TALES

FOR

THE PEOPLE AND THEIR CHILDREN.

TIRED OF HOUSEKEEPING.

BY

T. S. ARTHUR.

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OF

HOUSEKEEPING.

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T. S. ARTHUR,
AUTHOR OF "INSUBORDINATION," "SIX NIGHTS WITH THE WASHINGTONIANS," ETC. ETC.

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TIRED OF HOUSEKEEPING.

CHAPTER I.

GOING TO HOUSEKEEPING.

"ONE month more, and our happiness will be complete. But how long a month seems, dear Julia!" Frank Lawton said to the fair girl who leant fondly and confidingly upon his arm.

"It does seem long. But the time will pass quickly, even while we are chiding its seeming delay," Julia replied.

"Yes; our happy day will come soon. Four weeks is not a very long time. And now that we are on this subject, I should like to know which you would prefer: to board for a few months, or to go at once to housekeeping."

"O, I wish to go to housekeeping by all means. I think that every young couple ought to set up for themselves at once. We should begin at the beginning, as old aunt Prudence used to say."

"Then I must look out for a house immediately, and get it furnished."

"You will have but little time to spare, certainly, Frank. A month soon passes."

"I shall want you to help me select the furniture, then," the young man said. "And as soon as I get a house, I will call for you."

"O no, indeed! I could never do that."

"And why not, Julia?"

"Because it wouldn't look well, Frank."

"I am sure there is no harm in it."

"No: I don't suppose there is. But then, what would people say to a young lady's going out to select furniture a month before her marriage?"

"Why, really Julia, I don't know what they could say. Certainly, no harm, at least."

"Indeed, indeed, Frank, I never can do it! It would look too much as if I wanted people to know that I was going to be married."

"Still, that would not be your reason."

"No."

"Then why need you care what people may happen to think. If they misunderstand a right action, and, from a censorious spirit, condemn that action, they are injuring themselves, not you. So, come, Julia, be above all such considerations, and act from your own sense of right and wrong."

"I cannot go with you, Frank, indeed I cannot!" Julia replied, in an earnest tone.

"I do not wish to urge you in the matter," the young man said. "But it would gratify me much if you would go with me, and assist me to select at least some part of the furniture. The carpets for instance, and the parlour furniture. I am not certain that my taste would please

you. We men are not adepts in these matters, for they lie mostly out of our province. Can I not, then, persuade you to go that far?"

"O no, no, no, Frank! I cannot. It would not look right."

"And yet, it would not be in itself wrong, any more than our walking together in the street is wrong. And as I look at it, instead of being a wrong, it would be, in every sense of the word, a right action."

"I cannot see it so, Frank."

"Then look at it in this light. Our house is to be furnished, and you are, by far, the best judge of what is wanted. The question thus becomes narrowed down to one that concerns us alone. Why, then, should we consider the opinion of others in the matter? They have nothing to do with it, and they will go out of their way if they interfere at all. If you do not select your own furniture, many articles may be purchased that will not coincide with your taste; and surely that would be a much greater evil than the mere idle expression of an opinion that it was not in good taste for you to go with me and choose such articles of furniture as pleased you."

"O, never fear but that I shall be pleased with anything you may buy, Frank. I am willing to leave it all to your taste."

"And so you will not go with me?"

"I can't, indeed, Frank."

"Well, if your mind is made up, it is no use for me to argue the point with you. Still, it

would have given me great pleasure, if I could have prevailed upon you to lay aside what I cannot but esteem an objection that is founded in a wrong idea."

"You will have to buy the furniture, Frank, notwithstanding your solid arguments," Julia responded, laughing; "and so you might as well make up your mind at once. You know that a woman's conclusions are proof against all a man's most eloquent reasonings."

"Well, if I must, I suppose I must," Frank Lawton said, laughing in turn. But it was not a very earnest laugh.

By this time the young couple had reached Julia's home, where, after a few more words, they parted. In spite of all his efforts to find excuses for Julia, Frank Lawton could not help condemning her weak regard for the opinions of others, in a matter that in no way concerned them. His own character was manly and independent. Ever since he could exercise his rational faculties, he had been in the habit of looking within for the true criterion of action. Is it right? was a question, that, with him, decided all doubtful points. It was the square and rule of his whole life.

But now he was encountering, and about to encounter in a still stronger degree, influences that were too powerful for him. Another mind, acting almost like a new mind within his, was about to oppose and modify what had before been free and permanent. In a word, he was soon to feel the all-powerful influence of a woman he

loved, bearing to him the relation of a wife, and that woman,—though deeply attached to him, well educated, and highly accomplished,—with a mind unable to appreciate his straight-forward, honest, common-sense ideas of the world.

That he was already feeling this influence, and likewise yielding to it, will be evident when it is stated, that he had only been a few years in business, and that his capital was limited. Consequently his income was not large, and there existed a strong reason why he should be prudent in all of his expenditures. His own idea was, that it would be the right way for him and Julia to board for one or two years, until his business became more profitable; and thus avoid the immediate large outlay that would be required to furnish a house. But, when he perceived that she was so earnest about going to housekeeping, he could not find it in his heart to oppose her; thus yielding his better judgment to her wishes.

Julia Manning was an only daughter, and had, from childhood up, been subject to few privations, and no cares. She had never been taught to regard others, nor to deny herself, at times, for the sake of making others comfortable or happy. Necessarily, then, she was not fitted to fill, perfectly, the station of a wife. And yet, she had a kind, affectionate disposition. But she had not been rightly educated.

In a few days, Frank Lawton found a neat house, finished in modern style, and set himself about furnishing it. As he had no female friend

whom he could consult, or in whose taste he could confide, he was compelled to select his furniture in the best way he could.

"What kind of carpets must I get?" he asked of Julia, one evening.

"Brussels, of course," she replied. "And be sure to get a rich pattern."

"And the chairs? I suppose I ought to get those with cane seats. I was looking at some very beautiful ones to-day."

"That is just as you like, Frank," Julia said, in a tone which indicated that she did not entirely approve the selection.

"Would you rather have mahogany ones, with stuffed seats?" he asked, thus inviting temptation.

"They are much handsomer," Julia replied, "and add greatly to the appearance of a parlour."

"Then I will get mahogany ones," he said, although he thought that a less costly kind would do just as well.

"I bought two beautiful pier-tables to-day," he continued.

"That was right," Julia said, her mind, as she began more fully to realize the idea of being in a house of her own, taking far more interest in what was to be in that house, than it did at first —"Pier-tables are fashionable. Have you bought your looking-glasses yet?"

"No."

"Well, you must have a pair, to fill the piers over the tables, and let them be as large as the pier will permit. And you should have lounges

made for the recesses. A pair of sofas, of course, and two pairs of astral lamps with rich lustres for each of the mantel-pieces; besides a pair of large ones to set on the pier-tables. And let the curtains be of blue damask. The upholsterer will know how to make them."

"Is there anything else that you would like for the parlours?" asked Frank Lawton.

"Nothing, except two pairs of ottomans and a centre table with a slab of Italian marble, that I think of now. Anything else that is wanted can be obtained after we are married."

All the rest of the house was left to Frank, the cabinet-maker, hardware merchant, and upholsterer, and those particular friends of the occasion, took good care that everything necessary, and something over, should be supplied. There was very little left out of two thousand five hundred dollars when the house was ready to receive the bride, which was a very important reduction of young Lawton's capital in trade, especially, as business was brisk, and he could do as much as his available means would allow.

The wedding passed off in the usual style of such affairs, and then the bride was removed to her new home, and installed in the office of mistress.

"And now, tell me how you like my taste, Julia," said the young husband, after the house and furniture had been examined, from the kitchen to the garret.

"O very much, indeed! These carpets are beautiful; and those are a splendid pair of look-

ing-glasses. Almost too large, if there is any fault."

"You know that you were particular in wanting them large."

"Yes, I know. And they will do admirably. How much did they cost?"

"I gave one hundred dollars a piece for them."

"Well, they are beautiful!"

"Rather too fine," thought her mother. "But he is rich, and can afford it."

"And how do *you* like the furniture?" Frank said, turning to Mrs. Manning, who had made few remarks during the examination.

"I like it very much, Mr. Lawton, but ——"

"Don't come with any of your buts, Ma!" Julia interrupted her, in a laughing tone.

"O yes, speak out plainly," her husband said; "I always like the truth. I cannot believe that every thing in this house is as it should be, for I have no practical knowledge of such matters."

"Well, then," Mrs. Manning said, "in the first place, you have bought almost as much again, of nearly every thing, as you want."

"O no, Ma!" broke in Julia; "I am sure there is not an article here that is not needed in the furnishing of a parlour."

"But the parlour, my dear," her mother replied, smiling, "is a very small portion of your house. That, in fact, which should receive your smallest consideration."

Julia was silent, for she did not exactly appreciate this idea. And the error on her mother's part, was, in not having long before made her

practically acquainted with the precept she now uttered.

"There are more things in the kitchen," resumed Mrs. Manning, "than you will ever have use for, unless you intend giving splendid entertainments."

"Of course we do not," Frank said, in a decided tone.

"And then, you have five chambers fully furnished, and in a costly style; and all these for just two persons."

"I thought that was wrong, myself," remarked Frank; "but then I left it pretty much to the cabinet-maker and upholsterer, and they said that it was customary to furnish every chamber in the house. But that is usually the way with any one who undertakes to do what he knows nothing about."

"It would have been better, if you had turned these matters over to Julia and myself. We could have managed them much more judiciously for you."

"Why, Ma!" exclaimed Julia.

"And why not, my child?"

"O, it wouldn't have done at all, for me to have been seen selecting my own furniture before I was married."

"I don't see anything wrong in it, Julia."

"It wouldn't have looked well, Ma; and people would have talked about it."

"Still, my child, it would have been right; for, in doing so, you would have saved your husband an expense of several hundred dollars.

That, surely, is of much more importance, than the idle gossip of folks who want something better with which to employ their time."

"It is too late to mend it now, however," Frank Lawton said, refraining from any allusion to the fact that he had tried to persuade Julia to assist him in the selection of furniture. "And we must only profit by this little experience."

CHAPTER II.

FIRST EXPERIMENTS.

KEEPING house is quite a matter-of-fact kind of an affair, as not a few who read this can testify. And it is no mere child's play, as too many young ladies, a few weeks after marriage, have, very much to their surprise, discovered. With all the knowledge, tact, and patience that a thorough housewife possesses, she finds that her daily tasks require the exercise of all this store of knowledge, tact and patience. How sadly at fault then must a young creature, with no actual knowledge of domestic economy, find herself! To her it is indeed a severe trial, and often interferes seriously with her happiness; and the more so, in proportion to her false and romantic ideas of the marriage state.

How strange and censurable an error is that

into which so large a proportion of American mothers fall in regard to their daughters! Music and dancing, and French and Italian, are deemed indispensable. While too often, not even a smattering of domestic economy is given.—As if no practical duties as wives and mothers were ever to devolve upon them. Into this almost unpardonable error did Mrs. Manning fall in bringing up Julia. A thorough housewife herself, she yet neglected to induct her daughter into its necessary details. Thus, when she became mistress of a house, she knew nothing of the art and mystery of keeping a house. She could not bake a loaf of bread herself, nor teach a servant how to do it. A pudding or a custard she might indeed manage. But to boil a potato well, or properly roast a piece of meat, or make a wholesome and palatable soup, was beyond her culinary skill.

And here I would allude to a false idea which has begun to prevail, growing out of the effort which has been made to elevate woman to her right position of intelligence and influence in the community, that it is a perversion of her true character and office to make her thoroughly and practically acquainted with the details of domestic life—with the drudgery of the kitchen, as it is sometimes called by these ultraists, to give force to their declamations.

Here is, indeed, a fundamental error, and its fallacious reasonings have already begun to operate injuriously upon the true domestic interests of the community. It is wrong for a woman to

busy herself in her kitchen and chambers, to the utter neglect of intellectual culture, and the social amenities of life; but it is still more wrong for her to give exclusive attention to the latter, and utterly neglect the former—because in the former are involved her first and most important duties.

As we often see things by contrast that were not palpable before, it may not be amiss to introduce a contrast here. Take, then, the condition and duties of a man. His first duty is to provide for his family, and this he must do by entering into business, and giving to it, for many hours in the day, a careful and exclusive attention. No social pleasures or intellectual pursuits must interfere with this first and most important of duties. It will not do for him to say that the drudgery of business is beneath the dignity of his nature. Equally absurd then, and fraught with error, is the doctrine which teaches that woman is degraded by an earnest daily application to, and interest in, her domestic concerns. No woman is degraded, but is actually in her true sphere of action, while thus engaged in performing the duties which promote the comfort and happiness of those dependent for those offices upon her. And how much does the comfort and happiness of her husband and children depend upon this care and attention which she gives to her household!

How strange then is it, that we find so many wives and mothers willing to transfer their most sacred duties to servants, who, in too rare instan-

ces, regard anything beyond the hire of their labour!

Two servants, a cook and a chambermaid, had been procured by Mr. Lawton; but of their qualifications to fill these respective offices, he, of course, knew nothing. He supposed that so soon as Julia took her true position as mistress of the family, all would go on right and orderly. As far as his knowledge went, he procured provisions, but only in a limited degree, awaiting the more judicious and practical directions in these matters which his wife would be able to give him.

For the first few days, of course, the young couple had a good deal of company; and in the expectation of this, Mrs. Manning came every day and "gave an eye to things." She told Frank what it was necessary to buy for the table, and directed the cook how to prepare her dishes; and more than this, saw that everything went on right, and that the meals were ready in proper season. But this was only for a few days.

Towards the end of the first week, Julia was left sole mistress of her own house. And now, let us see how she filled her new station.

"What shall I get for dinner, ma'am?" asked the cook, opening the parlour door about ten o'clock, where Julia sat reading, on the first day that she had found herself alone since the wedding.

The young wife looked up with something of surprise in her countenance, and then, after a

moment's pause to collect her ideas, thrown suddenly into confusion, said,

"I am sure I don't know, Rachel. I want you to attend to that matter. You are the cook."

"Yes, ma'am, but I always like to know what the madam wants cooked. And besides, there is nothing in the house but salt meat."

"You should have mentioned that this morning, Rachel, before Mr. Lawton went out," Julia said, her tone of voice and expression of countenance indicating that she felt annoyed.

"I would have done it, ma'am," the cook replied, respectfully, "but I thought you knew it."

"Thought I knew it, Rachel! Why, how could I know it, when I haven't been in the kitchen but once since I came into the house?"

Poor Rachel stood in perplexity for a few moments, and then said,

"But what shall I do, ma'am?"

"You must do the best you can, Rachel, for I am sure I don't know any thing about these matters."

And so Rachael withdrew, and returned to the kitchen, while Mrs. Lawton resumed her book. After reading until she grew tired, she sat down to her piano, which had been removed from her old to her new home, and played three or four recent and favourite pieces of music. But she tired of this also, and then she placed herself at the window, and spent the next two hours in looking out, and wishing for Frank's return.

In the meantime, Rachel, after much consideration, for she had never before been left to plan

her work as well as perform it, finally resolved, as there were several hams in the cellar, that she would boil part of one of these, with cabbage and potatoes. As to dessert, that had always been prepared by the mistress of the house where she had lived heretofore, and she had, consequently, no skill in this department. She did not therefore attempt anything beyond the meat, cabbage and potatoes.

At the regular dinner hour, Frank came home, and was met at the door by the smiling, happy creature, the sunshine of whose heart was the light of his countenance.

"O, it has seemed so long, Frank, since you went away!" she said, leaning her arm upon his shoulder, and looking fondly into his face. "I thought two o'clock would never come. You must stay with me this afternoon, for I feel so lonesome, now Ma has gone, and all the rest of the pleasant company we have had."

"I should like to stay home with you very much, Julia," Frank replied, kissing her fair young cheek; "but my business requires a great deal of my attention now, and I cannot neglect it, even for a single afternoon."

"Not even for the sake of your wife's company!" Julia said.

"I would do anything for her sake that was not wrong. Neglected duties, my dear Julia, never bring happiness. Even your society would fail to delight me, if I endeavoured to enjoy it at the expense of a known duty."

"You are a strange one, Frank!" his young

wife responded, laughing gaily. "And I must own, that I do not always see the force of your positions, or the truth of your precepts. But I love you, for all, as no woman ever loved her husband; and if you will love me in return, that is all that I care for."

"And do I not love you, dear Julia! with devoted tenderness?"

"O yes! But you love business a little more, now don't you? Come, confess the truth!" she said in a light, laughing tone; but in that tone, the ear of Frank Lawton could detect something which told his heart too plainly, that Julia did not feel satisfied with his preference of business over her society.

"Indeed, Julia," he said, with something of seriousness in his voice, "I would much prefer to remain at home with you; but it would be wrong for me to do so, when there is an absolute necessity for my being at the store. That which is our duty, should always take the precedence. Unless it does, no effort to obtain happiness can ever be successful."

"But I could be happy in your society all the while, Frank, and never think of duty."

"Could you?"

"Certainly I could."

"There you are mistaken, Julia; and the experience of a few years, perhaps a few months, will show you your error. But I do not want to read you a lecture; and so I will change the subject."

"Well, what next?"

"Why, how soon will dinner be ready? I have been hard at work this morning, and have got quite a keen appetite."

"I'm sure I don't know," Julia replied. "But I will ring for Rachel, and tell her to put it on the table immediately, if she is not already doing so."

"Is dinner on the table yet, Rachel?" she asked of the cook, who made her appearance in a moment or two.

"O no, Ma'am, it aint near done yet; but I will get it ready as soon as possible."

"Be as quick as you can, Rachel," Frank said, "for I want my dinner."

"Yes, sir," Rachel replied in a respectful tone, and left the room.

"I can't say that I am very sorry, Frank; for now I shall keep you here half an hour or so longer than you would have otherwise staid," his wife said, patting his cheek with her small white hand.

"Well, what can't be cured must be endured, as the adage says. But this won't do for every day. There is nothing that I like so well as punctuality, and if you want to do what will give your husband especial pleasure, keep Rachel to the minute in the preparation of her meals."

"I will if I can, Frank," the young wife said, in a changed and somewhat serious tone. "But it is hardly possible to make servants punctual and orderly in their movements."

"Still, it can be done, Julia, and the result is worth all the effort required to produce it."

"But it can't be, Frank, unless one follows them up all the while, and sees that every thing is done just so, and to the minute."

To this the young husband did not reply, for the meaning it conveyed was too palpable not to be understood. It became at once evident, that Julia had no idea of the duties, which, as a matter of course, devolved upon her. This was a painful discovery. But he concealed its unpleasant effect upon his mind, for he could not chill the happy heart of her he loved by any condemnation of the want of interest that she manifested in the domestic economy of her family.

After the passage of about three quarters of an hour, dinner was announced; and the young couple repaired to the dining-room.

"Ham, cabbage, and potatoes; and nothing else, as I live!" exclaimed Julia, after they were seated at the table, and she had glanced her eye over it.

"And I feel as if I could do justice to all three of them," Frank replied, as he took up the carving knife, and sunk it into the fine ham before him. "But I believe it is not more than half done, after all," he added, lifting a slice upon his fork. "But never mind, I can manage to get out a few slices from the thinner part that will do."

"But it is too bad for Rachel to do so!" Julia said, ringing the table-bell; and in a few moments the individual she had named made her appearance.

"Why, Rachel, this ham isn't near done!"

"I was afraid it wouldn't be, ma'am," Rachel replied; "it was so late when I put it on."

"Then you should have put it on earlier."

"And so I would, ma'am, if I had known that we were to have ham for dinner to-day."

There was a pause of a moment, when Frank said,

"Well, it's too late to remedy it now, Rachel. You must only try and do better next time."

After the cook had retired, the young couple proceeded to satisfy the demands of hunger with the plain food before them, Julia ever and anon blaming the cook for not having prepared something more inviting for dinner.

"I hardly think it was her fault, Julia," her husband said; "for now that I come to think of it, she had little else in the house. It was an oversight in me, not to have seen that provision was made for this meal. But, like you, it is all new to me. However, we will both learn by and by."

"She has something nice for dessert to make up for it, I suppose;" and Julia again rung the bell.

"You can clear off the table, and bring in the dessert, Rachel."

"I havn't got any dessert, ma'am." And Rachel, as she said so, looked confused and troubled.

"But how comes that?" asked Mrs. Lawton.

"I have never made the puddings and pies where I lived," Rachel replied; "and I don't know much about that kind of work."

"Who did make them then?" inquired Julia.

"O, the mistress of the house always made the pastry, and everything like that.

Julia did not reply; and as Frank rose from the table, she got up also, and followed him into the parlour.

"Did you ever see such assurance as that?" she said, in an indignant tone, as she closed the parlour door after her.

"I hardly think you ought to call it assurance, Julia. Rachel, I think, did the best she knew how."

"But I wonder if she thinks I am going down into the kitchen every day to do her work? If she does, she is mistaken. I don't believe a word of the story about the mistresses of families where she has lived always making the dessert. I am not going to do it, I know. And if she doesn't understand her business, I must get some one who does, that is all!"

"I think I would try and bear with her, Julia," Frank said, in a quiet, soothing tone. "She appears willing, good-natured, and respectful. And these are qualities not often found, I believe, in servants."

"But it won't do to have things in this condition every day, Frank."

"No, but I think we may easily remedy the present evil. I must see that everything that is wanted is in the house, and by your giving a little attention to Rachel, all will no doubt go on well."

The first part of this was plain enough to Julia,

but she could not so readily comprehend the latter, for she had never given the cares and duties of housekeeping, as they really are, demanding much of a woman's time and attention, a single serious thought.

After a pause, she said,

"But surely, Frank, you do not wish me, just for the sake of humouring Rachel, to go into the kitchen, and work like a servant?"

"How can you think so, Julia? I am sure I had no such meaning. All I intended by my remark, was, that by your overlooking Rachel, every day, for a little while, all difficulty would be remedied."

But Julia felt not the least inclination to do so. Indeed, she always had a great distaste for any duty connected with the kitchen. And could not help thinking her young husband a little unreasonable. He perceived, instinctively, how the whole matter was considered by his wife; and said no more upon the subject; determining, in his own mind, to provide as far as possible in reference to Rachel's abilities as cook, and to be willing to bear every irregularity with as much patience as possible.

"It will all come right by and by," he thought. "Her good sense will teach her what are her real duties, and until then, I must be willing to make any sacrifices for her sake."

After her husband returned to his store, and Julia was again left alone, she did not feel so happy as she did during the morning, for added to the fact of her being deprived of the company

of her husband, there was a consciousness that he thought her somewhat neglectful of her domestic duties.

"But surely," she said to herself, heaving a long sigh, as she came out of a troubled reverie, "he cannot wish to see me toil like a servant in the kitchen!"

Frank Lawton had his thoughts also; and though a little disposed to blame his young wife for her disinclination to enter upon matter-of-fact household duties, yet his true affection for her caused him to excuse this as far as possible, and trust to the salutary influence of time and circumstance.

Thus we see, that within the first week of their married life, Mr. and Mrs. Lawton were experiencing a degree of unhappiness, small it is true, but still palpable, arising from neglected duty.

And thus, in all the relations of life, does unhappiness follow, as surely as effect follows cause, the evasion of duty. If the neglect be broad and predetermined, the result will be correspondingly painful. If it regard little things, and appear in the form of thoughtless omissions, pain of mind, though indistinct, and seemingly causeless, will come with unerring certainty. This is a moral law, as unchangeable as any physical law.

CHAPTER III.

MORNING CALLS.

On the next morning the young husband went to market, accompanied by Thomas, the porter of his store, and performed this new and very essential duty to the best of his ability. But, instead of informing his wife of the kinds of meat, vegetables, &c. that he had purchased, and resigning to her all future care in relation to them, he explained to Rachel, the cook, as far as he could, no doubt awkwardly enough, in what order and manner to prepare them for the table. Not, indeed, precisely how she should cook them, for that would have exceeded his knowledge; he merely gave such general directions as would enable her to get along without the necessity of referring to the young mistress of the parlour—for beyond that Mrs. Lawton had not yet deemed it required of her to extend any particular jurisdiction.

But, from the previous day's experience, and and the slight uneasiness of mind occasioned thereby, she had gained a small portion of wisdom. Notwithstanding she thought that her husband was a little unreasonable in his too evident desire to see her give some attention to the movements of Rachel, yet the knowledge that this desire existed, partially modified her actions, as will be seen.

On this morning she intended going out for

the purpose of making a number of calls. As she was on her way up to her chamber to dress, the dinner scene of the previous day came up fresh before her mind, and she remembered Rachel's remarks about the dessert. She paused on the stairway, and stood there for a minute or two, musing and irresolute. A duty was presented to her mind, that she was inclined to evade. It was a plain and simple duty, and one that she could easily perform, being nothing more than the preparation of a pudding or tart for dinner. Finally duty gained the victory, and she descended to the kitchen, reluctantly enough, and in the course of some fifteen or twenty minutes, had a pudding ready for the oven. After transferring it to Rachel, with directions for baking it, she charged her to be sure and have dinner on the table by two o'clock.

Rachel promised in a cheerful tone, for this little effort of Mrs. Lawton's had somewhat inspirited her, and then the young mistress went up to her chamber and prepared to go out, with feelings whose lightness she enjoyed, but did not pretend to account for.

Among her acquaintances was a Mrs. Campbell, who had been married some two or three years, and upon her Julia called on this morning.

"O, I am so glad to see you, Julia! Mrs. Campbell said. "How have you been? And how do you like your new house?"

"O, very well. How could it be otherwise?

"True enough! And you are as happy as any

young bride in the land! But don't be too much elated. Life has its bitter as well as its sweet portion, and you will have to take your share."

This was said in a light, trifling tone and manner, that contradicted the truism she uttered.

"Of course!" Julia responded, smiling gaily in return. "But I shall take as little of the bitter as possible."

"Ah! you are a true philosopher, I see. Well, that is right. Take things easy as you move along, and then you will have things easy. But, if you go to burying yourself alive in cares and household duties, your spirits will be broken, and you will become as dull and uninteresting as any notable housewife in the land."

"Never fear on that score for me, Mrs. Campbell. I have no particular affection for these matters. I have a cook, and to her I shall leave the business of the kitchen. Though I did humour her so far this morning, as to make a pudding."

"There you were wrong, Julia. If you assist these creatures in the smallest way, they will look for you to be ever helping them. So take the advice of a friend, and let your cook attend to her own duties. You will have trouble, if you don't."

"I felt as if I were doing wrong when I went into the kitchen," Julia replied. "But then, she made such a bungling work of dinner yesterday, that I was afraid to trust her. She gave us no dessert, and when I wanted to know the reason, said that where she had lived before, the lady

of the house always prepared the puddings and the pies."

"Indeed!"

"Yes; that was what she said."

"She has not lived with me then," Mrs. Campbell said, laughing heartily. "For I never do more than tell my cook what I want. I have enough to occupy my time, without drudging in the kitchen."

"But does every thing go on well? Are your meals always ready in time, and properly cooked?"

"About once a week or so," Mrs. Campbell said, with mock gravity. Then, changing her tone to one of affected surprise, she continued, "You have got it all to learn yet, I see, Julia. And I only hope, for your sake, that Mr. Lawton is not one of your very particular, minute men; for if he is, he will worry you half to death. There will be a constant alternation of sunshine, clouds, and rain, for the first year or so, and then matters will settle down into something like quietness. Mr. Campbell tried me severely for a time. He wanted to persuade me that it was my duty to go into the kitchen every day, and see that the cook attended to her business; to tell her when to put dinner on, and see that it was ready in season, and all that—and thus have everything go on like clock-work to suit his notions of matters and things. But I wasn't going to make a slave of myself in that way; and I told him so, plainly. He fretted and fumed

for awhile, but soon got over it, and now gives me no more trouble about these things."

Julia did not feel shocked at all this, and I am sorry to have to say so. Indeed, she more than once thought of Frank, and some of his too plain allusions on the day previous to what he thought to be her duties, with a feeling very near allied to contempt. But this was only momentary.

Her next call was upon another friend, also married, by the name of Mrs. Watson.

"And so you have begun life in earnest," Mrs. Watson said, after the first greetings and congratulations were over. "And begun, too, in a house of your own. Well, you will have your hands full, that is all I can say about it. You had better, by a great deal, have taken genteel boarding somewhere. I only wish that I could persuade my husband to break up, even now, and go to boarding."

"What, with your three children?" asked Julia, in surprise.

"Certainly. Wouldn't I have as much time again to attend to them, and then not have to work half so hard as I do now? In a boarding-house, you have nothing to do but take care of your own room. No trouble about breakfast, dinner, and supper, to say nothing of looking after the whole house. O, dear! I wonder people will keep house, any how! But men are so selfish, that they will make slaves of their wives, just to have a comfortable home to sit down in and do nothing, every evening when they come home from their business."

"I almost wish I had conversed with you on this subject before," said Julia, musingly. "For I must confess that, now Ma has gone home, a single day's experience is enough to convince me, that the care of a whole house is no light affair."

"Indeed, and it is not, Julia! It is go, go, go, from morning until night, and then not get through. The fact is, a woman's work is never done, while a man has nothing to do but sit down and read, after he comes home from business in the evening. And then he must have a whole house to do that in, when a single parlour and bedchamber, in a respectable boarding-house, would be just as pleasant for him, and far more economical, to say nothing of the relief from unnecessary cares that it would bring to his wife. But, oh no! She is not to be considered at all in the matter. She is nothing. But I'll manage it yet! I'll make this house too hot to hold my good man, one of these days, see if I don't!"

Mrs. Watson was not a woman of confirmed bad principles. She was only chafed at the many duties which, as mistress of a family, devolved necessarily upon her, and which she performed under the compulsive idea of necessity. She really loved her husband, but had thought him, from the first, a little selfish and unreasonable in his immoveable resolution to live in a house of his own, when it would have been so much pleasanter and easier for her, she imagined, if they had boarded.

Whenever, therefore, the subject of household

cares and duties came up for consideration, she would ride her hobby until the blood warmed up almost to fever heat, and then she would talk something after the strain of her conversation with Julia.

It is but just to say, that, to Julia, her language in reference to her husband did not seem in place, nor at all consistent with the character of a wife. Still, the idea of boarding, with its promised relief from household cares, made its impression upon her mind.

Julia's next call was upon a Mrs. Logan, a friend who had been married some two or three years. Her character will appear in their interview.

"Ah, Julia, or Mrs. Lawton, as it is now, how do you do? I am right down glad to see you. You have passed the Rubicon, as they say, and now you are 'one of us.' Well, how do you like your new condition?"

"Very well, of course, so far. But you know I have everything to learn."

"Yes, and a little more too, as the saying is. The married life has its pleasures, and its cares and troubles, and which of these overbalances the other, I am sure I cannot say."

"And yet, Mrs. Logan, you would not, if it were in your power, resume your single condition."

"There you are right, Julia. Nor if the cares and troubles, as I call them, were doubled in number."

"Then I should conclude that they were far overbalanced by the former."

"Well, no doubt they are. But, sometimes, you know, when we look on the dark side of things, all the sunshine is obscured."

"It ought to be a happy condition," Julia said. "For in it we have our heart's most fervent desire, the society of the one we cherish in our affections above all others."

"And yet, Julia," Mrs. Logan remarked, "I have thus early in my married life learned the painful, but, I believe, salutary lesson, that the society of one we love cannot, and will not, alone, make us happy."

"You talk in riddles, Mrs. Logan."

"Do I? Well, you will find their solution one of these days."

"Why, I am sure, Mrs. Logan, that I should be the happiest creature in the world, if I could spend every hour of the day with Mr. Lawton: it is only his absence that leaves a single shadow upon my feelings."

Just then the parlour door was opened by the servant, and a visiter entered.

"Good morning, Mrs. Emerson," said Mrs. Logan, advancing, and offering her hand. "You see that I have got the bride with me," presenting Julia.

"So you have; and right glad I am to meet her," Mrs. Emerson replied, taking Julia's hand, and giving it an earnest, truthful pressure.

Mrs. Emerson was a widow lady, somewhat advanced in life; of a mild and benevolent dis-

position, united with much experience and great good sense. There were few with whom she associated who did not like her—or, perhaps, the stronger term of "love" would better express the sentiment. After she was seated, Mrs. Logan said,

"Julia and I were talking, just as you came in, about the happiness connected with the married life. She thinks that the society of her husband alone, is all that is required to make her happy in her new condition. But I tell her, that time will prove this idea to be an erroneous one."

"Am *I* not right, Mrs. Emerson?" Julia asked, as soon as Mrs. Logan ceased speaking.

"No, Julia, you are far from being right," Mrs. Emerson replied. "Our friend, Mrs. Logan here, had the same idea at one time, but she has long since proved it to be a false one. The discovery is by no means pleasant, but it teaches a salutary lesson, making us better and wiser."

"I must confess," Julia said, "that I cannot understand your meaning. I love my husband, and am never so happy as when he is by my side. My delight is in the thought that he loves me, and that alone, with his presence, constitutes my greatest felicity."

"That is only the appearance of truth, Julia," was Mrs. Emerson's answer. "But the real truth is, that only in the discharge of all the duties appertaining to your new relation, can you possibly find happiness. If any of these are neglected, unhappiness will follow, in spite of all the deep and pure affection that lives in both your

hearts. I see by your countenance that you do not appreciate the sentiment I utter. I most sincerely wish that you did, and that, by acting up to it, you would secure for yourself that measure of enjoyment in the married life that you so fondly expect."

"But I am sure of being happy, Mrs. Emerson."

"The greater the danger of disappointment, Julia."

"Really, if I were to be influenced by what I have heard this morning, I would give up in despair. I made two calls before I came in here, and at both of the places I was met by homilies on the troubles, and trials, and duties of the married life."

"Not for the world would I discourage you, my dear Julia!" Mrs. Emerson said, with affectionate earnestness. "In what I have said, I have been moved by a sincere desire to impart the truth, that in obedience to it, you might secure the great enjoyments and inestimable blessings of the married life. But you are too happy now, under the first delightful emotions of your new condition. By and by, when your heart ceases, in a degree, its joyful tremulousness, and gives sober thought a little room for action, I may be better understood." Then rising, she added,

"Come and see me, Julia, often. I should like to converse with you freely, for I think I can give you a little of my experience that will be beneficial to you."

Julia promised; when, bidding her two young friends a kind good morning, Mrs. Emerson left them again alone.

"I think more of Mrs. Emerson than any woman I know," Mrs. Logan said, after she had seen her friend to the door.

"And I cannot help liking her. She always seems so kind and unselfish."

"And what is more," remarked Mrs. Logan, "although she has seen much trouble in her time, there is about her nothing morose—nothing of murmuring. She seems ever cheerful, and ever desirous of imparting to others the secret of her cheerfulness. I have enjoyed her society much of late, and it has been of great advantage to me. I hope you will call upon her often, and encourage her to visit you."

"I certainly shall," Julia said, "as I have always liked her. And I think I would enjoy her society better, if she did not talk so much about *duty*. For my part, I must confess, that I have but little affection for the word."

"And yet, Julia, it is a word that has much to do with our happiness."

"I am yet to learn in what way."

"You will learn before long, Julia."

"Will I? Well, perhaps I may. But I must be going. The morning has passed away rapidly, and it is now near dinner time."

CHAPTER IV.

FIRST DEMONSTRATIONS.

"I DON'T think I shall stay here after my month is up," Rachel said to the chambermaid, during the morning on which Mrs. Lawton was making her calls.

"Why not?"

"Because I am sure that I shall not be able to please Mrs. Lawton."

"I don't think she's hard to please at all," the chambermaid replied. "She's never given me a single direction since I've been here."

"That is the difficulty, Sally. If she would look after things a little, and tell me how she wanted them done, I could get along well enough. But while it is all left to me, I am never sure that I am going right or wrong. Yesterday the dinner did not please them, and I know that I was blamed. But it was no fault of mine."

"I find it easy enough," Sally responded, "for I can do as I please, and that is what I like. Mrs. Lawton is not the woman to poke about in holes and corners for dirt and dust."

"If it is all to your mind, Sally, I am sure I have no objections; but, as I said, it won't suit me. I will do my best, until my month is up, and then, if there has been no change, I shall certainly leave. People like Mrs. Lawton never have any consideration for us; and it always discourages me to be treated as if I had no feel-

ing. I've lived with ladies before now who seemed afraid to put their foot into the kitchen, and they were the hardest to please of any people that I ever met."

"I don't know," Sally replied, "but it seems to me that you couldn't get an easier place than this. Only two persons to cook for, and your own way into the bargain, about everything."

"I never was afraid of work, Sally, and it isn't that that discourages me. I had rather give satisfaction, if I have to work twice as hard."

"But when things can't be mended, you ought to take them easy."

"That may do for you, Sally; but I haven't so easy a way of getting along as you have. I may be wrong, but I can't help it. If everything don't go on smooth and quiet, I am in hot water all the while."

"But how do you know, Rachel, that things won't go on smooth and quiet here? I am sure there is nothing to prevent it."

"As I said before, Sally, I've lived in my time with ladies who had a mortal hatred of the kitchen; which was, in most cases, because they didn't know how to do anything when they came into it. It was no use to try to please them, because they didn't know how to make allowance for any thing that happened to go wrong; and things will go wrong, sometimes, in spite of any one. If dinner came on the table ten or fifteen minutes too late, and the husband grumbled, the cook had to bear the blame of

being indifferent, or lazy, or inattentive to her business, when, perhaps, her fire had burned badly in spite of all she could do, or she had, though anxious to do right, slightly miscalculated her time. But it is very different where the mistress of a family has an eye over every thing. Then she knows whether a cook tries to do her duty, and will never blame one who honestly endeavours to do right. And besides, we always feel more confidence when the lady herself is occasionally about, saying how she wants this thing done, or that; and giving such general directions as will always keep us from going wrong. But there is the bell, Sally. I suppose Mrs. Lawton has come home."

Sally answered the bell, and the young mistress entered her new home, with feelings somewhat different from those which swelled her bosom, when her foot first touched its threshold. The experience of a single day, in which she had been made to feel some domestic responsibilities, added to the gossip of two or three grumbling and discontented housekeepers, had opened to her mind a new world of thought. Already had the words, "I wish I had advised Frank to take rooms at a genteel boarding-house," formed themselves in her mind, and been inwardly expressed, thus giving to them a partial confirmation.

In a few minutes her husband came in, and found her sitting in one of the parlours in a musing attitude, with her bonnet unremoved.

"Sitting alone, and pensive!" Frank said, in

a lively tone, as he entered; and the honey-moon not half over."

"But I'm in right down earnest, though, for all," was the half-laughing reply.

"Or trying to be. Well, as there are to be no secrets between us, suppose you relate to me the cause of this painful state of your mind. Perhaps I can help you to a happy thought or two."

"But I tell you, I'm in earnest, Frank."

"Are you indeed? But I am sure I did'nt dispute it. Seriously, however, I wish to know if anything does really trouble you."

"I do feel a little troubled, Frank."

"I am truly sorry to hear you say so. But, perhaps, if you will tell me why you feel uneasy, I can say or do something that will remove that uneasiness."

"I am afraid you will think me weak and foolish, Frank."

"Don't fear that, Julia," said he, taking her hand affectionately. "I can never think you either weak or foolish. Tell me, then, frankly, why you have unpleasant feelings."

"To be honest then with you, as I always wish to be, I am afraid, that in consenting to take upon myself the care of a house, I have undertaken more than I can well perform."

"That is a strange idea, Julia," Frank said, smiling. "Where in the world did it come from?"

"I suppose it came, in part, from some ladies

whom I visited this morning, and who gave me a short account of their domestic grievances."

"Indeed! That was kind, truly!"

"Perhaps it was not exactly the best way of entertaining a young beginner like myself. Still, that doesn't alter the facts of the case any. The trials and difficulties incident to housekeeping which they related, were no doubt all true."

"That may all be, Julia. But the facts were incident, I presume, to their own household economy, and in no way connected, necessarily, with yours."

"Yes, but the two or three on whom I called, bore the same testimony. And they said that every one had these troubles, because it was impossible to obtain good and intelligent servants."

"But your mother, I believe, never has these difficulties."

"No, I believe not. I have never heard her complain, at least not very often. But then, you see, she is always looking after her servants, and takes good care that everything is done as she wishes it."

"And it is for that very reason, I suppose, Julia, that your mother is not troubled in the way that those ladies you speak of are. If they would look after the domestic arrangements of their families as carefully as she does, they would find as little cause of complaint."

"Yes, but she gives a great deal too much attention to her family concerns."

"Not more than is required, I presume, to make all around her comfortable."

"No, I suppose not."

"Then, I cannot think that she pays any too much attention to these matters. And I am sure that she seems always cheerful, and enjoys good health."

To this Julia could perceive in her mind no fitting reply, and so she paused for a few moments, and then rising to go to her chamber for the purpose of changing her dress before dinner, said, as she moved towards the door,

"I don't know much about these things, Frank, but I suppose I will learn by and by."

It so happened that when dinner was served up, it was in time, and well cooked. The few general directions given to Rachel in the morning, by Mr. Lawton, which did not cost him five minutes' thought, nor occupy him over a minute in imparting them, and the making of the pudding by Mrs. Lawton, were just sufficient aid to enable her to do all that was required, in proper time and in proper order.

Of course, Julia felt a little encouraged by a result, which, to obtain every day, would have cost her but a small portion of care and attention. But she did not feel inclined to give this, for it was irksome to her. Her mind was averse to the assumption of any care, and she was not able to appreciate the duty which was involved in such an assumption. Consequently, only a day or two passed before there was cause of dissatisfaction and complaint. This Rachel bore

with all the patience that she could call to her aid, which was not a great deal, for, though possessed of an honest intention, and natural good sense, she had not enjoyed many advantages of either mental or moral culture, and had not, in consequence, much self-control, founded in true principles of action. She soon, therefore, became tried beyond endurance.

CHAPTER V.

TROUBLE WITH SERVANTS.

"I DON'T think you try to do, Rachel," said Mrs. Lawton, in no very kind tone, one day, near the close of her cook's first month. "This is the second time this week that we have had dinner too late, and no dessert into the bargain. I don't see any occasion for this, for it is just as easy to do a thing right as wrong."

Rachel knew that the dinner had been badly cooked, and she knew that Mrs. Lawton was not pleased at her for not preparing a dessert, for neither of which she was, on the score of carelessness or neglect, to blame, and she felt a good deal chafed in mind.

"I do the best I can, Mrs. Lawton," she replied, in a tone that was rather sharp and positive.

"Come, now, I don't want any of your impertinence, Rachel," Mrs. Lawton said, indignantly.

This somewhat cooled, at the same time that it deeply wounded the feelings of the cook. She had not intended to be impertinent, and did not wish to bear such an imputation. She therefore responded, in a calmer tone,

"I did not mean to be impertinent, Mrs. Lawton; I only said ——"

"Well, I don't want to hear what you said! And I won't be answered back by any servant in my house!" Mrs. Lawton replied, in an excited tone; "I complained of the dinner's not being well cooked, and I shall expect you, hereafter, to give more attention to what you are doing. You *can* cook well, that I know."

And so saying, the young mistress swept out of the kitchen. As she closed the door after her, poor Rachel burst into tears, and sitting down upon a chair, covered her face with her hands, and sobbed long and violently. At the age of ten years she had been left an orphan. Up to that time, none could have been more tenderly raised, but thenceforward she knew little of kindness beyond the orphan's limited portion. Still, the remembrance of earlier days ever lived like a green spot in her memory, and modified her whole character and feelings. It acted like a conservative principle in her moral nature, elevating her thoughts, and keeping her free from the too many contaminating influences incident to her condition in life. Her feelings had always been exceedingly sensitive, so much so, that the least

dissatisfaction on the part of any one for whom she was working, made her unhappy.

After sitting for about ten minutes, during which time the agitation of her mind gradually subsided, she rose up, and went about the performance of her duties as usual; but there was in her countenance a thoughtful and resolved expression.

In the mean time, Mrs. Lawton had her own thoughts and her own feelings, and they were by no means of the pleasantest kind. She had suffered herself to become excited, and this state of excitement she had exhibited before her servant. She felt, consequently, but did not suffer the feeling to arise into a thought, that she had lowered that servant's estimation of her, and this worried her. And besides this, there was a consciousness that she had not acted with justice towards that servant; and still further, a consciousness of diminished self-respect.

It cannot, therefore, be supposed, that she was in a very happy frame of mind when Frank returned home in the evening. Her troubled looks at once attracted his attention.

"Is anything the matter, Julia?" he asked, tenderly.

"Nothing," replied the young wife, "except that I have been tried out of all patience with Rachel."

"I am very sorry to hear that, Julia. I was much in hopes that, with some looking after, you would find in Rachel all that you wanted."

Now, those two little words, "looking after,"

had a specific meaning when uttered by the husband, and Julia felt that they had. And this annoyed her still more. For there was in them, it seemed to her, a rebuke for not having given the required attention to her domestic concerns. Not that such a rebuke was really intended to be conveyed—the object was, merely to utter a truth, in the hope that it would be rightly appreciated. She, therefore, replied with some warmth,

"I don't know that I could have looked after her any more than I have. I am sure that I have made all the pastry and such things for her for the last ten days, though I got no thanks for it."

"I didn't say, Julia," Frank responded in a soothing tone, "that you had not looked after Rachel sufficiently; I only said, that with a little looking after, I had hoped you would find her all that you desired. But don't let so little a thing worry you. Try to bear with her, and excuse her faults. I think she means to do the best she can."

"Well, *I* don't, then," said the offended young housekeeper, "for when I tried to talk with her this afternoon, she was as stiff and impudent as she could be; and that is what I am not going to put up with from any one in my house. I am resolved to be mistress here, and when things are not done as I want them, I shall speak about it."

"In that you are right, Julia. Only you must use this right with discretion. But I see that I

am worrying your mind, and so I will say no more. Your own good sense and discrimination will, I am sure, cause you to do everything for the best. So brighten up now, and forget all your little annoyances."

The presence of her husband, with his cheerful air, and ready power to interest her, soon chased the cloud from the brow of Julia, and she was again the happy young wife. But this cheerful temper was not to remain long. Towards the middle of the forenoon of the next day, she descended to the kitchen, under the impulse of the idea, that if she would prevent trouble, she had better see a little after the movements of Rachel.

"Get me some flour and butter, Rachel," she said, as she entered the kitchen; and these articles were promptly brought to her. Several other things that were named, were also supplied, while she stood, inactive, until the various articles she had named were laid before her. She then proceeded to compound some article of dessert, with a daintiness of manner that indicated her true thoughts, that such an occupation was entirely below one in her condition. While thus engaged, Rachel approached her respectfully, and said—

"I think it right, Mrs. Lawton, to tell you, thus early, that I cannot stay with you longer than this month."

"Very well, Rachel, you can do as you please," was Mrs. Lawton's reply, made in an offended tone, for she still felt unkindly to-

wards her cook; and though she did not wish her to go, she instantly resolved that she would not ask her to stay, or give her the least intimation that she entertained such a thought.

The reply of Mrs. Lawton touched Rachel, and made her feel still more uncomfortable. But it had the effect to increase her desire to be away.

After Mrs. Lawton had finished what she was engaged in, she retired to her chamber in no very pleasant mood of mind, which was not improved by reflection. When her husband came home, he found that there was a cloud upon her brow. He of course inquired the reason.

"Rachel is going away as soon as her month is up, and I am sure I do not know what I shall do!" was her reply, in a gloomy tone of voice.

"She is? Really, I am sorry to hear that. What can be the reason of it?"

"I am sure that I don't know. Though I suppose it is because I talked to her yesterday about her negligence. But that is just the way with them all. If you let them do as you please, all will go on to their satisfaction. But the moment you say a word, it is all over. They will either give you impudence in return, or look out immediately for another place."

"I wouldn't let it disturb me, Julia," Frank said, soothingly. "Rachel will, no doubt, change her mind in a day or two, and then all will go on well again."

"And if she does, there will be the same trou-

ble to go over again every few weeks. If she don't do as I want her to, and I speak about it, there will be another flare up, and so I will be kept in hot water all the while. I declare I feel almost discouraged at the prospect. How much better it would have been, Frank, if we had taken boarding instead of going to housekeeping."

"I thought, myself, it would have been better; but then you said that you would prefer housekeeping."

"I know I did. And foolish enough I was! But I hope it is not too late yet. How much pleasanter it would be, Frank, if we were clear of all this trouble of servants, and the care of a whole house."

"It might be pleasant in some respects, Julia, but unpleasant in many more. Now that we are comfortably settled in a house of our own, it would be a great folly for us to break up. We would not be half so comfortable in any boarding-house in the city."

"I don't know how that would be, but I am very much inclined to believe, that I should find it a great deal more pleasant. I should be relieved of all the care and responsibility of having the meals well cooked, and ready in time, and have no trouble with servants."

To this kind of argument Frank Lawton had in his mind some very decisive answers: but he could not utter them, without deeply wounding the young creature he had taken to his bosom, and vowed to love and cherish; and therefore

he was silent. But in that silence was a fixed resolution not to yield to Julia's wishes in regard to breaking up housekeeping, should she go so far as to urge upon him a compliance with those wishes. He could not conceal from himself the fact, that a great part of the difficulty and trouble which his wife had experienced, arose from her indisposition to enter into, and faithfully perform her duties. This indisposition he had no doubt, time and reflection, added to the necessity of circumstances, would, in the end, correct.

Contrary to the hope of Mrs. Lawton, Rachel showed herself to be in earnest in her resolution to change her place. At the end of the month she gave up her situation, and Mrs. Lawton was left, with Sally, in care of the house. Now Sally had no more affection for culinary operations than her mistress, and therefore did not exhibit the most amiable temper in the world when she was told that she must turn cook until another one could be obtained.

"But I don't know anything about cooking, Mrs. Lawton," she said, with a clouded brow.

"Still you will have to try, Sally, for I can't do it. Rachel goes to-day; and until another cook can be obtained, you will have to take her place."

Sally went grumbling about her work in the kitchen after Rachel left, resolved to do nothing right, unless it should prove too much trouble to do it wrong; and further resolved, not to find a moment's time to make Mrs. Lawton's bed, or clear up her room. About eleven o'clock, her

mistress came into the kitchen, for the purpose of sending her up into her chamber, but found her still washing up the breakfast dishes.

"Why, Sally, is it possible you haven't got the breakfast things washed yet? How in the world do you expect to get the chamber and parlours cleaned up this morning?"

"I don't expect to get them cleaned up at all, Ma'am!" Sally replied, tartly. "If I've got the cooking to do, I'm sure I can't be chamber-maid at the same time."

"But how do you expect the up-stairs work is to be done, Sally?" Mrs. Lawton asked, in a tone of perplexity.

"I'm sure I don't know, Ma'am, unless you do it."

"Me do it!" exclaimed Mrs. Lawton, in profound astonishment.

"It's your own work, Ma'am," Sally replied, with the utmost coolness.

Here, then, the young wife found herself in a narrow place, and how to get through it she knew not. To go to work and clean up the parlours, and then make up her bed and put her chamber in order, she could not, at first, think of doing. But time passed on, and Sally showed herself to be in earnest in the matter. Under the impulse of a fear that some one would call in and find her parlours in disorder, did Julia at last go to work and sweep and dust them pretty thoroughly. She then proceeded to her chamber, and restored everything to order there. This occupied her for an hour or two, at the end of which time

she returned to the kitchen, and, from appearances there, perceived that if her husband got any dinner that day, she would have to cook it, for Sally was just placing the breakfast things upon the dresser, having, at last, concluded the process of washing them.

"Indeed, Sally, this is too bad!" she said, in an excited tone. "It is nearly one o'clock, and nothing done towards getting dinner."

"I've hurried all I could," Sally replied, tossing her head. "I did not hire for cook any how!" was muttered in a lower tone, but distinct enough for Mrs. Lawton to hear.

Finding that nothing was to be gained by endeavouring to make Sally more active in her movements, and perceiving that she was in no very gentle temper, the young mistress made a virtue of necessity, and proceeded to the preparation of dinner, with the trifling assistance Sally felt disposed to give, herself in no very amiable mood. About the regulation of the cooking-stove she knew little or nothing, and Sally pretended to be far more ignorant than her mistress. Between them, however, they at last managed to get the dinner cooked, but it was "after a fashion,' as they say.

The interview between the husband and wife at the dinner table, we will not sketch. Julia filled his ear with complaints, and declared that it was impossible to get along. But Frank was firm in his resolution not to give way. He soothed, and comforted, and tried to encourage his wife all he could, but would not entertain,

for a moment, her renewed propositions to break up housekeeping.

CHAPTER VI.

A NEW ONE.

"How do you do, Mrs. Campbell! I am really glad to see you this morning!" said Julia, to the lady she had named, who called in to see her on the third day of her trials with Sally as cook, a new one not having yet been obtained.

"I'm well, Mrs. Lawton, or Julia, as I must still call you. And how are you?"

"O, I'm almost worried to death, Mrs. Campbell! I've had no cook for the last three days, and my chambermaid is worth nothing in the kitchen. It's the truth, that I've had to cook, or rather try to cook, for I know little or nothing of these matters, every dinner since Rachel went away."

"I know how to sympathize with you," Mrs. Campbell said; "for I've been served in the same way, many and many a time. The fact is, Julia, this housekeeping is a terrible business. I am so sick and tired, that I would almost be willing to live on bread and water, if I could be entirely free from it."

"It is indeed, Mrs. Campbell. I never dreamed that so many troubles and annoyances were

connected with it, or I should have been one of the last ones to have taken upon myself its perplexing cares."

"Well, Julia, if you regard a friend's advice, you will get out of them as quickly as possible."

"I have mentioned it to Mr. Lawton, but he won't listen to me."

"O no, of course not. The men never will hear to it. It's very comfortable for them, and that's all they care about. Give them a well-kept house to sit down in at night, and read or go to sleep, perhaps, and not a fig do they care how much trouble their wives have! The fact is, I'm getting out of all patience, and am determined to have a change before long."

"I really believe, as you say," Julia replied, "that men cannot truly appreciate the trials and cares to which women are subjected in their families."

"Truly appreciate them! No, indeed, that they cannot! They think we have it all easy enough; and what is worse, you may talk to them until you are blind, about it, and it makes not the least difference. I get so out of patience, sometimes, that I hardly know what to do with myself."

"But in regard to boarding, Mrs. Campbell, Mr. Lawton says that but few real comforts can be had in a boarding-house. That in too many instances the food not only comes on the table badly cooked, but is often inferior in quality, and limited in quantity. That you are constantly

liable to be thrown into disagreeable associations; that ——"

"Don't say any more, Julia! I have heard these things asserted over and over again, until they have lost all weight with me. Indeed, to tell the truth, I don't believe one word of it all. Isn't it sheer nonsense, now, to talk about the food being badly cooked in a regular boarding-house, where they have the best of servants, and everything arranged to have things done right. And as to its being inferior in quality, I believe as little of that as the other. I go to market, and I see what boarding-house people buy. It's their business to have everything in order for the sake of their boarders, for they know very well, if they don't, that they will lose them."

"As far as all that is concerned, Mrs. Campbell, I am sure I am willing to make the trial."

"So am I, Julia. And I will make it too, and that before long—see if I don't! Why, there is Mrs. Jamison, who has boarded for the last year. She says that it is infinitely preferable. And she had a fair trial of housekeeping, for she was at it ten years. It is all nonsense, she says, to talk about there being no comfort in boarding, for it is all comfort, in comparison with housekeeping. No looking after servants, no slaving in the kitchen, no care about anything but your own room. O, it must be delightful!"

"How foolish I was not to have gone to boarding at first! Mr. Lawton says that he thought it would have been better to have avoided the trou-

ble and expense incident to housekeeping for a year or so, but, that as I preferred being in a house of my own, he had yielded to my wishes."

"I should think, then, that he would still be willing to break up."

"O no, not he! Now that we are in a house of our own, he thinks that it would be the greatest piece of folly in the world. And besides, he says, now is the best possible time for me to become familiar with its cares and duties."

"Indeed! Ah, Julia, I see that there is little hope for you. Your good man has the same notions that prevail among nine-tenths of husbands, that a wife is never so interesting as when she is engaged in attending to her household duties, as they call them. But, ain't we doomed to slavery?"

"It really seems that we are, Mrs. Campbell," Julia replied, despondingly. "I am sure that I have felt like a slave ever since the care of this house devolved upon me. And, instead of things growing better, they grow worse and worse every day. Just to think, in the very first month after marriage, to be left without a cook, and be obliged to go into the kitchen, and toil like a servant! I declare, I get right sick sometimes! Don't you know of some one whom I could get?"

"Indeed I do not, Julia. And if I did, I wouldn't feel like recommending her to you, for they are all good for nothing. I've had about a hundred or so in my time, and never saw one yet that was worth a copper."

"I don't know what I shall do, Mrs. Camp-

bell. If I had known that all were so worthless, I would have tried to persuade Rachel not to have left me. I think, now I have seen a little of Sally's cross-grained temper and indolence, that she was far above the ordinary run of servants. It is true, that she did not always do things just to my mind, but I shall have to put up with some things, I suppose."

"That you will. On this subject, we might say with Shakspeare: Let us

> ——Rather bear those ills we have,
> Than fly to others that we know not of.

At least, such is my experience; for so sure as I let a servant go, I get one in her place ten times as bad."

"Ah me!" sighed the young wife, "we gain our wisdom by sad experience."

"Indeed we do, Julia! But like most of such wisdom, it comes too late."

And thus Mrs. Campbell, one of the too numerous class of modern ill-furnished and reluctant housewives, chafed and worried the mind of Mrs. Lawton, instead of carefully soothing, and judiciously directing her into the right course of action. When, therefore, this kind friend left, she returned to her parlour, and seating herself near the window, remained for some time a prey to troubled and gloomy thoughts. But a consciousness that Sally was not to be depended upon for anything, roused her up, and she proceeded to the kitchen, and was soon busied in the preparations required for the ensuing meal. This re-

lieved her feelings considerably, but her countenance still wore a troubled air, when her husband came home to his dinner.

"Havn't you heard of a cook yet, Julia?" he asked, as he observed her unhappy looks.

"Indeed I have not, Frank. And I don't see any hope of getting one. I asked Mrs. Campbell this morning to look out for me, but she says it is no use, for they are all so worthless, that it is a nuisance to have them in the house."

"Still, it would have been only an act of kindness for her to have interested herself a little for you. And as to her sweeping declaration in the matter, I am afraid it is not quite so near the truth as it might be. I am really sorry that Rachel did not stay, for I think that she would have suited you very well, after you had both become more accustomed to each other."

"And I have been sorry a dozen times since she went away. I could get along tolerably well with her, but as to Sally, she is one of the most worthless creatures in the world. She pretends to do the cooking, but the whole of it falls upon my shoulders."

"I am really very sorry for you, Julia, and would do anything that I possibly could, to make your task lighter."

"I wish you could do something, Frank; for really, as things are now, I do not see an hour's happiness during the day." This was said in a tone and manner that indicated plainly enough to the husband, that Julia thought it in his power to make her condition easier.

"I am sure I do not know how to relieve you," he replied. "What would you have me do, Julia?"

"I know but one way, and that is to break up, and go to boarding," was the prompt, decisive answer.

"But we can't do that, Julia," replied Frank.

"And why not?" urged the young wife, the moisture gathering into her eyes as she looked her husband, with a steady, appealing look, in the face.

"Because, Julia, we could not, possibly, be so happy in a boarding-house. And now that we have everything comfortable around us, it would be foolish indeed to break up."

"But didn't you say that you thought it would have been better for us if we had taken boarding at once, instead of going to housekeeping?"

"Certainly I did, Julia; but my reason for thinking so was, because I knew that it would be better for me to keep in my business the money required to furnish a house. Not that I did not prefer being in a house of my own; for I knew that, in the latter case, we should be far more comfortably situated."

"Well, I am sure, I am not comfortable by any means. Indeed, I am miserable." And Julia gave way to a gush of tears.

Here was a severe and unexpected trial for Frank Lawton. In permitting his affections to become placed upon Julia, he had thought of little beyond her winning appearance and manners—her amiability and intelligence. Of her

qualifications for filling the responsible station of a wife, involving as it does many sacrifices, and a continual round of home-duties, he had thought nothing, for of these duties he was as ignorant as Julia herself proved to be. The natural conclusion of his mind was, that, under the care of so judicious and sensible a mother as Mrs. Manning appeared to be, Julia must be fully capable of filling the station she had agreed to assume. Sadly indeed had he been mistaken in this involuntary conclusion.

For a moment after the ebulition of his wife's feelings, just mentioned, Frank Lawton was so troubled and confused in mind, that he knew not what to think or say. Then drawing her to his side, and kissing her cheek tenderly, he tried by all the soothing and affectionate words he could utter, to quiet down her agitated feelings.

"But what shall I do? I am sure I cannot tell," she said, after the lapse of a minute or two, raising her head, and looking earnestly at Frank, with her eyes still suffused with tears.

"Do not distress yourself, dear Julia! All will come right again. I will advertise at once for a cook, and, in the meantime, to make it as light as possible for you, I will not come home to any dinner, until one is obtained."

"But you can't go without your dinner, Frank! That will never do."

"O no! I can obtain it readily enough at an eating-house."

"And then I won't see you from morning until night."

"But that will only be for a few days. And it will be much better than for you to be put to all the trouble you now are."

Gradually Frank soothed the agitated feelings of his wife, and it was finally agreed that he should, on the next morning, insert an advertisement in one of the newspapers for a cook.

The advertisement was accordingly inserted, and, by half-past eight o'clock in the morning, an Irish woman presented herself, and claimed the place.

"Can you cook well?" asked Mrs. Lawton, eyeing her closely, and feeling by no means prepossessed in her favour, for she had a bold look, and was slovenly in her dress.

"O yes, mum, I can cook onything."

"What is your name?"

"Biddy O'Riley, mum."

"Where did you last live, Biddy?"

"At one o' th' quality houses up in Bleeker-street."

"And what made you leave there, Biddy?"

"O, because I didn't like the people, at all, at all."

"Why didn't you like them, Biddy?" pursued Mrs. Lawton, who, feeling altogether disinclined to hire her, was yet unwilling to send her away without eliciting in her account of herself some good reason for doing so.

"Because, mum, they expected too much of me, an' that was the rason."

"I am afraid, Biddy, that I should also expect too much of you."

"Och, no indade, mum! Y'r swate purty young face tells me I'd have nothing to fear from you at all, at all. Jist give me the sitiation, mum, and I'll run all the risks."

Mrs. Lawton paused a moment or two, undetermined how to act; at last she said,

"Well, Biddy, I suppose I will have to give you a trial. But I shall expect you to do your very best. My last cook did not please me, and she knew her business, I am inclined to think, much better than you know yours."

"Not a hate mum. I cooked for the quality folks afore I left the ould country, and I know all about it."

"Do you know how to make puddings and pastry?" inquired Mrs. Lawton.

"O yes, mum. We had a pastry-cook in the grand house where I lived, in the ould country, and I learned from her how to make a'most anything."

Preliminaries all settled, Biddy was installed in the kitchen, where she seemed to feel herself perfectly at home.

Contrary to Mrs. Lawton's expectations, Biddy went about her work as if she understood, perfectly, what she was doing. The first dinner was well cooked, and neatly served up; and the dessert as good as if Mrs. Lawton's own hands had made it.

"Why, really, this seems as if Biddy, as you call her, knew what she was about," Frank said, as he glanced over the dinner-table, "notwith-

standing she is such an unpromising looking subject."

"Yes, she does really seem to know her business, much as I doubted her," Julia replied. "But I am afraid that she is not clean. Her appearance is, certainly, by no means inviting."

"I shall be agreeably disappointed, if she prove to be all that is desired. Still, we must hope for the best."

Day after day passed, and Biddy continued to perform her duties well and promptly. The consequence was, that the smile came back to the lip, and the light to the brow of Mrs. Lawton. Frank attended to the provision of everything. Biddy needed little or no direction in her department, beyond what he gave to her; and Sally kept her part of the house tidy enough. Mrs. Lawton had, in consequence, few cares and no trouble about her domestic concerns, and was, of course, happy enough in a house of her own. Mr. Lawton was also relieved, for Julia was happy, and said no more about breaking up housekeeping.

CHAPTER VII.

MORE TROUBLE.

But this calm, alas! was but the preluding hush of the coming tempest. For about two

weeks everything went on as smoothly as any one could desire. At the end of that time, Biddy asked for her wages, and took an afternoon to herself. About the time for putting on the tea-kettle, she returned, and proceeded, as usual, to prepare the supper. Frank came home at an early hour, and was sitting in the dining-room with Julia, when Biddy made her appearance for the purpose of setting the table.

"What can be the matter with Biddy?" he asked, as the cook left the room. "She acts strangely."

"So it seemed to me; but I am sure I do not know. She took up two weeks' wages to-day, and has been out all the afternoon."

"Has she been out for any length of time, before?"

"No; she has kept herself closely in the house ever since she has been here."

At that moment Biddy re-entered with a waiter, which she placed upon the table, and then turned again towards the kitchen. As she passed out of the door, she struck against one side of it, bounded to the other, and then staggered off along the passage.

"She is drunk, as I live!" exclaimed Frank, the moment she had passed out of hearing.

"Mercy on us!" Mrs. Lawton ejaculated, rising to her feet, her face instantly becoming pale.

"Really this is too bad!" Frank said, also rising, and pacing the room backward and forwards. "You had better call Sally to finish setting the table, and I will try and persuade Bid-

dy to go off to bed. A night's sleep will sober her; and no doubt to-morrow morning she will be heartily ashamed of herself."

"But ain't it dreadful, Frank, to have a drunken person about the house? I shall not have a quiet moment while she is here."

"Don't be alarmed, Julia; but go and call Sally, while I see what I can do with the Irish woman."

While Mrs. Lawton went up to her chamber, Frank proceeded to the kitchen. There he found Biddy endeavouring to fill the tea-pot. But she had become, by this time, so much under the influence of the liquor she had taken, that instead of pouring the hot water into the tea-pot, she was pouring it all over the hearth.

"Biddy," he said, kindly, "I don't think you are well this evening. Sally will finish getting the supper, and you had better go up stairs to your bed."

Now Biddy, although pretty far gone, had a distinct idea of her situation, and dreaded its being perceived. So soon, therefore, as Mr. Lawton alluded to her not being well, she raised herself up, and, while her face crimsoned with drunken indignation, said,

"I'm jist as well, sir, as iver I wus—and I don't want no lazy chambermaid to git the tay for me."

"Yes, but see, Biddy, how you have poured the boiling water over the hearth."

"And what if I have, thin? It's only a few draps. And sure a body may do that, ony day."

"Then, Biddy, if I must speak out plainly," Mr. Lawton said, for he began to feel worried, "you have been drinking this afternoon."

"Niver a hate, sir."

"Yes, but Biddy, I know better. And now let me tell you plainly, that unless you go right off to bed, and quietly too, I won't have you in the house a day longer. But if you will go up stairs, without any disturbance, and will promise not to do so again, we will look over this first offence."

Drunk as Biddy O'Riley was, she had yet sense enough left to understand perfectly the meaning of what Mr. Lawton said, and it cooled her down in a moment.

"Bless your heart!" she began; "I only took a little drap of the crater comfort. But, indade, indade, I'll niver touch another bit while I'm in your house; now that you are so good and kind to me—bless your purty young face!"

"But let all that pass, Biddy. And so go right off to bed, if you expect to be pardoned for this offence."

Unexpectedly to himself, Mr. Lawton got Biddy up to her chamber without trouble, and then returned to the dining-room to soothe Julia's mind.

"I can't have her in the house another day, Frank, indeed I cannot! A drunken woman of all things in the world, I dread."

"But I don't think Biddy is vicious, even while under the influence of liquor. I got her to go off to bed with very little trouble. To-morrow you

can take her while she is sober, and tell her plainly, that for the next offence there will be no forgiveness."

"Indeed, indeed, Frank, I cannot keep her about me! I shouldn't have any peace of my life. I never could tell the moment when she would get drunk. It might be some day when we were alone together, and I should be frightened almost to death."

"Really, I am grieved that this has happened," Lawton said. "I felt in hopes that Biddy, as unpromising as her appearance was, would turn out to be a valuable servant."

"And I had begun to hope so too; but it is all over now."

On the next morning, Biddy was up at her usual early hour, and prepared breakfast in her best style. She had lost her last place, which was a good one, in consequence of drunkenness, an infirmity under which she had occasionally suffered for many years; and now, under the fear that she would lose her present situation, did she proceed to do everything in the best possible manner.

"Biddy has cooked us a very nice breakfast, I see," Mr. Lawton remarked, as he and Julia drew up to the table.

"O, I am so sorry this has happened," his wife said; "for she would suit me so well. I rarely have to tell her how to do anything, and you know that she always has her meals cooked in time."

"I really think, Julia, that you had better try her again."

"I'm afraid; indeed I am, Frank!"

"But, perhaps, if you were to talk the matter over calmly with her, and let her know distinctly, that you will not pass by the second offence, she will be more careful in future."

"O, I can't say a word to her about it."

"Then, Julia, if you will consent to give her another trial, I will state the case to her in terms that she will not misunderstand."

Julia finally consented, and so Biddy's first offence was passed over. Everything went on smoothly enough again for nearly a month, when Biddy could hold out no longer. The spirit was willing, but the flesh was weak.

Poor Mrs. Lawton had begun to feel some degree of confidence in her cook, who, barring a little slovenliness about her kitchen, was good-tempered and obliging, when this second lapse almost broke her down again. This time, Biddy was not so easily managed as before; but, finally, Mr. Lawton, who was home upon this occasion also, got her off to bed.

After some persuasion, and a good deal of begging and promising on the part of Biddy, Mrs. Lawton was induced to give her another trial, although she had positively promised a discharge from her service for the second offence. And so sinning and repenting, Biddy remained in her place for a whole year, when she got so bad that it was absolutely necessary to send her off.

A year's experience had helped Mrs. Lawton

a good deal in an approximation towards a correct idea of her true position and relations. On many and many occasions during that time, had she become discouraged, and urged upon her husband the propriety of giving up their house. But on this point, he could not be moved—either by persuasions or tears. She could not help thinking him a little selfish in the matter, and, perhaps, he was. But his consideration extended to her, for he knew much better than she did the kind of satisfaction a boarding-house afforded in comparison with the delights of a real home. And, moreover, he was sensible enough to think that Julia ought rather to enter into and perform her domestic duties, than shun them. In this he found it necessary to conceal, in a great degree, his real sentiments, for it soon became apparent that Julia could not appreciate them, and he did not, of course, wish her to think him unregardful of her comfort.

CHAPTER VIII.

A TRUE FRIEND.

A YEAR has passed away, and, as indicated in our last chapter, some changes have occurred during that year. Let us look in upon our young friends, who still retain their well-established

house. It is evening, and the soft light of a shaded lamp is diffused through a neatly-arranged sitting-room, where Frank and his young wife are alone, feeling as happy, or may be, happier, than they had been since young love trembled in their hearts with its first sweet emotion.

Alone, did we say? No, not all alone; for upon the bosom of Julia lay a perfect miniature of herself—a living, moving, breathing one—not yet conscious of its own innocent existence.

"Dear, sweet babe!" murmured the young mother, under the impulse of the newly awakened maternal affection, pressing the infant to her breast.

"I thought we were as happy before as we could be," the husband said; "but how much this precious gift has increased it!"

"And you love me more than ever now; don't you, dear Frank?"

"A thousand times more, it seems, dear Julia!" and he pressed his lips first to those of his wife, and then to the cheek, lips, and forehead of the innocent babe that lay in happy unconsciousness upon her bosom.

"How strange it seems that some mothers can coldly turn their babes over to the care of hired nurses!" Julia remarked, after a silence of some moments. "For my part, I am never so happy as when my sweet little one is sleeping where she now lies. Hark! there's the bell. I wonder who it can be?"

In a few minutes Sally came in and announced that Mrs. Emerson was in the parlour.

"Ask her to walk back into the sitting-room, Sally," Mrs. Lawton said.

"This is an unexpected pleasure," she added, turning to her husband, as Sally withdrew. "I cannot help liking Mrs. Emerson."

"Nor I, Julia. I think her one of the best of women."

The entrance of Mrs. Emerson checked any further remark.

"We are very glad to see you, Mrs. Emerson," said Mr. Lawton, as she came in, offering his hand, and conducting her to a chair.

"And I felt as if I would like to spend an evening with you, my young friends, and so, my nephew having come in for a few minutes, I got him to accompany me thus far, and he is to call for me again in the course of an hour or so. And so you've got your dear little babe there, Julia," she added, in a changed tone, drawing her chair up familiarly to the side of Mrs. Lawton, and taking in her's the small white arm of the infant.

"O yes, Mrs. Emerson; I am never so happy as when I have her in my arms. Dear little thing! How strong a hold she has already taken on our affections. I had no idea how deep and tender was the love which a mother bore to her child."

"It is a deep, a tender, and pure love, Julia," Mrs. Emerson said, "when it is suffered to act freely. But how many young mothers there are, whose selfish love of ease and idle visitings prompt them to delegate to others the dear offi-

ces of affection, thus permitting the fountain of maternal love to run dry, or partially fail, in their bosoms."

"How strange!" Mr. Lawton said, musingly.

"Strange indeed!" continued Mrs. Emerson. "How can a wife and mother look out from her own fireside for that which is to satisfy her yearnings after happiness? At home, and in home-duties, it is alone to be found; and whenever it is sought elsewhere, it is sought in vain."

"A truer sentiment was never uttered," Mr. Lawton responded, in an earnest tone.

"How can a mother find pleasure anywhere but with her children?" Julia said, drawing closer the arm that held her babe to her bosom.

"She may find pleasure elsewhere, Mrs. Lawton," her friend remarked; "but never while neglecting the duties of home. I would not be understood to interdict in any way the pleasures of the social circle; but let them always be rational, and never at the expense of real duties. It is as great an error to suppose that within our own home is the limit of obligation, as to neglect our domestic duties for the pleasures which society offers. Whenever we can find an hour that may be spared without the neglect of some duty, we should spend that hour in society, with the double motive of imparting as well as receiving some good impulses. In this way we may ever be the medium of some good to others, either in our families, or in society at large. And surely, such a consciousness of ever being in the effort

to do good, must bring a reward far above what any idle, self-indulgence, or vain show can give."

"You seem to have thought much upon these subjects, Mrs. Emerson," Mr. Lawton said, as their visiter paused.

"I believe I have," she replied, with a smile; "and the reason is, I suppose, to be found in the fact, that when I started in life, I had many erroneous views, which caused me much pain before I discovered them, and no little effort to correct. Experience is said, you know, to be the best teacher, and therefore it is that I have learned my lesson well. But I will not weary you with my dull reflections on life. And so to change the subject, let me inquire, Julia, if you find your cares in any degree lightened by the aid which a year's experience has given you?"

"They are lightened, I think, some little," Mrs. Lawton replied. "But still, I find I have my hands full. And just now I am in some difficulty."

"I am sorry to hear that. What is it?"

"My cook has become so much addicted to drunkenness, that we have been obliged to send her away. While sober, she performed her work well. Indeed, except that one great fault, I had no complaint to make against her."

"That is bad enough. But, I think I know of an excellent cook who is just now out of a place. And I will see about her for you, to-morrow, early."

"It would be very kind, indeed, of you to do so, Mrs. Emerson, for just now, with a young

babe to attend to, I cannot give much attention to household affairs."

"I shall do it with pleasure, Julia."

"How different from our friend Mrs. Campbell!" Frank Lawton could not help saying to himself. Then speaking aloud, he remarked—

"I am glad to find, Mrs. Emerson, that you are more inclined to help and encourage, than to dispirit by idle complaints, as some of Julia's acquaintances are."

"And I hope I ever shall be, Mr. Lawton. If we all complained less, and tried to encourage and help each other more, we should find all our duties much more easily performed."

"But don't you think, Mrs. Emerson," Julia said, "that, with just ourselves, and our babe, we should find it much easier and pleasanter in a boarding-house. Then, we would be done with all this trouble about servants."

"Indeed, Julia, I do not think any such thing. For a little while it might seem better. But a boarding-house is a poor substitute for a home. As far as I am concerned, I would rather keep house in two rooms, than live in the best boarding establishment in the city."

"Well, I don't know, Mrs. Emerson, but it does seem to me, that I would be much happier than I am now."

"If you are not happy, Julia, with your husband and child, in so pleasant a home as this, be sure that the change to a boarding-house will do but little towards giving you a contented mind.

I am afraid, my dear child, that you have much to learn yet."

"No doubt I have. But still, I cannot get the idea out of my mind, that there is far more enjoyment, for a woman at least, in a boarding-house, than there is for her while pressed down with ever-recurring and perplexing domestic duties."

"But surely, Julia, you consider your husband's comfort, as well as your own."

"Certainly I do, Mrs. Emerson. But then, it seems to me nothing more than fair, that he should consider mine a little also," Julia replied, half laughing, half in earnest.

The conversation now took a different turn, and continued with pleasure and profit to all, until Mrs. Emerson's nephew called for her, when she took her leave of Mr. and Mrs. Lawton, and went away.

CHAPTER IX.

ANOTHER POWERFUL DEMONSTRATION.

It is so easy, with a few strokes of the pen, to carry the reader through as many years, that we cannot resist the impulse to do so; especially as we have lingered long enough in the description of domestic incidents, such as recur

again and again, year after year, in the family of a young married couple like Mr. and Mrs. Lawton. We shall, therefore, advance the history of those we have introduced, at least ten years, with only a remark or two.

Mrs. Lawton, who had been blessed during the period with two more children, both boys, had not ceased, at different periods, to press upon her husband the expediency of breaking up, and enjoying the comforts of a boarding-house. His very resoluteness in opposing this desire on the part of his wife, only tended to make it increase in strength, and take deeper root in her mind. To her, the precincts of a boarding-house seemed forbidden ground, and because forbidden, if for no other reason, she had come to have an almost unconquerable desire to renounce the certain comforts of her own pleasant establishment, for the doubtful ones that such a change of condition promised. During all that period, the influence of Mrs. Campbell, who had by dint of persevering application, finally prevailed upon her husband to break up, was operating steadily and powerfully—counteracting, in a good degree, the more judicious and really excellent counsel of Mrs. Emerson, added to that of her own mother, who would never hear a word in favour of giving up her comfortable house.

The care of three children added, of course, greatly to Mrs. Lawton's duties, and made any irregularity in the arrangements of her family doubly annoying. Their ages were, Florence, the eldest, eleven years, James, nine, and Henry,

an infant, about a year old. From the first, she had been devoted to them, for her maternal feelings were deep and lasting. As to servants, she still had many and grievous troubles.

In regard to Mr. Lawton, he had felt, like every one else, the disastrous effects arising from a universal depression of trade that pervaded the whole community in 18—. A prudent man in his business, he had been able to bear up under the accumulating difficulties of the times, but he was merely holding his own, not advancing. It happened, one evening, about this time, that as Mr. Lawton and his wife sat after tea, each busy with thoughts that neither felt disposed to clothe in words, Mr. and Mrs. Campbell dropped in, to pass a social hour. Mr. Campbell was a man of general information, and of course he and Mr. Lawton were soon engaged in discussing some current topic of interest; while, with the ladies, the too common theme of troublesome servants was introduced and canvassed.

"There is where I am a little ahead of you, Mrs. Lawton," said her visiter. "I am my own servant in my own chamber, and there ends the matter. After I have made my bed in the morning, I can sit down pleasantly enough, and chat with my husband, until the breakfast bell rings. And after breakfast I can do what I please until dinner time; and the same until supper. No seeing after servants, and studying about what I shall have for dinner, and how it shall be cooked.

I wouldn't keep house again for a pretty premium."

"And sick and tired enough of it I am, Mrs. Campbell. But Mr. Lawton won't hear to our breaking up. Though, I suspect, if he had all the trouble of it, as I have, he would be glad enough to escape."

"I never knew what it was to enjoy life," resumed Mrs. Campbell, "until we sold off our things and went to boarding. I was always in hot water about something. Don't you find your servants very wasteful? I never had one who did not waste and break more than her wages came to."

"Why, the fact is," responded Mrs. Lawton, "there is scarcely a day that a cup, a plate, or a tumbler is not broken. There! Didn't you hear that crash in the kitchen? Something else has gone. Now, if I were to go out there and ask the cook what she had broken, and how she came to do it, she would have the sulks all day to-morrow, which would cost me more unpleasant feelings than the plate or dish is worth."

"Why *don't* you break up and go to boarding, Mrs. Lawton? You would be a thousand times better contented."

"The fact is, Mrs. Campbell, I shall have to worry my husband into it. I think I can approach him on the score of economy. Times are hard enough now, the men all say; and if I can convince him that several hundred dollars can be saved by breaking up, he will be in a fair way to be conquered."

"You will never regret it, Mrs. Lawton. It is living a dog's life to keep house."

"A dog's life, Mrs. Campbell? Aye, you are right there!"

"You can save five or six hundred dollars a year by boarding; and that is a handsome sum now-a-days."

"Do you hear that, Mr. Lawton?" cried his wife, in an exulting tone. "Mrs. Campbell says that we can save at least five or six hundred dollars by boarding."

"And be six hundred dollars worse off in regard to comfort than we now are."

"There you are mistaken, Mr. Lawton," said Mrs. Campbell, coming up to the attack in aid of her friend. "We have tried house-keeping, and we have tried boarding; and the latter, besides being cheaper, is in every way more pleasant."

"It may be for you, Mrs. Campbell, but with our three children, and a servant to take care of them, we would find boarding a very unpleasant change from a comfortable house, in which we can do as we please."

"But I am sure we do just as we please," broke in Mrs. Campbell. "We come when we please, and we go when we please. And in boarding-houses, every one is at home; for while he pays for it, the house he lives in is his home."

"You may think it tolerable with no children," replied Mr. Lawton; "but, with three and a nurse, let me tell you, that you would find it

approaching too near the intolerable. While a single man, I had boarding to my heart's content; and I find house-keeping, with all its little troubles, far preferable."

"You may call them *little* troubles, Mr. Lawton," spoke up his wife, with some spirit—"but if you had all the battles to fight with the servants, and the care of the whole house upon your shoulders, you would see these little troubles through the other end of the telescope. But what do you say, Mr. Campbell? Let us have your opinion upon the matter; I am sure that you prefer boarding to house-keeping?"

"Why, as to that," replied Mr. Campbell, in a very deliberate manner, seeming all the while to be casting about in his mind for words to convey his thoughts, that should not, at the same time that they expressed his own, compromise his wife's opinions too much—"we are comfortably enough off. Our landlady is a fine woman, and quite attentive to the wants of her boarders. It costs us less to board, as there are but two of us, than it did to keep house; but not such a great deal less. If it was not that Mrs. Campbell likes it so much better, I should prefer, I think, to be in a house of my own. But it is so much easier for her, that it would be wrong in me, perhaps, to prefer my own comfort to hers. We had such a trying time with servants, that I am reluctant to subject her again to the same perplexities and inconveniences."

"But if your family was as large as ours,"

said Mr. Lawton, bringing him at once to the point, "would you prefer boarding?"

"As you corner me, then, so closely, I must beg, respectfully, to differ with the ladies, and say, that I should think house-keeping, with a family of children, in every way preferable to boarding."

"Well, I'm for boarding, I can tell you!" broke in Mrs. Lawton, half laughing, half serious, "and whenever Mr. Lawton says the word, I will be ready at a week's notice."

"I don't intend being ready for a long time to come, Never, I think."

"We shall see!" was the laughing reply of Mrs. Lawton.

The gentlemen, after a brief pause, resumed their conversation, and the ladies put their heads together again, and went on in their comparison of the evils and benefits of house-keeping and boarding.

CHAPTER X.

BREAKING UP.

STRANGE things will happen sometimes, and one among the strangest we have to record is that which took place in the mind of Frank Lawton. From presenting a steady and persevering opposition to all arguments in favour of

boarding for more than ten years, he came around, and finally consented to break up. True, it came to pass after six weeks of incessant clouds and storm, growing out of one of those periodical changes of servants with which so many families are annoyed."

"You will have an auction, of course," said Mrs. Lawton, after the main point was gained.

"I shall have no such thing," was the decided answer of her husband, who, now that he had yielded so much, felt himself privileged to be a little crusty.

"Why, what in the world will you do with all of our parlour and kitchen furniture, and a hundred other things that we shall have no more use for?"

"Store them, of course."

"Why, we shall have no more use for them, you know, and storage will only be a useless expense. I really think you had better have an auction, which will be a regular clearing out at once. I am sure I don't want the trouble of packing up every thing."

"I'll take all the trouble," was the brief reply.

"But what in the world do you want to store them for, Frank? We shall have no more need for them."

"It's a mere notion of mine, Julia," was the evasive answer.

Having gained the most important point, Julia thought it hardly worth while to contend for this, and so it was given up.

The next thing was to find a suitable boarding-

house. This, which was considered quite an easy matter, viewed in the distance, was found rather difficult when the actual experiment was tried. The first application was at one of the hotels, as it was voted that in a tavern they would be more alone than in a boarding-house. The price asked, however, banished all ideas of a hotel from their minds. For Mr. and Mrs. Lawton, their three children, and a servant, with a parlour and two chambers, the terms were fifty dollars a week. Application was next made at a fashionable boarding-house. The landlady, after some hesitation at the idea of taking a whole family into her house, finally agreed to accommodate them with a private parlour and two chambers, at thirty-five dollars a week. This was nearly two thousand dollars a-year, far more than it cost them to keep house, pay their servants' wages, and buy all their clothing.

After this, Mr. Lawton relinquished the search, but his wife was by no means discouraged. She knew very well, she said, that genteel boarding could be obtained at a far less price. The lady at whose house Mrs. Campbell boarded, was applied to, but she said she could take no more, as all of her rooms were full. Though the fact was, that Mrs. Campbell had quietly hinted to her, that she didn't believe that Mrs. Lawton's whole family would add anything to the comfort of her boarders, as her friend had not the best government in the world over her children.

As a last resort, Mrs. Lawton caused an advertisement to be inserted in one of the daily

newspapers. Among the several applications made, in answer to this advertisement, was one from a widow lady, with two daughters, and one son, a mere lad. She said, that if they were pleased with her terms, she would at once rent a large house then vacant, and accommodate them. Her charge would be fifteen dollars a-week; eight for Mr. and Mrs. Lawton, six for the two oldest children, and one for the infant. For the servant, she said that she would not charge anything, as she could always do enough "odd jobs" to pay for all she would eat.

This was the very thing. And now came the severe trial to Mr. Lawton—the actual breaking up—the consummation so long dreaded and struggled against with manly determination. But he tried to be as earnest and cheerful in the matter as possible, and did actually gain so far over his reluctance as to feel reconciled in the idea that he should, by the change, accomplish a great saving.

Mrs. Baillie, the lady who proposed to set up a boarding-house, was a widow in reduced circumstances. Her husband had, while living, been engaged in an extensive wholesale trade with the south and west; but, like thousands of others, had suddenly found himself with a large amount of unproductive debts upon his books, and a host of eager creditors pressing, with the accumulated force of a general pressure, for their dues. And like thousands of others who yielded to the disastrous gales of 18—, he gave way—became a bankrupt. Being an honest man, he re-

tained nothing for his family, who, until that time, had known no mere external want unsatisfied.

The fiery ordeal through which Mr. Baillie had to pass, an ordeal that none but he who has himself gone through it can appreciate, completely broke down his spirits. Had there been any hope of his rising, there would have been something to inspirit him; but there was none. Every section of the country was suffering under a wide-spread commercial disorder. Though a man of extensive business acquaintance, business habits, and known integrity, he could make no new connection in trade, nor even obtain the more quiet and less responsible station of clerk; for there was no inducement for men of capital to enter into business, and those already inextricably involved in its details, had more help than they wanted. Indeed, thousands of clerks were thrown out of employment. And to all this was added the unfeeling persecutions of one or two creditors, who persisted in alleging the existence of fraud. All these suddenly accumulated distresses completely broke down the man. He saw no hope-star glimmering with a feeble ray of promise through the dark clouds that overshadowed him. A man of less vigour of mind than he, could have bent low, and still been unbroken. But, like the strong tree which resists the war of elements that levels the reed to the earth, he broke down when the storm increased to a tempest. In a word, Mr. Baillie's distress of mind brought on a sickness of which he died.

And now, for the sorrow-stricken widow and

her two daughters, came trials and sufferings, to bear which they found themselves but poorly able.

"We cannot remain here, my children," the mother said to her two daughters, the eldest twenty, and the other just entering her seventeenth year, glancing as she spoke at the comfortable, even elegantly arranged room in which they were sitting. It was three months from the day her husband had been buried out of her sight; and, as she spoke, the tears came into her eyes.

"We are ready, dear mother!" Anna, the eldest, replied, "to go where you think best, and to do what you think best."

"I know that, my children. But where shall we go, and what shall we do? These are questions that I ask myself over and over again, but can find no answer."

"But why can't we stay here, Ma?" asked Josephine, the younger of the two daughters. "I am sure it would be much pleasanter to live here than to go to any other place that I know of."

"Because, my dear child, we cannot afford to remain here. All that we have left to us is just what you see around you. When your father's business was broken up, everything was taken out of his hands, and our furniture is all that has been spared. We cannot live on this. It is, therefore, necessary for us to reduce, in some way, our expenses to the lowest possible sum."

"But even then, Ma, how shall we live?"

inquired Josephine, whose mind fully comprehended her mother's statement.

"Indeed, that is more than I can tell. But can you not help me to devise some way, my children. Your little brother, you know, must be sent to school, and there is no one left now to do it but his mother and sisters."

A silence of some minutes ensued, during which the thoughts of each were busy. At length, with a deep sigh, Anna looked up and said,

"One thing can at least be done, mother."

"And what is that, my child?"

"We cannot of course live here, burdened with a rent of seven hundred dollars."

"That is certain, Anna."

"And we have a great deal more furniture than we want in a smaller house."

"Yes."

"Now, we can sell a portion of this, and move where the rent will be much less. What we get by selling the furniture, will support us until we have time to look about for something to do."

"That is all very good, Anna. It is exactly what I have myself thought. Suppose then, we go out at once and look for a house."

This proposition was agreed to, and on that very day Mrs. Baillie and Anna went out in search of a house. But they came home tired and dispirited, having looked in vain for one that seemed just what they wanted. On the next day they tried it again; and met with the upstairs portion of a house to rent, at two hundred

dollars. It was not in a very pleasant part of the city, and the rooms, which were three in the second story, with a garret room, and the use of the kitchen in the basement, were not in very good repair.

"Well, mother, what do you think about the house we saw in Grand-street?" asked Anna, after their return.

"I do not like it, Anna. But can we do better?"

"I am afraid not. The next question is, how shall we pay even two hundred dollars?"

"We will have to sell a good deal of our furniture, you know, and that will keep us for a while."

"But when that is gone, what shall we do?" asked Anna, in a concerned tone.

"Indeed, my child, I cannot tell. For I have no idea at all of what we can do to earn money. It is true, that we can take in sewing, if we can get it. But it will be impossible for us to support ourselves with the needle, and pay a rent of two hundred dollars."

"How sorry I am that I do not know some trade!" Anna remarked, thoughtfully.

"And suppose that you did, what could you do then?" asked Josephine.

"Why, if I was a good dress-maker or a milliner, how easy it would be for us to set up the business with what we would get for our extra furniture."

"But you are surely not in earnest, Anna!" exclaimed Josephine, in surprise.

"Certainly I am, sister. Why did you think I was not in earnest?"

"You set up a milliner's shop, Anna!"

"And why not, Josephine?"

"That would be too low, indeed! O, I did not think it had come to that!"

"It would be a happy resource in our present difficulties," Anna replied, whose mind, in its deep and earnest sympathy with her mother, had lost sight of the mere conventional prejudices which she had herself before indulged. "Surely, Josephine, there is no moral wrong, and, therefore, no disgrace, in making bonnets or dresses, more than in doing any other kind of sewing. What we now want, is an honourable means of supporting ourselves, and educating our little brother. And if both you and I understood one of the two trades I have named, we would have, I feel sure, a certain means of providing comfortably for our mother and brother. For we could set it up, in handsome style, with the money we would obtain in selling our furniture."

"But really, Anna, I cannot bear the thought of going behind the counter, and becoming a mere milliner."

"I must own, sister, that I feel as you do; but I know that it is founded in prejudice, and a false estimate of things. Surely, the end we have in view is a motive strong enough to obliterate any such false idea, with its unpleasant feeling. You remember what Pope says; and now that so great a change has suddenly come

over us, we cannot think of the sentiment too often :—

> 'Honour and shame, from no condition rise;
> Act well your part; there all the honour lies.'"

"You are no doubt right, sister; but still, I cannot help feeling as I do."

"I only wish, Josephine, that both of us could feel on that subject to some purpose. But, alas! we cannot. Neither you nor I know anything at all about mantua-making or millinery operations. Nor are we so perfect in our music or French as to be able to offer ourselves as teachers of either branch. And so we come back to the yet unanswered question—what shall we do?"

"What would you think, Anna, of our renting that large house we saw in Broome-street, and opening a boarding-house? A great many ladies who have become reduced in circumstances, support themselves in that way."

"They ask a thousand dollars for the house, do they not?"

"Yes. But it is a large old-fashioned house, and would accommodate a good many boarders. By the sale of a few costly articles, we would be enabled to furnish a number of rooms, besides having as much furniture as we wanted."

"I am sure I hardly know what to say, mother," Anna replied. "It is certainly worth thinking about. If we had a few boarders to begin with, I should almost feel like recommending a trial at least."

Thus things remained until the next morning,

when Anna, in looking over the newspaper, exclaimed, "Just listen to this mother,—

"'WANTED.—Genteel boarding for a small family, in a central part of the city. Address A. B. with real name.'"

"That may be the very thing for us," Mrs. Baillie said, while her countenance brightened up; for she had thought so much about the subject since it had been introduced on the day before, that she had come to feel that the only chance for them was to open a boarding-house.

A note was at once written and sent to the printing-office, and then they waited in anxiety and suspense all through the day, and there came no answer. Poor Mrs. Baillie felt gloomy enough as night came slowly on, and yet there had been no response to their application. But about ten o'clock on the next morning she had a visit from Mr. Lawton and his wife, at which interview all the preliminaries were settled, and it was agreed that Mrs. Baillie should rent the house at once, on the certainty of receiving fifteen dollars a-week. This she accordingly proceeded to do, and, in the course of a week, was ready to receive her boarders.

To Mr. Lawton and his family were assigned a neat parlour and two adjoining chambers, which were furnished by themselves, of course. And now the two experiments of boarding and taking boarders commenced in good earnest.

CHAPTER XI.

EXPERIMENTS IN BOARDING AND TAKING BOARDERS.

"I AM sure you will agree with me, now, that boarding is, in every way, preferrable to housekeeping," Mrs. Lawton said to her husband, one day, after dinner, at the expiration of a month from the beginning of their experiment.

"I can't say but that it is pleasant enough, so far, Julia; but I have no idea that it will last. And even as it is, this is far from feeling like home to me. And I am sure the children are not so cheerful as they were."

"O, there you are mistaken. They enjoy themselves as much as ever they did. I see more of them than you do, and I am sure that there is not a particle of difference."

"Well, perhaps not. It may only be an idea of mine—a reflection of my own feelings."

"But why do you think that it will not last long?" inquired Mrs. Lawton. "I cannot understand what you mean."

"I mean, then, Julia, that Mrs. Baillie will not be able to sustain herself. Poor woman! I pity her, for she is struggling, I see, with difficulties that are, I fear, insurmountable. Her rent alone is one thousand dollars a-year, or twenty dollars a-week, and all she yet receives from boarders is but fifteen."

"O but, Frank, you know that she will obtain

more boarders. She doesn't, of course, expect to get along on what we pay her."

"Of course not. But she hasn't got her other boarders yet."

"Certainly not. But then you must give the woman time. The world was not made in a day."

"All very just and sensible, Julia. And we will suppose that she has six or eight more boarders, which is as many as she can expect for the first six months. Six young men, at four dollars each, will make twenty-four dollars, which, including what she receives from us, will make thirty-nine, say forty dollars a-week. Her rent is twenty. And there is but twenty dollars left to buy the marketing and groceries for about sixteen persons, including, of course, her own family and servants, to say nothing of fuel, servants' wages, their own clothes, &c. &c. &c."

"Rather a discouraging picture, I must confess," Mrs. Lawton said.

"Indeed it is. And I pity her from my heart. The more I see of both herself and daughters, the more I feel interested in them. To tell you the truth, Julia, since I have considered the matter, I begin to feel as if we had acted wrong in encouraging them to take this house."

"O no, I wouldn't think that. They will get more boarders."

"I hope so, Julia. But, even then, I have my doubts of their success."

As Mrs. Lawton had intimated, they certainly were situated very pleasantly, considering that

they were in a boarding-house. Mrs. Baillie and her daughters did everything that their kind hearts and a natural desire to please, prompted them to do, to make them comfortable. But as day after day passed, and there was no accession to their number of boarders, they began to feel discouraged. Their advertisement, which was ordered to be kept in for a month, still continued to appear, and at last attracted the eye of two or three young men who wanted to obtain boarding, and at the end of the third week there were two additions to the family, which increased their income eight dollars. These soon induced first one and then two others to come also. And now the widow and her daughters began to feel as if there was some hope of success. But with this increase of family, came increased labour for all. Every night, both the mother and her daughters retired late, overwearied with the toil and care of the day, and every morning rose early, to renew those toils and cares. And what was worse, even with their increased income, it did not long escape the notice of Mrs. Baillie, that but little was left after the weekly bills for marketing and groceries were paid.

"I don't see how we are going to pay our rent, Anna," she said, one day, to her oldest daughter,—"We do not seem to make anything on our boarders. Seven weeks of our first quarter have passed, and yet we have not ten dollars laid by, and the rent will amount to two hundred and fifty."

This remark caused Anna's countenance to

fall, and she paused for some moments before she replied. At last, with a long-drawn sigh, she said—

"Indeed, mother, I don't know what we shall do, unless there is some increase in our number of boarders. But even as it is, we are all nearly broken down with work, and how we are to get along with more, I can hardly tell. It won't do to hire even one more servant, for we cannot afford it."

"The prospect seems gloomy enough, Anna. But now that we have gone thus far, there is no looking back. We must try and economize all we can, and hope for the best. Something may yet turn up in our favour."

But what that something was, she had not even a remote idea. Time passed rapidly onwards, and Mrs. Baillie's quarter-day came long before she was prepared for it.

"Your bill, Ma'am, for the quarter's rent," said the agent of the landlord, who had been admitted by the servant, about ten o'clock on the morning of the day the rent became due.

Poor Mrs. Baillie felt as if she would sink to the floor, at this sudden demand, for she had not twenty dollars in the house.

"I am sorry, sir, that I am not able to-day—have been disappointed in getting boarders—will attend to it very soon," she stammered out in broken sentences, while her tones and expression of countenance evinced her confusion and distress of mind.

"But your rent is due to-day, Ma'am," the agent said, in a positive, and somewhat stern voice.

"I know it is, sir. And I tried my best to have the money ready for you. But have not been able."

"And when do you expect to be able, pray?" inquired the collector, who seemed to feel himself privileged to wound and insult even a woman, where he found her so far beneath human consideration as to have no money, when called upon to meet a just demand.

"Very soon, I hope, sir," meekly replied the distressed widow, whose previous condition and habits unfitted her as much for contending with the world in this form, as in any other.

"But I should like to know how soon, Ma'am?"

"Indeed, sir, I cannot tell. But it shall be settled at the earliest possible day. It is not a wilful omission on my part, sir—but arises, altogether, from inability."

Such a plea she did not, of course, think would have the effect to make her case much worse in the eyes of the agent than before. She knew too little of the world for that.

"Then why did you rent so large a house, if you had no means of paying? It is little better than ——"

Here he checked himself, and after a moment added—

"This bill must be settled very soon, Ma'am, or we cannot wait;" and so saying, he withdrew.

The moment he closed the door after him,

poor Mrs. Baillie burst into tears; and sinking into a chair, covered her face with her hands, and wept and sobbed as if her very heart were breaking. For weeks she had dreaded this interview, but it was none the less painful, and even distressing, for having been looked for with a nervous, indefinable sensation of fear.

Anna had listened, in the adjoining room, with a throbbing heart, and feelings of indignation to what had passed between the agent and her mother. She came instantly forward, and taking her mother's hand, said, with affectionate earnestness—

"Do not give way so, dear mother! It was cruel in the man to talk as he did; but try and not mind it."

"I would not mind it so much, Anna," her mother replied, raising her head, while the tears fell fast over her pale, and sorrow-stricken face, "if I could pay him his rent."

"Well, it can be paid, mother. I have thought of a way."

"How, my child?"

"Why, by selling my piano. It will certainly bring enough to pay one quarter's rent."

The tears were almost instantly dried from Mrs. Baillie's eyes, and she looked Anna steadily and earnestly in the face.

"Do you speak from your heart, Anna?" she at length said.

"Of course I do, mother. It is of little use to me now. Certainly, far less than the money it will bring."

"I will neither say yea nor nay, Anna. The instrument is yours, and you can do with it as you see best."

It was only half an hour after, that Anna Baillie entered an auction store, and made arrangements for its sale on the next day. But the trial was sore to her; for that piano, a beautiful and costly one, had been a birth-day present from her father, when she was fifteen years old; and now she valued it ten-fold on that account. But she subdued her feelings with an effort, and steadily proceeded in her arrangements for its disposal. On the same afternoon it was sent away. Her eyes rested upon it for the last time, and then she retired to her chamber to weep. While in the presence of her mother, she tried to assume an air of indifference, but when alone, she suffered the current of her feelings to have an unrestrained flow.

On the morning of the day after the sale, she went to the auction store to learn the result.

"Did you sell that piano yesterday?" she asked of a clerk, whom she found at a desk in the store.

"What piano, Miss?" he said, eyeing her with a bold stare.

"Why, a very beautiful one, that I had sent here on the day before the sale."

"I am sure I don't know, Miss. The clerk who attends to that business is not in," still staring her in the face with a look that caused her to drop her eyes to the floor.

"When will he be in?" she inquired, in a disappointed tone.

"You will find him in this afternoon; he is now out attending a sale."

"Can't you tell me how much it brought, if sold?" Anna ventured to ask.

"No, Miss, I can't. The clerk has the sale book with him."

And so Anna was forced to go home without even the satisfaction of knowing whether her piano were sold or not.

"Well?" said her mother, in an inquiring tone, as Anna entered, and breathing heavily as she awaited her answer.

"They could not tell me anything about it, mother."

"Why?"

"Because the clerk who attends to the sales was out."

"When did they say you could see him?"

"This afternoon."

"You must be sure and go then, Anna, for that collector has been here again this morning."

"Well?"

"I told him that he should certainly have his money to-morrow."

"And was he satisfied at that?"

"Not altogether; for he did not seem to believe my promise, but talked of distraint, if the money were not forthcoming in a day or two."

At three o'clock, Anna again entered, with a timid step, the auction store where her piano had been deposited. There were now several

men near the desk, all of whom looked at her steadily as she approached. She felt confused, and half alarmed, while the blood crimsoned her neck and face.

"Well, Miss?" said the clerk, as she came up to the desk.

"Have you sold that piano, sir, that was left here day before yesterday?"

"Was it an old one, Miss?"

"O no, sir. It was a very handsome one."

"Yes, I remember now. It was a very handsome one when new, but had been in use some time. O, yes, that is sold."

"What did it bring?" and Anna's voice was husky, and she felt a choking sensation as she asked the question.

"One hundred and twenty dollars, Miss," the clerk replied, after referring to his account of sales.

"You must be mistaken in the one, sir; mine was very elegant, and cost seven hundred dollars. It had been well kept, and was as good as new."

"O no, I am not mistaken. It was left for sale by Anna Baillie."

"Yes, sir, that was the name."

"That was the piano that brought one hundred and twenty dollars, which was a very good price these times. Why, we sell pianos every day for from fifty to one hundred dollars—and most excellent ones, too. A new one can now be bought for one hundred and fifty, or two hundred dollars."

"Be kind enough to settle the bill for me," Anna said, for she perceived that her real feelings were too visible, and she wished to get away.

"We cannot do it to-day, Miss. We have nothing out of bank, and it is after bank hours. But if you will come in to-morrow, you shall have your money."

"At what hour?" asked Anna.

"Say at about ten or eleven o'clock."

The poor girl turned slowly and sadly away, and went back to her home.

"Has it been sold?" asked her mother, anxiously, as she entered the door.

"Yes, mother, it has!" and she gave way to a gush of tears.

Mrs. Baillie's heart sunk, and felt like lead in her bosom, at this indication that more disappointments awaited her.

"Be calm, my child," she said, affecting a composure that mocked the agitation within.

"I will try, mother," Anna said, with a strong effort to control her feelings; "though it is very hard. My beautiful instrument was sold for one hundred and twenty dollars. Not half enough to pay our quarter's rent."

"O, my dear child!—what *shall* we do?" Mrs. Baillie ejaculated, lifting her eyes upwards, involuntarily, as if human hope had failed in her bosom.

For more than a minute the mother and daughter stood in silent, painful irresolution. Then each moved quietly, and almost stealthily away,

to enter again upon the duties that awaited them.

The clock was striking ten, as Anna entered the store of the auctioneer on the next morning.

"Can you pay me that bill this morning?" she inquired, and the tones of her voice were again husky, and the words seemed to choke her in giving them utterance.

"I am really sorry, Miss," the clerk said, bowing and smiling, with a blander air than he had exhibited on the previous day, "Mr. L—— has gone out, and he has the check book locked up in his desk. But come in almost at any time, and your bill shall be paid."

Anna felt sick and faint at this answer; for she knew that the collector of rent would be in during the morning, and she could not think of going home without the money.

"I will wait a little while," she said, after a few moments of irresolution.

"I am sorry to say, Miss, that Mr. L—— will not return for an hour or so. But call in at almost any time through the day, and the money shall be ready for you."

Anna was now compelled to go back again without the money. She dreaded to enter the house, for she felt sure that the landlord's agent was there awaiting her return. And, sure enough, his form was the first that met her eye, as she entered the sitting-room.

"Have you got the money?" Mrs. Baillie asked eagerly, advancing to the middle of the floor, as she entered.

"Indeed, mother, I have not! The clerk told me that Mr. L —— was out, and had the check-book locked up in his desk."

"And so I am not to get the rent, then, I suppose!" the collector said, abruptly.

"How can we pay you, sir, without money?" was Mrs. Baillie's reply, in an appealing tone.

"A very sensible question, Ma'am. But still that don't suit us. When we rent a house, we expect to get the money."

At this moment Mr. Lawton, who was later than usual in going to his store, came into the room, and perceived by the countenances of both Mrs. Baillie and her daughter, that they were in great distress of mind. His sympathies had already been much excited for them, especially since the quiet removal of Anna's beautiful piano, the cause of which he truly guessed.

"What is the matter Mrs. Baillie?" he asked, in a concerned tone, advancing to the centre of the room. "Is it anything in which I can be of service to you?"

"Our rent is due, Mr. Lawton," Mrs. Baillie replied. "And to pay it, my daughter has sent her piano to auction. But now that it has been sold at a great sacrifice, she cannot get the money, and this man does not seem disposed to let us have a moment's time, if he can help it."

"I am sure, ma'am," spoke up the collector, "I have been running here for a week; and yesterday you promised, positively, that I should have my money this morning."

"But you see how they have been disappointed," Mr. Lawton said.

"Yes, but I have nothing to do with that. A promise is a promise, and never should be broken."

"It is two hundred and fifty dollars, is it not, Mrs. Baillie?" Mr. Lawton asked, turning towards her.

"Yes, sir; but——"

"Well," turning again towards the collector, "bring your bill to my store, No. — Pearl-street, in an hour, and you shall have your money."

"Very well, sir, I will be there to the minute," was the reply, in an under tone, and the collector left the house.

"But, Mr. Lawton, the piano has only sold for one hundred and twenty dollars," Mrs. Baillie said; "and, therefore, the money for that will not be enough to repay you."

"O, never mind, Mrs. Baillie. The balance can be placed to our boarding account."

"O, sir, you are very kind!" the widow said, with a full heart.

"And now, Anna," he added, turning to the daughter, "to whose auction store did you send your piano?"

"To L—— & R——'s."

"The worst place in the city. For it is well known that they will cheat whenever a good opportunity offers. But come, I see you have your things on, and I will return there with you. I will get your money for you."

Mr. Lawton went direct to L—— & R——'s

auction store, in company with Anna. One of the firm was in when they entered.

"I believe you sold a piano for Miss Baillie?" Mr. Lawton said.

"For whom?"

"For this young lady."

"Well, I believe we did. How much did it bring, William?" addressing a clerk.

William referred to the sales-book, and stated the amount for which it sold to be one hundred and twenty dollars.

While the clerk was looking over the book, Mr. Lawton stepped quickly up to him, and before he had time to close it, noted that the sum of one hundred and seventy-five dollars was marked opposite to the entry of the piano.

"You have made a mistake, have you not?" he asked, laying his hand upon the book, and touching the entry with his finger. "It should be one hundred and seventy-five dollars."

The confusion of the clerk, on so sudden and unexpected a movement, betrayed the intended act of swindling. He stammered and apologized for his careless manner of examining the entry, and confessed the larger sum to be the true one.

The commission, amounting to seventeen dollars and fifty cents, was now deducted from the bill, and the net sum of one hundred and fifty-seven dollars fifty cents paid over to Mr. Lawton, who received the money in silence, and, bowing, left the store.

CHAPTER XII.

MORE SACRIFICES.

DURING the next six or seven weeks, Mrs. Baillie and her daughters found it impossible to provide comfortably for their boarders, on sixteen dollars a-week, all that remained to them while Mr. Lawton's board-money went to repay him for the advance he had made.

But one temporary resource remained to them, and that was to continue selling, now that they had commenced, articles for which they had no immediate use. Accordingly, a handsome silver tea service was disposed of, and by this means they were able to keep up the ordinary expenses of the house. But time hurried on with strange celerity, it seemed to them, for it brought the next quarter-day long before they were prepared for it.

"And now what shall we do?" was the anxious and troubled question of Mrs. Baillie.

"Something else will have to be sold," was the sad, reluctant response of Anna.

"But what that something else is to be, I am sure I cannot tell," Mrs. Baillie said. "At the sacrifice we have to make, it takes a great many things to sell for two hundred and fifty dollars. I cannot see where all this is to end."

"It must end at last, mother, in scattering everything that we have," Anna replied, sadly.

"I have been sorry many times that we ever undertook to keep a boarding-house."

"I don't know, Anna, anything else that we can do," Mrs. Baillie remarked, in a troubled and anxious voice.

"I have been thinking about that for some days," Anna said; "and I have pretty well made up my mind, that if you and Josephine can get along with my assistance at night, that I will learn some trade."

"But it will take you so long, Anna."

"By paying down fifty dollars, I can go to Madame Laclerc's, and have the privilege of working at the millinery business with her for six months. In that time, I know that I can learn it well; for I shall have strong incentives."

"But we have not fifty dollars to pay her, Anna, even if I could feel like giving my consent to your taxing your health so severely."

"As to that, mother, if it meet your approbation, I will sell my gold watch. The tax on my health cannot be greater than it now is."

"But the rent, Anna! Where is that to come from?"

"I have some jewelry, mother, with a handsome gold chain that cost forty dollars."

"And there is my watch and chain, and all my jewelry, also, ma," said Josephine, who was present at the interview. "Take them, and welcome; they are of no use to me."

Both the mother and elder sister had felt anxious to spare Josephine every possible sacrifice.

And had, therefore, conversed but little of their doubts, and fears, and difficulties in her presence. The selling of Anna's piano was the first intimation she had received of the extremity to which they were reduced. She felt touched at the apparent cheerfulness with which her sister bore this sacrifice of a favourite instrument, and had often pondered in her mind, since that occurrence, over some means by which she could more effectually aid in the maintenance of the family. An opportunity now offered, and she came promptly and cheerfully forward.

"I do not wish to take your few little things, Josephine," her mother replied to her offer.

"O no; keep them, sister. We will try to manage in some way."

"Haven't you sold your piano, and haven't you just offered to sell all your jewelry?" Josephine asked, in an earnest tone. "Let me, likewise, do all that I can. I am sure that I am willing."

The kind, self-sacrificing interest of her children, affected Mrs. Baillie to tears.

"May our Father in heaven bless you both, my children!" she said, fervently.

There was a brief pause, and in that pause, were entwined new chords around the hearts of that tried family, drawing them closer, and uniting them by ties of tenderer affection.

Anna was the first to break silence.

"If you feel thus, sister, we cannot refuse your aid. Are you willing, then, to take upon yourself additional cares and additional labours, while I endeavour to learn a trade at which we

may, hereafter, be able to secure a more certain return for our efforts?"

"How could I be otherwise than willing, Anna?"

"Then, if we can get enough money to pay this quarter's rent, and mother does not object, I will begin at Mrs. Laclerc's at once. Will you consent, mother?"

"If you think that your health will bear up under it, I cannot say no, my child."

The two gold watches, or rather three, for Mrs. Baillie's was added to the number; three gold chains, and various articles of jewelry, with a pair of silver fruit baskets, and a silver waiter, were sold to a regular dealer in those articles, and the sum of three hundred dollars obtained. With two hundred and fifty the second quarter's rent was paid, on its being called for, and the other fifty were paid to Mrs. Laclerc, on entering Anna at her millinery establishment, for the purpose of learning the art and mystery of bonnet making and trimming.

This sale included nearly everything superfluous that was owned by the mother and daughters. Beyond that resource there was nothing left to fall back upon.

CHAPTER XIII.

EXTRACTING GOOD FROM EVIL.

In the meantime, these things could not transpire without coming under the observation of Mrs. Lawton, whose interest and sympathies, as well as those of her husband, were awakened, and their hearts made to feel deeply the trying condition of the widow and her children.

"It really makes my heart ache whenever I see Mrs. Baillie," Mrs. Lawton said to her husband one evening. "She evidently tries to look cheerful, but finds the effort unsuccessful. And Anna grows paler and thinner every day."

"I am afraid that Anna will break down her constitution," Mr. Lawton remarked.

"And so am I. Her mother tells me that she is up and at work an hour or two before day every morning, and rarely goes to bed until eleven or twelve o'clock at night, besides sitting all day over the work-table at Mrs. Laclerc's."

"She is certainly an uncommon girl, and deserves, it would seem, a better fate. But I see no use in her overworking herself in the way she does."

"I expect it is because they cannot afford to hire another servant," Mrs. Lawton said.

"Does not Margaret help them a good deal?" inquired her husband.

"O, yes; she is at it almost the whole time. Indeed, she is now hardly any use to me, for

there is so little help in the house, and so much to do, that I attend to the children nearly all the while myself, and let her work for them."

"In that case, you do not now find it a great deal easier on you than it was while we kept house."

"Just now it is not. But it is because I know that Margaret is wanted down stairs all the while, and I take a good deal upon myself for the sake of Mrs. Baillie."

"I cannot but commend you, Julia, for this self-sacrificing disposition," her husband said. "But now that you have begun it, I do not see where it is to end. You cannot again withdraw Margaret from assisting them, while you are conscious, that for every hour you keep her in your room, an hour more will be added to the toil of some member of this overburdened family."

"I see it all, and feel it sensibly," Mrs. Lawton replied. "But I must learn to consider the necessities of others more than my own ease—at least in the present case; irksome as it sometimes is to be confined so much in the house, and busy as it keeps me to attend to all the children. I often get very much fatigued with nursing little Henry so constantly, and frequently am on the eve of ringing for Margaret to come and relieve me, when a vivid sense of the condition of Mrs. Baillie makes me hesitate, and I at length conclude to keep on a little longer."

Mr. Lawton looked upon his wife with a new interest, as he listened to her simple account of her first experience in self-devotion for the good

of others. Although Mrs. Baillie tried to do everything for their comfort, he had never been contented since he left his own house. But now he felt willing to put up with every inconvenience, and even the sense of having lost his home, that had been an abiding feeling with him, if by doing so, Julia would learn so fully to sympathize with others, as to be willing to deny herself for their sakes. Until she had learned this lesson fully, he knew that she could never find in the necessary duties of life that pleasure which should ever accompany their cheerful performance.

"And do you not often feel a glow of delight, my dear Julia," he said, in reply, "when the thought comes up vividly in your mind, that by denying yourself a little, you have relieved them very much?"

"O yes, I often feel thus. And it is a very pleasant feeling, more than compensating for all the self-sacrificing acts that produced it."

"Then you can, no doubt, understand what is meant by the delight of doing good to others. A sentiment that you could not, at one time, fully apprehend."

"Yes; I can readily understand what it means; for I have felt that delight recently, though doubtless in a very small degree."

"You will feel it, in the performance of uses to others, in just the degree that you are actuated by a simple principle of benevolence, abstracted from any selfish desire of reward."

"But I am sure, I could have no desire of reward in this case."

"Not of a reward in kind. But still, there may be in the mind, when we do a good action, the desire to be *thought* kind and benevolent, which desire may be the moving spring of the action. In such case, we look for a reward; and this selfish feeling will diminish the real delight which flows from the good deed."

"I see that, clear enough," Mrs. Lawton said. "But it is a more abstract, or interior view of the subject than I have ever before taken."

"And yet the true one."

"I certainly believe so."

"On the subject of doing good to others," Mr. Lawton added, "an eminent and profound theological writer has said, that the happiness of heaven consists in the delight of performing uses for the sake of uses; or, in other words, of doing good from the love of good, instead of from the love of reward, which is a selfish feeling; and all selfish feelings, this same writer says, produce unhappiness in the degree they are entertained."

"No wonder then, that none of us are happy," remarked Mrs. Lawton; "for we are all more or less selfish in our feelings."

"No wonder indeed, Julia. How necessary, then, is it, if we would be happy, that we put away as far as we can, those thoughts and feelings that alone have reference to self; and cultivate the higher and better ones that have reference to the good of others as well as ourselves."

"And yet, to do good for the sake of the delight of doing good, it seems to me, would be a selfish motive," Mrs. Lawton remarked.

"You are right there, Julia. We should do good for the sake of good. Or to bring down the idea a little lower, and make it more perceptible, we should do good to others because it will make others happier, and in doing it, have no thought of ourselves."

"O, if I could only act from such a motive, how glad I should be!" Mrs. Lawton said, with an earnest emphasis.

"Begin then, dear Julia! in the endeavour to resist every feeling that is purely selfish. The effort may be attended, at first, with some pain, but that which you desire is worth all that the trial may cost you."

"But the task seems a hopeless one, when I see, as I now do, so vividly, how utterly selfish I am."

"But you will not always have that vivid perception, Julia, and need not be discouraged because you have it now. Ordinarily, you will only be permitted to see the single selfish desire that is active, and when that single desire is seen, if you are only willing to resist it, you will find power in the very effort of resistance. A power that will weaken, if not subdue, the selfish principle."

"And by such efforts I will gradually gain strength?"

"Just as a child, by repeated efforts, learns to walk."

"I will try, dear husband! For as I now feel, that which is to be gained by such trial, is worth all the effort it may cost."

"And you will conquer, if you only hold fast to your resolution, dear Julia!" her husband said, kissing her cheek, that was glowing with the fervour of a new affection.

CHAPTER XIV.

FAILURE OF THE FIRST EXPERIMENTS.

"You will have to wait a few weeks for this bill," Mrs. Baillie said to the landlord's agent, who had been prompt in his visit on the day of the expiration of the third quarter.

"A few weeks, Ma'am! I cannot wait a few weeks. The rent is due to-day."

"I know that it is due to-day. But still, I haven't got the money, and therefore cannot give it to you. But I hope to have it soon."

"*Hope* to have it soon?"

The insolence of the collector's tone and manner excited the mind of Mrs. Baillie, already fretted in consequence of fearing his visit, and she turned upon him a steady, indignant glance, and said—

"I have already told you, sir, that you cannot

get your money to-day. And now, be pleased to retire."

The collector made an effort to reply, in terms more insulting, but he was instantly met by a calm, dignified, command to be silent, the moral force of which he could not resist. But after he had withdrawn from her presence, and the subduing sphere of her influence, his own selfish and resentful feelings came back upon him with a power increased by accumulation.

"She shall suffer for that!" he muttered between his teeth, as he strode hastily along the street, in the direction of his employer's residence.

Arrived there, he entered without pausing to knock or ring for admission, and in a few moments stood before a hard-featured old man, who sat at a low desk poring over an old and much-worn legal document. He raised his head, and as he pushed back his spectacles, displayed a pair of small, keen eyes, deeply sunk, restless, and flashing.

"Well?" was his brief interrogatory.

"There is a quarter's rent on the old house in Broome-street, and the tenant can't pay."

"How much is it?

"Two hundred and fifty dollars."

"Will the furniture bring the amount?"

"Yes."

"Distrain, then."

And the old man replaced his spectacles on his nose, and bent again over the paper he had been examining.

The agent did not reply, but turned and left the house.

Just as Mr. Lawton was about leaving his room to return to his business after dinner of the same day, Anna appeared at the door in tears, and asked him to step down stairs; that her mother wanted to see him. Descending to the parlour, he found two men seated there, and Mrs. Baillie weeping bitterly.

"We have an unpleasant task to perform," said one of the men in a feeling tone, rising as Mr. Lawton entered. "It is our duty to take possession of the furniture in this house, under a landlord's warrant."

"I am sorry to hear you say that, gentlemen. What is the amount of your warrant?"

"Two hundred and fifty dollars," was the reply.

"A single quarter's rent. How long has it been due, Mrs. Baillie?"

"It is only due to-day, Mr. Lawton," Mrs. Baillie replied.

"And the goods distrained already? That is a singular proceeding, gentlemen!"

"We are but agents in the case, you know, sir; mere instruments of the law," one of the officers replied, in a mild tone. "We cannot be governed by the merits of the case; and never have any feeling, in the performance of our duty, unless it be pity for the victims."

"Thank you for your consideration, gentlemen, to a distressed family," Mr. Lawton said. "It is hardly necessary, I suppose, to trouble

them further, by going over the house for the purpose of taking an inventory. I will give you security that nothing shall be moved, until arrangements are made to pay the debt."

"O no, sir. Your security will be all-sufficient; and if you will give it to us now, we will at once retire, and relieve the ladies from our necessarily unwelcome presence."

Mr. Lawton sat down to write a form of security. He half finished it, when he paused a moment, thoughtfully, and then wrote out a check for the amount of the rent. For this the officers passed their receipt, and then bowing, withdrew.

"Do not distress yourselves," he then said, turning to Mrs. Baillie and her two daughters, who were still weeping bitterly. "I have paid the quarter's rent for you, and so that trouble is past."

This intelligence did not appear to quiet their feelings so much as Mr. Lawton expected that it would. Although Mrs. Baillie thanked him fervently for his unexpected act of kindness, yet her mind seemed in no way relieved, and she continued to weep, as if her spirits were completely broken down. And so they really were; for she saw nothing ahead to encourage her, and the present incidents were of a most distressing and mortifying character.

After a silence of some minutes, Mr. Lawton said—

"I am afraid, Mrs. Baillie, that you are going behindhand very fast."

"I *know* I am, Mr. Lawton," the widow replied, raising her head, and endeavouring to dry her tears. "But, then, what can I do?"

"You have but three boarders now, besides my family, which makes your whole income only twenty-seven dollars a-week, and your rent alone amounts to twenty dollars. Your other expenses will more than double that sum. How is it possible, then, for you to get along?"

"What, then, ought I to do?" Mrs. Baillie asked, in an earnest tone.

"You ought to give up keeping boarders at once, Mrs. Baillie."

"I have thought so myself. But if I give up, I know not what to do."

"In three months, mother, I shall be done learning my trade," spoke up Anna, "and then we shall be able to do something."

"But what shall we do in the three months?" asked the mother.

"I'll tell you what I have been thinking," Anna resumed. "I have been thinking, that the best thing we could do would be to give up this house, sell off the most of our furniture, and rent a single room somewhere, at the lowest possible rent for which we could obtain one. How much more comfortably could we all live in a single room, than we now live in this large house! We have no inducement to make a show. Our former friends and associates have long since forgotten us. We could get a room somewhere up town, no doubt, for five dollars a month. I have heard of rooms renting for that. And it would not cost

us much to live, for we would want no servant. The money we obtained from the sale of our furniture would be all sufficient to support us under the small expense until I was through with learning my trade; and then, I trust, a brighter day will dawn upon us. What do you think of my plan, Mr. Lawton?"

"I think it excellent, Anna, and would earnestly advise its immediate adoption."

"And how does it strike you, mother?"

"I like it much better than the idea of continuing as we are," Mrs. Baillie replied.

"Then do not hesitate a moment to adopt it. And in the mean time, I will not only look out for a new boarding-house, but will endeavour to find a good room for you; and also will assist in every way that I can in the removal and disposition of your furniture."

Under this advice, Mrs. Baillie at once acted. Her boarders were given up, and an immediate sale of a large portion of her furniture advertised. But so much that was really valuable had already been parted with, that the proceeds of this sale was only about three hundred dollars; and then, all that was left to her were two beds, with their furniture, and plain furniture for two rooms. Of this sum, two hundred and fifty were tendered to Mr. Lawton, in repayment of his settlement of the last quarter's rent. But he declined receiving it.

"I fear, Mrs. Baillie," he said, "that Mrs. Lawton and I were to blame in inducing you to rent this house. If we had not encouraged you

to do so, you would, probably, never have tried this ruinous experiment; and therefore it is but right that I should bear a part of the loss, especially as I am more able to do so than you are. I will not, therefore, take one cent from you. You will want it all, and more too."

Words were too feeble to express Mrs. Baillie's sense of Mr. Lawton's kindness to her, and she did not attempt to give it utterance; but she bowed her head upon her bosom, and wept.

In the course of a week, she retired with her children to a comfortable room that Mr. Lawton had procured for them, at a rent of six dollars a month. And thus ended the first experiment in boarding, and in taking boarders.

Mr. Lawton lost two hundred and fifty dollars by that experiment; but poor Mrs. Baillie lost three times as much, and gained a world of trouble. Nor had Mr. Lawton, or any member of his family, been so comfortable and contented as they were while under their own roof, not even Mrs. Lawton herself; although she, perhaps, was a gainer over the rest, as the chapter immediately preceding this has indicated. Still, even the widow and her daughters were really benefitted "in the long run," as it is said. For they were now able to fall back, without pain of mind, to a position in which there were no artificial wants to supply; in which their little fund was more than sufficient to support them until Anna had finished learning her trade. In fact, they had over two hundred dollars, as a little capital on which to set up business after

Anna had completed her term at Mrs. Laclerc's, for both Mrs. Baillie and Josephine had employed their time in sewing, and thus earned nearly enough to meet all their expenses.

CHAPTER XV.

THE NEW BOARDING-HOUSE.

THE search for a new boarding-house was attended, of course, by its own difficulties, anxieties, and disappointments.

"What success?" asked Mrs. Lawton, as her husband came in after his first effort to obtain a new home.

"Not such as I would like; but, perhaps, as good as might have been expected. I have seen three lady boarding-house keepers."

"Well?"

"The first said that she would take us for thirty dollars a month."

"Just double what we have been paying!"

"Yes; of course I treated no further with her. I then went to see a Mrs. ——, in Barclay-street, who keeps a very genteel, though not fashionable house. She could not spare us a parlour, but had two chambers in the third story adjoining each other, which she could let us have, with boarding, at twenty dollars a week."

"We must have a parlour," Mrs. Lawton said.

"I thought that you would not like the arrangement," resumed her husband, "and so I called on another lady, who keeps at the upper end of Varick-street."

"That is too far out of the way."

"Yes; it is a long distance from business."

"Nor is it a pleasant part of the town?"

"No; it is not."

"But what was the result of your interview?"

"Well, the landlady agreed to take us at twenty-two dollars, and furnish a parlour and two bedrooms."

"Did you look at them?"

"O, yes."

"Were they pleasant rooms?"

"Not very. The chambers were in the third story, and small, and one of them had no window in it; being, as it were, a large recess, or closet, opening off from the main chamber."

Mrs. Lawton shook her head.

"Is it large enough for a double bed?" she asked, after pausing a few moments.

"O, yes; plenty large enough for that. But warm weather is coming on, and it will be a very hot and uncomfortable place."

"A much pleasanter situation might be found at the same price, I should think," Mrs. Lawton said.

"No doubt of it. And to-morrow I will look around again."

On the next day Mr. Lawton resumed his

search, but with not even the success of the first trial. He found plenty of boarding-houses, of course, but some charged too high, while others could not offer such accommodations as his family required. The third day closed with no better prospect of getting an agreeable boarding-house.

"I suppose we shall have to put up with that which is nearest to our idea of comfort and convenience, among the many places at which I have called," Mr. Lawton said, as he sat alone with his wife, on the evening of the third day of the search.

"I am afraid that we shall."

"Which do you like best, of those under twenty-five dollars a week?"

"Really, I can hardly tell. But I seem to prefer that in —— street, with the parlour and two chambers, at twenty-two dollars a week. Still, I do not like the room with no window."

"No, nor I."

"It could not make much difference now, but hot weather will be here in a few weeks. Still, I don't see what else we can do."

"I am afraid that we shall never get another place like this," Mr. Lawton remarked. "Our own friends could not have been kinder; and these rooms are delightful."

"No, indeed, that we will not."

"But there is no time to lose. Day after to-morrow Mrs. Baillie's sale takes place, and, therefore, we cannot stay more than one night after this, at the farthest."

This was bringing the matter down to a point that could not be evaded, and so, after talking it over for an hour or so, it was finally concluded to remove on the next day to the house where a parlour and two small chambers were furnished, with boarding, at twenty-two dollars a week. This being settled, the removal was effected in due time.

How well Mr. and Mrs. Lawton were pleased with their new home will appear by the following conversation which occurred after the children had retired for the evening, about a month from the time of their removal from Mrs. Baillie's.

"What is this?" asked Mr. Lawton, as his wife handed him a long bill.

"It is a bill for extras that Mrs. Newell sent up this afternoon."

"For extras?"

"Yes; so she calls them."

"Twenty dollars in a month for extras! Really, I don't understand it!"

"Nor did I at first. But, I believe I see into it now."

"Then I wish you would enlighten me, Julia," Mr. Lawton said, "for it is all dark to my mind."

"You know that we have always been in the habit of sending Margaret down for a pie, or something of that kind, towards bed-time."

"Yes."

"Well, you will see a pie, or cakes, or bread

and butter, charged regularly every day in the bill at twenty-five cents."

"Let me see. Ah, yes! here it is."

"And then you will see as regularly put down, 'luncheon for Mrs. Lawton and children at eleven o'clock.'"

"Yes, I see that also. And the charge is twenty-five cents more."

"And then there is a charge for every time the children received bread and butter through the day; and fifty cents a meal for all our visiters. And you know Ma is here at least once a week, and stays to tea."

"O yes, I fully comprehend it all now!" Mr. Lawton said, half laughing, and half disposed to feel indignant, as the first clear idea glanced through his mind.

"Well, isn't it abominable?" remarked his wife, in a somewhat excited tone.

"I don't know, Julia, now I come to think of it, that we have any particular right to complain," he replied. "We pay for three meals a day, and there our contract ends. If we want extras, we must pay for them, of course. That is the rule, no doubt, and our surprise is occasioned by our not having been acquainted with the rule."

"We pay for our boarding, and I am sure that ought to include enough to eat. But it seems that it does not, neither first nor last. We give more by seven dollars a week, than we did at Mrs. Baillie's, and the fare isn't half so good. And there they never thought of charging us for what was eaten between meals."

"Nor is any thing so pleasant as it was there," added Mr. Lawton. "The house is not kept so clean, nor are the boarders as agreeable as were the young men we had at Mrs. Baillie's."

"Indeed they are not. And as to that Mrs. Phipps, who sits just opposite to us at the table, I cannot bear her. Every day, almost, she comes up and sits with me for an hour or two, and worries me almost to death with her tittle-tattle. She speaks well of no one, and often talks about things of which I do not wish Florence to hear, compelling me to send her away, out of hearing."

"Really, that is an annoyance!"

"It is, indeed! And so sure as I happen to say, in her presence, that I intend walking out, she will propose to go with me."

"I would rather not have you seen in the street with Mrs. Phipps," Mr. Lawton remarked in a grave tone.

"Why not, dear? Do you know anything about her?" asked Mrs. Lawton, eagerly.

"No, Julia. Only, I neither like her appearance nor her manners."

"Nor, do I. At first I could not help myself. But I take good care now. But this is not the worst. Her Lizzy is a girl of very bad behaviour, and I can't keep her away from Florence when she is home from school; unless I drive her right down stairs. And that I don't like to do; for I can see that her mother is a woman of high temper, and I dread to have any difficulty with her."

"Still, Julia, our duty to our children is to protect them, by all possible means, from every association that may injure them. If you really think that it has a bad effect upon Florence to associate with Lizzy Phipps, you ought, by all means, to keep them apart."

"But Lizzy is in the habit of walking into our room so soon as Florence comes home."

"Then you will have to tell her plainly, that she must not do so. How much better is it that her mother should be angry, than our child corrupted."

"I feel the force of what you say; and I have thought the same myself," Mrs. Lawton replied. "And yet, I cannot but hesitate to offend, deliberately, a fellow-boarder."

"Nevertheless, you should resolutely determine to act from your clear convictions of right. And, surely, the moral health of your children is a motive strong enough to determine you to offend any one who is willing to be offended, because you use every means in your power to protect them from improper influences."

"I see the truth you utter, dear husband! And not only see it, but feel its force," Mrs. Lawton said.

"Then, for your children's sake, endeavour to act in obedience to that truth."

"I will try," was the simple, but earnest answer.

CHAPTER XVI.

TROUBLE IN EARNEST.

It was about a week after the conversation alluded to, that Mr. and Mrs. Lawton, just after dinner, were seated in their parlour, when there was a quick, loud rap at their door, followed by the entrance of one of the boarders, a Mrs. Parr. Her face was red, and her eyes flashing with excitement.

"How do you do, Mrs. Parr?" said Mr. Lawton, rising, and offering her a chair.

"No, I thank you, sir," Mrs. Parr replied, straightening herself up, and placing one hand upon her hip. "I have come in to say, Mrs. Lawton," she began in an elevated tone of voice,—"that I can't stand it any longer the way your Jim treats my little Tommy—and I won't stand it, neither! I'll leave the house first, I will!"

"I am very sorry that any thing has gone wrong between the children, Mrs. Parr," replied Mrs. Lawton, her words seeming to choke her as she uttered them, while her voice was low and husky. "If James has treated your little boy in an improper manner, he shall certainly be punished for it."

"Well, he did treat him bad! He always treats him bad! He never sees him but he pushes him, or knocks him over, or does something to him! He is a very bad boy, Mrs. Lawton! and ought to be half killed for his ugliness

to the other children in the house. I never saw a worse one in my life; and if you don't take better care of him, he will come to the gallows in the end, so he will!"

"But what has James done to your little boy, Mrs. Parr?" inquired Mr. Lawton. "I should like to know very much."

"Done to him? Why, he is always a doing to him. He never sees him but he does something to him!"

"Still, your accusation is so indefinite, that I know not how to correct my boy, if he has done wrong?" Mr. Lawton said, calmly.

"Done wrong? Humph! That is too bad! He might kill my little Tommy, I suppose, and you'd want to know if he had done any thing wrong! Humph!"

"But tell me, in a word, Mrs. Parr, what James has done to your little boy?"

"Why, he pushed him over, so he did, the wretch! and almost knocked his head off. And he does it every day of his life. But let me once catch him at it, and it'll be the last time he touches my boy!"

And Mrs. Parr clenched her teeth and hands, and looked the personification of anger and revenge.

"Call Margaret up, Julia, if you please," Mr. Lawton said, turning to his wife.

"O, you needn't call her up to ask about it, for she is just as bad as he is, and encourages him to pick upon the other children in the house!"

"Call her, if you please, Julia," Mr. Lawton again said, seeing that his wife hesitated.

In a few moments Margaret appeared.

"Has there been any difficulty to-day, between James and Thomas Parr, Margaret?" he asked.

"There was a little disturbance between them just now, sir."

"Well, Margaret, did you see it?"

"Yes, sir."

"And who else?"

"Why, John the waiter saw it. And so did Fanny, the cook."

"Ask them to come up here for a minute or two." And Margaret departed on her errand.

In a few moments Margaret re-appeared, with John and Fanny.

"John, did you see my little boy push Thomas Parr over?" Mr. Lawton asked, calmly.

"Yes, sir, I did."

"Well, John, tell me exactly how it happened, and in doing so I wish you to conceal nothing that James has done. If he is wholly to blame in the matter, I would a thousand times rather know it."

"I will tell you exactly, sir. Your little boy was rolling his hoop in the yard, when Tommy Parr ran out, and jerked it up, and before James could catch him, threw it over into the next yard."

"Well?"

"And then James caught hold of him, and was going to push him over, but Tommy scream-

ed out, and then he let him go, and Tommy ran up stairs to his mother."

"Did you see it also, Fanny?" inquired Mr. Lawton.

"Yes, sir. And it happened just as John has said."

"It's all a made up lie, so it is!" exclaimed Mrs. Parr, still more angrily.

"There is another thing that I would like to know, John, and, as before, I want nothing but the simple truth. Did you ever see James strike Mrs. Parr's little boy?"

"No, sir."

"Did you ever see him push Thomas over?"

"Yes, sir."

"Often?"

"Yes; a good many times."

"How came he to do so, John?"

"He done it because Tommy wouldn't let him alone. He never picks on Tommy, or any one; but Tommy is always picking on him."

"It's a lie!" again exclaimed Mrs. Parr.

"No, Ma'am, it is not a lie," John replied. "I never tell lies."

"Has he ever hurt Thomas?" further inquired Mr. Lawton.

"Hurt him, sir? No, I don't believe he ever hurt him any at all. But there is no telling, for Tommy screams out, if any of the children look at him."

"That will do, John. You and Sally can go down again," Mr. Lawton said. "And now, Mrs. Parr," he continued. "I hope you are

satisfied that my little boy has no disposition to hurt yours."

"Indeed, then, and I am not satisfied of any such thing. I know that he does push and knock him about whenever he gets a chance, the little devil!" and so saying, Mrs. Parr swept out of the room, her passion unallayed.

"Here comes trouble, at last, in good earnest," Mr. Lawton said, as Mrs. Parr banged the door to after her.

"And only the beginning of it, I am afraid," replied Mrs. Lawton. "For I sent Lizzy Phipps down stairs this morning, and told her, that I did not wish her and Florence to be together so much."

"Did she make you any reply?"

"O yes. She warmed up in a minute, and said, with an indignant look, 'Humph! I s'pose you think that I ain't good enough to keep company with your Florence.'"

"And she has told her mother, no doubt."

"O, of course; and she looked black enough at me while we sat at the dinner-table to-day."

"Then I suppose we must prepare for another storm."

"Yes. For——"

Mrs. Lawton did not finish her sentence, for the door opened, and in stalked the object of their conversation, with an indignant expression on her countenance.

"I have come in, Mrs. Lawton," began Mrs. Phipps, "to know what you meant by telling

my Lizzy that you didn't want her and Florence to be together so much?"

"I meant simply what I said," Mrs. Lawton replied, in a firm tone, for she now began to feel herself indignant at the unreasonableness and assurance of her fellow-boarders.

"You did, did you? And what's the reason, pray, that you don't want my Lizzy to keep company with your Florence? She is as good as she is, any day, let me tell you."

"I said nothing to the contrary, Mrs. Phipps. Still, as she is a noisy, rude, ill-behaved girl, who uses bad words, sometimes, I do not wish Florence to be in her company any more than can possibly be helped."

This was talking out pretty plainly, and much plainer than Mrs. Lawton had before any idea that she could ever speak to a mother about her own child. But she felt provoked, and that set her tongue free. As might have been expected, Mrs. Phipps went off into a blaze at once.

"She's as good as you, or any of your ugly breed, let me tell you, Mrs. Lawton! And ten hundred thousand million times better! Talk about my Lizzy being ill-behaved, you good-for-nothing, proud, stuck-up creature you! I'd like to know what you sprung from, to set yourself up for a lady. *A lady! A lady!*" drawing the word out with a tone and look of ineffable contempt. "But that is always the way with them that spring from the dirt."

"I cannot suffer any one, man or woman to use such language to my wife," Mr. Lawton

said, rising and going towards Mrs. Phipps; "and so, madam, you will please to leave the room."

"And I wonder how you'll help it, sir! I wonder how you'll help it, sir!"

"Go down stairs, Mrs. Phipps."

"I won't go down! I won't go down! You are both a mean, low-lived couple, and all the boarders in the house know it!"

Mr. Lawton, finding that their visiter had no disposition to retire, went up to her, and taking her by the arm, led her to the door, and, after thrusting her out by main force, for she resisted him, closed it after her. To her resistance were added loud, passionate cries for her husband. Overcome by her angry feelings, when she found herself fairly shut out of the room, she sank upon the floor, and continued to scream more passionately than before. Mr. Phipps, who had not yet gone out, started in alarm when he heard the cries of his wife, and sprang up the stairs to see what was the matter. He found her lying on the floor, near the entrance to Mr. Lawton's room, panting and screaming hysterically.

"What ails you, Jane? What is the matter? What have they done to you?" he asked, in an anxious tone, for he felt alarmed, as he lifted her up, and then supported her, while both passed down stairs to their own room as quickly as possible. There he let her sink, really too weak from passion to support herself on her feet, into a chair.

"And now, Jane," Mr. Phipps said, standing

before her, his face growing dark with anger, "tell me what they have done to you! Let it be the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

"Why, Mr. Lawton abused me as if I had been one of the vilest creatures in town, and then took hold of me and pushed me out of the room with all his might. He might have killed me."

Mr. Phipps paused to hear no more, but picked up a cane and hastily left the room. At his door he was met by four or five of the boarders, who had been attracted by his wife's screams.

"What is the matter? What is the matter?" was asked in eager tones, but Mr. Phipps stopped to answer no questions. Springing up the stairs, he swung open the door of Mr. Lawton's sitting-room, and walked in, cane in hand, with a furious aspect of countenance.

Mrs. Lawton screamed and turned pale.

"Don't be alarmed, Julia," her husband said, in a calm tone, as he rose to his feet. Then turning to his excited visiter, he said, sternly,

"Leave this room, sir, on the instant!"

By this time a number of curious faces were to be seen clustered around the door.

The calm, decisive, fearless tone and manner of Mr. Lawton cooled off his assailant several degrees, which was indicated by an involuntary lowering of his cane, that was held over his head in a menacing position, as he entered the room.

"I want to know, sir," began Mr. Phipps, "how you dared to ——"

"Leave this room, sir, without another word, or I will pitch you down stairs! These are my premises, remember!"

"I won't go till I have satisfaction," Mr. Phipps began, with a flourish of his cane.

"Won't you?" And Mr. Lawton strode towards him with an air of determination not to be mistaken. The other paused but a moment, and then turning, glided from the room, amid an involuntary burst of laughter from the group of boarders and servants at the door.

"What is the matter, Lawton?" asked one of the spectators of this scene.

"The matter is simply this. My wife took the liberty of telling Mr. Phipps' little girl that she did not wish her to come up into her room so often; and Mrs. Phipps got angry at this, and was so thoughtless and imprudent as to come up here and use very ill language to Mrs. Lawton. As it occurred in my presence, I told her she must cease or leave the room. As she would do neither, I took her by the arm and led her out, as I should do again under similar circumstances. I feel bound to protect my wife from insult in all cases, and I shall do so while I have the power."

"Right!" "Right!" "Right!" was responded from several of the group, and then all dispersed, leaving the different actors in this unpleasant, and, to one party, disgraceful affair, to their own reflections.

Poor Mrs. Lawton was much alarmed, and it was a long time before her husband could soothe down her agitated feelings.

"This is dreadful!" she said, giving way to tears.

"Don't let it agitate you, Julia, it is all over now."

"O, but I am afraid, dear husband, that Mr. Phipps will do you some harm. He looked so wicked when he came in."

"Don't give yourself a single uneasy thought about that, Julia. I know precisely what kind of a man Phipps is; and, therefore, have no more fear of his making another attack upon me, than I have of the sky's falling. One trial of that kind is all-sufficient for him."

"Dear father, let us go away from here!" Florence now said, coming out from the chamber, with pale face, tearful eyes, and trembling lips. "It isn't a good place to live in at all, and I don't want to stay."

"Why is it not a good place, my daughter?" asked Mr. Lawton, soothingly.

"Because it isn't like it was at Mrs. Baillie's. There all of them were kind to us; and we could have as much as we wanted at the table. But we can't get it here, unless we choose to want more potatoes and bread than anything else, and I never liked potatoes; and Mrs. Newell always looks and speaks so cross at us children while we are at the table. I wish we were only home again."

"Ain't we never going to go home again, father?" spoke up James.

"Why, this is your home, James," Mrs. Lawton said to the little boy.

"O no, it isn't any kind of a home."

"Why not, my son?"

"Because you nor father can't do what you please in this house. And we have to stay up in these rooms so much. When we were home we could go where we pleased, and there was no one to say, 'Clear out there, and go off up into your own room!'"

Mr. Lawton felt keenly the innocent and earnest regrets of the child, and were it not that he had fully resolved not to recommence housekeeping until his wife had become so completely sick of boarding as to propose the change herself, he would have then urged upon her the propriety of their at once resuming housekeeping. But he thought it best to have the boarding mania thoroughly cured, now that it was under treatment.

"I think, Julia, we had better look out for another boarding-house," he said, after the silence of a few moments.

"I shall certainly never be happy here," Mrs. Lawton responded. "Two of the boarders are mortally offended, and, of course, we can meet no longer upon even the common terms of civility."

"That is very true; and to live so, will be exceedingly unpleasant."

"Indeed it will! There is that cough again!" she added, in a lower tone, and one indicating a feeling of uneasiness, as Florence gave one or two hoarse, resounding coughs.

"Why, how long has she had that? I did not notice it before," the father said; and then call-

ing Florence to him, took hold of her hand, which he found to be hot, and perceived other indications of fever.

"Don't you feel well, dear?" he asked, drawing her to his side.

"Not very well, father. I feel hot all over, and my throat has been a little sore all day."

"I didn't know that, Florence!" her mother said, in surprise, and some alarm. "And now I come to notice it, how red her skin looks," she added, turning to her husband.

The name of a fatal disease, of which there had been one case in the house recently, trembled upon the tongue of each, but neither had the resolution to mention it.

"If she is no better when I return this evening, I will call in the doctor," Mr. Lawton said, as he was about parting with his wife at the door.

"Yes, by all means. But ain't you afraid Mr. Phipps will ——"

"Will what, Julia?"

"Will attack you in a secret manner."

"Not in the least."

"Well, I am," his wife replied, while a shade of fear passed over her countenance.

"There is not the slightest danger, I do assure you, Julia. Phipps is, by this time, I have not the least doubt, heartily ashamed of himself."

"I wish you would look out for a new place soon, for I shall have no more peace while I stay here," Julia said, after a few moments of troubled silence.

"I will, this very afternoon," and so saying, Mr. Lawton departed for his store.

As he came down the stairs and through the passages, he had to pass near the room occupied by Mr. Phipps and his wife. When a few steps beyond the door of this room, it was opened, and Mr. P. glided out and followed close after Mr. Lawton. A momentary thrill ran through the nerves of the latter, for, although he could not believe that the man would offer, in cool blood, to harm him, yet the thought passed instantly through his mind, that under the excitement of angry feelings, he might be tempted of evil spirits to do him some personal injury.

He, therefore, while he seemed not to notice Mr. Phipps, as he pursued his way towards the front door, was yet perfectly on his guard. The latter did not speak until they were both in the street. Then coming to the side of Mr. Lawton, he said—

"I believe I have acted like a fool, Mr. Lawton, as I always do, when I suffer myself to get into a passion without really knowing the cause why."

"Now you talk like a rational man, Mr. Phipps, and I shall be pleased to offer any explanation that circumstances may seem to require."

"I have not come to ask for explanations, Mr. Lawton, but to apologize for my really outrageous conduct in coming to your room, in the spirit and manner that I did."

"Having done that, Mr. Phipps, it is now but justice to yourself and to myself, that I should

explain the causes of the unpleasant occurrence that took place in my room. They are simply these. My wife, as well as myself, thought that it would be much better for your little girl and mine to be less frequently in each other's company. Accordingly we kept Florence in our own rooms, most of the time when she was home from school. But this had not the desired effect, for Lizzy's very natural desire for company of her own age was so great that she would come up to see Florence so soon as she came home from school. It then became my wife's duty to speak to her about it, and request her not to do so. Was there any thing wrong in that, Mr. Phipps?"

"O no, sir; nothing at all. We have few enough comforts in a boarding-house, any how, and it would be hard indeed, if our own rooms were not free from intrusion."

"Well; Mrs. Phipps came in and complained of this, which caused my wife to use some very plain talk, and then——"

"I understand it all perfectly, Mr. Lawton. I know my wife's infirmity of temper, and my own too. You had to put her out of the room."

"I did. And much I regretted the necessity."

"It was rather a severe remedy, Mr. Lawton, though, for all."

"I admit it. But what could I do? She was getting more and more excited every moment."

"I don't blame you, sir;" and Mr. Phipps sighed and remained silent for some moments.

At length he said, with an emphasis that indicated his having felt on the subject—

"How I do detest this miserable system of boarding! Every man ought to have his own family in his own house. If he can't afford to have a big house, let him have a little one, say I. I've never been in a boarding-house yet, that there hasn't been trouble among the children. And I am sure not a month passes round that I am not put into hot water about mine."

"I agree with you, there, perfectly, Mr. Phipps."

"I only wish that my wife did, Mr. Lawton. In that case I wouldn't be here twenty-four hours. But she's got a notion in her head that, for a man to expect his wife to take care of his house for him, is for him to want to make a slave of her. She never seems to think that I have to work, steadily, ten and twelve hours a day, and sometimes longer, to support the family. That is all nothing. But if I complain about my clothes being neglected, and the children not well attended to, I am told that I needn't expect that she's agoing to make a slave of herself for me or them either. I was once in hopes that she would learn better as she grew older. But I see no improvement."

Thus Mr. Phipps run on, until it became necessary for him and Mr. Lawton to take different directions; when they shook hands, and parted in mutual good will.

CHAPTER XVII.

SICKNESS.

"How is Florence now?" asked Mr. Lawton, in a tone of concern which showed that he had been thinking about her during the afternoon with some feelings of anxiety.

"She seems to me a good deal worse," Mrs. Lawton said. "She is asleep now, but breathes heavily, and her skin is very dry and hot."

"Has she complained of any particular sensation of uneasiness or pain?"

"Yes. She says that her head aches, and that her throat is very sore."

"Then I think it best that I should go for the doctor at once."

"So do I; for I'm really afraid that it is the scarlet fever," Mrs. Lawton said, turning pale as she gave utterance to the name of a disease, the thought of which makes every mother's heart tremble and sink in her bosom.

"I hope not, indeed!" her husband replied, as he turned hastily away to go for the physician.

When he returned, he found that Florence had awakened from the brief slumber into which she had fallen. She complained of a general uneasiness, with flushes of heat running over the whole body, sore throat, and headache. Her skin was red, dry, and hot. All these symptoms produced in the minds of her parents great uneasiness, and they waited the arrival of the

physician with increasing anxiety. He came about nine o'clock that evening, and carefully examined into the condition of his patient.

"Has she been exposed to the measles?" he asked, after he had observed the entire group of symptoms.

"Not to our knowledge," was the reply. "Do you think that it is nothing more than the measles, doctor?" Mrs. Lawton asked, in an anxious tone.

"I hope not, madam," was the answer.

A few simple directions were given by the physician, who promised to call early on the next morning, and then he went away, leaving the hearts of the parents heavier with anxiety than they were when he came in. That, "I hope not," with the peculiar tone in which it was uttered, haunted both their minds, in spite of all their efforts to forget it.

In the morning when the doctor came in, he found all the symptoms aggravated. The skin of his patient was dry and burning; her respiration hurried and difficult, interrupted by frequent sighs; her tonsils swollen and inflamed, and the swallowing, even of saliva, attended with soreness and pain. All this was accompanied by a hurried circulation of the blood. And to add to the alarming symptoms, her head was so much affected, that there was an evident tendency to delirium. There was now no mistaking it for a case of scarlet fever, in one of its most dangerous forms. This fact he at once communicated to the parents, with the announcement, that the

life of their child depended upon their strict attention to all his prescriptions and directions.

And now the inconveniences and difficulties of their position, as occupants of a boarding-house, were perceived in a new aspect, and felt with painful acuteness. Confined to one part of the house, they had no means of removing the two younger children beyond the atmosphere which Florence breathed, and were thus compelled to leave them exposed to the dangers of contagion. Instead, too, of the large, airy chambers which their own house had afforded, an arrangement so indispensable in sickness, they were cooped up, as it were, in two very small bed-rooms, one but little larger than a closet, and containing no window. The season, too, had advanced, and they were now amid the first warm, sultry, oppressive days of summer. To make this condition of things in some way tolerable, they removed the bed upon which Florence lay out into the more roomy parlour. Still, this was but a slight alleviation of all the difficulties that presented themselves, the worst of which was, the necessity of keeping James and Henry, now two years old, in such immediate contact with the disease.

To prevent, if possible, the ill effects of this exposure, the doctor administered to the two children who were not affected with the disease, several drops of the extract of belladonna, daily, after the manner of the German physicians.

About the fourth day, the condition of Florence was pitiable indeed. Her throat was al-

most black with ulcerations; and the whole surface of her body was red and swollen, resembling a vast erysipelas, with here and there livid spots, especially on the neck and face. She seemed to possess little consciousness, except pain and uneasiness.

The case was one of such extreme malignancy, that scarcely any of the boarders dared venture into Mrs. Lawton's rooms, for fear of contagion. Had it not been for her mother's assistance in relieving her from incessant watchings and attentions, her own health would doubtless have given way. But, situated as they were, it was difficult to afford anything like a comfortable arrangement for Julia's mother to remain over night, the very time when she felt most need of her attentions. It was in vain that Mr. Lawton applied for the use of another chamber for himself; it could not be had. Every one was taken up. The house was full. And so, through the hot days and sultry nights, all were compelled to remain in their allotted portion of the house.

"Doctor, is there *any* hope?" asked Mrs. Lawton of the physician, on the sixth day of the disease, her countenance expressing the most intense and painful anxiety. She had asked this question often before, and as often had it been evaded, with the remark, "Where there is life, there is hope."

"There *is* hope, madam," the physician replied, looking up from his little patient, over whom he had been bending for the last five min-

utes, with an anxiety only exceeded by that of her parents.

The tone in which those few words were uttered was not to be mistaken. Mrs. Lawton's heart trembled for a few moments; then covering her face with her hands, she leaned forward against the bed, near which she was standing. There was no sound of weeping, but the tears trickled through her fingers, and fell fast upon the pillow that supported the head of her dear child.

"And yet there is much to fear, Mrs. Lawton," the physician added, after the pause of a few moments. "All the skill I possess, and all the care you have to bestow, will be required, for the re-active power of nature will be feeble indeed."

And so it proved; for full two days, Florence lay in a condition so low, that hope almost failed in the hearts of the parents. Then there was an evident healthy re-action of the whole system, which steadily and slowly progressed, until she was pronounced out of danger.

But, alas! the joy that trembled in the hearts of the parents and friends was of but brief duration. On the same day that Florence sat up, a little while, for the first time, in her bed, little Henry was observed to droop about. In alarm, the physician was again sent for, who was concerned to find all the premonitory symptoms precisely resembling those which were exhibited when he was called in to see Florence. And now the heart of poor Mrs. Lawton sunk like a

weight in her bosom. Wearied and exhausted by ten days and nights of confinement, watching, and anxiety, the tone of her mind was gone, and she gave way, for a time, to utter despondency. From this, however, she was soon roused by the condition of her child, that required every thought and care in her power to bestow.

Nearly two days passed without the physician being able to determine the nature of the disease —two days of intense and painful anxiety to the parents—though, in his own mind, there was little hope of its being anything of a milder character than scarlatina.

"Do you think it the scarlet fever, doctor?" asked Mrs. Lawton, for the fourth or fifth time, in an anxious tone.

"I hope not, Mrs. Lawton."

"O, I am afraid that it is, doctor. He was taken just like Florence, and every symptom now resembles those which she had."

"That is true, madam. And yet it may not be the scarlet fever."

"What else can it be, doctor?"

"It may be nothing but measles, Mrs. Lawton."

"But he hasn't been exposed to them at all."

"And yet, it often happens that children take the measles, or whooping cough, without the parents being at all able to learn in what way they have been exposed to it. Hope for the best, Mrs. Lawton. I always do."

"But here there seems little hope," was the

desponding reply. "There has been scarlet fever here, but no measles."

The force of that reply silenced the physician, for he felt it, and the effect was to diminish the hope he had himself entertained that possibly the child's sickness might be nothing more than the early stage of measles.

"To-morrow will determine all," he said, as he rose to depart; "and, in the meantime, be careful not to let him be exposed to draughts of air."

The next twenty-four hours were passed, by Mrs. Lawton and her husband, in a state of painful suspense and anxiety. Neither of them slept over an hour or two during the night; and, indeed, they had now no accommodation for comfortable repose. The little dark chamber was so close and warm, that neither of the sick children could sleep there. The bed in their own chamber was occupied by Florence, and now that which had been made up in the parlour had to be appropriated to the use of little Harry. On a part of this, one of the parents reposed for an hour or so while the other sat up, to attend to the two sick children, and thus they relieved each other through the warm and sultry night, during which all the windows in both rooms had to be tightly closed to prevent Henry or Florence from taking cold.

In the morning, the fever of the child was much increased, and his skin was almost as red as scarlet. When the mother examined him by the light of day, and saw his condition, she

burst into tears, and burying her face in the pillow, sobbed aloud.

"Do not give up to your feelings so, Julia," Mr. Lawton said, tenderly, while his own voice trembled. "Let us still hope for the best."

"I have no hope," was Mrs. Lawton's response, as she raised her head. "What else can it be but scarlet fever? And you know that the dear little fellow is one of the most delicate of our children. He will never live through it."

"But let us wait, in some degree of hope, until the doctor comes in. You know that he seemed to think it might be nothing more than measles."

"I have no confidence in the hope he endeavoured to inspire. Has not the child been exposed for nearly ten days to the atmosphere in which his sister breathed? What else can it be then, but that dreadful disease? How wrong it was in us, dear husband, not to have sent both him and James to their grandmother's. All this would have been prevented."

"Perhaps so, Julia. But we cannot tell. What we did was for the best; and now let us be satisfied in that consciousness, while we endeavour to do all we can for our dear little ones."

It was about nine o'clock when the physician came in. Since daylight, Mr. and Mrs. Lawton had waited for him in trembling anxiety. He came into the room, and sat down by the bedside in silence. And all remained breathlessly still for more than five minutes, during which time he carefully and minutely examined

every apparent symptom. These minutes seemed to the parents prolonged almost to hours. Their hearts beat oppressively, and they almost held their breaths for the first word of hope or fear that might be uttered. At last the doctor raised himself up, from the examination, with a long, deep expiration.

"It is measles!" he said, in a tone of confidence not to be mistaken.

"O doctor! are you sure?" Mrs. Lawton exclaimed, seizing hold of his arm, and looking into his face with a mingled expression of hope, confidence, and fear.

"Yes, ma'am, I am fully satisfied. The eruption on the skin has assumed the true form and appearance, and there is little or no soreness or inflammation of the throat or tonsils. Still, you know, that even in measles, great attention is requisite to prevent the patient's taking cold, and so you must not abate a single attention."

Tears gushed from the eyes of the mother, and she sunk into a chair, overcome by emotions of joy that were too powerful to be controlled.

CHAPTER XVIII.

ANOTHER CHANGE.

THE hope created in the minds of the parents was not a fallacious one. Little Henry's disease

proved to be nothing worse than the measles. The reason of his taking it was also accounted for, when another child in the house, whose mother had frequently assumed the charge of him to relieve Mrs. Lawton while Florence was so ill, sickened of the same disease, and it became known that this child had not only been exposed to the infection, but that another child, who was just taking it, had been brought into the house, and had played with him and Henry.

Gradually, both Florence and Henry recovered from their severe illness, for it was severe in both cases, and Mrs. Lawton began to feel the effects of three weeks' almost incessant watchings and painful anxieties, combined with all the inconveniences of her uncomfortable position. During all that time she had not once been present at the public table, and had thus been spared any encounter with Mrs. Parr and Mrs. Phipps, whose resentment continued unabated. Now, although her children were able to walk about the room, she did not feel inclined to join the family at meal times, but continued to have the little she required brought to her room.

"I shall never feel at home here again," she said one day, about this time, to her husband, as she reclined upon the bed, in a weak state from her recent over exertions.

"Do you think that the children could be removed safely?" Mr. Lawton asked.

"Yes, I think so. The weather is warm, and in a carriage there would be no danger of taking cold."

"I will look out, then, for a new home at once," her husband replied.

"I wish you would. For things get more and more unpleasant here. Margaret says that there is a disturbance with the cook or Mrs. Newell every day when she goes to prepare my meals, and those of Florence and Henry. And I am sure, after what has happened, I have no wish to go to the public table again."

The desire to return to housekeeping was strong in the mind of Mrs. Lawton. But as not the slightest allusion to this subject was made by her husband, she hesitated first to introduce it. Enough had transpired since she had left her own well-arranged and commodious home, to convince her that all ideas in reference to superior comfort in a boarding-house, were perfectly chimerical. The thought of removing any where else than to their own house, was really painful, but she could not find resolution enough to declare this to her husband.

"I will try, Julia," he replied to her last remark, "to get another place in a few days, and one, if possible, more pleasant than this."

It was on the third day succeeding this conversation, that Mr. Lawton announced as successful his effort to obtain a new home.

"Where is it? and who keeps the house?" Mrs. Lawton asked.

"It is in East Broadway, and the mistress of the house is a very fine woman, I know."

"Is the situation pleasant?"

"O yes! And we are to have two large, airy

chambers; a front and a back one, adjoining each other."

"That will be delightful this warm weather! How much will we have to pay?"

"Not so much as we do here."

"Are there any other families in the house, with children?"

"Not one. So we shall be free from that trouble."

"O, I am so glad of that! But——"

"But what, Julia?" Mr. Lawton asked, seeing that she hesitated.

"I was going to say," she added, while the colour rose to her cheeks and forehead—"that—that—"

"That what, Julia?"

"That our own house would have been so much pleasanter."

"Why, Julia!" exclaimed Mr. L., with a look and tone of surprise. "Didn't you desire, of all things, to give up housekeeping?"

"Yes, Frank! And I was foolish enough to persuade and worry you, until you gave in to my weak desire. But sadly enough have I since repented of it. I would give the world, were I again back in that pleasant home we occupied for ten years."

"That is now impossible, Julia. The house has been rented to other tenants, and will, probably, never again shelter us or our little ones. But why didn't you tell me this before I engaged another place?"

"Because I couldn't take heart enough to do

it, I felt so mortified at the result of our boarding experiment. But the engagement is surely not binding?"

"I have made it for a year, Julia."

"O why did you do that, Frank! I can never stand it in the world to live in this way for another year."

"But, you will be much more pleasantly situated than you are now."

"Still, it will not be home—my own home, where I can do as I please. And then the children; poor things! I can't half attend to them in a boarding-house. And they are kept under restraint all the while."

Mr. Lawton did not reply, but walked the room backwards and forwards, in a thoughtful manner, for many minutes. At length pausing, he said,

"Will you be ready to move by to-morrow?"

"O yes. The sooner we can get away from here the better. Any change is preferable."

"To-morrow, then, it shall be."

After tea that evening, Mr. Lawton asked to have his bill made out and sent up to his room, as he intended moving on the next day, and wished to pay it in the morning. About nine o'clock the bill came up.

'How much is it?" asked Mrs. Lawton, as the servant who had brought it in left the room.

"Eighty-five dollars."

"Eighty-five dollars!"

"Yes, it is eighty-five dollars, and no mistake. But, as it is a bill of items. it will proba-

bly explain itself. Let me see. *To two weeks boarding*, at $22 50—$45."

"But it is only a week since you paid, if I remember rightly."

"It was a week last Saturday. And this is only Tuesday. But here is a memorandum at the bottom, which will no doubt explain the charge. *Boarders who leave in the middle of a week are always charged for the whole week, the same as if they staid.*"

"Well, that is too bad!" exclaimed Mrs. Lawton. "It is no better than swindling."

"Not much better, as I look at things," replied her husband. "It is a charge for a service not rendered, and made under the plea of a rule which few boarders would feel inclined to dispute."

"But how in the world does she swell the bill up to eighty-five dollars?"

"The next item will explain, I presume. *To four weeks' extras for children, and extra trouble for sending Mrs. L.'s meals to her room*, $10 *a week*, $40. Quite cool and business-like, really."

"But you are not going to pay it?"

"Of course I am. I cannot deny the specifications of the bill, and as there was no contract for the extra services rendered, I am not willing to have any dispute about the exorbitant demand that Mrs. Newell has made."

On the next morning the bill was paid, and immediately after breakfast furniture-cars were

brought, and all the furniture of their chamber and parlour removed.

"As soon as I get our things into the house, I will send a carriage for you, and the children, and Margaret," Mr. Lawton said, as he left his little family, all dressed to go out, in the parlour below. Little Henry, just able to sit up steadily, and feel interested in what was passing around him, was on Margaret's lap, and Florence, still very weak, sat beside her mother, and leant her head against her.

"Send the carriage soon, father," Florence said.

"In an hour at least," he replied, as he closed the door after him.

It was just an hour after that, the carriage drove up to the door, and full of pleasure at the proposed change, Mrs. Lawton and her little family stepped into it, and in a few minutes were whirling rapidly away. After a drive of about twenty minutes, the carriage stopped at a neat house in East Broadway. Mr. Lawton stood in the door with a smiling face.

"Welcome home again!" he said in a lively tone, as he opened the carriage door, and lifted Florence out in his arms, and then stood holding her, until they were ready to enter the house with him.

In the next minute all were standing in the midst of two beautifully furnished parlours, Mrs. Lawton, and the children and Margaret glancing around them each with a bewildered air.

"What is the meaning of all this?" Mrs. Law-

ton asked, in surprise. "Where are we? These are all my things! These are my parlours!"

"O, we are home again!—home again!" exclaimed James, jumping up and down in an ecstasy of delight.

"O, father, is it home?" Florence asked, looking up into her father's face with an earnest appealing look, while the tears started to her eyes—"Is it home, dear father!"

"Yes, my child, it is home once more. Our own home."

"O, I am *so* glad!"

"And *I* am glad, dear husband!" Mrs. Lawton said, leaning her head upon his shoulder, and giving way to tears. "How foolish I was ever to leave my home in search of that happiness to be found alone within its sacred precincts."

"And I am glad, too," Margaret said.

"Ain't *I* glad! I reckon I am!" broke in James, still continuing to jump and dance about like an urchin just let loose from school.

"I glad, too," little Henry murmured, raising his head, which had fallen back on to the bosom of Margaret, his little eyes brightening, and his pale cheek warming with a sudden flush.

"So we are all glad together; and may we ever remain so!" Mr. Lawton said, with emotion.

"I shall never again think any household duty a hardship," Mrs. Lawton remarked, after the tea things had been cleared away on that evening, and she had seated herself beside her husband on the sofa. "How much I have thought,

in the last three or four months, about my former foolish, or, I must call them, wicked complainings. I now understand why our kind friend, Mrs. Emerson, used so frequently and earnestly to urge upon me the necessity of entering into my duties with a willing heart, rather than to seek to avoid them. Had I been influenced by her, rather than by Mrs. Campbell, and one or two like her, how much of that unhappiness, which has found its climax in the last two months, would I have avoided. Dearly, indeed, do we sometimes pay for our wisdom!"

"Never too dearly, however. For a just appreciation of our duties in life, is worth any sacrifice that its attainment may cost."

"I feel that it is. Hereafter, I earnestly hope that my sense of the duty I owe to my husband and family, may never be less acute than now."

Mr. Lawton did not reply. He felt that no precept was needed to enforce the plain, but earnest teachings of real life. And these proved effectual, for, ever after, to Mrs. Lawton there was no place like home; the duties of which, as they were entered into with the right spirit, became more and more delightful.

CHAPTER XIX.

CONCLUSION.

It was about three years from the time in which the incidents of the last chapter occurred, that Mr. Lawton stood musing one day at his desk, about two o'clock in the afternoon. His countenance wore a troubled aspect; and he seemed much disturbed in mind. The cause can be told in a few words. The commercial difficulties that commenced in 18—, continued year after year, until there was scarcely a business man in the country who was not more or less affected by it. Like all around him, Frank Lawton bent to the gale; though he still remained strong at the root. But a succession of heavy payments completely exhausted every resource; and with the last note in bank that was to fall due for two months, he found himself, at two o'clock, minus the required amount, in the sum of three hundred dollars. He had paid over ten thousand dollars in the preceding thirty days, and now, like the last pound, under which the overladen beast sinks to the earth, he found himself really staggering under the necessity of raising so trifling a sum. All his business friends who would have gladly assisted him, had done so to the extent of their abilities, or, were themselves so cramped in their means, as to be unable to spare a single dollar. He had seen them

nearly all during the morning. Of the thousand dollars which he was required to pay, he had seven hundred. But where to obtain the remaining portion, was more than he could tell. He was now waiting for the return of one of his clerks, who had been sent to a business friend, not before called upon, to see if the required sum could not be borrowed from him. The minutes hastened rapidly away, and it was well on to half-past two when the clerk returned.

"Did you see Mr. ——," inquired Lawton in an anxious tone, as his young man entered.

"Yes, sir."

"Well?"

"He says that you should have a thousand dollars and welcome, if he had them. But that he has not a dollar left in the house after taking up three notes to-day."

Mr. Lawton compressed his lips hard, and took a deep inspiration at the answer which he had feared his clerk would bring. There was now no longer any hope of obtaining the required sum, except by resorting to an expedient to which he had not yet been driven; an expedient that he dreaded only less than a failure in business. For a single moment he hesitated. But a glance at the hurrying fingers on the clock determined him. Hastily opening his desk, he took from a large pocket-book a note of hand, having thirty days to run. This he endorsed, with a hurried dash of the pen, as if he were engaged in a desperate act, to the perform-

mance of which he had nerved himself by the stern force of necessity. As he turned from his desk, a little boy, about ten years old, with a mild, sweet face, stood before him.

"Does Mr. Lawton live here?" inquired the boy, in tones musical and strangely familiar to the ear of Mr. Lawton.

"Yes, my little boy, that is my name."

The child then handed him a note, and turning, glided away before Mr. Lawton thought of detaining him.

Hastily breaking the seal, he was surprised to find that the note contained three one hundred dollar notes. These he quickly removed, glancing nervously at the clock as he did so, and placing them on the little package of seven hundred dollars that lay in his desk, handed the whole to his clerk, with the bank notice. The latter instantly hurried off to lift the note. He then proceeded to read the letter that enclosed so opportune a supply of funds. It ran thus:

"MR. LAWTON.—*My dear sir*. Three years ago, you loaned a poor widow, in her extremity, two hundred and fifty dollars, with which to pay her rent, and save her furniture from distraint. That widow, by the aid of her children, under the blessing of Providence, is now in much more comfortable circumstances, and perfectly able to return, with interest, your kind benefaction. Receive, then, your own, with the blessing of the widow and orphan upon it.

"Yours truly, JANE BAILLIE.

"*New-York, June* 14, 18—."

The sudden reaction of feeling caused by so unexpected an event, occurring too, so opportunely, melted down the feelings of Mr. Lawton, and his eyes grew dim with moisture as he bowed his head upon the desk at which he stood, and lifted his heart with an emotion of thankfulness to the Giver of all good.

It seems hardly necessary to tell the reader what must already have been inferred, that success had crowned the effort of Anne Baillie in setting up the millinery business, which she did, so soon as she had completed her trade. Josephine readily acquired a knowledge of the same art, and the two, with the aid and counsel of their mother, went to work in that earnest way that always meets success. In the course of a year or two, their business grew into importance, and when Mrs. Baillie returned Mr. Lawton the money he had loaned her, she was able to do so, notwithstanding the difficulties of the times, without at all feeling its loss.

THE END.

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