful. Then

there came a gradual awakening. The consciousness of other presences grew feebler and feebler, until Mrs. Grayson felt that she was alone with Barby. No! Barby had gone with the angels who came to bear her upward. Only the wasted and useless body was left behind, never more to enshrine in its rough casket that spirit of celestial beauty.

'Is it over?' said the doctor, who called on the next day to see his patient.

'Yes, it is over,' replied Mrs. Grayson, tears of true sorrow filling her eyes.

'How and when did she die?'

Mrs. Grayson told the simple but moving story of Barby's departure.

'And went right up to heaven!' said the doctor, turning his face partly away to hide the signs of feeling. Then he added: 'I must take a last look at Barby.'

And they moved to the room where her body, all ready for burial, was laid. On the wall of this room hung a likeness of the nurse, surrounded by the children to whom her life had been devoted with such loving care. It was a most faithful likeness, giving all her living expression—for the sun had done the work of portraiture. After looking at the soulless face of the departed one for a few moments, the doctor turned to the almost speaking portrait, and gazed at it for some time. Then taking a pencil

from his pocket, he wrote these two words in a bold hand on the white margin below the picture :—

'SAINT BARBARA.'

And turning away, left the apartment without a word.

In Mrs. Grayson's nursery, richly framed, hangs this picture of 'SAINT BARBARA;' and the children stand and look at it every day, and talk of her in hushed tones, almost reverently. Of her it may with truth be written, 'Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord. Yea, saith the Spirit, for they rest from their labours, and their works do follow them.' Though absent in body, she is yet present in spirit, by thought and love, with the children she so tenderly cared for while in the flesh, and her influence is ever leading to good states, and prompting to right actions.

Blessed Saint Barbara! The world knows you not, and the Church has failed to enroll you in the calendar of her worthies. But you are canonized for all that; and your memory is sacred in the hearts of children. Blessed Saint Barbara! If our dim eyes could penetrate the veil, we should see you clothed in immortal beauty!

'FOR FATHER'S HONOUR.'

SO much gone! I might have known how it would be!' said Mr. Sterling, looking up from the morning paper, with a most unpleasant expression in his face.

'What is gone?' asked his wife.

'My money is gone,' answered Mr. Sterling, fretfully.

'What money?'

'The money I was foolish enough to lend Mr. Granger.'

'Why do you say that?'

'He's dead,' replied Mr. Sterling, coldly.

'Dead!' The wife's voice was full of surprise and pain. Sorrow overshadowed her face.

'Yes, gone, and my money with him. Here's a notice of his death. I was sure when I saw him go away that he'd never come back, except in his coffin. Why will doctors send their patients from home to die?'

'Poor Mrs. Granger! Poor little orphans!' sighed Mrs. Sterling. 'What will they do?'

'As well without him as with him,' was the unfeeling answer of her husband, who was only thinking of the fifty pounds he had been over-persuaded to loan the sick clergyman, in order that he might go south during the winter. 'He's been more of a burden than a support to them these two years.'

'Oh, Harvey! How can you speak so?' remonstrated Mrs. Sterling. 'A kinder man in his family was never seen. Poor Mrs. Granger! She will be heart-broken.'

'Kindness is cheap and easily dispensed,' coldly replied Mr. Sterling. 'He would have been of more use to his family if he had fed and clothed them better. I reckon they can do without him. If I had my fifty pounds again, I wouldn't—'

But he checked for shame—not from any better feeling—the almost brutal words his heart sent up to his tongue.

Not many hundred yards away from Mr. Sterling's handsome residence stood a small, plain cottage, with a garden in front neatly laid out in box-bordered walks, and filled with shrubbery. A honeysuckle, twined with a running rose-bush, covered the latticed portico, and looked in at the chamber windows, giving beauty and sweetness. The hand of taste was seen everywhere; not lavish, but discriminating taste. Two

years before there was not a happier home than this in all the pleasant town of C——. Now the shadow of death was upon it.

'Poor Mrs. Granger! Poor little orphans!' Well might Mrs. Sterling pity them. While her mercenary husband was sighing over the loss of the paltry money, the young widow lay senseless with her two little ones weeping over her in childish terror. The news of death found her unprepared. Only a week before she had received a letter from Mr. Granger, in which he talked hopefully of his recovery. 'I am stronger,' he wrote. 'My appetite is better; I have gained five pounds in flesh since I left home.' Three days after writing this letter there came a sudden change of temperature; he took cold, which was followed by congestion of the lungs; and no medical skill was sufficient for the case. The body was not sent home for interment. When the husband and father went away, two or three months before, his loved ones looked upon his face for the last time in this world.

Love and honour make the heart strong. Mrs. Granger was a gentle, retiring woman. She had leaned upon her husband very heavily; she had clung to him as a vine. Those who knew her best, felt most anxious about her. 'She has no mental stamina,' they said. 'She cannot stand alone.'

But they were mistaken. As we have just said

love and honour make the heart strong. Only a week after Mr. Sterling read the news of the young minister's death he received a note from the widow.

'My husband,' she said, 'was able to go south in the hope of regaining his health through your kindness. If he had lived, the money you loaned him would have been faithfully returned, for he was a man of honour. Dying, he left that honour in my keeping, and I will see that the debt is paid. But you will have to be a little patient with me.'

'All very fine,' muttered Mr. Sterling, with a slightly curling lip. 'I've heard of such things before. They sound well. People will say of Mrs. Granger, "What a noble woman! What a fine sense of honour she has!" But I shall never see the fifty pounds which I was foolish enough to lend her husband.'

Very much to Mr. Sterling's surprise, and not a little to his pleasure, he discovered about three months afterwards, that he was mistaken in his estimate of Mrs. Granger. The pale, sad, fragile little woman brought him the sum of five pounds. He did not see the tears in her eyes as he displayed her husband's note, with its dear familiar writing, and made thereon, with considerable formality, an endorsement of the sum paid. She would have given many drops of her heart's blood to have been able to clutch that document from Mr. Sterling's hands. His possession of it seemed like a blot on the dear lost one's memory.

'Katie Granger is the queerest little girl I ever knew,' said Flora Sterling to her mother, on the evening of the very day on which this first payment was made. Mr. Sterling heard the remark, and letting his eyes drop from the newspaper he was reading, turned his ears to listen.

'I think her a very nice little girl,' replied the mother.

'So she is nice,' returned the child; 'but then she is so queer.'

'What do you mean by queer?'

'Oh, she isn't like the rest of us girls. She said the oddest thing to-day. I almost laughed out; but I'm glad I didn't. Three of us—Katie, Lillie Bonfield, and I—were walking round the square at recess time, when Uncle John came along, and taking out three bright penny pieces, he said, "Here's a penny for each of you, girls, to buy sugar-plums." Lillie and I screamed out, and were starting away to buy them in an instant; but Katie stood still with her share of the money in her hand. "Come along!" I cried. She didn't move, but looked strange and serious. "Aren't you going to buy candy with it?" I asked. Then she shook her head gravely, and put the penny in her pocket, saying (I don't think she meant me to hear the words), "It's for father's honour;" and leaving us, went back to the schoolroom. What did she mean by that, mother? Oh, she is so strange!'

'Her mother is very poor, you know,' replied Mrs. Sterling, laying up Katie's singular remark to be pondered over.

'She must be,' said Flora, 'for Katie has worn the same frock at school every day for a long, long time.'

Mr. Sterling, who did not let a word of this conversation escape him, was far from feeling as comfortable under the prospect of getting back the money he had advanced to Mr. Granger as he had felt an hour before. *He* understood the meaning of Katie's remark, 'It's for father's honour,' the truth flashing at once through his mind.

There was another period of three months, and then Mrs. Granger called again upon Mr. Sterling, and gave him five pounds more. The pale, thin face made a stronger impression on him. It troubled him to lift the coins that her small fingers, in which the blue veins shone through the transparent skin, had counted out. He wished that she had sent the money, instead of calling. It was on his lips to remark, 'Don't trouble or pinch yourself to pay faster than is convenient, Mrs. Granger;' but cupidity whispered that she might take too large an advantage of his considerate kindness, and so he kept silent.

'No, dear, it's for father's honour; I can't spend it.'

Mr. Sterling was passing a fruit-shop, where two children were looking in at the window, when this sentence struck upon his ears.

'An apple won't cost but a penny, Katie; and I want one so badly,' answered the younger of the two children, a little girl not five years of age.

'Come away, Maggie,' said the other, drawing her sister back from the window. 'Don't look at them any more—don't think about them.'

'But I can't help thinking about them, sister Katie,' pleaded the child.

It was more than Mr. Sterling could stand. Every want of his own children was supplied. He bought fruit by the barrel. And here was a little child pleading for an apple, which cost only a penny! but the apple was denied, because the penny must be saved to make good the dead father's honour. Who held that honour in pledge? Who took the sum total of these pennies, saved in the self-denial of little children, and added them to his already brimming coffers? A feeling of shame burned the cheeks of Mr. Sterling.

'Here, little ones!' he called, as the two children went slowly away from the fruit-shop window. He was touched with the sober look on their sweet young faces as they turned at his invitation.

'Come in, and I'll get you some apples,' he said.

Katie held back, but Maggie drew on her hand, eager to accept the offer, for she was longing for the fruit.

'Come!' repeated Mr. Sterling, speaking very kindly.

The children then followed him into the shop, and he filled their aprons with apples and oranges. Their thankful eyes and happy faces were in his memory all day. This was his reward, and he found it sweet.

Three months more, and again Mr. Sterling had a visit from the pale young widow. This time she had only four pounds. It was all she had been able to save, she said; but she made no excuse, and uttered no complaint. Mr. Sterling took the money, and counted it over in a hesitating way. The touch thereof was pleasant to his fingers, for he loved money. But the vision of sober child-faces was before his eyes, and the sound of pleading child-voices in his ears. Through over-taxing toil, and the denial of herself and little ones, the poor widow had gathered this small sum, and was now paying it into his hands, to make good the honourable contract of her dead husband. He hesitated, ruffling in a half absent way the edges of the little pile of bills that lay under his fingers. One thing was clear to him: he would never take anything more from the widow. The balance of the debt must be forgiven. People would get to understand the widow's case; they would hear of her self-denial and that of her children in order to pay the husband's and father's debt—in

order to keep pure his honour; and they would ask, naturally, who was the exacting creditor? This thought affected him unpleasantly.

Slowly, as one in whose mind debate still went on, Mr. Sterling took from his desk a large pocket-book, and selected from one of the compartments the note on which Mrs. Granger had now made three payments. For some moments he held it in his hands, looking at the face thereof. He saw written down in clear figures, the sum, Fifty Pounds. Fourteen of this had been paid. If he gave up or destroyed the slip of paper, he would lose thirty-six pounds. It was a severe trial for one who loved money so well, to come up courageously to this issue. Something fell in between his eyes and the note of hand. He did not see the writing and figures of the obligation, but a sad, pleading little face; and with the vision of this face came to his ears the sentence: 'No, dear; it's for father's honour.'

The debate in Mr. Sterling's mind was over. Taking up a pen, he wrote across the face of Mr. Granger's note the word 'Cancelled,' and then handed it to the widow.

'What does this mean?' she asked, looking bewildered.

'It means,' said Mr. Sterling, 'that I hold no obligations against your husband.'

Some moments went by ere Mrs. Granger's thoughts

became clear enough to comprehend it all. Then she replied, as she reached back the note :

'I thank you for your generous kindness, but he left his honour in my keeping, and I must maintain it spotless.'

'That you have already done,' answered Mr. Sterling, speaking through emotions that were new to him. '*It is white as snow !*'

Then he thrust back upon her the four pounds she had just paid him.

'No, Mr Sterling,' the widow said.

'It shall be as I will !' was the response. 'I would rather touch fire than your money. Every shilling would burn upon my conscience like living coals !'

'But keep this last payment,' urged the widow. 'I shall feel better.'

'No, madam ! Would you throw fire upon my conscience ? Your husband's honour never had a stain. All men knew him to be pure and upright. When God took him, he assumed his earthly debts, and did not leave upon you the heavy burden of their payment. But he left with you another and most sacred obligation, which you have overlooked in part.'

'What ?' asked the widow, in an almost startled voice.

'To minister to the wants of your children ; whom you have pinched and denied in their tender years—

giving of their meat to cancel an obligation which death had paid. And you have made me a party in the wrong to them. Ah, madam!'—Mr. Sterling's voice softened very much—'if we could all see right at the right time, and do right at the right time, how much of wrong and suffering might be saved! I honour your true-hearted self-devotion; but I shall be no party to its continuance. As it is, I am your debtor in the sum of ten pounds, and will repay it in my own way and time.'

Mr. Sterling made good his word. Under Providence, this circumstance was the means of breaking through the hard crust of selfishness and cupidity which had formed around his heart. He was not only generous to the widow in after years, but a doer of many deeds of kindness and humanity to which he had been in other times a stranger.

GUILTY, OR NOT GUILTY.

WE had not been drawn by the Sheriff—were not legally a Jury: there had been no formal submission of a case for our decision. But we were a tribunal for all that, and had a neighbour on trial. He was not present, of course: before such tribunals the accused is never summoned to appear, either in person or by counsel. He is tried and condemned, or acquitted, without a hearing.

The case under consideration was a serious one, involving the crime of wife-murder. A woman, beloved of all who knew her, had slowly faded and wasted in our eyes, until, like a withered autumn-leaf, she had dropped upon the river of death, and floated from our sight. Her husband had exhibited an almost unmanly sorrow at the grave; and so drawn toward himself a more than usual degree of observation. We were talking sadly of our departed friend—

of her virtues, her graces, her sweetness of temper, her devotion to all duties, and patient self-denial, when one referred to her husband, saying:

'I do not wonder that his heart was nearly broken. I shall never forget that burial scene as long as I live.'

To this there came an impatient reply:

'It was all a sham!'

There followed startled looks, and a rapid exchange of meaning glances. The last speaker added:

'Or, if the emotion were real, it sprang from remorse, not sorrow.'

Immediately the jury were formed, involuntarily and without regard to the legal number. Witnesses came, unsummoned, to the court.

'It is a clear case of wife-murder,' said one, speaking out boldly. 'I knew Mary Green well. We were friends at school. I was her bridemaid, and have been intimate with her ever since her marriage; and my testimony is, that if her husband had treated her with considerate kindness, she would have been alive to-day. But he was selfish, exacting, mean, and unsympathizing. He not only permitted her to take up burdens too heavy for her strength, but cruelly added to these burdens; and when, weary to faintness, she stumbled by the way, or uttered a complaint, he gave her frowns instead of smiles. I know! I have seen it all; and I bear my testimony against

him. For years she has been fading and failing; yet he gave her no respite. She was simply the slave of his convenience; and he exacted service to the last.'

'Mr. Green is an honourable and a just man,' spoke out a witness in his favour, as this accuser ceased. 'I have had good opportunities of knowing him—have seen his integrity put to trial.'

'Have you seen him in his home?' was queried.

'No.'

'It is of his home-life that we are speaking.'

A pause followed.

'A man,' continued the last speaker, 'may be upright in his dealings with men; may be just to the uttermost farthing; may not depart from integrity when sorely tempted—and yet be a miserable tyrant at home. Now, I have observed Mr. Green in his family, and can testify that he was not a considerate and loving husband—that his conduct towards his wife was bad.'

'In what respect?' queried one. 'Was he ill-natured?—passionate?—abusive?—neglectful? How was his conduct bad?'

'He was neglectful, for one thing,' answered the other. 'Now, every true woman knows that neglect and indifference are, in certain cases, as sure to destroy life as a slowly working poison.'

'Did he neglect her? I never imagined that.'

'Not as some men neglect their wives. There was nothing of that coarse, brutal indifference that we sometimes see; but still neglect. She was too much out of his thought. He treated her as if she were of no account beyond the sphere of household and maternal duty; as if she were only a useful piece of machinery, working for his comfort—feeling nothing, and desiring nothing. Did you ever see them together at a place of public amusement?'

None answered in the affirmative.

'I have seen him often at the theatre and opera, but rarely in company with his wife. He did not go alone. He was always in attendance on some lady; usually a relative or friend visiting in his family.'

'I can speak to the point on that head,' remarked another, coming in with her testimony, and manifesting considerable warmth of feeling. 'I have spent days at a time with Mrs. Green. We were friends of long standing; and I loved her dearly. It was just as you have heard. Mr. Green never seemed to imagine that his wife needed change, recreation, and amusement, like other people. Once, while I was in the family, the wife of Mr Green's cousin made them a visit. She was a handsome, lively, companionable woman, who had left three children and a husband at home to the care of domestics, while she enjoyed herself for a few weeks at the east. Mr. Green gave

up all his leisure to her entertainment. He drove her out to see the notable places in and around the city, and took her to the opera or the theatre as often as two or three times in the week.'

'"Won't Mrs. Green go with us?" inquired the cousin, when the first drive out was proposed.

'"Oh, no, you needn't ask her. She never goes anywhere," replied Mr. Green, before his wife had time to answer.'

'I looked at Mrs. Green. She smiled faintly, and said, in her quiet, patient way: "I'm very much occupied this afternoon."

'"She's always occupied," remarked Mr. Green. I did not make out whether he meant apology or sarcasm. But there was no mistaking the indifference of his manner. I looked from the fresh, healthy countenance and bright eyes of the cousin, to the thin, pale face and languid eyes of his wife, and my heart grew angry. For her, change, fresh air, and the exhilaration of a ride, were as necessary to health and life as food; and he had not even asked her to accompany them: nay, when the cousin inquired if she were not going, he had been in haste to answer for her in the negative.

'I did not ride out with Mr. Green and his cousin, though the compliment of an invitation was extended. Mrs. Green put on a faint show of satisfaction at the enjoyment her relative was to have; but after they

were gone, I saw tears in her eyes, and noticed a change in her manner. Her face was paler, and there was an expression about her mouth that I did not clearly understand; but it was indicative of mental pain.

'"Are you not well?" I asked. She had laid her head down suddenly on a small work-table by which she was sewing. She did not answer immediately. When she did reply, I perceived that her voice was disturbed:

'"My head aches badly."

'"How long has it been aching?" I inquired.

'"For half an hour or so."

'"You should have ridden out," I said. But she made no response. A little while afterward I saw her shiver. Putting one of my hands on hers, I was chilled by its coldness. The touch made her shiver again. She was in a nervous chill. Through a little persuasion, I got her into bed, and put hot water to her feet. In the course of half an hour she was better; but the headache remained.

'Mr. Green and the cousin came back from their ride with every evidence of having enjoyed themselves. Both were in high spirits. I wondered, as I looked at the cousin's bright, healthy face, and then at Mrs. Green's shadowy countenance—so pale and thin—if her husband did not take note of the difference—if there was no tenderness and compassion

in his heart—if he did not see that she was drifting away from him——'

'Pushed away, rather!' spoke out one of the company sharply. 'Pushed out upon the river of death, as a boat is thrust from the shore!'

'I accept your better figure of speech,' said the other. 'Yes, the hand that should have held her to the shore thrust her out upon the dark river, and we who loved her have lost her.'

'May it not have been her own fault?' was now suggested. 'You know some women bury themselves amid their household and motherly cares, and resist all their husbands' efforts to draw them out into society. They shut themselves away from the bright sun, and fresh, health-giving air—away from social and public life—and droop and fade, self-immolated, in their homes. A husband is not responsible, and should not be blamed for this.'

'If our sweet friend who has left us'—such was the reply—'had possessed a colder heart, and been less loyal to duty, she might have been alive to-day. But she had a mind of exceedingly delicate organization, and was hurt by touches that would have fallen lightly as a feather upon most hearts. Mr. Green ought to have known this. She was his wife—a true, devoted, faithful wife. If she was so buried in home duties that she failed for lack of sunshine and air, the fault was his. Mr. Green is a close man, as we say—a

saving, money-loving man. He was liberal to himself, but never to his wife. If expenditure was for his appetite, pleasure, or convenience, there was no stint; if for his wife, or general household use, he doled it out with a niggardly hand. He was perpetually descanting on the waste of servants, the cost of living, the ruinous increase of price in everything. The consequence was, that Mrs. Green, who felt that his homilies were for her ears, and meant as a rebuke to what he considered her extravagances, kept for most of the time but one servant, though she had little children, and was always worked beyond her strength. She had neither time nor heart to go out. A domestic slave—a household drudge—an imprisoned nurse—with a husband for master and driver; and she a woman of the finest mental organization, and a heart thirsting for love, and that tender consideration so sweet to the soul: is it any wonder that she died? I marvel, knowing her as I did, that she lived so long.'

Other evidence bearing on the case was given, all going to show that Mr. Green, through years of petty home exactions, indifference, and neglect, had been the cause of his wife's early death. Daily he saw her bearing burdens beyond a woman's strength; daily her cheeks grew whiter. Her flesh wasted, her eyes became heavier, her steps feebler, her lips and voice sadder; and yet the cruel tyrant never relented, never

relaxed, until the silver cord was loosened, and the golden bowl broken at the fountain !

The testimony, given in some cases with a painful detail of circumstances, was overwhelming; and the verdict, rendered without a dissenting voice, was 'Guilty.' That is, guilty of wife-murder.

So far as the evidence is before the reader, he can make his own decision, and say Guilty or Not Guilty, according to his estimate of the case. If he be a husband with a pale-faced, stay-at-home, over-worked wife, he will find, in what we have recorded, a hint for his future government, that, if observed, may put off for many years the day of sorrow and bereavement.

SAD EYES.

THE face was fair; the lips soft and ruby; the cheeks warm with summer flushes; but the large, brown eyes were sad. It was not a painful, but a tender sadness, that lay like a thin veil over their brightness. You hardly noticed it at first; but the shadow in Mrs. Percival's eyes grew more and more apparent, the oftener you looked into them. They were full of light when she spoke—dancing, rippling light; but this faded out with a quickness that half surprised you, making the shadow that came after it the more noticeable.

'What can it mean?' said one friend to another. They were speaking of Mrs. Percival and her sad eyes. 'Is that peculiar look hereditary—a mere transmitted impression of the soul upon the body—or is it the sign of an inward state? Do you know anything of her early history?'

'Something.'

'Is she happy in her marriage?'

'I am afraid not.'

'Then it must be her own fault,' was answered.

'Perhaps it is.'

'Every one speaks well of Mr. Percival. I have seen a great deal of him, and hold him in very high regard.'

'In no higher regard than he is held by his wife, who knows, better than any one else can know, his worth as a man.'

'And yet you said just now that you did not think her married life a happy one.'

'There is a shadow upon it. As the wife of Mr. Percival, she is not, I fear, in her true place.'

'Are you serious in this?'

'Entirely so.'

'While to me it seems that she is just in her true place. Both are well educated, social, and attractive; and both seem governed by high moral principles; and both have noble aims in life. Their deportment towards each other, so far as I have noticed it, is uniformly kind; and I have observed the reciprocation of little attentions while in company, not usual among married partners. They are superior to most of those around us, and, as I read them, eminently fitted for each other.'

To this it was replied:

'The very elevation of character to which you refer makes this union the more inharmonious—the lack of fitness the more fatally apparent. Lower natures may feed on husks, but these cannot; may be satisfied with a compact that secures external good, but these must have interior likeness.'

'Which does not, as you believe, exist in the case of Mr. and Mrs. Percival.'

'I am very sure it does not. Hence the sad eyes that look out into the world so hopelessly.'

This was said of Mr. and Mrs. Percival. Let us go back a few years, and come near them in the time when this union was formed. There had been too great an ardour of pursuit on the side of Mr. Percival. The beautiful girl who flashed across his way so dazzled him by her mental and personal charms, that he resolved to secure her hand, no matter what difficulties might intervene. And he soon found an obstruction in the way. An artist named Liston, a young man of genius, but modest and shrinking, as such men usually are, had already been attracted by this lovely girl; and she was meeting his slow and timid approaches with such tender invitations as maiden delicacy would permit. The more she saw of him, the more he charmed her. He was so different from other young men, into whose society she was thrown; so unworldly; so single of heart; so noble in all the aspirations to

which he gave utterance. In her eyes, he seemed to stand apart from the world; to be of another quality—more refined, more intellectual, purer. She loved him, so far as she dared give liberty to her feelings, seeing that he held himself at a further distance from her than some ventured to approach. In him, the faint ideal of her soul's companion stood forth embodied. When he drew near, she moved instinctively to meet him, the pulses of her interior life beating quicker and stronger. When he stood afar off, it seemed as if a thin veil of shadow had fallen around her.

The quick eyes of Henry Percival soon discovered the truth. He saw that the maiden was deeply interested in the young artist, and also that Liston worshipped her at a distance, fearing to approach, lest the beautiful star in whose light his soul found light should veil itself as a rebuke to his advances. And seeing this, he resolved to press in boldly, to win the maiden for himself; to carry off the prize another was reaching out to grasp. Percival had been more in the world than Liston, possessed a more cultivated exterior, understood men and things better, was more self-confident. Whatever he undertook to do, he strained every nerve to accomplish. Difficulties only stimulated new effort. From a boy up he had moved steadily to the accomplishment of his ends, with a vigour and persistence that usually brought success.

'She shall be mine!' So he declared, in his heart, though he fully understood the relation which Liston and the maiden bore to each other; so he resolved, when he knew that love had grown up between them, and that she was to the young artist as the very apple of his eye.

It happened in this case as it happens in many others. As the bold lover advanced, the less confident one retired. Percival drew very near, draping himself in sunshine; while Liston stood afar off, in shadow, looking from his dim obscurity with sad eyes upon the only being he had met who embodied his ideal of a woman. If he had drawn near, if he had given the maiden clearly intelligible signs of what was in his heart, Percival would have sought her hand in vain. But she seemed in his eyes so pure and noble, so elevated above common mortals, and himself of such little worth, that he dared not approach and enter the lists as an openly declared suitor. The ardour of Percival had no abatement. He pressed his case with an impetuosity that bore down all obstructions, almost extorting from the doubting and bewildered girl a promise to become his wife. If Liston had not shown apparent indifference—had not held himself aloof—this promise, repented of almost as soon as made, would never have been given. Had she known that her image was in his heart, treasured and precious, Percival's

suit would have been idle. But she did not know, and in her blindness she went astray, losing herself in a labyrinth from which she never escaped.

The effect on Liston, when it was known that Percival and the maiden he so worshipped were engaged, was very sad. He lost, for a time, all heart in his work—all interest in life. An intimate friend, who knew of his attachment, and understood the meaning of his altered state, divulged the secret; and so it became public property, finding its way to the maiden's ears.

'Do you know,' said a gay friend, 'that you are charged with a serious crime?'

'I have not heard of the accusation. What is the crime?' she answered, smiling.

'The crime of breaking a heart.'

'Ah! whose heart?' There was a change in the expression of her face; the smile dying out.

'Liston's.'

'Why do you say that?' she asked, catching her breath, and showing pallor of countenance.

'Oh, haven't you heard anything about it? Why, it's the talk all around. He was dead in love with you, it seems, but hadn't the courage to say so; proving the truth of the old adage, that "faint heart never won fair lady." And now he's moping about, and looking so wo-begone, that everybody is pitying him.'

'I'm sorry that he should have pain on my account,' was answered, with as much indifference as could be assumed. 'Not a very serious case, I imagine.'

'Oh, but it is; he fairly worshipped you,' replied the friend. 'Do you know that an asylum is talked of?'

'Don't, don't say anything more, if you please! It's all gossip and exaggeration, of course; but still of a kind I must not hear. You forget that I am to be married in a few weeks.'

The laughing light went out of the gay friend's countenance; for she saw more than she expected to see.

A few weeks passed, and the wedding night arrived, when the pale-faced maiden, true to her promise, but false to her heart, took up the burden of wifehood, staggering under the weight as it came down upon her shoulders. The young husband, when he kissed her almost colourless lips, and, gazing into her pure face, said, 'Mine!' looked into sad eyes, and felt that his ardent word but half expressed the truth—that she was not, and never could be, all his own. He too had heard of Liston's attachment, and of the effect produced on him when the fact of the engagement became public, and something more than a feeling of triumph found its way into his heart. There was at first a vague sense of

uneasiness, followed by doubts and questionings. Smarting suspicion crept in. He became keen-eyed. But all he discovered was a thin veil drooping down over the countenance of his betrothed, and diminishing the splendours of its sunshine. In his eagerness to grasp the angel whose beauty had fascinated his gaze, he had rubbed a portion of lustre from her wings.

But she had taken her place by his side; and no allurement could have drawn her thence, though she walked in perpetual shadow, and though sharp stones cut her feet at every step. She was too strong in purity and truth, to waver from the line of duty. The path might be difficult, but she would not turn aside, even though she failed. She had the courage to die, but not to waver.

'Mine!' said Percival, when his kisses were laid on the almost irresponsive lips of his bride; and even as he said it, away down in his innermost convictions, another voice answered: 'Not mine!'

So their wedded life began. It took nearly a year for Liston, the artist, to recover from his disappointment. A few times during this period he met Mrs. Percival, and read in her inward-looking eyes that she was not a happy wife; and more than this he read, penetrating by quick-sighted perception the veil in which she had enveloped herself. After this period he was master of his soul again, and dwelt in

his heart. But all who met him noticed, and many spoke of, a subdued sadness in his eyes. Years passed, and though he went into society, Mr. Liston did not marry. As an artist, he rose steadily, and some of his works attracted much attention. Among them was a personification of 'Hope,' in the single figure of a woman exquisitely beautiful, yet showing in every feature of the tenderly pure face, trial and triumph.

'Have you seen Mr. Liston's "Hope," at the Academy?' asked a friend, addressing Mrs. Percival, a few days after the painting had been placed on exhibition.

'Not yet,' was answered.

'You must see it. Every one is charmed. And, do you know, it bears a remarkable likeness to yourself? I've heard several persons speak of this. By the way, is it a compliment or an accident? It is said that he is one of your old admirers.'

The friend laughed, and in laughing, so dimmed her own vision, that she did not see the strange, startled look, that came for an unguarded moment into Mrs. Percival's eyes.

In company with her husband, Mrs. Percival went to see the 'Hope' of Mr. Liston. Something in the ideal figure held her as by fascination. Mr. Percival recognised the likeness, and with a sense of uneasiness. Many times he turned his eyes from the

painting to the countenance of his wife. Its expression was not satisfactory. There was more in it than admiration for a fine picture. From the painting he saw her once turn half round, suddenly, as if spoken to; but no voice had reached his ear. He turned also in the same direction, and looked into the artist's face, but did not encounter his eyes, for they were resting on his wife.

The act of Mrs. Percival was but momentary. She turned again to the picture, at the same time placing her hand on the arm of her husband, and, by a movement, intimating her wish to leave that part of the gallery. Mr. Percival did not fail to observe that his wife's interest in the Exhibition was from this time partial and forced.

'Are you not well?' he asked, in his usual kind but half-constrained manner.

'My head is aching,' she answered, forcing a smile.

'Shall we go home?'

'If you have stayed long enough,' was replied.

And so they went away, not again venturing to look at Mr. Liston's 'Hope,' and not again visiting the Academy while it was there.

The eyes of Mrs. Percival were just a little sadder after this, and so were the artist's eyes; and the heart of Mr. Percival was just a little heavier. But all three were pure enough, true enough, and strong enough to bear the burdens this great error had laid

upon them, though in bearing there was pain that made life wearisome.

Alas for these sad eyes! See well to it, maiden, that in accepting some boldly wooing lover, you do not, like Mrs. Percival, commit one of life's saddest errors, and so look out with dreary eyes upon the world through all your coming years.

And see to it, over-ardent young man, that in the eagerness of pursuit you do not make captive one who can never be wholly your own. See to it that you do not rob another of the good designed for him, and at the same time rob yourself of the highest blessing in life. The soul-lit eyes that so charm to-day, may haunt you with accusation through all the coming years; the face so bright and beautiful, wear a perpetual veil of shadows. In the name of all that the heart holds sacred, beware of an error here!

LITTLE MARTYRS.

A NEW 'Book of Martyrs' is yet to be written, and one that will appeal as strongly to human sympathy as the terrible record of suffering made by Fox. It will not exhibit the writhing victim of cruel bigotry in the midst of consuming fire, broken on the wheel, or tortured by the rack; nor take the reader a long journey into the middle ages of darkness and superstition, where all things lie in a kind of dreamy indistinctness. It will be a book of the present time, and record the sufferings of children—not of men and women—of children in homes of luxury, as well as in homes of penury; children of Christian parents, as well as children of the vile and the vicious. If faithfully written, it will exhibit an aspect of human life quite as painful to contemplate as that presented to us in the old Book of Martyrs.

The task is not ours to write such a book. We could not linger over the details, nor torture other hearts than our own. The work must be done by one of sterner stuff. It will include two classes of martyrs—those sacrificed to neglect and cruelty, and those who fall victims to false ideas and mistaken notions of duty and discipline.

How sad it is to think, that among helpless children there is so much wrong and suffering, and that all over our graveyards and cemeteries green mounds swell up from the level earth to mark the spots where sleep the little martyrs of our homes!

You look at us, bereaved mother, with a sober face and rebuking eyes, as if we meant you; as if, in our belief, the low-creeping flowers that cover with greenness and deck with spring-blossoms the resting-place of your beloved child, but marks the spot where the bones of a martyr are laid; and you repel the accusation of cruelty implied in our words.

'Well, perhaps you *are* meant.'

And now there is a flash of indignation as well as rebuke in your face, and we hear you say that it was by scarlet fever that your baby died—that no mother ever cared for a child more tenderly than you cared for this lost darling.

But, for all that, the little hillock in the graveyard on which your tears have fallen so many times, swells greenly above the grave of an infant martyr. Bear

with us a little while, as we revive some memories of your past. You recollect that fine theory of yours about cold water.

You look at us wonderingly.

Didn't your mother and kind-hearted Aunt Mary remonstrate, over and over, against the cold bath to which that tender babe was subjected every morning? We need not remind you how the shrinking child clung to you and screamed, in dread of the icy plunge. But you were wedded to a false idea, and sacrificed a helpless infant to your blind persistence. Somewhere you had heard it said that babies should have a cold bath every morning, to harden and make them healthy; and ignoring your mother's experience, and the plain common sense of the matter, you sent a cold chill daily to the heart of that shuddering little one, reducing the vital forces, and leaving, in consequence, many unguarded avenues where disease might gain an entrance. Don't you remember the blue lips, the cold little feet and fingers, the still languor, that often followed these daily chilling ablutions? Ah, sad-hearted mother! that was all wrong. The tender flesh of an infant loses heat too rapidly for exposure like this. How often did Aunt Mary plead for just one cupful of hot water in the cold brimming basin to take off the chill, as she said! How often did your mother say, 'Daughter, you will kill that

child!' But you heeded them not, being wise in your own conceit.

And now, let us remind you of that winter morning, when floating in baby's bath-tub were bits of ice. You felt well and strong. The warm blood tingled in your finger-tips, and glowed all over your body; but baby had been restless through the night, and now seemed dull, and inclined to sleep. But you would wake him up with a laughing dip in the accustomed bath. Poor little sufferer! It was a cruel thing in you to plunge his warm body deep down into the icy fluid! Was there no pity in your heart? You laughed and talked to him gaily. But was not this like mocking at his misery?

Well, there was no healthy reaction after this. He lay quieter than usual, or fretted, at times, all day. At night he was a little feverish. Ah! there was a fatal epidemic in the air, and you had taken away the power of resistance. He would have passed the danger safely but for this fatal bath. That threw the trembling balance against him, and he died of scarlet fever.

You don't believe it!

Neither belief nor unbelief can alter the fact.

'It is cruel to say all this, even if true. Why lacerate a heart already bleeding?'

If, by causing pain in your heart, we can save other babes from martyrdom, our duty is clear. And so

we have told you the truth, hard though it is to be borne.

'But no such sin lies at my door,' we hear from the lips of another.

You speak confidently.

'I had a tenderer heart than that. My darling's bath was always warm. But he went from me, by the door of death, heavenward.'

Stricken down in the budding of life by his mother's pride and vanity.

Nay, do not flush so warmly! Turn away those indignant eyes.

'You have spoken hard and cruel words against me.'

Let us see if they do not involve the truth. That is what we are searching after. We must not pause to ask who the truth will hurt. The past is crystallized into unchangeable facts, and for use in the present it is right to hold these facts up in the clear sunlight.

No, grieving mother, you did not sacrifice your child to ignorance and self-will. But you laid him on another altar—the altar of pride and vanity. You are silent from astonishment at so overwhelming a charge. Be calm, and let us talk together. He was a beautiful child, and you were so proud of him! Yes, I see it in your eyes. There was never a prouder mother than you, and pride was stronger than love.

'Not true!'

Let us see. If love had been stronger than pride, would he have gone forth with naked legs on those frosty December days? A red spot burns on your cheek. If love had been stronger than pride, would that little white bosom, and those fair round arms, have been so often bared to the winds that tossed his glossy curls—cold winds, whose chill crept nestling in among the sensitive air-passages, leaving there the seeds of inflammation and obstruction? Didn't the doctor say to you on one occasion, 'Madam, that is not safe?' and didn't you smile at his warning, and let the child go out half-naked, though the air was pressing in from the cold north-east, laden with moisture?

Not true! Think again. And didn't his anxious grandmother, around whose warm heart the child had entwined himself, remonstrate over and over again? But he looked, to your eyes—or, to speak more accurately, he looked to you through other people's eyes—so handsome in that highland costume, that it was not to be thrown aside. Don't you remember how, on one cold day, nurse brought him home from his grandmother's, with his legs bundled up in a pair of thick woollen gaiters, and how provoked you were about it? 'Just think of what a ridiculous figure he must have cut! What did the people think?' Those were your very words. There was no thought of the

child's health or comfort, only of how he looked to other people! Think over all this calmly, and say if it be not so.

And now that busy memory is at work, just call to mind that clear, bright day in March, when the sun shone out with such a spring-like promise. How lovely looked your darling as you held him up, fresh and ruddy, from his morning bath—a warm bath!

'The day is so fine, pet must go out.'

So you tell nurse to get herself ready, while you dress him for a walk in the open air. But how did you dress him? Nurse said, 'Indeed, ma'am, I think it's too cold yet for bare little legs.'

'Oh, he'll be warm enough,' you reply confidently.

'Hadn't he better have a scarf round his neck, ma'am?'

But that sweet white neck and bosom are too beautiful to be hidden from admiring eyes, and so you will not consent to the scarf.

Well, when he came home after an hour's absence, how lovely he did look! What bright eyes and glowing cheeks! But he was just a little hoarse.

We need not go on. All the rest is too deeply imprinted on your memory. There was a sudden and violent attack of croup at midnight, and in less than twenty-four hours the seal of death was on his pallid countenance.

Over the way the blinds have just been closed.

Why? Because the baby is dead. Dear little baby! How often have we looked at its pale, puny face, held close to the window pane! The doctor went there often, for the baby was sick a great deal; and no wonder, for the mother was a devotee of fashion. She never came down to the common work of nursing her offspring. They never pillowed their heads on her white bosom, nor drew delight from the rich treasury of her breasts. No, no, for she was a woman of fashion, and the leader of a set. And so this delicate child was given over almost entirely to the care of a hired nurse,—a woman who put away her own babe that she might receive wages for giving nourishment to the child of another,—a woman of gross appetites and a selfish nature.

The babe did not grow strong and beautiful, as a well-cared-for baby should grow. We see in imagination its thin white face at the window opposite, and the old pity comes stealing into our heart. Last week a strange rumour ran through the neighbourhood. The baby was seriously ill, and it was said that the nurse had given it an overdose of laudanum. It was also said that, on being closely pressed, she had owned to the fact of a frequent nightly administration of anodynes. No wonder the baby was puny and sickly.

The pale thin face was never seen again at the window, nor the little hands playing feebly with the

tassels. In a day or two the earth will be heaped above a little coffin, in which the mortal remains of an infant martyr will sleep in that rest from which there is no awaking, while the immortal spirit will have arisen and passed upward to the habitation of angels.

Will the mother, as she looks her last look on the waxen face of her dead babe, realize, in anything like an adequate degree, the sad truth that it died the death of a martyr, first having borne the slow torture of sickness brought on by her cruel neglect? We fear not; she is a selfish woman of the world; her heart is iced over. Alas! that to such should be committed these precious little ones.

It was once our fortune—no, our misfortune—to live for a few months in the same house with a woman who had a mania for dosing her children with medicines. Poor little things! What a sad time they had of it! The mother actually had a medicine chest! Not homœopathic—oh, no! there was no such good luck in store for her unfortunates—but a regular calomel and jalap box, with scales for weighing out the crude poisons, and a measuring glass for determining the size of liquid doses. She was her own family physician, and so deeply interested in the profession, that she was for ever trying to extend her practice beyond the circle of her own sickly, cadaverous little ones.

Through colic, teething, whooping-cough, measles, influenza, and the whole catalogue of ordinary diseases incident to childhood, she carried most of her children safely; that is, they survived the double attacks of disease and medicine, and, by naturally good constitutions, came through the trying ordeal —though not unscathed. On these occasions she would point to their skinny forms and wan faces as trophies of her skill, never for a moment dreaming that they were the miserable wrecks of her blind folly.

As intimated, all did not come safely through. There was one little girl with feebler vitality than the rest—a pale, pitiful, wee thing, who always looked at you as if she were asking sympathy. Her lips did not swell out roundly, into a sweet expression that tempted you to kiss them, but were drawn in and held closely together, as if guarding the sensitive palate from some disgusting assault. If you gave her anything to eat—a cake or a sugar plum—she would look at it narrowly before venturing it near her lips, and her first mouthful was ever taken with due caution. If her infantile memory could have been explored, we doubt if the first impression of delight that recorded itself as she drew the sweet draught from her mother's bosom, would have been found free from a sense of nausea so distinct as to send a shudder along her nerves.

Poor little one! How well she knew the taste of rhubarb and senna, of magnesia and squills! Sweetmeats were an offence to her; for had she not been made, scores of times, to swallow nauseous drugs, or choking pills, concealed in their delusive attractions? In the hollow of her little arm were three scars, where the cruel lancet had drawn away the life-blood, which had never found its way back to her cheeks. The skin of her tender bosom had more than once been scalded off by blisters, while her temples bore the marks of cupping. The marvel was, that she had survived so long all these assaults upon her life.

'Don't you feel well, dear?' we said to her one day, as we came into the parlour and found her lying on the sofa.

'Not very well, thank you, sir;' and she raised herself up in a weary way.

'What's the matter?'

'I don't know, sir.'

'Does your head ache?'

'A little bit; but don't tell mamma, please, sir.'

'Why not tell your mother, dear?'

''Cause she'll give me nasty medicine.'

We felt the full force of this reason.

'You don't like to take medicine,' we said.

The child's stomach heaved from nausea created by the thought. She gave no other reply.

'Please don't tell mamma, sir. I'll lie here a little while, and then I'll be better. I don't want to take any medicine, it is so bad.'

And the poor child laid herself down on the sofa, and shut her eyes in such a sad way that our heart was touched. For more than half an hour we lingered in the parlour, every now and then questioning the child as to how she felt.

'Better,' she would always answer; and then add —'Don't tell mamma. I can't take bad medicine now.'

But mamma entered while we were yet in the parlour.

'I'm not sick,' said the little one, getting up quickly.

Professional instinct was alive.

'What's the matter?' The mother drew to her child at once.

'Nothing at all, mamma. I'm not sick.'

'You're not? Let me feel your hand.'

The poor child thrust her hand behind her.

'Give me your hand!' The mother spoke almost severely.

'My hand isn't hot, mamma.'

'Yes, it is hot. I declare! the child has fever. Does your head ache?'

'No, mamma.'

And yet, only a little while before, she told us

that her head ached. Fear led her to equivocation and direct falsehood, poor child!

'Come up stairs,' said the mother, taking her arm and leading her from the room. I caught a glance of her anxious, almost fearful face, as she went out, and it haunted me for days.

A little while afterward her imploring cries of 'No, —no, mamma! I can't take it! Don't! don't! oh, don't!' rang through the house. Then there was a struggle, and sounds of choking and strangling, followed by a low, moaning cry, that smote sadly on the ear, and continued until silenced by angry threats.

'How is Alice?' was inquired early in the evening, for it had gone forth that the child was sick.

'She isn't at all well,' the mother answered, 'but I've given her medicine, and hope to see her better in the morning.'

That hope was not realized. The morning found Alice too sick to rise. The dose of rhubarb which had been forced upon her reluctant stomach, had not only irritated the mucous membrane of the whole alimentary canal, but, by means of the absorbents, had been thrown into the blood, and conveyed to all parts of the feeble system—destroying the trembling balance of health. If she had been perfectly well, an assault like this would have been attended by disturbing consequences, but under a morbid condition it had a most disastrous effect.

'Hadn't you better send for the doctor?' suggested one and another.

'I've given her more medicine this morning. She'll be better after that acts freely.'

More medicine! poor child!

But she was not better, and the doctor was sent for. He did not approve of giving much medicine. Experience, philosophy, and observation had taught him that nature was the great restorer. So he prescribed bathing in warm water, and a quieting draught.

'But, doctor, she is a sick child,' urged the mother.

'I know she is,' was answered.

'Won't time be lost?'

'For what reason?' asked the doctor.

'You are really giving no medicine.'

'I fear she has already had too much. Give nature a little chance. I want to gain time.'

And the doctor went away. But the mother was not satisfied. She had no faith in the let-alone system. So she tried her hand again; and this time more energetically. She was successful—in throwing her child into convulsions; and then there was a great excitement in the house.

When the doctor called in on the next morning, he pronounced the case hopeless. There was congestion of the brain. Before night, little Alice was dead, and numbered with the martyrs of our homes.

How proud you were of that dear little fellow, whose mind opened in advance of his years! At twelve months he could repeat a dozen different nursery ditties. When two years old he knew all the letters in the alphabet by sight, and could put them together into words. At three he could spell remarkably, and at four years of age read almost anything.

You encouraged the precocity, by showing him off to your friends. We don't wonder you were proud of him, for he was a bright, beautiful, intelligent child; and so companionable, with his thoughts beyond his years. He cared more for books than plays; and so his toys were books. We never saw him riding about on a stick for a horse, or trundling a hoop. He had aspirations altogether above these, at the ripe age of seven.

What a fine intellectual face he had! Ample brow; dark glittering eyes, full of thought and feeling; a mouth as composed and expressive of purpose as a man's. There was no vain intrusiveness about him; no seeming consciousness of his intellectual superiority over other children of his age. If you talked to him, he would answer as he thought; but how mature were his thoughts! Books were his delight, and he grew daily more and more fascinated with them. Milton and Shakspeare at seven! What were you thinking of, to feed his imagination with these?

How tall and slender he grew! And you admired the delicate grace of his proportions, comparing him with the coarse, rough, animal-looking boys of your neighbours, who, in your idea, only lived to eat and play.

Instead of repressing him at school, and holding his mind back among the easier rudimentals, his teachers, proud of their pupil, as you were of your son, advanced him rapidly to higher studies, ranking him with boys his seniors by many years. He came home daily with his satchel so loaded with books, that the weight of them tired him; and you let him go straight from the dinner-table to the study of his hard lessons; thus allowing his brain to draw off the nervous vitality required for the work of digestion and assimilation—sacrificing the bodily powers to the intellectual. Were his tasks finished by supper time? Oh no! not half finished. There was still the Latin lesson; the page of Definitions; the lessons in Geography, Botany, Physiology, and Moral Philosophy! And so, after the evening meal, instead of a playful romp with little brother and sister, came two hours of hard study.

Have we exaggerated? No! The strange truth has not been fully told. We say strange, but truth is always stranger than fiction. To read of such insane violence to health—of such downright cruelty to children—awakens a kind of indignation. And yet,

are not hundreds of school children in our land subjected to the discipline we have described? As if five or six hours of confinement and mental application were not a tax up to the full capacity of mind and body of a child, two or three hours more are required in close study out of school; thus robbing the physical system for the sake of the intellectual, and, of consequence, weakening both. It is a marvel that such things are. But we are digressing.

At eight years of age, your beautiful, precocious boy showed signs of physical decay. First came wakefulness at night, and nervous terrors in the first stages of sleep. His appetite left him, and you had to urge, coax, and sometimes scold a little, in order to make him give to his stomach even the light burden of food it did not wish to take. His pale intellectual countenance attracted the eyes of every one. Mothers turned in the street to look at him, remarking, 'What a strangely beautiful boy!' And there was an impression, if the thought were not spoken, that he was not long for this world.

But you did not take the alarm yet. His studies were not remitted. He still brought home the weary load of books, and still mastered tasks that were gigantic ones for a child of his years.

At nine he was so much of an invalid, that the doctor positively required him to be taken from school. How you grieved over this! not so much

for the defect of health—you did not understand how serious the defect was—as for the great loss it would be in an educational point of view.

Poor child! Leaving school went hard with him; for he was enamoured of his studies. For a little while the relaxation and freedom from confinement and intense mental application produced a favourable change; but this, alas! was only temporary. Nearly all exercise was constrained; and unless watched and remonstrated with, he would spend nearly the whole of each day in reading. There came at this time an unhappy change in his disposition. He grew captious, irritable, and self-willed. The nervous wakefulness and terror by night returned upon him, harassing and debilitating him to a degree that occasioned fear lest fatal consequences might ensue.

'You must send him into the country, and keep him away from books,' said the physician. And you sent him to the country. For a little while this change seemed to promise well. But the country air acted only as a temporary stimulus. In less than a month you brought him home to die; and he rests now with the great company of little martyrs.

Go with us just a square from your luxurious home, fair lady, and we will show you a phase of baby-life that will, we think, haunt your memory for days and nights, and set you to questioning about your duties and responsibilities as a Christian woman. Nay, do

not hold back. Nerves are delicate things, we know, and sensibilities must not be too severely shocked. But shrinking nerves and pained sensibilities are light things in comparison with wrongs and sufferings that might be lessened, if you would resolutely contemplate them. So, come with us. We will not detain you long.

You enter with us a miserable hovel. Ah! the first sound that falls upon our ears is the wailing cry of a little child! There it is, lying upon a bundle of dirty rags in the corner. It cannot be six months old. You shudder, and shrink back. But it is too late now to recede. If there is any pity in your heart, you must stay. Where is the mother? We call. Hark! there is a sound from the next room. A pause. All is silent again. We push open the door, and what a sight is revealed to us! A woman in tatters and filth, lying drunk upon the floor! Oh, horrible! You cover your face with your hands, and shudder.

But the babe cries on in such a pitiful wail that your heart is touched, and you go back and stand by the bundle of rags in the corner, bending over, but afraid to touch, the repulsive-looking object. Yet it is a babe, precious in the sight of God, and beloved of his angels! And their love is beginning to flow into your heart, which is now moved by pity, and your hand has reached down to the famishing little one.

'Are there no neighbours?' you ask, looking round

upon us with knit brows, and speaking like one in earnest.

Yes, there are neighbours. A woman next door saw us enter, and curiosity, if no better feeling, has drawn her in after us.

'I'm a neighbour.'

Your question is answered.

'Then take this child, in Heaven's name! and do for it what is needed.'

Yes, that is talking to the purpose. Pity you had not come before.

You cannot turn your eyes away. The woman has taken the baby on her lap. It still cries piteously, and you see that its face and head are a mass of sores. The wet rags only half cover its little emaciated body, and you see that the flesh is red and excoriated. Poor little sufferer! Did you dream of anything like this within almost a stone's throw of the dwelling in which your little ones are so tenderly cared for? No, no! You tell the woman to take the babe into her own house, and that you will go home and send it changes of clothing. All this is done. You send, a few hours later, to ask about the little one, and word comes that it is ill. A physician is called; but he can only alleviate suffering. Death has already received his commission, and from the lap of pain another martyr will soon be translated.

Shall we go on in this darker, sadder way, taking you

to the lower haunts of dissipation, vice, and crime, where children are born, and die from cruelty, want, and neglect, by hundreds and thousands every year? No; we have not the heart to go there, even if you would accompany us. We said, in the beginning, that ours was not the pen from which the new Book of Martyrs was to come, and that we should leave for one of sterner stuff the task of lingering over details that, whenever given, must cause strong hearts to shudder, and warm cheeks to pale. What we have written is for suggestion—a mere glimpse at the appalling truth which lies hidden beneath the fair surface of things, that you may pause by the way, and ponder the subject of infant martyrdom.

THE LITTLE MAID OF ALL WORK.

SUPPER was not ready when Abraham Munday, at the close of a long, weary summer day, lifted the latch of his humble dwelling. He was not greatly disappointed, for it often so happened. The table was partly set, and the kettle was boiling on the fire.

'There it is again!' exclaimed Mrs. Munday, fretfully. 'Home from work, and no supper ready! The baby has been *so* cross!—hardly out of my arms the whole afternoon. I'm glad you've come, though. Here, take him, while I get the things on the table.'

Mr. Munday held out his arms for the little one, who sprang into them with a baby shout.

Mrs. Munday bustled about in good earnest. A few pieces of light wood thrown on the fire, soon made the kettle sing, and steam, and bubble. In a

wonderfully short space of time all was ready, and the little family, consisting of husband, wife, and three children, were gathered around the table. To mother's arms baby was transferred, and she had the no very easy task of pouring out her husband's tea, preparing cups of milk and water for the two older of the little ones, and restraining the baby, who was grappling first after the sugar-bowl, then after the cream-pot, and next after the teapot.

'There!' suddenly exclaimed Mrs. Munday; and two quick slaps on baby's hand were heard. Baby, of course, answered promptly with a wild scream. But what had baby done? Look into the tea-tray—the whole surface is covered with milk. His busy, fluttering hands have overturned the pot.

Poor Mrs. Munday lost her temper completely.

'It's of no use to attempt eating with this child,' said she, pushing her chair back from the table. 'I never have any good of my meals!'

Mr. Munday's appetite failed him at once. He continued to eat, however, but more hurriedly. Soon he pushed back his chair also, and rising up, said, cheerfully—

'There, I'm done, Lotty. Give me the baby, while you eat your supper.'

And he took the sobbing child from the arms of its mother. Tossing it up, and speaking to it in a lively, affectionate tone of voice, he soon restored

pleasure to the heart and smiles to the countenance of the little one.

Mrs. Munday felt rebuked for her impatience. She often suffered from these silent rebukes. And yet the trials of temper she daily endured were very great. No relish for food was left. The wants of the two children were attended to, and then, while Mr. Munday still held the baby, she busied herself in clearing off the table, washing up the tea things, and putting the room in order.

An hour later. Baby was asleep, and the other children with him, in the land of dreams. Mrs. Munday was busy sewing a little frock, and Mr. Munday sat with his face turned from the light, in a brown study.

'Lotty,' said the latter, waking up from his reverie, and speaking with considerable emphasis—'It's no use for you to keep going on in this way any longer. You are wearing yourself out. And what's more, there's no comfort at home for anybody. You must get a woman to help about the house.'

'We can't afford it, Abraham,' was Mrs. Munday's calm but decided answer.

'We must afford it, Lotty. You're killing yourself.'

'A woman will cost six shillings a week, and her board at least as much more. We can't spare that sum—and you only getting fifty shillings a week.'

The argument was unanswerable. Mr. Munday

sighed and was silent. Again his face was turned from the light; and again the hand of his wife plied quickly the glittering needle.

'I'll tell you what we might do,' said Mrs. Munday, after the lapse of nearly ten minutes.

'Well?'—her husband turned towards her, and assumed a listening attitude.

'We might take a small girl to help in the family. It would only cost us her victuals and clothes.'

Mr. Munday mused for some time before answering. He didn't just like the proposition.

'Anything,' he at length said, 'to lighten your labour. But can you get one?'

'I think so. You remember poor Mrs. Barrow, who died last month? She left a little girl, about eleven years old, with no one to see after her but an old aunt, who, I've heard, isn't very kind to the child. No doubt she would be glad to get her into a good place. It would be very easy for her. She could hold the baby, or rock it in the cradle while I was at work about the house—and do a great many little things for me that would lighten my task wonderfully. It's the very thing, husband,' added Mrs. Munday, with animation; 'and if you agree, I will run over and see Mrs. Gooch, her aunt, in the morning before you go to work.'

'How old did you say she was?' inquired Mr. Munday.

'She was eleven in the spring, I believe.'

'Our Aggie is between nine and ten.'

Something like a sigh followed the words, for the thought of having his little Aggie turned out, motherless, among strangers, to do drudgery and task-work, forced itself upon his mind.

'True. But a year or so makes a great difference. Besides, Anna Barrow is an uncommonly smart girl for her age.'

Mr. Munday sighed again.

'Well,' he said, after being silent for a few moments, 'you can do as you think best. But it does seem hard to make a servant of a mere child like that.'

'You call the position in which she will be by too harsh a name,' said Mrs. Munday. 'I can make her very useful without overtasking her. And then, you know, as she has got to earn her own living, she cannot acquire habits of industry too soon.'

Mrs. Munday was now quite in earnest about the matter; so much so that her husband made no further objection. On the next morning, she called to see Mrs. Gooch, the aunt of Anna Barrow. The offer to take the little girl was accepted at once.

When Mr. Munday came home at dinner-time, he found the meal all ready and awaiting his appearance. Mrs. Munday looked cheerful and animated. In a corner of the room sat a slender little girl, not very

much larger than Aggie, with the sleeping baby in her arms. She lifted her eyes timidly to the face of Mr. Munday, who gave her a kind look.

'Poor motherless child!' Such was his thought.

'I can't tell you how much assistance she is to me,' whispered Mrs. Munday to her husband, leaning over to him as they sat at the table. 'And the baby seems so fond of her.'

Mr. Munday said nothing, but before his mind was distinctly pictured his own little girl, a servant in the home of a stranger. On his return from work in the evening everything wore a like improved appearance. Supper was ready, and Mrs. Munday had nothing of the worried look so apparent on the occasion of her first introduction to the reader. Everything wore an improved appearance, did we say? No, not everything. There was a change in the little orphan girl; and Mr. Munday saw at a glance, that the change, so pleasant to contemplate, had been made at her expense. The tidy look, noticed at dinner-time, was gone. Her clothes were soiled and tumbled; her hair had lost its even, glossy appearance, and her manner showed extreme weariness of body and mind. She was holding the baby. None saw the tears that crept over her cheeks as the family gathered around the tea-table, and, forgetful of her, enjoyed their evening meal.

Supper over, Mrs. Munday took the baby and

undressed it, while Anna sat down to eat her portion of food. Four times ere this was accomplished did Mrs. Munday send her up to her chamber for something wanted either for herself or the child.

'You must learn to eat quickly, Anna,' said Mrs. Munday, ere the little girl, in consequence of these interruptions, was half through her supper. Anna looked frightened and confused, pushed back her chair, and stood gazing inquiringly at the face of her mistress.

'Are you done?' asked the latter coldly.

'Yes, ma'am,' was timidly answered.

'Very well. Now I want you to clear off the table. Gather up all the things, and take them out into the kitchen. Then shake the table-cloth, set the table back, and sweep up the room.'

Mr. Munday looked at his wife, but said nothing.

'Shall I help Anna, mother?' inquired Aggie.

'No,' was rather sharply answered. 'Have you studied your lessons?'

'No, mother.'

'Set about that, then; it will be as much as you can do before bedtime.'

Mrs. Munday undressed her baby, with considerably more deliberation of manner than usual, observing all the while the proceedings of Anna, and every now and then giving her a word of instruction. She felt very comfortable, as she

finally leaned back in her chair, with her little one asleep in her arms. By this time Anna was in the kitchen, where, according to instructions, she was washing up the tea things. While thus engaged, to the best of her small ability, a cup slipped from her hand and was broken on the floor. The sound startled Mrs. Munday from her agreeable state of mind and body.

'What's that?' she cried.

'A cup, ma'am,' was the trembling answer.

'You're a careless little girl!' said Mrs. Munday, rather severely. The baby was now taken up stairs and laid in bed. After this, Mrs. Munday went to the kitchen, to see how her little maid of all work was getting on with the supper dishes. Not altogether to her satisfaction, it must be owned.

'You will have to do all these over again,' she said —not kindly and encouragingly, but with something captious and authoritative in her manner. 'Throw out that water from the dish-pan, and get some more.'

Anna obeyed, and Mrs. Munday seated herself by the kitchen table to observe her movements, and correct them when wrong.

'Not that way!'—'Here, let me show you!'—'Stop! I said it must be done in this way.'—'Don't set the dishes down so hard; you'll break them—they're not made of iron!'

These, and words of like tenor, were addressed to

the child, who, anxious to do right, yet so confused as often to misapprehend what was said to her, managed at length to complete her task.

'Now sweep up the kitchen, and put things to rights. When you're done, come in to me,' said Mrs. Munday, who now retired to the little sitting-room, where her husband was glancing over the daily paper, and Aggie engaged in studying her lesson. On entering, she remarked:

'It's more trouble to teach a girl like this, than to do it yourself.'

Mr. Munday said nothing; but he had his own thoughts.

'Mother, I'm sleepy; I want to go to bed,' said Fanny, younger by two or three years than Aggy.

'I don't want to go yet; and besides, I haven't got my lesson,' said the older sister.

'Wait until Anna is done in the kitchen, and she will go up and stay with you. Anna!' Mrs. Munday called to her, 'make haste! I want you to put Fanny to bed.'

In a few minutes Anna appeared, and, as directed, went up stairs with Fanny.

'She looks tired. Hadn't you better tell her to go to bed also?' suggested Mr. Munday.

'To bed!' ejaculated Mrs. Munday, in a voice of surprise, 'I've got something for her to do besides going to bed.'

Mr. Munday resumed the reading of his paper, and said no more. Fanny was soon asleep.

'Can't Anna go up with me now? I'm afraid to go alone,' said Aggy, as the little girl came down from the chamber.

'Yes, I suppose so. But you must go to sleep quickly. I've got something for Anna to do.'

Mr. Munday sighed and moved himself uneasily in his chair. In half an hour Anna came down—Aggie was just asleep. As she made her appearance, the baby awoke and cried out.

'Run up and hush the baby to sleep before he gets wide awake,' said Mrs. Munday.

The weary child went as directed. In a little while the low murmur of her voice was heard, as she attempted to quiet the babe by singing a nursery ditty. How often had her mother's voice soothed her to sleep with the self-same words and melody! The babe stopped crying; and soon all was silent in the chamber. Nearly half an hour passed, during which Mrs. Munday was occupied in sewing.

'I do believe that girl has fallen asleep,' said she, at length, letting her work drop in her lap, and assuming a listening attitude.

'Anna!' she called. But there was no answer.

'Anna!' The only returning sound was the echo of her own voice.

Mrs. Munday started up, and ascended to her

chamber. Mr. Munday was by her side, as she entered the room. Sure enough, Anna had fallen asleep, leaning over on the bed where the infant lay.

'Poor motherless child!' said Mr. Munday, in a voice of tender compassion that reached the heart of his wife, and awakened there some womanly emotions.

'Poor thing! I suppose she is tired out,' said the latter. 'She'd better go to bed.'

So she awakened her, and told her to go up into the garret, where a bed had been made for her on the floor. Thither the child proceeded, and there wept herself again to sleep. In her dream that night, she was with her mother, in her own pleasant home, and she was still dreaming of her mother and her home, when she was awakened by the sharp voice of Mrs. Munday, and told to get up quickly and come down, as it was broad daylight.

'You must kindle the fire and get the kettle on as fast as possible.'

Such was the order she received on passing the door of Mrs. Munday's room.

We will not describe, particularly, the trials of this day for our poor little maid of all work. They were very severe, for Mrs. Munday was a hard mistress. She had taken Anna as a help, though not with the purpose of overworking or oppressing her. But now that she had some one to lighten her burdens and assist her, the temptation to consult her own ease was

very great. Less wearied than in days past, because relieved of scores of little matters about the house, the aggregate of which had worn her down, she was lifted somewhat above an appreciative sympathy for the child, who, in thus relieving her, was herself heavily overtasked. Instead of merely holding the baby for Mrs. Munday, when it was awake and would not lie in its cradle, and doing for her the 'little odd turns,' at first contemplated, so as to enable her the better to get through the work of the family, the former at once began to play the lady, and to require of Anna not only the performance of a great deal of household labour, but to wait on her in many instances where the service was almost superfluous.

When Mr. Munday came home at supper-time, he found his wife with a book in her hand. The table was set, the fire burning cheerfully, and the hearth swept up. The baby was asleep in its cradle, and as Mrs. Munday read, she now and then rocked the cradle gently with her foot. This he observed through the window, without himself being seen. He then glanced into the kitchen. The kettle had been taken from the fire; the teapot was on the hearth, flanked on one side by a plate of toast, and on the other by a dish containing some meat left from dinner, which had been warmed over. These would have quickened his keen appetite, but for another vision. On her knees, in the middle of the room, was Anna, slowly,

and evidently in a state of exhaustion, scrubbing the floor, her face, which happened to be turned towards him, looked worn and pale, and he saw at a glance her red eyes, and the tears upon her cheeks. While he yet gazed upon her, she paused in her work, straightened her little form with a wearied effort, and clasping both hands across her forehead, lifted her wet eyes upwards. There was no motion in her wan lips, but Mr. Munday knew that her heart, in its young sorrow, was raised to heaven. At this moment the kitchen door was opened, and Mr. Munday saw his wife enter.

'Eye-service!' said she, severely, as she saw the position of Anna. 'I don't like this. Not half over the floor yet! Why, what have you been doing?'

The startled child bent quickly to her weary task, and scrubbed with a new energy imparted by fear. Mr. Munday turned, heart-sick, from the window, and entered their little sitting-room as his wife came in from the kitchen. She met him with a pleasant smile, but he was grave and silent.

'Don't you feel well?' she inquired, with a look of concern.

'Not very well,' he answered, evasively.

'Have you felt bad all day?'

'Yes; but I am heart-sick now.'

'Heart-sick! What has happened, Abraham?'

Mrs. Munday looked slightly alarmed.

'One whom I thought full of human kindness has been oppressive, and even cruel.'

'Abraham! what do you mean?'

'Perhaps my eyes deceived me,' he answered; 'perhaps it was a dream. But I saw a sight just now to make the tears flow.'

And as Mr. Munday spoke he took his wife by the arm, and led her out through the back-door.

'Look!' said he, 'there is a poor motherless child, scarcely a year older than our Aggie!'

Anna had dropped her brush again, and her pale face and tearful eyes were once more uplifted. Was it only a delusion or fancy? or did Mrs. Munday really see the form of Mrs. Barrow stooping over her suffering child, as if striving to clasp her in her shadowy arms?

For a few moments the whole mind of Mrs. Munday was in a whirl of excitement. Then, stepping back from the side of her husband, she glided through the open door, and was in the kitchen ere Anna had time to change her position. Frightened at being found idle again, the poor child caught eagerly at the brush which lay upon the floor. In doing so, she missed her grasp, and, weak and trembling from exhaustion, fell forward, where she lay motionless. When Mrs. Munday endeavoured to raise her up, she found her insensible.

'Poor—poor child!' said Mr. Munday, tenderly,

his voice quivering with emotion, as he lifted her in his arms. He bore her up to the children's chamber, and laid her on their bed.

'Not here,' said Mrs. Munday. 'Up in her own room.'

'She is one of God's children, and as precious in his sight as ours,' almost sobbed the husband, yet with a rebuking sternness in his voice. 'She shall lie here!'

Mrs. Munday was not naturally a cruel woman, but she loved her own selfishly; and the degree in which this was done, is the measure of disregard towards others. She forgot, in her desire for service, that her little servant was but a poor motherless child, thrust out from the parent nest, with all the tender longings of a child for love, and all its weaknesses and want of experience. She failed to remember that, in the sight of God, all children are equally precious.

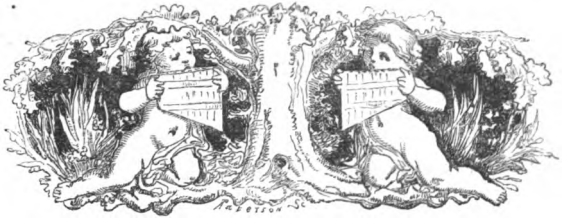
But the scales fell from her eyes. She was rebuked, humbled, and repentant.

'Anna must go back to her aunt,' said Mr. Munday, after the child had recovered from her brief fainting fit, and calmness was once more restored to the excited household.

'She must remain,' was the subdued but firm answer. 'I have dealt cruelly with her. Let me have an opportunity to repair the wrong she has

suffered. I will try to think of her as my own child. If I fail in that, the consciousness of her mother's presence will save me from my first error.'

And Anna did remain—continuing to be Mrs. Munday's little maid of all work. But her tasks, though varied, were light. She was never again overburdened, but treated with a judicious kindness that won her affections, and made her ever willing to render service to the utmost of her ability.



MARY CARSON.

'WHO is that young lady?'

A slender girl, just above the medium height, stood a moment at the parlour-door, and then withdrew. Her complexion was fair, but colourless; her eyes so dark, that you were in doubt, on the first glance, whether they were brown or blue. Away from her forehead and temples, the chestnut hair was put far back, giving to her finely-cut and regular features an intellectual cast. Her motions were easy, yet with an air of reserve and dignity.

The question was asked by a visitor who had called a little while before.

'My seamstress,' answered Mrs. Wykoff.

'Oh!' The manner of her visitor changed. How the whole character of the woman was expressed in the tone with which she made that simple ejaculation!

'I have never been so well suited in my life,' replied Mrs. Wykoff. 'Let me show you a muslin dress for Anna which she finished yesterday.'

Mrs. Wykoff left the room, and returned in a few minutes with a child's dress in her hand. The ladies examined it with practised eyes, and agreed that it was of unusual excellence.

'And she fits as well as she sews?' said Mrs. Lowe.

'Yes. Nothing could fit more beautifully than the dresses she has made for my children.'

'How soon will you be done with her?'

'She will be through with my work in a day or two.'

'Is she engaged anywhere else?'

'I will ask her, if you desire it.'

'Do so, if you please.'

'Would you like to see her?'

'It's of no consequence. Say that I will engage her for a couple of weeks. What are her terms?'

'Three shillings a day.'

'So much? I've never paid any more than half-a-crown.'

'She's worth the difference. I'd rather pay her five shillings a day than give some women I've had half-a-crown. She works faithfully in all things.'

'I'll take your word for that, Mrs. Wykoff. Please ask her if she can come to me next week; and if so, on what day.'

Only a seamstress! 'Oh! I thought it some relative or friend of the family.'

'No.'

'She is a peculiar-looking girl,' said Mrs. Lowe, the visitor.

'Do you think so? In what respect?'

'If she were in a different sphere of life, I would say that she had the style of a lady.'

'She's a true, good girl,' answered Mrs. Wykoff, 'and I feel much interested in her. A few years ago her father was in excellent circumstances.'

'Ah!' With a slight manifestation of interest.

'Yes, and she's been well educated.'

'And has ridden in her own carriage, no doubt. It's the story of two-thirds of your sewing-girls.' Mrs. Lowe laughed in an unsympathetic, contemptuous way.

'I happen to know that it is true in Mary Carson's case,' said Mrs. Wykoff.

'Mary Carson! Is that her name?'

'Yes.'

'Passing from her antecedents, as the phrase now is, which are neither here nor there,' said Mrs. Lowe, with a coldness, or rather coarseness of manner, that shocked the higher tone of Mrs. Wykoff's feelings, 'what is she as a seamstress? Can she make children's dresses nicely?—for little girls like my Angela and Grace?'

'I have never been so well suited in my life,' replied Mrs. Wykoff. 'Let me show you a muslin dress for Anna which she finished yesterday.'

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Mrs. Wykofi left the room.

'Will Monday suit you?' she asked, on returning.

'Yes, that will do.'

'Miss Carson says that she will be at your service on Monday.'

'Very well. Tell her to come as early as possible on that day. I shall be all ready for her.'

'Hadn't you better see her, while you are here?' asked Mrs. Wykoff.

'Oh, no. Not at all necessary. It will be time enough on Monday. Your recommendation of her is all-sufficient.'

Mrs. Lowe, who had only been making a formal call, now arose, and with a courteous good morning, retired. From the parlour, Mrs. Wykoff returned to the room occupied by Miss Carson.

'You look pale this morning, Mary,' said the lady as she came in. 'I'm afraid you're not as well as usual.'

The seamstress lifted herself in a tired way, and took a long breath, at the same time holding one hand tightly against her left side. Her eyes looked very bright, as they rested, with a sober expression, on Mrs. Wykoff. But she did not reply.

'Have you severe pain there, Mary?' The voice was very kind; almost motherly.

'Not very severe. But it aches in a dull way.'

'Hadn't you better lie down for a little while?'

'Oh, no, thank you, Mrs. Wykoff.' And a smile

flitted over the girl's sweet, sad face; a smile that was meant to say—'How absurd to think of such a thing!' She was there to work, not to be treated as an invalid. Stooping over the garment, she went on with her sewing. Mrs. Wykoff looked at her very earnestly, and saw that her lips were growing colourless; that she moved them in a nervous way, and swallowed every now and then.

'Come, child,' she said, in a firm tone, as she took Miss Carson by the arm. 'Put aside your work, and lie down on that sofa. You are sick.'

She did not resist; but only said:

'Not sick, ma'am—only a little faint.'

As her head went heavily down upon the pillow, Mrs. Wykoff saw a sparkle of tears along the line of her closely shut eyelids.

'Now don't stir from there until I come back, said the kind lady, and left the room. In a little while she returned, with a small waiter in her hand, containing a glass of wine and a biscuit.

'Take this, Mary. It will do you good.'

The eyes which had not been unclosed since Mrs. Wykoff went out, were all wet as Mary Carson opened them.

'Oh, you are so kind!' There was gratitude in her voice. Rising, she took the wine, and drank of it like one athirst. Then taking it from her lips, she sat, as if noting her sensations.

'It seems to put life into me,' she said, with a pulse of cheerfulness in her tones.

'Now eat this biscuit,' and Mrs. Wykoff held the waiter near.

The wine drunk and the biscuit eaten, a complete change in Miss Carson was visible. The whiteness around her mouth gave place to a ruddier tint; her face no longer wore an exhausted air; the glassy lustre of her eyes was gone.

'I feel like myself again,' she said, as she left the sofa, and resumed her sewing chair.

'How is your side now?' asked Mrs. Wykoff.

'Easier. I scarcely perceive the pain.'

'Hadn't you better lie still a while longer?'

'No, ma'am. I am all right now. A slight weakness came over me. I didn't sleep much last night, and that left me exhausted this morning, and without any appetite.'

'What kept you awake?'

'This dull pain in my side for a part of the time. Then I coughed a good deal; and then I became wakeful and nervous.'

'Does this often occur, Mary?'

'Well—yes, ma'am; pretty often of late.'

'How often?'

'Two or three times a week.'

'Can you trace it to any cause?'

'Not certainly.'

'To cold?'

'No, ma'am.'

'Fatigue?'

'More that than anything else, I think.'

'And you didn't eat any breakfast this morning?'

'I drank a cup of coffee.'

'But took no solid food?'

'I couldn't have swallowed it, ma'am.'

'And it's now twelve o'clock,' said Mrs. Wykoff, drawing out her watch. 'Mary! Mary! This will not do. I don't wonder you were faint just now.'

Miss Carson bent to her work and made no answer. Mrs. Wykoff sat regarding her for some time with a look of human interest, and then went out.

A little before two o'clock there was a tap at the door, and the waiter came in, bearing a tray. There was a nicely-cooked chop, toast, and some tea, with fruit and a custard.

'Mrs. Wykoff said, when she went out, that dinner would be late to-day, and that you were not well, and mustn't be kept waiting,' remarked the servant, as he drew a small table towards the centre of the room, and covered it with a white napkin.

He came just in time. The stimulating effect of the wine had subsided, and Miss Carson was beginning to grow faint again, for lack of food.

It was after three o'clock when Mrs. Wykoff came home, and half-past three before the regular dinner

for the family was served. She looked in a moment upon the seamstress, saying as she did so:

'You've had your dinner, Mary?'

'Oh yes, ma'am, and I'm much obliged,' answered Miss Carson, a bright smile playing over her face. The timely meal had put new life into her.

'I knew you couldn't wait until we were ready,' said the kind-hearted, thoughtful woman, 'and so told Ellen to cook you a chop, and make you a cup of tea. Did you have enough?'

'Oh yes, ma'am. More than enough.'

'You feel better than you did this morning?'

'A great deal better. I'm like another person.'

'You must never go without food so long again, Mary. It is little better than suicide for one in your state of health.'

Mrs. Wykoff retired, and the seamstress went on with her work.

Mary Carson appeared at the usual hour next morning. Living at some distance from Mrs. Wykoff's, she did not come until after breakfast. The excellent lady had thought over the incident of the day before, and was satisfied that, from lack of nutritious food at the right time, Mary's vital forces were steadily wasting, and that she would in a very little while destroy herself.

'I will talk with her seriously about this matter,' she said. 'A word of admonition may save her.'

'You look a great deal better this morning,' she remarked, as she entered the room where Mary was sewing.

'I haven't felt better for a long time,' was the cheerful answer.

'Did you sleep well last night?'

'Very well.'

'Any cough?'

'Not of any consequence, ma'am.'

'How was the pain in your side?'

'It troubled me a little when I first went to bed, but soon passed off.'

'Did you feel the old exhaustion on waking?'

'I always feel weak in the morning; but it was nothing, this morning, to what it has been.'

'How was your appetite?'

'Better. I ate an egg and a piece of toast, and relished them very much. Usually my stomach loathes food in the morning.'

'Has this been the case long?'

'For a long time, ma'am.'

Mrs. Wykoff mused for a little while, and then asked:

'How do you account for the difference this morning?'

Miss Carson's pale face became slightly flushed, and her eyes fell away from the questioning gaze of Mrs. Wykoff.

'There is a cause for it, and it is of importance that you should know the cause. Has it been suggested to your mind?'

'Yes, ma'am. To me the cause is quite apparent.'

They looked at each other for a few moments in silence.

'My interest in you prompts these questions, Mary,' said Mrs. Wykoff. 'Speak to me freely, if you will, as to a friend. What made the difference?'

'I think the difference is mainly due to your kindness yesterday. To the glass of wine and biscuit when I was faint, and to the early and good dinner, when exhausted nature was crying for food. I believe, Mrs. Wykoff'—and Mary's eyes glistened—'that if you had not thought of me when you did, I should not be here to-day.'

'Are you serious, Mary?'

'I am, indeed, ma'am. I should have got over my faintness of the morning, even without the wine and biscuit, and worked on until dinner-time; but I wouldn't have been able to eat anything. It almost always happens, when I go so long without food, that my appetite fails altogether, and by the time night comes, I sink down in an exhausted state, from which nature finds it hard to rally. It has been so a number of times. The week before I came here, I was sewing for a lady, and worked from eight o'clock in

the morning until four in the afternoon, without food passing my lips. As I had been unable to eat anything at breakfast-time, I grew very faint, and when called to dinner, was unable to swallow a mouthful. When I got home in the evening I was feverish and exhausted, and coughed nearly all night. It was three or four days before I was well enough to go out again.'

'Has this happened in any instance, while you were sewing for me?' asked Mrs. Wykoff.

Miss Carson dropped her face, and turned it partly aside; her manner was slightly disturbed.

'Don't hesitate about answering my question, Mary. If it has happened, say so. I am not always as thoughtful as I should be.'

'It happened once.'

'When?'

'Last week.'

'Oh! I remember that you were not able tc come for two days. Now, tell me, Mary, without reservation, exactly how it was.'

'I never blamed you for a moment, Mrs. Wykoff. You didn't think; and I'd rather not say anything about it. If I'd been as well as usual on that day, it wouldn't have happened.'

'You'd passed a sleepless night?' said Mrs. Wykoff.

'Yes, ma'am.'

'The consequence of fatigue and exhaustion?'

'Perhaps that was the reason.'

'And couldn't eat any breakfast?'

'I drank a cup of coffee.'

'Very well. After that you came here to work. Now, tell me exactly what occurred, and how you felt all day. Don't keep back anything on account of my feelings. I want the exact truth. It will be of use to me, and to others also, I think.'

Thus urged, Miss Carson replied:

'Well, ma'am, I'll tell you how it was. I came later than usual. The walk is long, and I felt so weak that I couldn't hurry. I thought you looked a little serious when I came in, and concluded that it was in consequence of my being late. The air and walk gave me an appetite, and if I had taken some food then, it would have done me good. I thought, as I stood at the door, waiting to be let in, that I would ask for a biscuit or a piece of bread and butter; but, when I met you, and saw how sober you looked, my heart failed me.'

'Why, Mary?' said Mrs. Wykoff. 'How wrong it was in you!'

'Perhaps it was, ma'am; but I couldn't help it. I'm foolish sometimes; and it's hard for us to be anything else than what we are, as my Aunt Hannah used to say. Well, I sat down to my work with the dull pain in my side, and the sick feeling that always

comes at such times, and worked on hour after hour. You looked in once or twice during the morning to see how I was getting on, and to ask about the trimming for a dress I was making. Then you went out shopping, and did not get home until half-past two o'clock. For two hours there had been a gnawing at my stomach, and I was faint for something to eat. Twice I got up to ring the bell, and ask for a lunch; but I felt backward about taking the liberty. When, at three o'clock, I was called to dinner, no appetite remained. I put food into my mouth, but it had no sweetness, and the little I forced myself to swallow, lay undigested. You were very much occupied, and did not notice me particularly. I dragged on, as best as I could, through the afternoon, feeling sometimes as if I would drop from my chair. You had tea later than usual. It was nearly seven o'clock when I put up my work and went down. You said something in a kind, but absent tone, about my looking pale, and asked if I would have a second cup of tea. I believe I forced myself to eat a slice of bread half as large as my hand. I thought I should never reach home that night, for the weakness that came upon me. I got to bed as soon as possible, but was too tired to sleep until after twelve o'clock, when a fit of coughing came upon me, which brought on the pain in my side. It was near daylight when I dropped off; and then I slept so heavily

for two hours that I was all wet with perspiration when I awoke. On trying to rise, my head swam so that I had to lie down again, and it was late in the day before I could even sit up in bed. Towards evening, I was able to drink a cup of tea and eat a small piece of toast; and then I felt wonderfully better. I slept well that night, and was still better in the morning, but did not think it safe to venture out upon a day's work; so I rested and got all the strength I could. On the third day, I was as well as ever again.'

Mrs. Wykoff drew a long sigh as Miss Carson stopped speaking and bent down over her sewing. For some time she remained without speaking.

'Life is too precious a thing to be wasted in this way,' said the lady, at length, speaking partly to herself and partly to the seamstress. 'We are too thoughtless, I must own; but you are not blameless. It is scarcely possible for us to understand just how the case stands with one in your position, and duty to yourself demands that you should make it known. There is not one lady in ten, I am sure, who would not be pleased rather than annoyed, to have you do so.'

Miss Carson did not answer.

'Do you doubt?' asked Mrs. Wykoff.

'For one of my disposition,' was replied, 'the life of a seamstress does not take off the keen edge of a

natural reserve, or, to speak more correctly, sensitiveness. I dislike to break in upon another's household arrangements, or in any way to intrude myself. My rule is, to adapt myself, as best as I can, to the family order, and so not disturb anything by my presence.'

'Even though your life be in jeopardy?' said Mrs. Wykoff.

'Oh! it's not so bad as that.'

'But it is, Mary! Let me ask a few more questions. I am growing interested in the subject, as reaching beyond you personally. How many families do you work for?'

After thinking for a little while, and naming a number of ladies, she replied:

'Not less than twenty.'

'And to many of these, you go for only a day or two at a time?'

'Yes.'

'Passing from family to family, and adapting yourself to their various home arrangements?'

'Yes, ma'am.'

'Getting your dinner at one o'clock to-day, and at three or four to-morrow?'

Miss Carson nodded assent.

'Taking it now, warm and well served, with the family, and on the next occasion, cold and tasteless by yourself, after the family has dined?'

Another assenting inclination of the head.

'One day set to work in an orderly, well-ventilated room, and on the next cooped up with children in a small apartment, the air of which is little less than poison to your weak lungs?'

'These differences must always occur, Mrs. Wykoff,' replied Miss Carson, in a quiet uncomplaining voice. 'How could it be otherwise? No housekeeper is going to alter her family arrangements for the accommodation of a sewing-girl. The seamstress must adapt herself to them, and do it as gracefully as possible.'

'Even at the risk of her life?'

'She will find it easier to decline working in families where the order of things bears too heavily upon her, than to attempt any change. I have been obliged to do this in one or two instances.'

'There is something wrong here, Mary,' said Mrs. Wykoff, with increasing seriousness of manner—'something very wrong; and as I look it steadily in the face, I feel both surprise and trouble; for, after what you have just said, I do not see clearly how it is to be remedied. One thing is certain: if you, as a class, accept without remonstrance the hurt you suffer, there will be no change. People are indifferent and thoughtless; or worse, too selfish to have any regard for others—especially if they stand, socially, on a plane below them.'

'*We* cannot apply the remedy,' answered Miss Carson.

'I am not so sure of that.'

'Just look at it for a moment, Mrs. Wykoff. It is admitted, that, for the preservation of health, orderly habits are necessary; and that food should be taken at regular intervals. Suppose that at home my habit is to breakfast at eight, dine at one, take tea at five, and sup at eight. To-day, such is the order of my meals; but to-morrow, I leave home at half-past six, and sit down on an empty stomach to sew until eight, before I am called to breakfast. After that, I work until two o'clock, when I get my dinner; and at seven drink tea. On the day after that, may be, on my arrival at another house where a day's cutting and fitting is wanted, I find the breakfast awaiting me at seven; this suits very well—but not another mouthful of food passes my lips until after three o'clock, and then, it may be, I have such an inward trembling and exhaustion, that I cannot eat. On the day following the order is again changed. So it goes on. The difference in food, too, is often as great. At some houses, everything is of good quality, well cooked, and, in consequence, of easy digestion; while at others, sour or heavy bread, greasy cooking, and like kitchen abominations, if I must so call them, disorder instead of giving sustenance to a frail body like mine. The seamstress

who should attempt a change of these things for her own special benefit, would soon find herself in hot water. Think a moment. Suppose, in going into a family for one or two days, or a week, I should begin by a request to have my meals served at certain hours—eight, one, and five, for instance—how would it be received in eight out of ten families?'

'Something would depend,' said Mrs. Wykoff, 'on the way in which it was done. If there was a formal stipulation, or a cold demand, I do not think the response would be a favourable one. But I am satisfied that in your case, with the signs of poor health on your countenance, the mild request to be considered as far as practicable, would, in almost every instance, receive a kind return.'

'Perhaps so. But it would make trouble, if nowhere else, with servants, who never like to do anything out of the common order. I have lived long enough to understand how such things operate; and generally think it wisest to take what comes, and make the best of it.'

'Say, rather, the worst of it, Mary. To my thinking, you are making the worst of it.'

But Mrs. Wykoff did not inspire her seamstress with any purpose to act in the line of her suggestions. Her organization was of too sensitive a character to accept the shocks and repulses that she knew would attend, in some quarters, any such

intrusion of her individual wants. Even with all the risks upon her, she preferred to suffer whatever might come, rather than ask for consideration. During the two or three days that she remained with Mrs. Wykoff, that excellent lady watched her, and ministered to her actual wants, with all the tender solicitude of a mother; and when she left, tried to impress upon her mind the duty of asking, wherever she might be, for such consideration as her health required.

The Monday morning on which Mary Carson was to appear 'as early as possible' at the dwelling of Mrs. Lowe, came round, but it was far from being a bright morning. An easterly storm had set in during the night; the rain was falling fast, and the wind driving gustily. A chilliness crept through the frame of Miss Carson as she arose from her bed, soon after the dull light began to creep in drearily through the half-closed shutters of her room. The air, even within her chamber, felt cold, damp, and penetrating. From her window a church clock was visible. She glanced at the face, and saw that it was nearly seven.

'So late as that!' she exclaimed, in a tone of surprise, and commenced dressing herself in a hurried, nervous way. By the time she was ready to leave her room, she was exhausted by her own excited haste.

'Mary,' said a kind voice, calling to her as she was moving down stairs, 'you are not going out this morning?'

'Oh, yes, ma'am,' she answered, in a cheerful voice. 'I have an engagement for to-day.'

'But the storm is too severe. It's raining and blowing dreadfully. Wait an hour or two until it holds up a little.'

'Oh dear, no, Mrs. Grant! I can't stop for a trifle of rain.'

'It's no trifle of rain this morning, let me tell you, Mary. You'll get drenched to the skin. Now don't go out, child!'

'I must, indeed, Mrs. Grant. The lady expects me, and I cannot disappoint her.' And Miss Carson kept on down stairs.

'But you are not going without something on your stomach, Mary. Wait just for a few minutes until I can get you a cup of tea. The water is boiling.'

Mary did not wait. It was already past the time when she was expected at Mrs. Lowe's; and besides feeling a little uncomfortable on that account, she had a slight sense of nausea, with its attendant aversion to food. So, breaking away from Mrs. Grant's concerned importunities, she went forth into the cold driving storm. It so happened, that she had to go for nearly the entire distance to Mrs. Lowe's house, almost in the teeth of the wind, which

blew a gale, drenching her clothes in spite of all efforts to protect herself by means of an umbrella. Her feet and ankles were wet by the time she reached Mrs. Lowe's, and the lower parts of her dress saturated to a depth of ten or twelve inches.

'I expected you half an hour ago,' said the lady, in a coldly polite way, as Miss Carson entered her presence.

'The morning was dark and I overslept myself,' was the only reply.

Mrs. Lowe did not remark upon the condition of Mary's clothing and feet. That was a matter of no concern to her. It was a seamstress, not a human being that was before her; a machine, not a thing capable of feeling. So she conducted her to a room in the third story, fronting east, against the cloudy and misty windows of which the wind and rain were driving. There was a damp, chilly feeling in the air of this room. Mrs. Lowe had a knit shawl drawn around her shoulders; but Mary, after removing her bonnet and cloak, had no external protection for her chest beyond the closely-fitting body of her merino dress. Her feet and hands felt very cold, and she had that low shuddering, experienced when one is inwardly chilled.

Mrs. Lowe was ready for her seamstress. There were the materials to make half a dozen dresses for Angela and Grace; and one of the little misses was

called immediately, and the work of selecting and cutting a body pattern commenced, Mrs. Lowe herself superintending the operation, and embarrassing Mary at the outset with her many suggestions. Nearly an hour had been spent in this way when the breakfast bell rang. It was after eight o'clock. Without saying anything to Mary, Mrs. Lowe and the child they had been fitting, went down stairs. This hour had been one of nervous excitement to Mary Carson. Her cheeks were hot—burning as if a fire shone upon them; but her cold hands, and wet, colder feet, sent the blood in every returning circle, robbed of warmth to the disturbed heart.

It was past nine o'clock when a servant called Mary to breakfast. As she arose from her chair, she felt a sharp stitch in her left side; so sharp, that she caught her breath in half inspirations, two or three times, before venturing on a full inflation of the lungs. She was, at the same time, conscious of an uncomfortable tightness across the chest. The nausea, and loathing of food, which had given place soon after her arrival at Mrs. Lowe's to a natural craving of the stomach for food, had returned again, and she felt, as she went down stairs, that unless something to tempt the appetite were set before her, she could not take a mouthful. There was nothing to tempt the appetite. The table at which the family had eaten remained just as they had left it—soiled plates and

scraps of broken bread and meat; partly emptied cups and saucers; dirty knives and forks, spread about in confusion. Amid all this, a clean plate had been set for the seamstress; and Mrs. Lowe awaited her, cold and dignified, at the head of the table.

'Coffee or tea, Miss Carson?'

'Coffee.'

It was a lukewarm decoction of coffee, flavoured with tin, and sweetened to nauseousness. Mary took a mouthful and swallowed it; put the cup again to her lips, but they resolutely refused to unclose and admit another drop. So she set the cup down.

'Help yourself to some of the meat.' And Mrs. Lowe pushed the dish, which, nearly three-quarters of an hour before had come upon the table bearing a smoking sirloin, across to the seamstress. Now, lying beside the bone, and cemented to the dish by a stratum of chilled gravy, was the fat, stringy end of the steak. The sight of it was enough for Miss Carson; and she declined the offered delicacy.

'There's bread.' She took a slice from a fresh baker's loaf, and spread it with some butter that remained on one of the butter plates. It was slightly sour. By forcing herself, she swallowed two or three mouthfuls. But the remonstrating palate would accept no more.

'Isn't the coffee good?' asked Mrs. Lowe, with a

sharp quality in her voice, seeing that Miss Carson did not venture upon a second mouthful.

'I have very little appetite this morning,' was answered with an effort to smile and look cheerful.

'Perhaps you'd rather have tea. Shall I give you a cup?' And Mrs. Lowe laid her hand on the teapot.

'You may, if you please.' Mary felt an inward weakness that she knew was occasioned by lack of food, and so accepted the offer of tea, in the hope that it might prove more palatable than the coffee. It had the merit of being hot, and not of decidedly offensive flavour; but it was little more in strength than sweetened water, whitened with milk. She drank off the cup, and then left the table, going, with her still wet feet and skirts, to the sewing-room.

'Rather a dainty young lady,' she heard Mrs. Lowe remark to the maid, as she left the room.

The stitch in Mary's side caught her again, as she went up stairs, and almost took her breath away; and it was some time after she resumed her work, before she could bear her body up straight on the left side.

In her damp feet and skirts, on a chilly and rainy October day, Mary Carson sat working until nearly three o'clock, without rest or refreshment of any kind; and when at last called to dinner, the dis-

ordered condition of the table, and the cold, unpalatable food set before her, extinguished instead of stimulated her sickly appetite. She made a feint of eating, to avoid attracting attention, and then returned to the sewing-room, the air of which, as she re-entered, seemed colder than that of the hall and dining-room.

The stitch in her side was not so bad during the afternoon; but the dull pain was heavier, and accompanied by a sickening sensation. Still, she worked on, cutting, fitting, and sewing with a patience and industry, that, considering her actual condition, was surprising. Mrs. Lowe was in and out of the room frequently, overlooking the work, and marking its progress. Beyond the producing power of her seamstress, she had no thought of that individual. It did not come within the range of her questionings whether she were well or ill; weak or strong; exhausted by prolonged labour, or in the full possession of bodily vigour. To her, she was simply an agent through which a certain service was obtained; and beyond that service, she was nothing. The extent of her consideration was limited by the progressive creation of dresses for her children. As that went on, her thought dwelt with Miss Carson; but penetrated no deeper. She might be human; might have an individual life full of wants, yearnings, and tender sensibilities; might be conscious of bodily or mental

suffering; but if so, it was in a region so remote from that in which Mrs. Lowe dwelt, that no intelligence thereof reached her.

At six o'clock, Mary put up her work, and, taking her bonnet and shawl, went down stairs, intending to return home.

'You're not going?' said Mrs. Lowe, meeting her on the way. She spoke in some surprise.

'Yes, ma'am. I'm not very well, and wish to get home.'

'What time is it?' Mrs. Lowe drew out her watch. 'Only six o'clock! I think you're going rather early. It was late when you came this morning, you know.'

'Excuse me, if you please,' said Miss Carson, as she moved on. 'I am not very well to-night. To-morrow I will make it up.'

Mrs. Lowe muttered something that was not heard by the seamstress, who kept on down stairs, and left the house.

The rain was still falling and the wind blowing. Mary's feet were quite wet again by the time she reached home.

'How are you, child?' asked Mrs. Grant, in kind concern, as Mary came in.

'Not very well,' was answered.

'Oh! I'm sorry! Have you taken cold?'

'I'm afraid that I have.'

'I said it was wrong in you to go out this morning. Did you get very wet?'

'Yes.'

Mrs. Grant looked down at Mary's feet. 'Are they damp?'

'A little.'

'Come right into the sitting-room. I've had a fire made up on purpose for you.' And the considerate Mrs. Grant hurried Mary into the small back-room, and taking off her cloak and bonnet, placed her in a chair before the fire. Then, as she drew off one of her shoes, and clasped the foot in her hand, she exclaimed:

'Soaking wet, as I live!' Then added, after removing, with kind officiousness, the other shoe: 'Hold both feet to the fire, while I run up and get you a pair of dry stockings. Don't take off the wet ones until I come back.'

In a few minutes Mrs. Grant returned with the dry stockings and a towel. She bared one of the damp feet, and dried and heated it thoroughly, and then warmed one of the stockings and drew it on.

'It feels so comfortable now,' said Mary faintly, yet with a tone of satisfaction.

Then the other foot was dried, warmed, and covered. On completing this welcome service, Mrs. Grant looked more steadily into Mary's face, and saw that her cheeks were flushed unnaturally, and that her

eyes shone with an unusual lustre. She also noticed, that in breathing there was an effort.

'You got very wet this morning,' said Mrs. Grant.

'Yes. The wind blew right in my face all the way. An umbrella was hardly of any use.'

'You dried yourself on getting to Mrs. Lowe's?'

Mary shook her head.

'What?'

'There was no fire in the room.'

'Why, Mary?'

'I had no change of clothing, and there was no fire in the room. What could I do?'

'You could have gone down into the kitchen, if nowhere else, and dried your feet.'

'It would have been better if I had done so; but you know how hard it is for me to intrude myself or give trouble.'

'Give trouble! How strangely you do act, sometimes! Isn't life worth a little trouble to save? Mrs. Lowe should have seen to this. Didn't she notice your condition?'

'I think not.'

'Well, it's hard to say who deserves most censure, you or she. Such trifling with health and life is a crime. What's the matter?' she observed Mary start as if from sudden pain.

'I have suffered all day with an occasional sharp stitch in my side; it caught me just then.'

Mrs. Grant observed her more closely; while doing so, Mary coughed two or three times. The cough was tight, and had a wheezing sound.

'Have you coughed much?' she asked.

'Not a great deal. But I'm very tight here,' laying her hand over her breast. 'I think,' she added, a few moments afterwards, 'that I'll go up to my room and get to bed. I feel tired and sick.'

'Wait until I can get you some tea,' replied Mrs. Grant. 'I'll bring down a pillow, and you can lie here on the sofa.'

'Thank you, Mrs. Grant; you are so kind and thoughtful.' Miss Carson's voice shook a little. The contrast between the day's selfish indifference of Mrs. Lowe, and the evening's motherly consideration of Mrs. Grant, touched her. 'I will lie down here for a short time. Perhaps I shall feel better after getting some warm tea. I've been chilly all day.'

The pillow and a shawl were brought, and Mrs. Grant covered Mary as she lay upon the sofa; then she went to the kitchen to get the tea ready.

'Come, dear,' she said, half an hour afterwards, laying her hand upon the now sleeping girl. A drowsy feeling had come over Mary, and she had fallen into a heavy slumber soon after lying down. The easy touch of Mrs. Grant did not awaken her. So she called louder, and shook the sleeper more vigorously. At this, Mary started up, and looked

around in a half-conscious, bewildered manner. Her cheeks were like scarlet.

'Come, dear; tea is ready,' said Mrs Grant.

'Oh! yes;' and Mary, not yet clearly awake, started to leave the room instead of approaching the table.

'Where are you going, child?' Mrs. Grant caught her arm.

Mary stood still, looking at Mrs. Grant in a confused way.

'Tea is ready.' Mrs. Grant spoke slowly, and with emphasis.

'Oh! Ah! Yes. I was asleep.' Mary drew her hand across her eyes two or three times, and then suffered Mrs. Grant to lead her to the table, where she sat down, leaning forward heavily upon one arm.

'Take some of the toast,' said Mrs. Grant, after pouring a cup of tea. Mary helped herself in a dull way to a slice of toast, but did not attempt to eat. Mrs. Grant looked at her narrowly from across the table, and noticed that her eyes, which had appeared large and glittering when she came home, were now lustreless, with the lids drooping heavily.

'Can't you eat anything?' asked Mrs. Grant, in a voice that expressed concern.

Mary pushed her cup and plate away, and, leaning back wearily in her chair, answered—

'Not just now. I'm completely worn out, and feel hot and oppressed.'

Mrs. Grant got up and came around to where Miss Carson was sitting. As she laid her hand upon her forehead, she said, a little anxiously:

'You are fevered, Mary.'

'I shouldn't wonder.' And a sudden cough seized her as she spoke. She cried out as the rapid concussions jarred her, and pressed one hand against her side.

'Oh dear! It seemed as if a knife were cutting through me,' she said, as the paroxysm subsided, and she leaned her head against Mrs. Grant.

'Come, child,' and the kind woman took hold of one of her arms. 'In bed is the place for you now.'

They went up stairs, and Mary was soon undressed and in bed. As she touched the cool sheets, she shivered for a moment, and then shrank down under the clothes, shutting her eyes, and lying very still.

'How do you feel now?' asked Mrs. Grant, who stood bending over her.

Mary did not reply.

'Does the pain in your side continue?'

'Yes, ma'am.' Her voice was dull.

'And the tightness over your breast?'

'Yes, ma'am.'

'What can I do for you?'

'Nothing. I want rest and sleep.'

Mrs. Grant stood for some time looking down upon Mary's red cheeks; red in clearly defined spots, that made the pale forehead whiter by contrast.

'Something more than sleep is wanted, I fear,' she said to herself, as she passed from the chamber and went down stairs. In less than half an hour she returned. A moan reached her ears as she approached the room where the sick girl lay. On entering, she found her sitting high up in bed; or, rather, reclining against the pillows, which she had adjusted against the head-board. Her face, which had lost much of its redness, was pinched, and had a distressed look. Her eyes turned anxiously to Mrs Grant.

'How are you now, Mary?'

'Oh, I'm sick! Very sick, Mrs. Grant.'

'Where? How, Mary?'

'Oh, dear! I'm so distressed here!' laying her hand on her breast. 'And every time I draw a breath, such a sharp pain runs through my side into my shoulder. Oh, dear! I feel very sick, Mrs. Grant.'

'Shall I send for a doctor?'

'I don't know, ma'am.' And Miss Carson threw her head from side to side uneasily—almost impatiently; then cried out with pain, as she took a deeper inspiration than usual.

Mrs. Grant left the room, and going down stairs, despatched her servant for a physician who lived not far distant.

'It is pleurisy,' said the doctor, on examining the case. 'And a very severe attack,' he added aside to Mrs. Grant.

Of the particulars of his treatment we will not speak. He was of the exhaustive school, and took blood freely, striking at the inflammation through a reduction of the vital system. When he left his patient that night, she was free from pain, breathing feebly, and without constriction of the chest. In the morning, he found her with considerable fever, and suffering from a return of the pleuritic pain. Her pulse was low and quick, and had a wiry thrill under the fingers. The doctor had taken blood very freely on the night before, and hesitated a little on the question of opening another vein, or having recourse to cups. As the lancet was at hand, and most easy of use, the vein was opened, and permitted to flow until there was a marked reduction of pain. After this an anodyne was prescribed, and the doctor retired from the chamber with Mrs. Grant. He was much more particular now in his inquiries about his patient and the immediate cause of her illness. On learning that she had been permitted to remain all day in a cold room, with wet feet and damp clothing, he shook his head soberly, and remarked, partly speaking to himself, that doctors were not of much use in suicide or murder cases. Then he asked abruptly, and with considerable excitement of manner:

'In Heaven's name, who permitted this thing to be done? In what family did it occur?'

'The lady for whom she worked yesterday is named Mrs. Lowe.'

'Mrs. Lowe!'

'Yes, sir.'

'And she permitted that delicate girl to sit in wet clothing, in a room without fire, on a day like yesterday?'

'It is so, doctor.'

'Then I call Mrs. Lowe a murderer!' The doctor spoke with excess of feeling.

'Do you think Mary so very ill, doctor?' asked Mrs. Grant.

'I do, ma'am.'

'She is free from pain now.'

'So she was when I left her last night; and I expected to find her showing marked improvement this morning. But, to my concern, I find her really worse instead of better.'

'Worse, doctor? Not worse!'

'I say worse to you, Mrs. Grant, in order that you may know how much depends on careful attendance. Send for the medicine I have prescribed at once, and give it immediately. It will quiet her system and produce sleep. If perspiration follows, we shall be on the right side. I will call in again through the day. If the pain in her side returns, send for me.'

The pain did return, and the doctor was summoned. He feared to strike his lancet again, but cupped freely over the right side, thus gaining for the suffering girl a measure of relief. She lay after this in a kind of stupor for some hours. On coming out of this, she no longer had the excruciating pain in her side with every expansion of the lungs, but, instead, a dull pain, attended by a cough and tightness of the chest. The cough was at first dry, unsatisfactory, and attended with anxiety. A low fever accompanied these bad symptoms.

The case had become complicated with pneumonia, and assumed a very dangerous type. On the third day a consulting physician was called in. He noted all the symptoms carefully, and with a seriousness of manner that did not escape the watchful eyes of Mrs. Grant. He passed but few words with the attendant physician, and their exact meaning was veiled by medical terms; but Mrs. Grant understood enough to satisfy her that little hope of a favourable issue was entertained.

About the time this consultation over the case of Mary Carson was in progress, it happened that Mrs. Wykoff received another visit from Mrs. Lowe.

'I've called,' said the latter, speaking in the tone of one who felt annoyed, 'to ask where that sewing-girl you recommended to me lives.'

'Miss Carson?'

'Yes, I believe that is her name.'

'Didn't she come on Monday, according to appointment?'

'Oh yes, she came; but I've seen nothing of her since.'

'Ah, is that so? She may be sick.' The voice of Mrs. Wykoff dropped to a shade of seriousness. 'Let me see—Monday—didn't it rain?—Yes, now I remember; it was a dreadful day. Perhaps she took cold. She's very delicate. Did she get wet in coming to your house?'

'I'm sure I don't know.' There was a slight indication of annoyance on the part of Mrs. Lowe.

'It was impossible, raining and blowing as it did, for her to escape wet feet, if not drenched clothing. Was there fire in the room where she worked?'

'Fire! No. We don't have grates or stoves in any of our rooms.'

Mrs. Wykoff mused for some moments.

'Excuse me,' she said, 'for asking such minute questions; but I know Miss Carson's extreme delicacy, and I am fearful that she is sick, as the result of a cold. Did you notice her when she came in on Monday morning?'

'Yes. I was standing in the hall when the servant admitted her. She came rather late.'

'Did she go immediately to the room where she was to work?'

'Yes.'

'You are sure she didn't go into the kitchen and dry her feet?'

'She went up-stairs as soon as she came in.'

'Did you go up with her?'

'Yes.'

'Excuse me, Mrs. Lowe,' said Mrs. Wykoff, who saw that these questions were chafing her visitor, 'for pressing my inquiries so closely. I am much concerned at the fact of her absence from your house since Monday. Did she change any of her clothing, —take off her stockings, for instance, and put on dry ones?'

'Nothing of the kind.'

'But sat in her wet shoes and stockings all day!'

'I don't know that they were wet, Mrs. Wykoff,' said the lady, with contracting brows.

'Could you have walked through six or seven streets in the face of Monday's driving storm, Mrs. Lowe, and escaped wet feet? Of course not. Your stockings would have been wet half way to the knees, and your skirts also.'

There was a growing excitement about Mrs. Wykoff, united with an air of so much seriousness, that Mrs. Lowe began to feel a pressure of alarm. Selfish, cold-hearted, and indifferent to all in a social grade beneath her, this lady was not quite ready to

stand up in the world's face as one without common humanity. The way in which Mrs. Wykoff was presenting the case of Miss Carson on that stormy morning, did not reflect very creditably upon her; and the thought—'How would this sound, if told of me?'—did not leave her in the most comfortable frame of mind.

'I hope she's not sick. I'm sure the thought of her being wet never crossed my mind. Why didn't she speak of it herself? She knew her own condition, and that there was fire in the kitchen. I declare! some people act in a manner perfectly incomprehensible.' Mrs. Lowe spoke now in a disturbed manner.

'Miss Carson should have looked to this herself, and she was wrong in not doing so—very wrong,' said Mrs. Wykoff. 'But she is shrinking and sensitive to a fault; afraid of giving trouble or intruding herself. It is our place, I think, when strangers come into our houses, no matter under what circumstances, to assume that they have a natural delicacy about asking for needed consideration, and to see that all things due to them are tendered. I cannot see that any exceptions to this rule are admissible. To my thinking, it applies to a servant, a seamstress, or a guest, each in a just degree, with equal force. Not that I am blameless in this thing. Far from it. But I acknowledge my fault whenever it is seen,

and repenting, resolve to act more humanely in the future.'

'Where does Miss Carson live?' asked Mrs. Lowe. 'I came to make the inquiry.'

'As I feel rather troubled about her,' answered Mrs. Wykoff, 'I will go and see her this afternoon.'

'I wish you would. What you have said makes me feel rather uncomfortable. I hope there is nothing wrong; or, at least, that she is only slightly indisposed. It was thoughtless in me. But I was so much interested in the work she was doing that I never once thought of her personally.'

'Did she come before breakfast?'

'Oh, yes.'

'Excuse me; but at what time did she get her breakfast?'

There was just a little shrinking in the manner of Mrs. Lowe as she answered:

'Towards nine o'clock.'

'Did she eat anything?'

'Well, no, not much in particular. I thought her a little dainty. She took coffee; but it didn't appear to suit her appetite. Then I offered her tea, and she drank a cup.'

'But didn't take any solid food?'

'Very little. She struck me as being rather a dainty miss.'

'She is weak and delicate, Mrs. Lowe, as any one

who looks into her face may see. Did you give her a lunch towards noon?'

'A lunch! Why no!' Mrs. Lowe elevated her brows.

'How late was it when she took dinner?'

'Three o'clock.'

'Did she eat heartily?'

'I didn't notice her particularly. She was at the table for only a few minutes.'

'I fear for the worst,' said Mrs. Wykoff. 'If Mary Carson sat all day on Monday in damp clothes, wet feet, and without taking a sufficient quantity of nourishing food, I wouldn't give much for her life.'

Mrs. Lowe gathered her shawl around her, and arose to depart. There was a cloud on her face.

'You will see Miss Carson to-day?' she said.

'Oh, yes.'

'At what time do you think of going?'

'I shall not be able to leave home before late in the afternoon.'

'Say four o'clock.'

'Not earlier than half-past four.'

Mrs. Lowe stood for some moments with the air of one who hesitated about doing something.

'Will you call for me?' Her voice was slightly depressed.

'Certainly.'

'What you have said troubles me. I'm sure I

didn't mean to be unkind. It was thoughtlessness altogether. I hope she's not ill.'

'I'll leave home at half-past four,' said Mrs. Wykoff. 'It isn't over ten minutes' walk to your house.'

'You'll find me all ready. Oh, dear!' and Mrs. Lowe drew a long, sighing breath. 'I hope she didn't take cold at my house. I hope nothing serious will grow out of it. I wouldn't have anything of this kind happen for the world. People are so uncharitable! If it should get out, I would be talked about dreadfully; and I'm sure the girl is a great deal more to blame than I am. Why didn't she see to it that her feet and clothes were dried before she sat down to her work?'

Mrs. Wykoff did not answer. Mrs. Lowe stood for a few moments, waiting for some exculpatory suggestion; but Mrs. Wykoff had none to offer.

'Good morning. You'll find me all ready when you call.'

'Good morning.'

And the ladies parted.

'Ah, Mrs. Lowe! How are you this morning?'

A street meeting, ten minutes later.

'Quite well. How are you?'

'Well as usual. I just called at your house.'

'Ah, indeed! Come, go back again.'

'No, thank you; I've several calls to make this morning. 'But, d'you know, there's a strange story afloat about a certain lady of your acquaintance?'

'Of my acquaintance!'

'Yes; a lady with whom you are very, very intimate.'

'What is it?' There was a little anxiety mixed with the curious air of Mrs. Lowe.

'Something about murdering a sewing-girl.'

'What?' Mrs. Lowe started as if she had received a blow; a frightened look came into her face.

'But there isn't anything in it, of course,' said the friend, in considerable astonishment at the effect produced on Mrs. Lowe.

'Tell me just what you have heard,' said the latter. 'You mean me by the "lady of your intimate acquaintance."'

'Yes; the talk is about you. It came from doctor somebody; I don't know whom. He's attending the girl.'

'What is said? I wish to know. Don't keep back anything on account of my feelings. I shall know as to its truth or falsehood; and, true or false, it is better that I should stand fully advised. A seamstress came to work for me on Monday,—it was a stormy day, you know,—took cold from wet feet, and is now very ill. That much I know. It might have happened at your house, or your neighbour's,

without legitimate blame lying against either of you. Now, out of this simple fact, what dreadful report is circulated to my injury? As I have just said, don't keep anything back.'

'The story,' replied the friend, 'is that she walked for half a mile before breakfast, in the face of that terrible north-east storm, and came to you with feet soaking and skirts wet to the knees, and that you put her to work, in this condition, in a cold room, and suffered her to sit in her wet garments all day. That, in consequence, she went home sick, was attacked with pleurisy in the evening, which soon ran into acute pneumonia, and that she is now dying. The doctor, who told my friend, called it murder, and said, without hesitation, that you were a murderer.'

'Dying! Did he say that she was dying?'

'Yes, ma'am. The doctor said that you might as well have put a pistol-ball through her head.'

'Me!'

'Yes, you. Those were his words, as repeated by my friend.'

'Who is the friend to whom you refer?'

'Mrs. T—.'

'And, without a word of inquiry as to the degree of blame referrible to me, she repeats this wholesale charge, to my injury? Verily, that is Christian charity!'

'I suggested caution on her part, and started to see you at once. Then she did sit in her wet clothing all day at your house?'

'I don't know whether she did or not,' replied Mrs. Lowe, fretfully. 'She was of woman's age, and competent to take care of herself. If she came in wet, she knew it; and there was fire in the house, at which she could have dried herself. Even a half-witted person, starting from home on a morning like that, and expecting to be absent all day, would have provided herself with dry stockings and slippers for a change. If the girl dies from cold taken on that occasion, it must be set down to suicide, not murder. I may have been thoughtless, but I am not responsible. I'm sorry for her; but I cannot take blame to myself. The same thing might have happened in your house.'

'It might have happened in other houses than yours, Mrs. Lowe, I will admit,' was replied. 'But I do not think it would have happened in mine. I was once a seamstress myself, and for nearly two years went out to work in families. What I experienced during these two years has made me considerate towards all who come into my house in that capacity. Many who are compelled to earn a living with the needle, were once in better condition than now, and the change touches some of them rather sharply. In some families they are treated with a thoughtful kind-

ness, in strong contrast with what they receive in other families. If sensitive and retiring, they learn to be very chary about asking for anything beyond what is conceded, and bear, rather than suggest or complain.'

'I've no patience with that kind of sensitiveness!' replied Mrs. Lowe; 'it's simply ridiculous; and not only ridiculous, but wrong. Is every sewing-girl who comes into your house to be treated like an honoured guest?'

'We are in no danger of erring, Mrs. Lowe,' was answered, 'on the side of considerate kindness, even to sewing-women. They are human, and have wants, and weaknesses, and bodily conditions, that as imperatively demand a timely and just regard as those of the most honoured guest who may sojourn with us. And what is more, as I hold, we cannot omit our duty either to the one or to the other, and be blameless. But I must go on. Good morning, Mrs. Lowe.'

'Good morning,' was coldly responded. And the two ladies parted.

We advance the time a few hours. It is nearly sundown, and the slant beams are coming in through the partly-raised blinds, and falling on the bed, where, white, and panting for the shortcoming breath, lies Mary Carson, a little raised by pillows, against which

her head rests motionless. Her eyes are shut, the brown lashes lying in two deep fringes on her cheeks. Away from her temples and forehead the hair has been smoothly brushed by loving hands, and there is a spiritual beauty in her face that is suggestive of heaven. Mrs. Grant is on one side of the bed, and the physician on the other. Both are gazing intently on the sick girl's face. The door opens, and two ladies come in, noiselessly—Mrs. Lowe and Mrs. Wykoff. They are strangers there to all but Mary Carson, and she has passed too far on the journey homeward for mortal recognitions. Mrs. Grant moves a little back from the bed, and the two ladies stand in her place, leaning forward, with half-suspended breathing. The almost classic beauty of Miss Carson's face; the exquisite cutting of every feature; the purity of its tone—are all at once so apparent to Mrs. Lowe that she gazes down, wonder and admiration mingling with awe and self-accusation.

There is a slight convulsive cough, with a fleeting spasm. The white lips are stained. Mrs. Lowe shudders. The stain is wiped off, and all is still as before. Now the slanting sun-rays touch the pillows, close beside the white face, lighting it with a glory that seems not of the earth. They fade, and life fades with them, going out as they recede. With the last pencil of sunbeams passes the soul of Mary Carson.

'It is over!' The physician breathes deeply, and moves backwards from the bed.

'Over with her,' he adds, like one impelled by crowding thoughts to untimely utterance. 'The bills of mortality will say pneumonia; *it were better written murder!*'

Call it murder, or suicide, as you will; only, fair reader, see to it that responsibility in such a case lies never at your door.

MISTRESS AND MAID.

I DID not feel in a very good humour either with myself or with Polly, my nursery-maid. The fact is, Polly had displeased me; and I, while under the influence of rather excited feelings, had rebuked her with a degree of passionate intemperance not exactly becoming in a Christian gentlewoman, or just to a well-meaning, though not perfect domestic.

Polly had taken my sharp words without replying. They seemed to stun her. She stood for a few moments, after the vials of my wrath were emptied, her face paler than usual, and her lips almost colourless. Then she turned and walked from my room with a slow but firm step. There was an air of purpose about her, and a manner that puzzled me a little.

The thermometer of my feelings was gradually falling, though not yet reduced very far below fever-heat, when Polly stood again before me. A red spot now burned on each cheek, and her eyes were steady as she let them rest in mine.

'Mrs. Wilkins,' said she, firmly, yet respectfully, 'I am going to leave when my month is up.'

Now, I have my own share of wilfulness and impulsive independence. So I answered, without hesitation or reflection:

'Very well, Polly. If you wish to leave, I will look for another to fill your place.' And I drew myself up with an air of dignity.

Polly retired as quickly as she came, and I was left alone with my not very agreeable thoughts for companions. Polly had been in my family for nearly four years, in the capacity of nurse and chamber-maid. She was faithful and kind in her disposition, and industrious. The children were all attached to her, and her influence over them was both great and good. I had often said to myself, in view of Polly's excellent qualities, 'She is a treasure!' And always, the thought of losing her services had been an unpleasant one. Of late, in some things, Polly had failed to give the satisfaction of former times. She was neither so cheerful, nor so thoughtful, nor had she her usual patience with the children. 'Her disposition is altering,' I said to myself, now and

then, in view of this change; 'something has spoiled her.'

'You have indulged her too much, I suppose,' was the reason given by my husband, whenever I ventured to introduce to his notice the shortcomings of Polly. 'You are an expert at the business of spoiling domestic servants.'

My good opinion of myself was generally flattered by this estimate of the case; and, as this good opinion strengthened, a feeling of indignation against Polly for her ingratitude, as I was pleased to call it, found a lodging in my heart.

And so the matter had gone on, from small beginnings, until a state of dissatisfaction on the one part, and coldness on the other, had grown up between mistress and maid. I asked no questions of Polly, as to the change in her manner, but drew my own inferences, and took for granted my own conclusions. I had spoiled her by indulgence; that was clear. As a thing of course, this view was not very favourable to a just and patient estimate of her conduct, whenever it failed to meet my approval.

On the present occasion, she had neglected the performance of certain services, in consequence of which I suffered some small inconvenience, and a great deal of annoyance.

'I don't know what's come over you, Polly,' said I

to her sharply. 'Something has spoiled you outright; and I tell you now, once for all, that you'll have to mend your ways considerably, if you expect to remain much longer in this family.'

The language was hard enough, but the manner harder and more offensive. I had never spoken to her before with anything like the severity now used. The result of this intemperance of speech on my part, the reader has seen. Polly gave notice that she would leave, and I accepted the notice. For a short time after the girl retired from my room, I maintained a state of half-indignant independence; but as to being satisfied with myself, that was out of the question. I had lost my temper, and, as is usual in such cases, had been harsh, and, it might be, unjust. I was about to lose the services of a domestic, whose good qualities so far overbalanced all defects and shortcomings, that I could hardly hope to supply her place. How could the children give her up? This question came home with a most unpleasant suggestion of consequences. But, as the disturbance of my feelings went on subsiding, and thought grew clearer and clearer, that which most troubled me was a sense of injustice towards Polly. The suggestion came stealing into my mind, that the something wrong about her might involve a great deal more than I had, in a narrow reference of things to my own affairs, imagined. Polly was certainly changed; but might

not the change have its origin in mental conflict or suffering, which entitled her to pity and consideration, instead of blame?

This was a new thought, which in no way tended to increase a feeling of self-approval.

'She is human, like the rest of us,' said I, as I sat talking over the matter with myself, 'and every human heart has its portion of bitterness. The weak must bear in weakness, as well as the strong in strength; and the light burden rests as painfully on the back that bends in feebleness, as does the heavy one borne on Atlas-shoulders. We are too apt to regard those who serve us as mere working machines. Rarely do we consider them as possessing like wants and weaknesses, like sympathies and yearnings with ourselves. Anything will do for them. Under any external circumstances, it is their duty to be satisfied.'

I was wrong in this matter. Nothing was now clearer to me than this. But how was I to get right? That was the puzzling question. I thought, and thought, looking at the difficulty first on this side, and then on that. No way of escape presented itself, except through some open or implied acknowledgment of wrong; that is, I must have some plain, kind talk with Polly, to begin with, and thus show her, by an entire change of manner, that I was conscious of having spoken to her in a way that was not

met by my own self-approval. Pride was not slow in vindicating her own position among the mental powers. She was not willing to see me humble myself to a servant. Polly had given notice that she was going to leave, and if I made concession, she would at once conclude that I did so meanly, from self-interest, because I wished to retain her services. My naturally independent spirit revolted under this view of the case, but I marshalled some of the better forces of my mind, and took the field bravely on the side of right and duty. For some time the conflict went on; then the better elements of my nature gained the victory.

When the decision was made, I sent a message for Polly. I saw, as she entered my room, that her cheeks no longer burned, and that the fire had died out in her eyes. Her face was pale, and its expression sad, but enduring.

'Polly,' said I, kindly, 'sit down. I wish to talk with you for a little.'

The girl seemed taken by surprise. Her face warmed a little; and her eyes, which had been turned aside from mine, looked at me with a glance of inquiry.

'There, Polly,'—and I pointed to a chair,—'sit down.'

She obeyed, but with a weary, patient air, like one whose feelings were painfully oppressed.

'Polly,' said I, with kindness and interest in my voice, 'has anything troubled you of late?'

Her face flushed and her eyes reddened.

'If there has, Polly, and I can help you in any way, speak to me as a friend. You can trust me.'

I was not prepared for the sudden and strong emotion that instantly manifested itself. Her face fell into her hands, and she sobbed out, with a violence that startled me. I waited until she grew calm, and then said, laying a hand kindly upon her as I spoke:

'Polly, you can talk to me as freely as if I were your mother. Speak plainly, and if I can advise you or aid you in any way, be sure that I will do it.'

'I don't think you can help me any, ma'am, unless it is to bear my trouble more patiently,' she answered, in a subdued way.

'Trouble, child! What trouble? Has anything gone wrong with you?'

The manner in which this inquiry was made, aroused her, and she said quickly, and with feeling:

'Wrong with *me?* Oh, no, ma'am!'

'But you are in trouble, Polly.'

'Not for myself, ma'am, not for myself,' was her earnest reply.

'For whom then, Polly?'

The girl did not answer for some moments. Then, with a long, deep sigh, she said:

'You never saw my brother Tom, ma'am. Oh, he was such a nice boy, and I was so fond of him! He had a hard place where he worked, and they paid him so little that, poor fellow! if I hadn't spent half my wages on him, he'd never have looked fit to be seen among folks. When he was eighteen he seemed to me perfect. He was so good and kind. But'—and the girl's voice almost broke down—'somehow, he began to change after that. I think he fell into bad company. Oh, ma'am! It seemed as if it would have killed me the first time I found that he had been drinking, and was not himself. I cried all night for two or three nights. When we met again I tried to talk with Tom about it, but he wouldn't hear a word, and, for the first time in his life, got angry with his sister.

'It has been going on from bad to worse ever since, and I've almost given up hope.'

'He's several years younger than you are, Polly?'

'Yes, ma'am. He was only ten years old when our mother died. I am glad she is dead now: what I've never said before. There were only two of us—Tom and I; and I being nearly six years the oldest, felt like a mother as well as a sister to him. I've never spent much on myself, as you know, and never had as good clothes as other girls with my

wages. It took nearly everything for Tom. Oh, dear! What is to come of it all? It will kill me, I'm afraid.'

A few questions on my part brought out particulars in regard to Polly's brother that satisfied me of his great lapse from virtue and sobriety. He was now upwards of twenty years of age, and from all I could learn, was moving swift-footed along the road to destruction.

There followed a dead silence for some time after all the story was told. What could I say? The case was one in which it seemed that I could offer neither advice nor consolation. But it was in my power to show interest in the girl, and to let her feel that she had my sympathy. She was sitting with her eyes cast down, and a look of sorrow on her pale, thin face. I had not before remarked the signs of emaciation—that touched me deeply.

'Polly,' said I, with as much kindness of tone as I could express, 'it is the lot of all to have trouble, and each heart knows its own bitterness. But on some the trouble falls with a weight that seems impossible to be borne. And this is your case. Yet it only *seems* to be so, for as our day is, so shall our strength be. If you cannot draw your brother away from the dangerous paths in which he is walking, you can pray for him; and the prayer of earnest love will bring your spirit so near to his spirit, that God

may be able to influence him for good through this presence of your spirit with his.'

Polly looked at me with a light flashing in her face, as if a new hope had dawned upon her heart.

'Oh, ma'am,' she said, 'I have prayed, and do pray for him daily. But, then, I think God loves him better than I can love him, and needs none of my prayer in the case. And so a chill falls over me, and everything grows dark and hopeless; for, of myself, I can do nothing.'

'Our prayers cannot change the purposes of God towards any one; but God works by means, and our prayers may be the means through which He can help another.'

'How? How? Oh, tell me how, Mrs. Wilkins!' The girl spoke with great eagerness.

I had an important truth to communicate, but how was I to make it clear to her simple mind? I thought for a moment, and then said:

'When we think of others, we see them.'

'In our minds?'

'Yes, Polly. We see them with the eyes of our minds, and are also present with them as to our minds, or spirits. Have you not noticed that on some occasions you suddenly thought of a person, and that in a little while afterwards that person came in?'

'Oh, yes, I've often noticed, and wondered why it should be so.'

'Well, the person in coming to see you, or in approaching the place where you were, thought of you so distinctly that she was present to your mind, or spirit, and you saw her with the eyes of your mind. If this be the right explanation, as I believe it is, then, if we think intently of others, and especially if we think with a strong affection, we are present with them so fully, that they think of us, and see our forms with the eyes of their spirits. And now, Polly, keeping this in mind, we may see how praying in tender love for another may enable God to do him good; for you know that men and angels are co-workers with God in all good. On the wings of our thought and love, angelic spirits, who are present with us in prayer, may pass with us to the object of our tender interest, and thus gaining audience, as it were, stir the heart with good impulses. And who can tell how effectual this may be, if of daily act and long continuance?'

I paused to see if I was comprehended. Polly was listening intently, with her eyes upon the floor. She looked up, after a moment, her countenance calmer than before, but bearing so hopeful an aspect that I was touched with wonder.

'I will pray for him morning, noon, and night,' she said; 'and if, bodily, I cannot be near him, my

spirit shall be present with his many times each day. Oh, if I could but draw him back from the evil into which he has fallen!'

'A sister's loving prayer, and the memory of his mother in heaven, will prove, I trust, Polly, too potent for all his enemies. Take courage!'

In the silence that followed this last remark, Polly arose and stood as if there was something yet unsaid in her mind. I understood her, and made the way plain for both of us.

'If I had known of this before, it would have explained to me some things that gave my mind an unfavourable impression. You have not been like yourself for some time past.'

'How could I, ma'am?' Polly's voice trembled and her eyes again filled with tears. 'I never meant to displease you; but'—

'All is explained,' said I, interrupting her. 'I see just how it is; and if I have said a word that hurt you, I am sorry for it. No one could have given better satisfaction in a family than you have given.'

'I have always tried to do right,' murmured the poor girl, sadly.

'I know it, Polly.' My tones were encouraging. 'And if you will forget the unkind way in which I spoke to you this morning, and let things remain as they were, it may be better for both of us. You are

not fit, taking your state of mind as it now is, to go among strangers.'

Polly looked at me with gratitude and forgiveness in her wet eyes. There was a motion of reply about her lips, but she did not trust herself to speak.

'Shall it be as it was, Polly?'

'Oh, yes, ma'am! I don't wish to leave you; and particularly, not now. I am not fit, as you say, to go among strangers. But you must bear with me a little; for I can't always keep my thoughts about me.'

When Polly retired from my room, I set myself to thinking over what had happened. The lesson went deeply into my heart. Poor girl! what a heavy burden rested upon her weak shoulders! No wonder that she bent under it! No wonder that she was changed! She was no subject for angry reproof, but for pity and forbearance. If she had come short in service, or failed to enter upon her daily tasks with the old cheerfulness, no blame could attach to her, for the defect was of force and not of will.

'Ah,' said I, as I pondered the matter, 'how little inclined are we to consider those who stand below us in the social scale, or to think of them as having like passions, like weaknesses, like hopes and fears with ourselves! We deal with them too often as if they were mere working machines, and grow impatient if they show signs of pain, weariness,

or irritation. We are quick to blame, and slow to praise; chary of kind words, but voluble in reproof; holding ourselves superior in station, but not always showing ourselves superior in thoughtfulness, self-control, and kind forbearance. Ah me! Life is a lesson-book, and we turn a new page every day.'

MY FATHER.

I HAVE a very early recollection of my father as a cheerful man, and of our home as a place full of the heart's warmest sunshine. But the father of my childhood and the father of my more advanced years wore a very different exterior. He had grown silent, thoughtful, abstracted, but not morose. As his children sprang up around him, full of life and hope, he seemed to lose the buoyant spirits of his earlier manhood. I did not observe this at the time, for I had not learned to observe and reflect. Life was a simple state of enjoyment. Trial had not quickened my perceptions, nor suffering taught me an unselfish regard for others.

The home provided by my father was elegant—some would have called it luxurious. On our education and accomplishments no expense was spared.

I had the best teachers—and, of course, the most expensive; with none others would I have been satisfied, for I had come naturally to regard myself as on a social equality with the fashionable young friends who were my companions, and who indulged the fashionable vice of depreciating everything that did not come up to a certain acknowledged standard. Yearly I went to a fashionable watering-place with my sisters, and at a cost which I now think of with amazement. Sometimes my mother went with us, but my father never. He was not able to leave his business. Business! How I came to dislike the word! It was always 'business' when we asked him to go anywhere with us; 'business' hurried him away from his hastily-eaten meals; 'business' absorbed all his thoughts, and robbed us of our father.

'I wish father would give up business,' I said to my mother one day, 'and take some comfort of his life. Mr. Woodward has retired, and is now living on his income.'

My mother looked at me strangely and sighed, but answered nothing.

About this time my father showed some inclination to repress our growing disposition to spend money extravagantly in dress. Nothing but a twenty-guinea shawl would suit my ideas. Ada White had been presented by her father with a twenty-guinea cash-

mere, and I did not mean to be put off with anything less.

'Father, I want twenty guineas,' said I to him one morning as he was leaving the house, after eating his light breakfast. He had grown dyspeptic, and had to be careful and sparing in his diet.

'Twenty guineas!' He looked surprised; in fact, I noticed that my request made him start. 'What do you want with so much money?'

'I have nothing seasonable to wear,' said I, very firmly; 'and as I must have a shawl, I might as well get a good one while I am about it. I saw one yesterday that is just the thing. Ada White's father gave her a shawl exactly like it, and you must let me have the money to buy this one. It will last my life-time.'

'Twenty guineas is a large price for a shawl,' said my father, in his sober way.

'Oh, dear, no!' was my emphatic answer; 'it is a low price for a shawl. Jane Wharton's cost a hundred.'

'I'll think about it,' said my father, turning from me rather abruptly.

When he came home at dinner-time, I was alone in the parlour, practising a new piece of music which my fashionable teacher had left me. He was paid half a guinea for every lesson. My father smiled as he laid a parcel of sovereigns on the keys of the

piano. I started up, and kissing him, said, with the ardour of a pleased girl :

'What a dear good father you are !'

The return was ample. He always seemed most pleased when he could gratify some wish or supply some want of his children. Ah ! if we had been less selfish ; less exacting !

It was hardly to be expected that my sisters would see me the possessor of a splendid shawl, and not desire a like addition to their wardrobes.

'I want some money, papa,' said my sister Jane, next morning, as my father was about leaving for his office.

'Can't spare it to-day, my child,' I heard him answer, kindly, but firmly.

'Oh, but I must have it,' urged my sister.

'I gave you five pounds only the day before yesterday,' my father replied to this. 'What have you done with that ?'

'Spent it for gloves and laces,' said Jane, in a light way, as if the sum were of the smallest possible consequence.

'I am not made of money, child.' The tone of my father's voice struck me as unusually sober ; almost sad. But Jane replied instantly, and with something of reproach and complaint in her tones : 'I shouldn't think you were, if you find it so hard to part with a small sum.'

'I have a large payment to make to-day'—my father spoke with unusual decision of manner—'and shall need every sovereign that I can raise.'

'You gave sister money yesterday,' said Jane, almost petulantly.

Not a word of reply did my father make. I was looking at him, and saw an expression on his countenance that was new to me,—an expression of pain mingled with fear. He turned away slowly, and in silence left the house.

'Jane,' said my mother, addressing her from the staircase, on which she had been standing, 'how could you speak so to your father?'

'I have just as good right to a new shawl as Anna,' replied my sister, in a very undutiful tone. 'And what is more, I'm going to have one.'

'What reason did your father give for refusing your request to-day?' asked my mother.

'Couldn't spare the money! Had a large payment to make! Only an excuse!'

'Stop, my child!' was the quick, firm remark, made with unusual feeling. 'Is that the way to speak of so good a father? Of one who has ever been so kindly indulgent? Jane! Jane! You know not what you are saying!'

My sister looked something abashed at this unexpected rebuke, when my mother took occasion to

add, with an earnestness of manner that I could not help remarking as singular:

'Your father is troubled about something. Business may not be going on to his satisfaction. Last night I awoke and found him walking the floor. To my questions he merely answered that he was wakeful. His health is not so good as formerly, and his spirits are low. Don't, let me pray you, do anything to worry him. Say no more about this money, Jane; you will get it whenever it can be spared.'

I did not see my father again until tea-time. Occasionally, business engagements pressed upon him so closely that he did not come home at the usual hour for dining. He looked pale—weary—almost haggard.

'Dear father, are you sick?' said I, laying a hand upon him, and gazing earnestly into his countenance.

'I do not feel very well,' he replied, partly averting his face, as if he did not wish me to read its expression too closely. 'I have had a weary day.'

'You must take more recreation,' said I. 'This excessive devotion to business is destroying your health. Why will you do it, father?'

He merely sighed as he passed onwards, and ascended to his own room. At tea-time I observed that his face was unusually sober. His silence was nothing uncommon, and so that passed without remark from any one.

On the next day Jane received twenty guineas,

which was spent for a shawl like mine. This brought the sunshine back to her face. Her moody looks, I saw, disturbed my father.

From this time, the hand which had ever been ready to supply all our wants, real or imaginary, opened less promptly at our demands. My father talked occasionally of retrenchment and economy when some of our extravagant bills came in; but we paid little heed to his remarks on this head. Where could we retrench? In what could we economize? The very idea was absurd. We had nothing that others moving in our circle did not have. Our house and furniture would hardly compare favourably with the houses and furniture of many of our fashionable friends. We dressed no better; indeed, not so well as dozens of our acquaintances. Retrenchment and economy! I remember laughing with my sisters at the words, and wondering with them what could be coming over our father. In a half-amused way, we enumerated the various items of imaginary reform, beginning at the annual summer recreations, and ending with our milliner's bills. In mock seriousness, we proposed to take the places of cook, chambermaid, and footman, and thus save these items of expense in the family. We had quite a merry time over our fancied reforms.

But our father was serious. Steadily he persisted in what seemed to us a growing penuriousness.

Every demand for money seemed to give him a partial shock, and every sovereign that came to us was parted with reluctantly. All this was something new; but we thought less than we felt about it. Our father seemed to be getting into a very singular state of mind.

Summer came round,—I shall never forget that summer,—and we commenced making our annual preparations for the seaside. Money was, of course, an indispensable prerequisite. I asked for ten pounds.

'For what purpose?' inquired my father.

'I haven't a single dress fit to appear in away from home,' said I.

'Where are you going?' he asked.

I thought the question a strange one, and replied, a little curtly:

'To the seaside, of course.'

'Oh!' It seemed new to him. Then he repeated my words, in a questioning kind of a way, as if his mind were not altogether satisfied on the subject.

'The seaside?'

'Yes, papa. We always go there.'

'Who else is going?' My father's manner was strange. I had never seen him just in the mood he then appeared to be.

'Jane is going, of course; and so is Emily. And we are trying to persuade mother also. She didn't

go last year. Won't you spend a week or two with us? Now, do say yes.'

My father shook his head at this last proposal, and said, 'No, child!' very decidedly.

'Why?' I asked.

'Because I have something of more importance to think about than watering-places and their fashionable follies.'

'Business! business!' said I, impatiently. 'It is the Moloch, father, to which you sacrifice every social pleasure, every home delight, every good! Already you have laid health and happiness upon the bloody altars of this false god!'

A few quick flushes went over his pale face, and then its expression became very sad.

'Anna,' he said, after a brief silence, during which even my unpractised eyes could see that an intense struggle was going on in his mind; 'Anna, you will have to give up your visit to the seaside this year.'

'Why, father?' It seemed as if my blood were instantly on fire. My face was, of course, all in a glow. I was confounded, and, let me confess it, indignant; it seemed so like a tyrannical outrage.

'It is simply as I say, my daughter.' He spoke without visible excitement. 'I cannot afford the expense this season, and you will, therefore, all have to remain in the city.'

'That's impossible!' said I. 'I couldn't live here through the summer.'

'*I* manage to live!' There was a tone in my father's voice, as he uttered these simple words, partly to himself, that rebuked me. Yes, he did manage to live, but *how?* Witness his pale face, wasted form, subdued aspect, brooding silence, and habitual abstraction of mind!

'*I* manage to live!' I hear the rebuking words even now; the tones in which they were uttered are in my ears. Dear father! Kind, tender, indulgent, long-suffering, self-denying! Ah, how little were you understood by your thoughtless, selfish children!

'Let my sisters and mother go,' said I; a new regard for my father springing up in my heart. 'I will remain at home with you.'

'Thank you, dear child!' he answered, his voice suddenly veiled with feeling. 'But I cannot afford to let any one go this season.'

'The girls will be terribly disappointed. They have set their hearts on going,' said I.

'I'm sorry,' he said. 'But necessity knows no law. They will have to make themselves as contented at home as possible.'

And he left me, and went away to his all-exacting 'business.'

When I stated what he had said, my sisters were in a transport of mingled anger and disappointment,

and gave utterance to many unkind remarks against our good, indulgent father. As for my oldest sister, she declared that she would go in spite of him, and proposed our visiting the store of a well-known merchant, where we often made purchases, and buying all we wanted, leaving directions to have the bill sent in. But I was now on my father's side, and resolutely opposed all suggestions of disobedience. His manner and words had touched me, causing some scales to drop from my vision, so that I could see in a new light, and perceive things in a new aspect.

We waited past the usual time for my father's coming on that day, and then dined without him. A good deal to our surprise, he came home about four o'clock, entering with an unusually quiet manner, and going up to his own room without speaking to any one of the family.

'Was that your father?' We were sitting together, still discussing the question of our summer holidays. It was my mother who asked the question. We had heard the street door open and close, and had also heard footsteps along the passage and up the stairs.

'It is too early for him to come home,' I answered.

My mother looked at her watch, and remarked, as a shade of concern flitted over her face:

'It certainly was your father. I cannot be mistaken in his step. What can have brought him home so early? I hope he is not sick.' And she arose and went hastily from the room. I followed, for a sudden fear came into my heart.

'Edward! what ails you? Are you sick?' I heard my mother ask, in an alarmed voice, as I came into her room. My father had laid himself across the bed, and his face was concealed by a pillow, into which it was buried deeply.

'Edward! Edward! Husband! What is the matter? Are you ill?'

'Oh, father! dear father!' I cried, adding my voice to my mother's, and bursting into tears. I grasped his hand; it was very cold. I leaned over, and, pressing down the pillow, touched his face. It was cold also, and clammy with perspiration.

'Send James for the doctor, instantly,' said my mother.

'No, no; don't.' My father partially aroused himself at this, speaking in a thick, unnatural voice.

'Go!' My mother repeated the injunction, and I flew down stairs with the order for James, our footman, to go in all haste for the family physician. When I returned, my mother, her face wet with tears, was endeavouring to remove some of my father's outer garments. Together we took off his coat, waistcoat, and boots, he making no resistance, and

appearing to be in partial stupor, as if under the influence of some drug. We chafed his hands and feet, and bathed his face, that wore a deathly aspect, and used all the means in our power to rekindle the failing spark of life. But he seemed to grow less and less conscious of external things every moment.

When the physician came, he had many questions to ask as to the cause of the state in which he found my father. But we could answer none of them. I watched his face intently, noting every varying expression, but saw nothing to inspire confidence. He seemed both troubled and perplexed. Almost his first act was to bleed copiously.

Twice, before the physician came, had my father been inquired for at the door, a thing altogether unusual at that hour of the day. Indeed, his presence in the house at that hour was something which had not occurred within a year.

'A gentleman is in the parlour, and says that he must see Mr. W—,' said the footman, speaking to me in a whisper, soon after the physician's arrival.

'Did you tell him that father was very ill?' said I.

'Yes; but he says that he must see him, sick or well.'

'Go down and tell him that father is not in a state to be seen by any one.'

The waiter returned in a few moments, and beckoned me to the chamber door.

'The man says that he is not going to leave the house until he sees your father. I wish you would go down to him. He acts so strangely.'

Without stopping to reflect, I left the apartment, and hurried down to the parlour. I found a man walking the floor in a very excited manner.

'I wish to see Mr. W—,' said he, abruptly, and in an imperative way.

'He is very ill, sir,' I replied, 'and cannot be seen.'

'I must see him, sick or well.' His manner was excited.

'Impossible, sir.'

The door bell rang again at this moment, and with some violence. I paused, and stood listening until the servant answered the summons, while the man strode twice the full length of the parlour.

'I wish to see Mr. W—.' It was the voice of a man.

'He is sick,' the servant replied.

'Give him my name,—Mr. Walton,—and say that I must see him for just a moment.' And this new visitor came in past the waiter, and entered the parlour.

'Mr. Arnold!' he ejaculated, in evident surprise.

'Humph! This is a nice business!' remarked

the first visitor, in a rude way, entirely indifferent to my presence or feelings. 'A nice business, I must confess!'

'Have you seen Mr. W—?' was inquired.

'No. They *say* he's sick.'

There was an unconcealed doubt in the voice that uttered this.

'Gentlemen,' said I, stung into indignant courage, 'this is an outrage! What do you mean by it?'

'We wish to see your father,' said the last comer, his manner changing, and his voice respectful.

'You have both been told,' was my firm reply, 'that my father is too ill to be seen.'

'It isn't an hour, as I am told, since he left his office,' said the first visitor, 'and I hardly think his illness has progressed so rapidly up to this time as to make an interview dangerous. We do not wish to be rude or uncourteous, Miss W—, but our business with your father is imperative, and we must see him. I, for one, do not intend leaving the house until I meet him face to face!'

'Will you walk up stairs?' I had the presence of mind and decision to say, and I moved from the parlour into the passage. The men followed, and I led them up to the chamber where our distressed family were gathered around my father. As we entered the hushed apartment the men pressed for-

ward somewhat eagerly, but their steps were suddenly arrested. The sight was one to make its own impression. My father's face, deathly in its hue, was turned towards the door, and from his bared arm a stream of dark blood was flowing sluggishly. The physician had just opened a vein.

'Come! This is no place for us,' I heard one of the men whisper to the other, and they withdrew as unceremoniously as they had entered. Scarcely had they gone ere the loud ringing of the door bell sounded through the house again.

'What does all this mean!' whispered my distressed mother.

'I cannot tell. Something is wrong,' was all that I could answer; and a vague, terrible fear took possession of my heart.

In the midst of our confusion, uncertainty, and distress, my uncle, the only relative of my mother, arrived; and from him we learned the crushing fact that my father's bills had been that day dishonoured at bank,—in other words, that he had failed in business.

The blow, long suspended over his head,—and, as I afterwards learned, long dreaded, and long averted by the most desperate expedients to save himself from ruin,—when it did fall, was too heavy for him. It crushed the life out of his enfeebled system. That fearful night he died!

It is not my purpose to draw towards the survivors any sympathy, by picturing the changes in their fortunes and modes of life that followed this sad event. They have all endured much and suffered much. But how light has it been to what my father must have endured and suffered in his long struggle to sustain the thoughtless extravagance of his family; to supply them with comforts and luxuries, none of which he could himself enjoy! Ever before me is the image of his gradually wasting form, and pale, sober, anxious face. His voice, always mild, now comes to my ears, in memory, burdened with a most touching sadness. What could we have been thinking about? Oh, youth! how blindly selfish thou art! How unjust in thy thoughtlessness! What would I not give to have my father back again! This daily toil for bread, those hours of labour, prolonged often far into the night season; how cheerful would I be if they ministered to my father's comfort! Ah! if we had been loving and just to him, we might have had him still. But we were neither loving nor just. While he gathered with hard toil, we scattered. Daily we saw him go forth hurried to his business, and nightly we saw him come home exhausted; and we never put forth a hand to lighten his burdens; but, to gratify our idle and vain pleasures, laid new ones upon his stooping shoulders, until, at last, the cruel weight crushed him to the earth!

My father! Oh, my father! If grief and tearful repentance could have restored you to our broken circle, long since you would have returned to us. But tears and repentance are vain. The rest and peace of eternity are yours!

GOING HOME.

'NOT until spring, John!' And light went out of Mrs. Orton's face. 'You promised that I should go home in autumn.'

'Yes, yes, I know I did,' was answered, a little impatiently. 'But things haven't turned out just so well as I expected. It costs something to go so far. I wonder that you can think of it, Mary!'

Mrs. Orton did not reply, but turned her pale, still face away, so that her husband could not see its expression, and bent down lower over the baby that slept on her lap.

Not until spring! and that was full five months away! Not until spring! The words fell upon her ears like the knell of hope. It was more than two long, long years since she had looked upon her mother's face; two long years since, a young, bewildered bride, she had gone out like a fluttering

birdling from the soft nest of home. A thousand miles away into the distant west she had journeyed, brave in spirit, with her husband, and confident of a happy future. But the sunny picture her warm imagination had painted faded from the canvas in a few short months, and life assumed a hard, cold, unlovely aspect.

John Orton had gone to the west two or three years before their marriage, and purchased a small farm. After getting this into pretty good cultivation, and erecting a house, he returned to the east to fulfil his engagement with Mary Spencer. John was too worldly and calculating to make a very ardent lover. A wife must be a 'help,' in the literal sense of the word. He had got everything on his new farm just in that condition when a wife might be brought in with advantage. Now, and not before, was he ready to marry.

The transition from a small, but neat, orderly, and well-conditioned New England home to a log-cabin in Ohio, standing nearly a mile away from any other human habitation, was a change that could not be made without a shock of feeling. Mary's heart sank in her bosom, when, after a long and weary journey, she stood, alone with her husband, in the comfortless, almost unfurnished cabin he had attempted to describe to her, but in regard to which no words used by him had given her the remotest

idea. But she loved him, and for his sake tried to put on a brave heart.

Now, Mary was not strong and robust. John Orton, in choosing her for his wife, had been a little out of his reckoning. There were girls in Clayton, the town from which he emigrated, who were much better fitted, in all respects, to become his wife, than Mary Spencer; girls, any one of whom would have taken him at a word. But Mary was such a delicate, sweet flower, that he must needs pluck her to wear on his heart. Well, yes, he had a heart; but it beat so far down in his bosom, that few saw the pulsations. He loved Mary as tenderly as natures like his can love; and meant to wear her on his heart. But, in his view,

'Life was real, life was earnest,'

and marriage involved something more than love. He did not take a wife as a plaything for holiday hours, nor as a mere ornament for his home; but as a co-worker in the serious business of getting ahead in the world. This being so, he had not done wisely in selecting Mary Spencer. He wanted bone and muscle, rather than heart and feeling.

It is no matter of surprise, that, from the beginning, Mary's work proved too hard for her; that almost every sunset found her with weary limbs, an aching head, and a discouraged heart. But love was strong; and she bore up bravely for the sake

of her husband, whose muscles were hardening daily, thus removing him farther and farther away from the ability to comprehend her feebleness. It required only a few months to take the delicate roundness from her cheeks, and the bloom from her countenance. Subjected to unusual exposure, and worn down by exhausting toil, Mary was all ready for the autumn fevers when they came; and they seized upon her with burning eagerness. For three or four weeks she was prostrate and helpless, with no attendant but her husband, who did not feel as if he could afford domestic assistance, even temporarily. He was willing to cook for himself and his man, rather than pay for having it done; and as he could run in from his fields every hour or two to ask if Mary wanted anything, he did not see the necessity for getting a woman into the house on her account. It annoyed him not a little to find her almost always with wet eyes; and he could not understand why his comforting and encouraging words had no apparent effect whatever. Sometimes he would grow impatient with her, and speak chidingly; but this only set the tears to flowing. Nothing of her real state of mind was comprehended. For him, that small western home, with its gradually improving aspect, was the central point of attraction in all the world. In a certain sense, it bounded his hopes. But her heart had gone back, yearningly, in her

weakness and helplessness, to another home; and her eyes were always far away, with her heart, looking into the face of her mother. Oh! with what a sad intenseness did she long to hear that mother's voice; to feel the soft touch of her caressing hand; to lie, like a sick child, upon her bosom! All strength had died out of her,—strength of mind as well as strength of body,—and she lay, a passive sufferer, but with one thought ever in her mind: the thought of home and her mother.

When Mrs. Orton recovered at last from this sickness, the things most essential for entire restoration to health were rest and change. But these she could not have. Her feeble hands had to lift the old burdens again, now heavier for her than they were before, because more than half her strength was gone. The deep longing to visit her early home—to see her mother again—still weighed upon her heart. She could not push it aside. It came with the first waking moment, and lay with a heavy pressure on her feelings when sleep bore down her weary eyelids.

'Can't I go home in the spring, John?' she asked, as the cheerless winter whitened around them.

How John Orton could look into the pale, thin, longing face of that young piner for the old fireside and her mother's heart-beat against her own, and say coldly, 'Home, Mary?—I thought this was your home!' is more than we can understand. But it was so.

Mary answered with a gush of tears. Now John, like men of his class, have no fancy for a woman's tears. They do not understand their origin, and never know how to deal with them in a satisfactory way. Sometimes they oppose a hardness and reserve of manner—sometimes pettishness or anger. John had tried all these with Mary, but not, that he could see, to any good purpose.

'Oh! if you've set your heart on it—' he said fretfully on this occasion; and then stopped suddenly, with the air of one who had forgotten himself.

Mary looked up eagerly; but John Orton did not finish the sentence.

'It's a long and expensive journey,' he said, speaking, after a while, in a sober way, 'and we are not well enough off yet to spare so much money as it will cost. In the autumn, after the crops are in—'

But he did not say what would be done then. To his mind, Mary was unreasonable to think of such a thing as going home. It would cost ten or twelve pounds; and then there would be the loss of time while she was away.

Long before that time came, a tiny baby lay on the bosom of Mary Orton. She recovered slowly from the prostration that attended its birth, and did not regain even her former health. John was delighted with his boy; and in his manifested delight Mary found a new sense of pleasure. But the man

was still at fault as to a right appreciation of the condition and wants of the delicate woman whose life and happiness were in his keeping. As soon as she was able to go about as of old, he let the old burdens, in addition to this new one of a baby, come back to her stooping shoulders; and though no tinge of health returned to her wan cheeks, and her step grew slower day by day, his dull mind had no fear of approaching evil until she sank down at her post of duty.

One morning, in mid-winter, when her babe was nearly five months old, Mrs. Orton found, on attempting to rise, that she became so dizzy as to fall into partial insensibility. This was accompanied by severe shooting pains through the head, and such physical prostration, as made even the lifting of her arm a weary effort. There were symptoms in the case that, before noon-time, caused Mr. Orton to feel anxious, and with some reluctance he rode off for the doctor, who lived three miles away.

'How soon will she be able to go about again?' asked the young farmer, following the physician into the yard, as he retired after making his first visit.

'In a month, may be,' answered the doctor, 'and, may be, not in two or three months. Your wife is a very delicate woman, Mr. Orton.'

'Two or three months! Why, doctor, what ails her?'

'I don't think she has much constitution,' replied the doctor, 'and that seems to have been overtaxed. She has a low fever that will be hard to break. You must get somebody to take care of the baby at once.'

'You alarm me,' said John Orton, looking sober.

'There is reason to be concerned,' was answered. 'I'm afraid that, like too many of our strong, hearty farmers, you have miscalculated your wife's strength. She was only a frail, delicate thing when you brought her here; and as you have kept no regular servant, she has been required to do the work of a strong, hearty woman. Since her baby was born, it has been still harder for her. I do not wonder that she has broken down. I speak plainly, Mr. Orton, as in duty bound. The fact is,' and there was more warmth than usual in the doctor's manner, 'you farmers about here take a great deal better care of your horses than you do of your wives. Horse-flesh is rarely overworked—woman's flesh nearly always.'

The doctor was right in his prognosis. For more than two months Mrs. Orton was unable to rise from her bed; and when, at last, the disease was broken, and life began to beat more firmly in her pulses, the progress of convalescence was very slow, and did not carry the degree of health above a low range. The hue of her face remained of an unnatural whiteness, except when, at regularly recurring periods each day,

warm spots glowed on her cheeks. At these times her eyes shone with a strange lustre.

All through this lingering illness, the heart of Mary pined for her mother. Oh! if she could have looked upon her face—could have felt her soft hand on her burning forehead!

'I must go home, John!' she said to her husband, as the spring began to open warmly: 'I must see mother!'

'You are not strong enough for the journey,' he replied.

'But I will be strong enough in a few weeks. May I go?' She leaned her hands on his arms, and looked pleadingly in his face. 'Say yes, John.'

But John thought of the expense, and could not get the word 'yes' to his lips.

'You will not be strong enough to go alone with the baby,' he objected; 'and it will be impossible for me to accompany you until after harvest.'

'Oh! never fear. I'll be strong enough. Say yes, dear John! Please.'

John's face grew serious. He was thinking of the money.

'We've been at a great deal of expense all winter, Mary. I don't see how I can possibly get the money to pay the cost this spring. After the crops are in, things will be different.'

After the crops are in! Ah, she had taken that

fond illusion to her heart once before, and she did not feel like trusting it again.

Spring passed into luxuriant summer, and Mary was still a pining exile from her mother's heart. John had not been very fortunate with his wheat and other crops. They did not turn out more than two-thirds of what he expected. He had, besides, lost a fine horse that had cost him twenty pounds. He was troubled and desponding in consequence; more particularly as his wife could no longer bear the entire family burdens, but needed constant help.

With the advancing summer Mary found herself growing weaker instead of stronger. As her body failed, her heart-yearnings became deeper; and she would sit, often for a whole hour at a time, with her babe, now over a year old, sleeping on her lap, thought and memory away off in her old New England home. More frequently than ever, when her husband came suddenly upon her, did he find her in tears. This always annoyed him, and sometimes caused him to use unkindness of speech. Nothing seemed to dry Mary's eyes so quickly as a rebuking word from her husband. But he saw that it made her cold towards him afterwards; and this he found hard to bear.

One pleasant Sunday, just as September was going out, Mary and her husband sat talking together, the baby asleep on Mary's lap. How strong the contrast

between them! He, stalwart, brown, and muscular, the picture of vigorous health; she, pale, slender, and wasted. Why did he not take the baby from her arms? But he never thought of that.

While John talked of the future, and laid out plans for next year, Mary was looking backward upon the old home, to which her heart had gone. While he sighed for thrift, she sighed for her mother's face and voice.

'It is autumn now, John,' she said, taking courage at last to speak of what was uppermost in her thoughts.

'I know it is,' he answered in a changed tone, for he understood what was coming.

'And I am to go home, you know.' She tried to smile in her old winning way.

John's countenance fell. He turned his face from her, and sat in silence for some time.

'You shall go next spring for certain, Mary,' said he at length. 'You know how unfortunate—'

'Not till spring, John!' And light went out of the poor wife's countenance, as we saw in the opening of our story. Her pale, still face was instantly averted, and then laid down upon her babe.

Not till spring! And that was full five months away. Poor Mary Orton!

'I must go, John,' she said at length, in a kind of desperate way, turning upon him so strange a

look, that for a moment he was startled. 'I must see mother. If you love me, let me go!'

'I never believed you would be such a baby about your mother,' said John Orton, giving utterance to the first thought that came into his mind.

Mary caught her breath, and seemed like one choking for an instant, while a deadlier paleness overspread her face. Then she coughed two or three times, swallowed rapidly, and seemed troubled with something in her throat. She put her handkerchief to her mouth, and held it for a moment. When she took it away, it was stained with blood; and blood was pressing out from between her closely-shut lips!

'Take the baby, John!' she said in a frightened voice; and as she spoke, her husband saw the blood flow from her mouth.

In less than half an hour John Orton's swiftest horse stood in a foam at the doctor's door; and the young farmer, pale-faced for once, read eagerly the doctor's countenance as the condition of Mary was described. Not much to encourage him there!

'Go back as quickly as possible, and see that she is kept perfectly still, and not allowed to speak even in a whisper. I will be there very soon after you arrive.'

And the doctor turned from him at the door.

The question of going home before spring was

definitely settled. The hæmorrhage was of an unusually serious character, showing that the lungs were badly diseased. So much blood was lost, that the doctor saw but little to encourage him as to the final result.

For two weeks the issue of life or death hung so evenly balanced, that, at each morning and evening visit, he looked forward to the vision of a still, cold face. After that, Nature began to rally a little, but so feebly, that only by days of contrast could the gain be perceived.

October had gone, and the waning year lapsed away until it was mid November; and still Mary's white face lay from morning until evening, and from evening until the long-looked-for morning broke again, still almost as a marble image upon its snowy pillow.

'John.' Only the lips moved.

Mr. Orton bent down and listened.

'John.' She looked up very wishfully. 'Won't you send for mother?'

It was the first time the word 'Mother' had been spoken for his ears since that day when his cold rebuke threw all the life-blood back in wild pressure upon her enfeebled heart and lungs.

'It is a long way for your mother to come, Mary,' he replied.

'Will you write for her, John?' There was little or no sign of feeling.

'If you desire it very much; but think, Mary, what a weary journey it will be for her; and the winter will soon be upon us.'

Winter! Cold, white, dreary winter! The word brought shuddering images to the heart of Mary Orton; and she shut her eyes, and lay silent for some minutes.

'I wish you would write, John.' She opened her eyes, and looked steadily at her husband. There was something in her tone, and something in her expression, that puzzled, and a little awed him. He objected no further.

'Write in earnest, John,' said the invalid, as she saw her husband sit down at the little table in their bed-room, with pen and paper.

'Will you let me see the letter?' she asked, after the writing was done. John handed her the brief epistle, and she read it over twice, but did not seem altogether satisfied.

'Won't that do?'

'Yes—yes.' But her tone was not free.

'I will write differently if you say so.'

'That will do.' She shut her eyes, still holding the letter in her hand. The deathliness of her face never so struck Mr. Orton as it did at that moment; and he felt a low thrill of fear creeping along his iron nerves.

'Give me the pen a moment, John.'

Mr. Orton dipped the pen into the ink, and placing a book under the letter for it to rest upon, held his wife up in bed, while she scrawled, rather than wrote, with her feeble hand :

'If you love me, come!—MARY.'

'Isn't it time we had an answer from home, John?' asked the pining invalid, three or four days after the letter went on its way.

'Oh, no,' was answered. 'Our letter has only about reached them.'

The lids fell slowly over the large bright eyes she had turned upon her husband's face.

Three more days passed, and then the answer came. Mrs. Spencer would start in a week.

The great tears ran over Mary's cheeks as her husband read the letter from her mother.

'In a week! In a week!' she said, half to herself, a faint smile playing around her shadowy lips. 'How can I wait even for one week to pass away?'

Waking or sleeping, there seemed to be only one thought in the mind of Mary Orton—the thought of her mother.

'In four days she will be here.' Then, as another morning broke, after a long wakeful night, she would say : 'Three more days.' Another setting and rising of the sun, and it was, 'Two days. Oh, how can I wait so long! It seems as if the days had lengthened into weeks!'

'How childish you have grown, Mary!' said her husband, as these words came to his ears. He spoke a little impatiently.

She did not answer, but turned her face away, and he knew by signs which had grown familiar, that she was weeping silently. He felt more annoyed at this, and exclaimed, with considerable hardness of tone:

'Oh dear! There it is again! I can't speak but you go to crying like a baby! I'm ashamed of you, Mary!'

There were two or three little choking sobs, and then Mrs. Orton lay as still and silent as if sleeping or dead. That night, something caused John Orton to awake among the small hours—a thing unusual with him.

'What is it, Mary?' he asked, for her voice had come to his ears. But there was no reply; and he was soon aware that she was talking fitfully in her sleep.

'Yes, I am going home in the spring. Oh dear! It is such a long time to wait! In the spring—home —mother. He said I should go. Mother—mother —home—going home!'

All at once there came to the mind of John Orton a perception of his wife's true state; a feeble perception at best, yet distinct enough to change the man's entire state of feeling—to fill his heart with tender pity and self-rebuke. He saw how it was with her,

and comprehended something of the weary home-sickness which had saddened her life. In the morning he bent over and kissed her, saying, with unusual softness for him :

'To-morrow we may expect your mother. Only a day more to wait !'

She looked at him in evident surprise, while a faint smile played around her lips.

'I will try and be very patient, dear John !' she answered. 'You must bear with me. Sickness has made me weak. And I do want to see mother so very badly. I dreamed last night that I was dying, and she hadn't come !'

Her lips quivered, and she shut her eyes to hold back the tears that were filling them. John Orton turned quickly away from the bed. His eyes were filling also, and he wished to hide what he felt to be an unmanly weakness.

To-morrow came, and Mary Orton's head lay upon the breast of her mother, and her happy eyes looked into the face she had so longed for through many years.

And in the spring she went home, though not across the mountains into dear New England. In the spring she went to her Father's house, though not in the sweet village of Clayton. Home—home ! She had sighed for home ; wept for it ; pined for it ; dreamed of it, sleeping and waking ; and now she

had gone home. Happy spirit! No, it was not across the mountains, but over the river that she had passed; and as her white feet went down unshrinkingly into the waters, she clasped her mother's hands against her breast, tightly—tightly, and looked into her mother's face until it faded from her view in mortal darkness.

She had gone home.

MESSENGERS OF DEATH.

'SIX hundred and forty-three wounded!'

'If that were all!' My wife spoke in a sad voice. 'If that were all!'

'The return is given as complete,' I said, referring again to the newspaper which I held in my hand. 'One hundred and forty-one killed, and six hundred and forty-three wounded.'

'A fearful list, but it is not all,' my wife answered. Her tones were even sadder than at first. 'A great many more were wounded—a great many more.'

'But this is an official return, signed by the commanding general.'

'And so far, doubtless correct. But from every battle-field go swift-winged messengers, that kill or wound at a thousand miles instead of a thousand paces; bullets invisible to mortal eyes, that pierce loving hearts. Of the dead and wounded from these

we have no report. They are casualties not spoken of by our commanding generals.'

I had not thought of this; or, at least, not with any realizing sense of what it involved. My wife resumed:

'Let us take the matter home. We have a son in the army. The ball that strikes him strikes us. If in that list of killed and wounded we had found his name, would there have been no bayonet point or shattering bullet in our flesh? I shiver at the thought. Ah, these invisible messengers of pain and death wound often deeper than iron and lead!'

As she thus spoke, my eyes were resting on the official list, and I saw the name of a friend. An ejaculation of surprise dropped from my lips.

'What?' My startled wife grew slightly pale.

'Harley is wounded!'

'Oh, dear!' The pallor increased, and she laid her hand over her heart, a sign that she felt pain there. 'Badly?' She tried to steady her voice.

'A ball through his chest. Not set down as dangerous, however.'

'Poor Anna! What sad tidings for her!' My wife arose. 'I must go to her immediately.'

'Do so,' I answered.

Soon afterward we went out together; I to my office, and she to visit the wife of our wounded friend.

It is strange how little those who are not brought

into the actual presence of death and disaster on the battle-field realize their appalling nature. We read of the killed and wounded, and sum up the figures as coldly, almost, as if the statistics were simply commercial. We talk of our losses as indifferently as if men were crates and bales. I do not except myself. Sometimes I feel as though all sensibility, all sympathy for human suffering, had died out of my heart. It is, perhaps, as well. If we perceived to the full extent the terrible reality of these things, we would be in half-paralyzed states, instead of continuing our useful employments, by which the common good is served. We cannot help the suffering nor heal the wounded by our mental pain. But let us see to it, that, through lack of pain, we fail not in ministration to the extent of our ability.

When I met my wife at dinner-time, her face was paler than when I parted with her in the morning. I saw that she had been suffering; while I, intent for hours upon my work, had half forgotten my two wounded friends—Harley and his wife; one pierced by a visible, and the other by an invisible, bullet.

'Did you see Anna?' I asked.

'Yes.'

'How is she?'

'Calm, but hurt very deeply. She only had the news this morning.'

'Is she going to him?'

'There has not been time to decide what is best. Her husband's brother is here, and will get as much information by telegraph to-day as it is possible to receive. To-night or to-morrow he will endeavour to go to the hospital. Anna may go with him.'

'She appeared to be hurt deeply, you say?'

'Yes,' replied my wife; 'and was in most intense pain. Every line in her face exhibited suffering. One hand was pressed all the while tightly over her heart.'

'What did she say?'

'Not much. She seemed looking into the distance, and trying to make out things seen but imperfectly. If he were to die, I think it would kill her.'

'Two deaths by the same bullet,' I said, my thoughts recurring to our morning conversation.

In the evening I called with my wife to see Mrs. Harley. A telegram had been received, stating that her husband's wound, though severe, was not considered dangerous. The ball had been extracted, and he was reported to be doing well. She was going to leave in the night train with her brother-in-law, and would be with her husband very soon. How a few hours of suffering had changed her! The wound was deep and very painful.

It was nearly two months before Harley was

sufficiently recovered to be removed from the hospital. His wife had been permitted to see him every day, and to remain in attendance on him for a greater part of the time.

'Did you know that Mr. Harley and his wife were at home?' said I, on coming in one day.

'No. When did they arrive?' was the answer and inquiry.

'This morning. I heard it from Harley's brother.'

'How are they?' asked my wife.

'He looks as well as ever, I am told, though still suffering some from his wound; but she is miserable, Mr. Harley says.'

A shadow fell over my wife's face, and she sighed heavily. 'I was afraid of that,' she said. 'I knew she was hurt badly. Flesh wounds close readily, but spirit wounds are difficult to heal. These invisible bullets are almost sure to reach some vital part.'

I met Mr. Harley not long afterwards in company with his wife. His eyes were bright, his lips firm, his cheeks flushed with health. You saw scarcely a sign of what he had endured. He talked in a brave, soldierly manner, and was anxious for the time to come when the surgeon would pronounce him in a condition to join his regiment. His wound, when referred to, evidently gave him more pleasure than pain. It was a mark of distinction—a sign that he had offered even life for his country.

How different with Mrs. Harley! It touched you to look into her dreamy, absent eyes; on her patient lips and exhausted countenance.

'She has worn herself out in nursing me,' said her husband, in answer to a remark on her appearance. He looked at her tenderly, and with just a shade of anxiety in his face. Was the truth not plain to him? Did he not know that she had been wounded also? —that two balls left the rifle when he was struck, one of them reaching to his distant home?

'In three weeks I hope to be in the field again, and face to face with the enemy.' He spoke with the ardour of a strong desire, his eyes bright, and his face in a glow—wounding, and the pain of wounding, all forgotten. But another's eyes became dim as his brightened—another's cheeks paled as his grew warm. I saw the tears shining as Mrs. Harley answered, in an unsteady voice,

'I am neither brave enough nor strong enough for a soldier's wife.'

She had meant to say more, as was plain from her manner, but could not trust herself.

'Oh, yes, you are, brave enough and strong enough,' replied Mr. Harley with animation. 'Not every one could have moved so calmly amidst the dreadful scenes of a camp hospital after a battle. I watched you often, and felt proud of you.'

'If she had not been wounded also,' my wife

began; but Mr. Harley interrupted her with the ejaculation,

'Wounded!' in a tone of surprise.

'Yes, wounded,' resumed my wife; 'and, as now appears, nearer the seat of vitality than you were. Did you not know this before, Mr. Harley?'

My friend was perplexed for a little while. He could not get down at once to my wife's meaning.

'When you were struck, she was struck also.'

'Oh, yes!' Light broke in upon Mr. Harley. He turned quickly towards his wife, and saw in her face what had been unseen before; the wasting and exhaustion that come only from deep-seated pain. He had thought the paleness of her countenance, the weakness that made her step slow and cautious, only the result of overtaxed muscles and nerves. But he knew better now.

'I didn't think of that,' he said, with visible anxiety, as he gazed into his wife's countenance. 'Our wounds, so ghastly to the eyes, often get no deeper than the flesh and bone. The pain is short, and nature comes quickly to the work of cure with all her healing energies. We suffer for a while, and then it is over. We are strong and ready for the conflict again.'

'But,' said my wife, 'into the homes that stand far away from battle-fields come swift-winged messengers that wound and kill as surely as iron hail. They

strike mothers, wives, sisters—some with death-wounds, all with the anguish of vital pain. Alas for these wounded! The healing, if it follows, is never, as the surgeons say, by first intention, but always slow, and often through abscess and ulceration. The larger number never entirely recover. They may linger for years, but do not lose the marks of suffering.'

A long silence followed. There were others present, who, like Mr. Harley, had never thought of this. I noticed, that for the hour we remained together he was tenderer towards his wife, and more than once I saw him looking at her, while she was not observing him, with a troubled countenance. He did not again speak of the early period at which he expected to join his regiment.

On the day following, another long list of killed and wounded was given to the public. As I read over the names and counted the numbers, my thought came back from bloody field and suffering hospital. 'These are not all,' I said. 'Alas! not all. The ball struck twice, thrice; sometimes oftener. There is pain, there is anguish, there is wounding even unto death, in many, many homes within a thousand miles of that gory place. Some are alone and neglected, dying on the battle-field with none to put even a cup of water to their lips; some are with loving friends, who yet fail to stanch the flow of blood, or bandage the shattered limb; some cover their wounds, hiding

them from all eyes, and bear the pain in chosen solitude. The sum of all this agony, who shall give it?'

The wounded! If you would find them all, you must look beyond the hospitals. They are not every one bearded and in male attire. There sat beside you in the omnibus just now a woman. You scarcely noticed her. She left at the corner below. There was not much life in her face; her steps, as they rested on the pavement, were slow. She has been wounded, and is dying. Did you notice Mrs. D—— in church last Sunday? 'Yes; and now I remember that she was pale, and had an altered look.' One of our wounded! Do you see a face at the window? 'In the marble-front house?' Yes. 'It is sad enough! What in-looking eyes!' Wounded! Ah, sir, they are everywhere about us. Already from over a hundred battle-fields and skirmishing-grounds have been sent these missives of pain and death. They have penetrated unguarded homes in every city, town, and neighbourhood in our once happy and peaceful country, wounding the beloved ones left there in hoped-for security. For such there is balm only in Gilead—God is their physician.

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