

Lewie eBook

Lewie

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I.

Little Agnes.

“And she, not seven years old,
A slighted child.”—*Wordsworth*.

“What *is* it Lewie wants? Does he want sister’s pretty book?”

“No!” roared the cross baby boy, pointing with his finger to the side-board.

“Well, see here, Lewie! here is a pretty ball; shall we roll it? There! now roll it back to sister.”

“No-o-o!” still screamed Master Lewie, the little finger still stretched out towards something on the side-board which he seemed much to desire.

“Here is my lovely dolly, Lewie. If you will be very careful, I will let you take her. See her beautiful eyes! Will Lewie make her open and shut her eyes?”

“No-o-o-o!” again shouted the fretful child, and this time so loud as effectually to arouse his youthful mamma, who was deep in an arm-chair, and deeper still in the last fashionable novel.

“Agnes!” she exclaimed sharply, “cannot you let that child alone? I told you to amuse him; and instead of doing so, you seem to delight in teasing him and making him scream.”

Again the little girl tried in various ways to amuse the wayward child. He really was not well, and felt cross and irritable, and nothing that his little sister could do to please him would succeed. With the utmost patience and gentleness she labored to bring a smile to her little brother’s cheek, or at least so to win his attention as to keep him from disturbing her mother. But the handkerchief rabbits, and the paper men and women she could cut so beautifully, and which at times gave little Lewie so much pleasure, were now all dashed impatiently aside. One by one her little playthings were brought out, and placed before him, but with no better success. Lewie had once seen the contents of a beautiful work-box of his sister’s, which stood in the centre of the side-board: at this he pointed, and for this he screamed. Nothing else would please him; at nothing else would he condescend to look.

“Oh, Lewie! darling Lewie! play with something else! Don’t you know Aunt Ellen gave sister that pretty work-box? and she said I must be so careful of it, and Lewie would break all sister’s pretty things.”



Again Master Lewie had recourse to the strength of his lungs, which he knew, by past experience, to be all-powerful in gaining whatever his fancy might desire, and sent forth a roar so loud as once more to arouse the attention of the novel-reading mamma; who, with a stamp of the foot, and a threatening shake of the finger, gave the little girl to understand that she must expect instant and severe punishment, if Lewie was heard to scream again.

Still Lewie demanded the work-box, and nothing that the patient little Agnes could do would divert his attention from it for a moment. The little angry brow was contracted, and the mouth wide open for another shriek, when little Agnes, with a sigh of despair, went to the side-board, and, mounting on a chair, lifted down her much-valued and carefully-preserved treasure, saying to herself:

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"If Aunt Ellen only *knew*, I think she would not blame me!"

And now with a shout of delight the spoiled child seized on the pretty work-box; and in another moment, winders, spools, scissors, thimble, were scattered in sad confusion over the carpet. In vain did little Agnes try, as she picked up one after the other of her pretty things, to conceal them from the baby's sight; if one was gone, he knew it in a moment, and worried till it was restored to him.

Finally, laying open the cover of the box, he began to pound with a little hammer, which was lying near him, upon the looking-glass inside of it; and, pleased with the noise it made, he struck harder and still harder blows.

"No, no, Lewie! please don't! You will break sister's pretty looking-glass. No! Lewie must not!" And Agnes held his little hand. At this the passionate child threw himself back violently on the floor, and screamed and shrieked in a paroxysm of rage; in the midst of which, the threatened punishment came upon poor little Agnes, in the shape of a sharp blow upon her cheek, from the soft, white hand of her mother, who exclaimed:

"There! didn't I tell you so? It seems to be your greatest pleasure to tease and torment that poor baby; and you know he is sick, too. Now, miss, the next time he screams, I shall take you to the north room, and lock you up, and keep you there on bread and water all day!"

Agnes retreated to a corner, and wept silently, but very bitterly, not so much from the pain of the blow, as from a sense of injustice and harsh treatment at the hands of one who should have loved her; and the mother returned to her novel, in which she was soon as deep as ever. At the same moment, the looking-glass in the cover of the work-box flew into fifty pieces, under the renewed blows of the hammer in Master Lewie's hand.

The little conqueror now had free range among his sister's hitherto carefully-guarded treasures; her bits of work, and little trinkets, tokens of affection from her kind aunt and her young cousins at Brook Farm, were ruthlessly torn in pieces, or broken and strewed over the floor. Agnes sat in mute despair. She knew that as long as her mother was absorbed in the novel, no sound would disturb her less powerful than Lewie's screams, and that all else that might be going on in the room would pass unnoticed by her. So, wiping her eyes, she sat still in the corner, watching Lewie with silent anguish, as he revelled among her precious things, as "happy as a king" in the work of destruction, and only hoping that he might not discover one secret little spot in the corner of the box where her dearest treasure was concealed.

But at length she started, and, with an exclamation of horror, and a cry like that of pain, she sprang towards her little brother, and violently wrenched something from his hand. And now the piercing shrieks of the angry and astonished child filled the house, and

brought even Old Mammy to the room, to see what was the matter with the baby. Mammy opened the door just in time to witness the severe punishment inflicted upon little Agnes, and to receive an order to take that naughty girl to the north room, and lock her in, and leave her there till farther orders.

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Agnes had not spoken before, when rebuked by her mother; but now, raising her mild blue eyes, all dimmed by tears, to her mother's face, she said:

"Oh, mamma! it was papa's hair!—it was that soft curl I cut from his forehead, as he lay in his coffin, Lewie was going to tear the paper!" But even this touching appeal, which should have found its way to the young widow's heart, was unheeded by her—perhaps, in the storm of passion, it was unheard; and Agnes was led away by Mammy to a cold, unfurnished room, where she had been doomed to spend many an hour, when *Lewie was cross*; while the fretful and half-sick child, now tired of his last play-thing, was taken in his mother's arms, and rocked till he fell into a slumber, undisturbed for perhaps an hour, except by a start, when the tears from his mother's cheek fell on his—tears caused by the *well-imagined* sufferings of the heroine of her romance.

All the time Mammy was leading little Agnes through the wide hall, and up the broad stairs and—along the upper hall to the door of the "North Room," the good old woman was wiping her eyes with her apron, and trying to choke down something in her throat which prevented her speaking the words of comfort she wished to say to the sobbing child. When they reached the door of the room in which little Agnes was to be a prisoner, Mammy sat down, and taking the child in her lap she took off her own warm shawl and pinned it carefully around her, and as she stooped to kiss her, Agnes saw the tears upon her cheek.

"Why do you cry, Mammy?" she asked, "mamma has not scolded you to-day, has she?"

"No, love."

"Are you crying then because you are so sorry for me?"

"That's it, my darling, I cannot bear to lock you up here alone for the day and leave you so sorrowful, you that ought to be as blithe as the birds in spring."

"Mammy, do you think I deserve this punishment?"

"No, sweet, if I must say the truth, I do not think you ever deserve any punishment at all. But I must not say anything that's wrong to you, about what your mamma chooses to do."

"Then, Mammy, don't you think I ought to be happier than if I had really been naughty and was punished for it. Don't you remember Mammy the verse you taught me from the Bible the last time Lewie was so fretful and mamma sent you to lock me up here. I learned it afterwards from my Bible: hear me say it:—"

'For what glory is it if when ye be buffeted for your faults ye take it patiently; but if when ye do well and suffer for it, ye take it patiently, this is acceptable with God.'

“Now, Mammy, I did try to be patient with Lewie, and I gave him everything I had, but I could not let him destroy that lock of papa’s hair. I am afraid I was rough then, I hope I did not hurt his little hand. Mammy, do you think mamma loves me *any*.”

“How could anybody help loving you, my darling!”

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"But, oh! Mammy, if I thought she would ever love me as she does Lewie! She never kisses me, she never speaks kind to me. No, Mammy, I do not think she loves me; but how strange it is for a mother not to love her own little girl."

"Well, darling, we will talk no more of that, or we shall be saying something naughty; we will both try and do our duty, and then God will bless us, and whatever our troubles and trials may be, let us go to Him with them all. Now, darling, I must leave you."

"Mammy, will you please bring me my Bible; and my little hymn-book? I want to learn the"

'I am never alone.'

"God is always by my side, isn't he Mammy?"

"Yes, love, and he says, 'I will never leave thee nor forsake thee.'"

When little Agnes was left alone in the great cold room, she walked up and down the floor repeating to herself verses from her Bible and hymn-book. Sometimes she stopped at the window and looked across the country, towards a wooded hill, where just above the tops of the trees she could see the chimneys of her uncle's house; and she thought how happy her young cousins were in the love of their father and mother, and she remembered how her own dear papa had loved her, and she thought of the difference now; and the tears flowed afresh. Then she walked the room again, repeating in a low voice to herself the words:

"Never alone; though through deserts I roam
Where footstep of man has ne'er printed the sand.
Never alone; though the ocean's wild foam
Rage between me and the loved ones on land.
Though hearts that have cherished are laid 'neath the sod,
Though hearts which should cherish are colder than stone,
I still have thy love and thy friendship my God,
Thou always art near me; I'm never alone."

Soon she grew tired of walking, and seating herself at the table, she laid her head upon her crossed arms and was soon in a sweet slumber, and far away in her dreams from the cold desolate north room, at "the Hemlocks."

At the end of an hour the youthful widow was disturbed by the sound of merry sleigh-bells, and she had only time to throw her novel hastily aside, when the door opened and her sister-in-law, Mrs. Wharton, entered, accompanied by two of her little girls, their bright faces glowing with health and happiness.

"And how are the children?" Mrs. Wharton asked, after the first salutations were over.

“Why, Lewie does not seem well, he has been complaining for a day or two.”

“And where is Agnes? We rode over to see if you let her go over and pass the holidays with us.”

“Why, to tell the truth, Agnes has been very naughty, and I have been obliged to shut her up.”

“Again!” exclaimed Mrs. Wharton, while glances of indignation shot from the eyes of her two little girls. “Agnes naughty, and shut up again! Why, Harriet, do you know she appears to me so perfectly gentle and lovely, that I can hardly imagine her as doing anything wrong. Mr. Wharton and I often speak of her as the most faultless child we have ever met with.”

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"She is not so bad in other ways, but she does delight to tease Lewie, and keep him screaming. Now, it has been one incessant scream from the child all this morning, and Agnes *can* amuse him very well when she chooses."

"Judging from all her own pretty things scattered about the floor here, I should think she had been doing her best to amuse him," said Mrs. Wharton; "she has even taken down her beautiful work-box, of which she has always been so careful. You may be sure it was a case of extremity, which compelled her to do that."

"Why, what a sad litter they have made to be sure; I did not observe it before. The fact is, Ellen, I have been exceedingly occupied this morning, and did not know what the children were about, only that Agnes kept Lewie screaming, and, at last, with the utmost rudeness, for that I saw myself, she snatched something from his hand, and for that, I punished her."

"Ah, yes, I see, Harriet," said Mrs. Wharton, glancing at the yellow-covered publication on the table; "I see how it is, now; you have been wholly absorbed in one of those wretched novels, and left little Agnes to take care of a sick, cross baby. That child is very sick, Harriet; do you see what a burning fever he has?"

"Ellen, do you think so?" said the mother hastily and in great agitation. "Oh, Ellen, what shall I do; oh, what *shall* I do! perhaps my baby, my darling, is going to be very ill."

"Do not agitate yourself so, Harriet, I will send Matthew directly over to the village for the doctor; but first, may I have Agnes?"

"Oh, do what you please with Agnes, only send the doctor to my baby; call Mammy, she will bring Agnes, and do go, quick!"

The bell was rung, and Mammy was despatched to bring the little prisoner down; she found her as we left her, sleeping with her head upon her arms.

"Precious lamb!" said Mammy, "she has cried herself to sleep." Then, kissing her, and rousing her gently, she told her that her aunt and cousins had come to take her to Brook Farm.

Agnes was at first very happy at the idea of once more enjoying the sunshine of her aunt's cheerful home, but, when she heard that Lewie was sick, a cloud came over her face.

"Aunty," she whispered, "I think I had better not go, perhaps I can do something for Lewie. I can *almost* always amuse him."

“Lewie is too sick to be amused now, my dear, and you can do no good here; besides, I want to get you away as quickly as possible, for I think it may be the scarlet fever that Lewie has. Come, darling, we will go.”

Agnes drew her hand quietly from that of her aunt, and running back, she stooped over her little brother as he lay in his mother’s arms, and kissed him; and then, standing a moment before her mother, she raised her eyes to her face. But her mother’s eyes, with a gaze of almost despair, were fixed on her darling boy, and she did not seem to be aware even of the presence of her little daughter.

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A look of disappointment passed over the face of Agnes, as, without intruding upon her mother by even a word of farewell, she turned, and put her hand once more in that of her aunt. And now, as, comfortably wrapped in buffalo skins, Mrs. Wharton and the little girls are flying over the country roads, to the sound of the merry sleigh-bells, we will relate a conversation which took place between Mammy and Bridget; and by so doing, will give a little insight into the history of the young widow, whom we have introduced to the reader.

II.

Brook Farm.

“By the gathering round the winter hearth,
When twilight called unto household mirth;
By the fairy tale, or the legend old,
In that ring of happy faces told;
By the quiet hours when hearts unite
In the parting prayer and the kind “good night”,
By the smiling eye and the loving tone,
Over thy life has the spell been thrown.”—*Spells of home*.

When Mammy left little Agnes in the north room, and descended to the kitchen, she found Bridget, who had already been made acquainted with, passing events by Anne, the chambermaid, in a state of great wrath and indignation. The china must have been strong that stood so bravely the rough treatment it received that morning, and the tins kept up a continued shriek of anguish as they were dashed against each other in the sink; while every time Bridget set down her foot as she stamped about the kitchen, it was done with an emphasis that made itself felt throughout the whole house.

“And so ye’ve been locking up that swate crathur again, have ye, Mrs. McCrae?” were the words with which, in no gentle tones, she assailed Mammy as she entered the kitchen.

“I did as I was bid, Bridget,” said Mammy, with a sigh.

“And indade it wouldn’t be me would do as I was bid, if I was bid to do the like o’ that. I’d rather coot off my right hand than use it to turn the kay on the darlint.”

“I always mind my mistress, Bridget,” said Mammy, “though it’s often I’m forced to pray for patience wi’ her.”

“And indade I don’t ask for patience wid her at all, anny how,” stormed Bridget. “To think of sending the swate child, that never has anny but a kind an’ a pleasant word for *iverybody*, away to the cold room, just because the brat she doats on chooses to yowl in

the fashion he did the morn. I don't know, indade, what's the matther with the woman! I think it's a quare thing, and an *on nattheral* thing, *anny how!*"

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“She’s much to be blamed, no doubt, Bridget, and yet there’s excuses to be made for my mistress,” said Mammy, mildly. “She’s young yet in years, no but twenty-two; and she’s nothing but a child in her ways and her knowledge. She never knew the blessing of a mither’s care, puir thing; and up to the very day she was married, her life was passed at one o’ them fashionable boarding-schules, where they teach them to play on instruments, and to sing, and to dance, and to paint, and to talk some unchristian tongue that’s never going to do them no good for this life nor the next. But they never give them so much as a hint that they’ve got a soul to be saved, and they take no pains to fit them to be wives and mothers. My mistress was but fifteen years old when she ran away with Master Harry. Poor dear Master Harry! It was the only fulish thing I ever knew him to do, was running away wi’ that chit of a schule-girl. He met her, I think, at a ball that was given at this schule, and Master Harry was over head and ears in love in a minute; and after two or three meetings and a few notes passing, they determined on this runnin’ away folly. I think it was them novels she was always readin’ put it in her head. It wouldn’t do, you know, to be like other folks, but they must have a little kind of a romance about it. Puir, fulish, young things!”

“You see, I was living with old Mr. Elwyn then,” continued Mammy; “indeed, I’ve been in the family ever since I came over from Scotland, quite a lassie, thirty-one years ago come next April. I left them, besure, when I married; but as my gude-man lived but two years, I was soon back in my old home again. Old Mr. Elwyn, Master Harry’s father, had lost his property before this time; but his brother, ‘Uncle Ben,’ as they called him, was very rich. They all lived together—‘Uncle Ben,’ old Mr. Elwyn, Master Harry and Miss Ellen, that’s Mrs. Wharton. Miss Ellen was a few years older than Master Harry, and she was the housekeeper. But Master Harry, bless you! was only twenty years old, when he walked in one morning, and told his father he was married. I never shall forget the time there was then! The old gentleman was complaining, and had had a bad night, though Master Harry did not know that. Well, the sudden shock threw him into an apoplectic fit; and two days after, he had another, and died. Master Harry was almost distracted then: he called himself his father’s murderer; and, indeed, I think he was never what you might call well from that time.”

“But you never saw any one so angry as Mr. Benjamin Elwyn was. He had always intended to make master Harry his heir, but his conduct in this foolish affair enraged him so that he said he would leave him nothing. At first the young folks lived with her father, but he soon died, leaving his daughter a little property settled on herself. But it was not enough to support them, and so Master Harry had to apply to old Mr. Benjamin Elwyn again, and the old man gave him this place, and enough to live on pretty comfortably here. He told Master Harry that perhaps something might be made of his baby wife yet, if he brought her away from the follies of the city, to a country place like this, and tried to improve her mind; and so they have lived here ever since, till last year, when poor master Harry died.”

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“And what do ye think is the raison that the mistress thrates little Miss Agnes the way she does?”

“Well, I can hardly tell you, Bridget. In the first place, I have often heard her say that she couldn’t abide *girls*, and bating other reasons, I think she would have been disappointed on her own account, you know, to have the first child a girl. But, besides this, I have heard that Mr. Benjamin Elwyn quite forgave Mr. Harry, and promised him that if his oldest child was a boy, and he named it after him, he would leave him the bulk of his property. I cannot tell you how bitterly disappointed my young mistress was, when her first born proved to be a girl. She was but sixteen years old then, you know, Bridget, and she acted like a cross, spoiled baby. She cried herself into a fever, and she wouldn’t let the poor, helpless baby, come into her sight. I think she never loved her; and from the time of Master Lewie’s birth, she has seemed to dislike her more and more.”

“But how the father loved her, Mrs. McCrae!”

“Aye, indeed he did; he never could be easy a minute without her. It was a sore day for my poor bairn, when it pleased God to take her father; poor man! But He knows best, Bridget, and He orders all things right.”

Here Mammy was summoned by the bell, and despatched to bring little Agnes down; to accompany her aunt and cousins to their home.

As Agnes was riding along, seated so comfortably by the side of her kind aunt, in the large covered sleigh, with the rosy, smiling faces of her little cousins, Grace and Effie, opposite her, she could scarcely believe that she was the same little girl, who, but an hour or two before, was walking so sadly up and down the desolate North Room, and trying to persuade herself that she was “not alone.” Agnes was naturally of a lively, cheerful disposition, and like any other little girl of six years of age, she soon forgot past sorrow in present pleasure, though, at times, the sudden remembrance of her dear little baby brother, lying so ill at home, would cause a sigh to chase away the smile of pleasure beaming on her lovely face.

It was but little more than two miles from “The Hemlocks,” Mrs. Elwyn’s residence, to “Brook Farm,” the home of the Wharton’s, and, as Matthew had received orders to drive very rapidly, it seemed to Agnes that her ride was just begun, when they turned into the lane that led up to her Uncle Wharton’s house. And now the pillars of the piazza appear between the trees, and now the breakfast room windows, and more bright young faces are looking out, and little chubby hands are clapped together, as the sleigh is discovered coming rapidly up the lane, and the cry resounds through the house, “They’ve come! they’ve come! and Agnes is with them!”

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A bright, cheerful wood fire was burning in the pleasant, great breakfast room, and the party who had just arrived were soon surrounded by smiles of welcome, while busy little fingers were assisting them to untie their bonnets, and unfasten their cloaks. In a few moments the door opened, and a pale, but lovely looking girl, in deep mourning, entered the room. She was a niece of Mr. Wharton's, and, having lately been left an orphan, by the death of her mother, she had been brought by her kind uncle, to his hospitable home, where she was received by all as a member, henceforth, of their family.

"Well, aunty," said she, after stooping to kiss Agnes, "you are back sooner than I expected."

"Yes, dear, I was obliged to hurry; little Lewie is very ill, I fear. By the way, Harry, run and tell Matthew that just as soon as he is warm, he must drive as fast as possible to the village, and ask Dr. Rodney to get directly into the sleigh, to go to your Aunt Elwyn's; and tell him to call for me, as he comes back."

"Why, mamma, are you going back there again?" asked Effie.

"Yes, love, I must go back, and remain with your Aunt Harriet to-day. I only came home to make some arrangements for the family. I want your papa to drive over for me to-night, after the little ones are all in bed; and I desire the rest of you to keep out of my way till I have changed my dress. I do not know yet what is the matter with Lewie. How do you feel, Emily?"

"Much better, thank you, aunty; I am quite prepared to play lady of the house in your absence."

"Well, do put aside those books, dear: your health is the most important thing now. I wish I could leave you so busy with household concerns as to give you not a moment's time for reading."

"Dear aunty, I do not think the books hurt me; and you certainly would not have me grow up a dunce, would you?"

"No fear of that, dear; and I by no means wish you to give up your books altogether, but only to lay them aside till you get a little color in these pale cheeks. I shall lay my commands on your uncle not to give you any more assistance in your studies till I give him permission."

"Well, I'll be very good, aunty, and I've promised the boys to take a run with them over to the pond, and see them skate; and besides, we are all invited to an entertainment in a certain snow palace, which is nearly finished, and which I have promised to grace with my presence."

Just then two fine handsome boys, the pictures of health and good nature, rushed in. These were Robert and Albert Wharton, home from school for the Christmas holidays.

“Mother, what will you give us for our entertainment?” they cried.

“Have you a table and seats?” she asked.

“Yes, all made of snow,” said Albert. “But don’t let us tell her all about it, Bob; I want to surprise her.”

“I think your entertainment, to be in keeping with your furniture, ought to be of snow and icicles,” said Mrs. Wharton; “but, whatever it is, I am sorry that I cannot visit your snow palace to-day.”

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"Oh! that's too bad, mother; it will spoil all our fun. But, say, will you give us something to eat?"

"Yes; I leave Emily mistress of the keys for to-day, and you may call upon her for pies, cake, or anything the store-room contains; only be a little moderate, and don't leave us entirely destitute."

"It won't be half so pleasant without you, mother," said Robert; "but we shall have quite as many as our palace can accommodate, if all these go. Hallo! here's Agnes! Why, Aggy, how do you do? I didn't see you before."

At this moment the sleigh was seen coming up the lane, and Mrs. Wharton hastened to get ready to accompany the doctor to the Hemlocks.

"I want to whisper to you, dear mother, one minute," said little Grace.

"What more Christmas secrets?" asked her mother.

A whispered consultation here took place, some request being urged with great eagerness by Grace; and the pleasant "Yes, yes," from her mother, made her bright eyes dance with joy.

As Mrs. Wharton was driving from the door, Albert called out:

"Mother, may the baby go with us?"

"Yes, if Kitty will wrap him up well," was the answer, and the sleigh flew down the lane, and was soon out of sight.

Agnes was now hurried off by her young cousins to inspect the various preparations for Christmas, and was made the repository of some most important secrets, "of which she must not give a hint for the world." She saw the purse Effie was knitting for Albert, and the guard-chain Grace was weaving for Robert, and the mittens for Harry, and the socks for the baby, and the pen-wiper for papa, and the iron-holder for mamma; and then Effie took her aside alone, to show her something she was making for Grace; and Grace took her aside alone, to show something she had bought with "her own money" for Effie; and there was a beautiful book for Cousin Emily. "And we cannot show you yet whether we have anything for you, Agnes, because, you know, we always keep our secrets till Christmas comes," they said.

"There comes papa from the mill," cried Effie, looking out of the window; "let's run down and see him. How surprised he will be to find mamma gone, and Agnes here!"

Mr. Wharton came in with his usual cheerful manner; and soon as he was warming his feet by the fire, he had Agnes on one knee, and Harry on the other, and the rest of the

noisy little tribe round him, eagerly telling the events of the day, and the pleasant anticipations for the afternoon.

“Oh, papa,” said Effie, “I’ve got something I want to say to you, if you would only come in the other room a few minutes, or if the children would only be kind enough to go out of this room a little while.”

“Won’t it keep, Effie, till I warm my feet?” asked her father; “because, if it will not, I suppose I must go now.”

“Oh no, papa, I will wait patiently,” said Effie.

In a few minutes her father said, “Now, Effie, for that important secret;” and they went together into another room.

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"This is what I wanted to say, papa," said Effie: "you know poor Agnes never has any money of her own; and I know, when she sees us all giving presents to each other, she will feel badly, if she cannot give something too; and I want to know if you won't give her a little money, and let her go to the village with us the next time we go, and get some materials to make something out of?"

Mr. Wharton answered by putting his hand in his pocket, and giving Effie some silver for Agnes, with which she went off perfectly happy.

And now little Grace put in her curly head, and said, "Effie, when you are through with papa, I've got something to say to him too."

The sum and substance of Grace's communication was this: "she had seen something at a store in the village, with which she was sure her mamma would be perfectly charmed, but she hadn't *quite* enough money to purchase it; she only wanted *ten cents* more." And she too went off with a smiling face.

Emily now came in jingling her keys and called them all to dinner.

As soon as possible after dinner, the boys laden with a basket of good things, which Emily had provided for them, started off for the snow palace, one of them carrying the dinner-horn, which was used in the summer, to call the men to the farm-house to their meals. When the entertainment was ready the horn was to sound. In the meantime, the children were sitting around the fire, waiting impatiently for the signal, to call them to the palace of snow.

"Cousin Emily," said Agnes, for she too said "Cousin Emily," though there was no relationship, in fact, between them, "Cousin Emily, I wish I knew *what* to read and study. I do want to know something, and I don't know anything but my Bible, and my little book of hymns. Mammy taught me to read, or I should'nt have known anything at all," she added sadly.

"Well, Agnes," that is the best knowledge you could possibly have, said Emily, "though I am far from thinking other studies unimportant; but, if I can help you in any way, I will gladly lend you books, and tell you how to study."

"Oh! will you, cousin Emily?" said Agnes, her face brightening; "how happy I shall be! aunty has taught Effie and Grace, and they have studied Geography and History, and they can cipher, and I don't know anything at all about those things; why, even little Harry knows more than I do."

"But you can beat us all in Bible knowledge, I know, Agnes," said Emily, "and, in a very little time, you will catch up to the other children, for aunty has little leisure time to

devote to them. But there! I hear the horn! call Kitty, to bring the baby, and we'll all start."

And now all warmly wrapped in cloaks and hoods, the little party left the side piazza, and walked down towards the pond. The path was well broken, as the boys travelled it so often, on their way to the pond and the snow palace, and the little party went briskly on. Emily and Agnes headed the procession, then came Effie and Grace, dragging a box-sled in which the baby was comfortably stowed, and Kitty, the nurse, brought up the rear, leading little Harry. The two boys met them at some distance from the snow palace, and told them they must go through the labyrinth before they could reach the place of entertainment.

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The labyrinth was composed of paths, cut in the deep snow, winding in and out, and circling about in all directions, till, at length, the foremost of the party halted before the entrance to the snow palace. The boys had, indeed, been industrious, and the new comers stared in amazement, at the results of their labor. They found themselves, on entering the palace, in a room high enough for the tallest of the party to stand upright in, and of dimensions large enough to seat them all comfortably around the square block of snow which formed the centre table. The seats were of the same material, and were substantial enough, while the extreme cold weather lasted. On the table was placed the entertainment provided by Emily, to which the party did all possible justice, considering that they had just risen from a plentiful dinner at home. After the feast, Robert and Alfred entertained them with feats of agility on the ice, dragging one or the other of the children after them upon the sled, and when they returned home, even Emily's usually pale cheeks were in a glow.

Towards evening Agnes began to be uneasy, and to watch at the window for her aunt's return. "I will not see aunty, cousin Emily," she said, "but I cannot go to bed till I hear how Lewie is to-night."

At length her uncle and aunt returned, and Agnes heard that her little brother was very ill; but the doctor was of opinion that his disease was a brain fever, and therefore there was no danger of contagion. Agnes went to bed with a heavy heart, and cried herself to sleep.

The next morning, as soon as breakfast was over, Mrs. Wharton again ordered the sleigh and drove to "the Hemlocks." She found Mrs. Elwyn in a state bordering on distraction.

"Oh, Ellen," she said, "how I have wanted you! Lewie has had a night of dreadful suffering, and now he is unconscious. He does not know me, Ellen! He does not hear me when I call. I think he does not see. Oh, Ellen, what would life be to me if I lose my darling. And now I want you to *pray*! You can pray, Ellen, and God answers your prayers. Pray for the life of my child! Mammy prays, but she will only say, 'The will of the Lord be done!'"

"And I can say no more, Ellen. I *do* pray; I *have* prayed, that your darling boy's life may be spared, if it be the will of God, but more than that I cannot say."

"And what if it be His will to take my darling from me, Ellen?"

"Then, Harriet, I hope you might learn to acquiesce without a murmur, and to say from your heart, 'It is the Lord, let Him do what seemeth to Him good.'"

"No, Ellen, never! I cannot contemplate the bare possibility of losing my boy. If you will not pray as I wish, I will try to pray myself;" and falling on her knees, she prayed for the

life of her child. "Take whatever else thou wilt, oh God," she cried, "but oh, spare me my child."

"Harriet, this seems to me most horrible impiety," said Mrs. Wharton, "to ask God to grant your desires, whether agreeable to His will, or not; I should much fear if your request were granted, that it would only be to show you, that you know not what is best for yourself, and for those you love; and that you might some day wish you had left this matter in the hands of God, even if it had been His will to take your darling to Himself."

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When Dr. Rodney came that morning, he found the child in a profound slumber. "This," said he, "is, I think, the crisis of the disease; on no account let him be disturbed; if he awakes conscious, he will in all human probability recover."

And they watched him in breathless stillness, Mrs. Wharton on one side of the cradle, and his mother on a low stool beside him, with her sad gaze riveted on his little face, to catch his first waking glance, and to see whether the eye then beamed with intelligence, or not.

Oh, who can imagine the agony, the terrible suspense of such watching, but those who have sat as that poor mother did, over a loved one hovering between life and death. And as Mrs. Wharton sat so silently opposite her, her thoughts were sometimes raised in prayer for her poor misguided sister; and sometimes she sat looking at her as a perfect enigma; with a heart so capable of loving devotedly, and yet so steeled against her own child, and so lovely and winning a little creature as Agnes. It was a puzzle which she had often tried to solve, in vain.

After an hour more of deep slumber, Lewie started and awoke. For a moment his glance rested with a bewildered expression upon his mother's face; and then, stretching out his little hands, he said, "Mamma!" Mrs. Wharton's attention was fixed upon the child; but when she turned to the mother, she saw her, white as the snow, falling back upon the floor. The revulsion of feeling was too much for her; she had fainted.

When Mrs. Wharton came home that night, she said, "Agnes, my love, your little brother is better, and, with great care, he may now recover."

"Oh, aunty!" exclaimed Agnes, joyfully, "and when may I see him?"

"You must be content to remain with us without going home for some days yet, dear; for the doctor says the most perfect quiet is necessary, and you could not see Lewie if you were at home."

And now that the mind of little Agnes was comparatively free from anxiety, she entered with great delight into the preparations going on at Brook Farm for Christmas.

III.

Christmas Time.

"In the sounding hall they wake
The rural gambol."—THOMSON.

And now but a week was wanting to Christmas, and all was excitement and bustle among the little folks at Brook Farm. Lewie was quite out of danger, and Agnes was as

happy and as busy as any of her little cousins. The cutter was in constant demand; for when one was particularly desirous to go over to the village on some secret expedition, that one must go alone, or only with those who were in her secret. Many were the mysterious brown-paper parcels which were smuggled into the house, and hidden away under lock and key in various closets and drawers; and there were sudden scramblings and hidings of half-finished articles, when some member of the family who “was not to see” entered the room.

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"Aunty," said Agnes one day, in a confidential tone, "I should like to make a needle-book for mamma, like the one cousin Emily is making for Effie. She says she will show me, and fix it for me, and I think I can do it. Do you think mamma would like it?"

"Certainly, darling, I should think she would like it; I do not see how any mamma could help being pleased with anything her little girl made for her."

"But, aunty," said Agnes, as if speaking of a well-known and acknowledged fact, "you know mamma doesn't love me much, and perhaps it would trouble her."

The sad tone in which these words were said brought tears to the eyes of Mrs. Wharton, but still she encouraged Agnes to go on with the needle-book. It was not a very complicated affair, and Emily arranged all the most difficult parts; but still it was a work of time, and one requiring much patience and perseverance on the part of so young a child as Agnes. However, it was at length completed on the day before Christmas, and, when handed about for inspection, was much admired by all her friends. Agnes was very happy, for on Christmas day her uncle was to take her over home to see Lewie, who called for her constantly, her aunt said. Mammy had walked over too, to see her little girl, and she told her that "Lewie was greetin' for 'sister' from morn till night."

The day before Christmas came, and with it the party at Brook Farm was augmented by the arrival of Mrs. Ellison, a younger sister of Mr. Wharton's, her husband and baby, a beautiful child of about a year old. There was great joy at the arrival of "Aunt Fanny," who was very lively, and always ready to enter with glee into the frolics and sports of the children.

As they were sitting at the dinner table that day, Mr. Wharton said:

"I have received certain information that Santa Claus himself is to visit us to-night, and bring his gifts in person. He desires me to inform the children, that all packages to be entrusted to his care must be handed into my study, labelled and directed, before six o'clock this evening."

Many were the wonders and speculations as to the nature and appearance of the expected Santa Claus; but they were suddenly interrupted by Robert, who exclaimed:

"Why, who comes here up the lane? It's old cousin Betty, I do declare, in her old green gig set on runners."

"I thought cousin Betty would hardly let Christmas go by without making her appearance," said Mrs. Wharton; "I have thought two or three times to-day that she might come along before night."

"Cousin Betty" was a distant relation of Mrs. Wharton's, a lonely old body, who lodged with a relative in a village about ten miles distant from Brook Farm. She was very

eccentric—so much so, that she was by some thought crazy; but Mrs. Wharton was of opinion that cousin Betty had never possessed sufficient *mind* to subject her to such a calamity. She was more silly than crazy, very good-natured, very inquisitive as to the affairs of others, and very communicative as to her own.

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In a few minutes cousin Betty had received a hearty welcome, and was seated by the bright fire, asking and answering questions with the utmost rapidity.

"I've been looking for you, cousin Betty," said Mrs. Wharton.

"Have! What made you?"

"Oh, I thought you could hardly let Christmas go by without coming to see the fun."

"Did! Well, I never thought nothing about comin' till yesterday, when I sat in my little room, and I got feelin' pretty dull; and thinks I to myself, I'll just borrow Mr. White's old horse, and take my old gig, and drive up to the farm, and see the folks."

"Cousin Betty, who do you think is coming to see us to-night?" asked little Grace.

"I'm sure I can't tell, child. Who is it?"

"Why, Santa Claus himself, with all his presents around him."

"Is, hey?" said cousin Betty; "well, I shall be mighty glad to see him, I can tell you; for, old as I am, I've never seen him yet."

"I'm so glad you've come, cousin Betty!" said Effie; "we want you to go with us some day over to the farm-house, and tell us about our great-grandfather, whose house stood where the farm-house stands now; and how his house was burnt down by the Indians, and he was carried off. Agnes wants to hear it so much."

"Does! Well, I will go over there, and tell you the story, some day. But I can't walk over there while the weather is so cold; I should get the rheumatiz."

"I'll drag you over on my sled, if that will do, cousin Betty," said Robert.

The children laughed so heartily at the picture presented to their imagination of little old cousin Betty riding on Robert's sled, that Grace actually rolled out of her chair.

"Why wouldn't it do to tell the story here, Effie?" asked Agnes.

"Oh, because it is a great deal more interesting, told on the spot you know. Cousin Betty has heard it all over and over again from grandmamma, and she can point out, from one window of the farm-house, all the places where all those dreadful things happened."

Some warm dinner was now brought in for cousin Betty, and the children went off to tie up and label the gifts for Santa Claus.

“What shall we do with the presents we have for papa and mamma?” asked Grace.

“Oh, we cannot hand those in to the study,” said Effie; “we must contrive some way to give them afterwards.”

And now the children, one after the other, with their arms laden with packages, were making their way to their father’s study; Emily and Agnes, too, had several contributions to make to the heap of bundles which was piled up on the study table; and before six o’clock, Mr. Wharton said he had taken in enough articles to stock a very respectable country store. At six o’clock the study door was locked, and there was no more admittance.

An hour or two after this, the whole family were assembled in the two large parlors, which were brilliantly lighted for the occasion, and all were on the tiptoe of expectation.

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"I should like to know how he is coming," said Albert; "he'll be likely to get well scorched, if he comes down either chimney."

At this moment there was a slight tap at one of the windows opening on to the piazza, which Mr. Wharton immediately proceeded to open, and in walked St. Nicholas.

He was a jolly, merry-looking, little old gentleman, with beard and whiskers as white as snow, and enveloped in furs from head to foot. Around his neck, around his waist, over his shoulders, down his back, and even on the top of his head, were presents and toys of every description. Behind him he dragged a beautiful sled, which was loaded with some articles too bulky to be carried around his person. Every pocket was full; and as he passed through the rooms, he threw sugar plums and mottoes, nuts and raisins, on all sides, causing a great scrambling and screaming and laughing among the children.

Then he began to disengage the presents, which were pinned about him, and tied to the buttons of his coat; and as he did so, he looked at the label, and threw it at the one for whom it was intended. It would be hard for one who was not there to imagine the lively scene which was now presented in the great parlors at Brook Farm; the presents flying round in all directions; the children dodging, and diving, and catching, while shouts and screams of laughter made the house ring.

"But who is he?—who can he be?" was the question which each asked of the other a great many times during this merry scene. Mr. Wharton and Mr. Ellison, "Aunt Fanny's" husband, were both in the room, and they were sure there was no other gentleman in the house.

Just then Robert screamed, "Oh, I know now! It's cousin Tom! He throws left-handed!" And now the effort was made to pull off the mask, but Santa Claus avoided them with great dexterity, still continuing his business of distributing the presents.

At the feet of Agnes he placed a work-box, much handsomer than that which Lewie had destroyed; at Emily's, a writing-desk, and some valuable books; and when his sled was emptied, he drew the sled, and left it with little Harry, for whom it was intended.

"My goodness gracious!" said cousin Betty, as a beautiful muff "took her in the head," as Albert said, and sadly disarranged the set of her odd little turban.

"And now I believe old Santa Claus has finished his labors," said Mr. Wharton.

"Oh no, not yet," cried Effie; "he must come with us for a new supply. But I feel a little afraid of him yet. If I only could be sure it was cousin Tom!"

"You need not doubt that, Effie," said Robert; "nobody else ever threw like cousin Tom. I've seen him play snow-ball often enough."

And now Santa Claus was taken captive by the children, and in a few minutes he reappeared, laden with gifts, but this time for the older members of the family; and the products of the children's industry made quite a display, and much astonished those for whom they were intended, the children having kept their secrets well.

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And now, as the rooms were warm, old Santa Claus was quite willing to get rid of his mask and his furs; and this done, he straightened up, and cousin Tom stood revealed.

“And how did you come, and where have you been?” asked the children.

“Oh, I came this afternoon, and stopped at the farm house,” answered cousin Tom, or Mr. Thomas Wharton, for it is time he should be introduced by his true name to the reader. “And after it was dusk I slipped over here, and went round to uncle’s study door while you were at tea. I sent word by Aunt Fanny that you might expect Santa Claus to-night.”

And now began a game of romps, which lasted for an hour or more, and then little bodies began to be stumbled over, and were found under tables, and on sofas fast asleep, and were taken off to bed. Mrs. Ellison’s baby being roused by the noise, had awaked, and persisted in keeping awake, and his mother came back to the parlor bringing him in her arms, with his night-gown on, and his cheeks as red as roses.

“Isn’t he a splendid fellow?” said she, holding him up before cousin Tom.

“A very comfortable looking piece of flesh certainly,” he answered; “but then they are all alike. I think you might divide all babies into two class, the fat and the lean; otherwise, there is no difference in them that I can see.”

“Pshaw, how ridiculously you talk; there is a great deal more difference between two babies, than between you and all the other young dandies who walk Broadway. They are all alike, the same cut of the coat and collar, and whiskers; the same tie of the neck-cloth, and shape of the boot: when you have seen one, you have seen all. But now just take a good look at this magnificent baby, and confess; wouldn’t you like to kiss him?”

“Excuse me, my dear aunty, but that is a thing I haven’t been left to do very often. I’ve no fancy for having my cheeks and whiskers converted into spittoons. It is really astonishing now,” continued cousin Tom, “what fools such a brat as that will make of very sensible people.”

“Are your allusions personal, sir?” asked Mrs. Ellison, laughing.

“No, not just now; but I was thinking of a man in our place, who used to be really a very sensible fellow; and though quite an old bachelor, he was the life of every party he attended, and more of a favorite than most of the young men. Well, when he was about fifty years old he got married, and he’s got a young one now about two years old. And what kind of an exhibition do you suppose that man made of himself the other day. Why, this refractory young individual couldn’t be persuaded to walk towards home in any other way, when they had him out for an airing, and what does this old friend of mine do, but allow a handkerchief to be pinned to his coat-tail, and go prancing along

the street like a horse for the spoiled brat to drive. The calf! I declare, before I'd make such a fool of myself as that, I'd eat my head! What are you writing there, uncle?"

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"Only taking notes of these remarks, Tom," answered Mr. Wharton, "for your benefit on some future occasion."

There was only one in that Christmas party who could not heartily join in the glee; it was poor Emily, to whom this scene brought back so vividly other holiday seasons passed with those who had "gone from earth to return no more," that only by a strong effort could she prevent her own sadness from casting a shade over the happiness of others; for they all loved cousin Emily so dearly, that they could not be merry when she was sad. Emily was usually so quiet, that in their noisy play they did not miss her as she retired to the sofa and shaded her eyes with her hand; but her kind uncle noticed her, and readily understood the reason of her sadness. Taking a seat by her he put his arm around her, and took her hand in his. This act of tenderness was too much for poor Emily's already full heart, and laying her head on her uncle's shoulder, she sobbed out her grief unchecked.

IV.

Cousin Betty.

"Come, wilt thou see me ride!"—HENRY VIII.

Cousin Betty was a little bit of a woman, with a face as full of wrinkles as a frozen apple, and a pair of the busiest and most twinkling little black eyes you ever saw, a prominent and parrot like nose, with a chin formed on the very same pattern, only that it turned up instead of down, the two so very nearly meeting that the children said they had "to turn their faces sideways to kiss her." She had some very unaccountable ways too, which no one understood, and which she never made any attempt to explain, perhaps because she did not understand them herself.

For instance, whenever meals were ready, and the family prepared to sit down, though cousin Betty might have been hovering round for an hour or two before, she was often missing at that very moment, and when a search was instituted she was sometimes found taking a stroll in the garret where she could have no possible business, and sometimes poking about in the darkest corner of the dark cellar, without the slightest conceivable object. If her thimble or spectacles were lost, she has often been known to go to the pantry and lift up every tumbler and wine-glass on the shelf, one after the other, and look under it as if she really expected to find the missing article there; and to take off the cover of vegetable dishes to look for her snuff-box, or open the door of the stove, if her work-bag, or knitting were missing, apparently with the confident expectation of finding them unharmed amidst the blazing fire.

Cousin Betty had a very uncomfortable fashion of *dying* too, every little while, which at first alarmed her friends so much that restoratives were speedily procured; but as she

never failed to come to life again, they became, after a time, accustomed to the parting scene, so that there was great danger that when she really did take her departure, nobody would believe it.

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"My dear," said she one night to Effie, "I feel very unwell; very unwell, indeed; I think it's more'n likely I shan't last the night through. I wish you wouldn't leave me alone this evening, and then if I'm suddenly taken worse, you know you can call the family. I should like to see them all before I go."

Effie promised she would not leave her, and bringing her book, she seated herself by the stove in cousin Betty's room. In about a hour she appeared in the parlor, her face purple with the effort to suppress the inclination to laugh, and said, "Oh, do all of you please to come to cousin Betty's room a few moments."

"What, is she dying?" they asked.

"Oh, no! but just come; very quietly; there's a sight for you to see."

Cousin Betty always tied a large handkerchief about her head when she went to bed, and on the night in question, the two ends of the handkerchief being tied in a knot stood up from her head like two enormous ears. She was bolstered up by pillows, as she declared she could not breathe in any other position, and at every breath she drew she opened and shut her mouth with a sudden jerk. Effie had looked up from her reading suddenly, and caught the reflection of cousin Betty's profile, thrown by the light, greatly magnified upon the wall, and stuffing her handkerchief in her mouth to prevent a sudden explosion of laughter, by which cousin Betty might be awakened, she ran to call the family. No pen-sketch but an actual profile would give the slightest idea of the extraordinary and most ludicrous appearance of the image thus thrown upon the wall; with the enormous ears standing up, and the mouth and chin snapping together like the claws of a lobster. One by one they rushed from the room, till at length a smothered cacchination from one of the little ones awoke cousin Betty, who exclaimed:

"Who is sobbing there? My dear friends do not distress yourselves, I find myself considerably more comfortable."

This "clapped the climax," and the room was unavoidably deserted for a few minutes; but at length Effie found courage to return, and, by placing the light in another position, was enabled to keep watch for the remainder of the evening.

There were some very amusing stories told in the family of cousin Betty's adventures, one of which I will relate here. She was at one time making one of her long visits at Mr. Wharton's, when, getting out of yarn, and not being willing to remain long idle, she began to worry about some way to get over to the village. The horses were all out at work upon the farm, except Old Prancer, a superannuated old horse, who was never used except for Mrs. Wharton or the girls to drive; for, whatever claims "Prancer" may once have had to his name, it had been a misnomer for some years past, and no one suspected him of having a spark of spirit.

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When Mr. Wharton came in to dinner, and cousin Betty consulted him as to the best means of getting over to the village, he told her that the best thing he could do for her would be to put the side-saddle on to Old Prancer, and let her ride over. To this cousin Betty consented, not without a slight trepidation, for she had never been much of a horse-woman, but still, as she had known Prancer for many years, and he had always borne the character of a staid, steady-going animal, she thought there could surely be no risk in trusting herself to him.

Soon after dinner, cousin Betty, with a very short and very scanty skirt, was mounted on the back of Old Prancer. She felt quite timid at first at finding herself upon so lofty an elevation, (for Prancer was an immense animal;) but when she found how steadily and sedately he went on, and that neither encouragement nor blows could induce him to break into a trot, she lost all her fears, and began to enjoy her ride saving that the pace was rather a slow one.

But just as cousin Betty began to ascend the hill leading into the village, the sound of martial music burst upon her ear, and she remembered hearing the children say that this was "general training day." Cousin Betty did not know that Prancer had once belonged to a militia officer; and if she had, it would have made no difference, as all the fire of youth seemed to have died out with Prancer years ago. But early associations are strong; and as the "horse scenteth the battle afar off," so did Prancer prick up his ears and quicken his pace at the spirit-stirring sounds of the fife and drum; and now he began to make an awkward attempt to dance sideways upon the points of his hoofs; and as he neared the brow of the hill, his excitement became more intense, and his curveting and prancing more animated. Cousin Betty was almost terrified to death. Throwing away her whip, and grasping the reins, she endeavored to stop him; but he only held in his head, and danced sideways up the street with more animation and spirit than ever. She thought of throwing herself off, but the immense height rendered such a feat utterly unsafe; she endeavored to rein the horse up to the side-walk; but now he had caught sight of the motley array of trainers, and of the gay horses and gayer uniforms of the officers, and, regardless alike of bit and rein, he started off at full speed, to join the long-forgotten but once familiar spectacle.

Cousin Betty had by this time dropped the reins, and was clinging with both arms to Old Prancer's neck; and as he turned his face to the company, and backed gallantly down the street, the sight was too irresistibly ludicrous. Shouts and laughter, and expressions of encouragement to poor cousin Betty, were heard on all sides; till at length a militia officer, taking pity upon her helpless condition, led the unwilling Prancer to the tavern, and assisted her to alight. Here cousin Betty remained till sun-down, and all was quiet; and then, requesting the tavern-keeper to lead the horse out of town while she walked, she again, with much fear and trembling, mounted when beyond the precincts of the village.

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Prancer, however, walked slowly home, with his head drooping, as if thoroughly mortified at the excesses into which he had been betrayed; and cousin Betty, when she once got safely home, declared that she'd go without yarn another time, if it was a whole year, before she would mount such a "treacherous animal as that 'ere."

But, with all her oddities, cousin Betty was sometimes a very amusing companion. She had many stories of her youth stowed away in her memory, which, when wanted, could be found and brought to light much more readily than the articles she was so constantly missing now; and though these stories were not told in the purest English, they were none the less interesting to the children for that.

There came, early in February, some pleasant, mild days, which soon made a ruin of the boys' palace of snow; and though cousin Betty had been in a dying state for an hour or two the night before, she was so far revived that morning, that she was easily persuaded by the children to go over with them to the farm-house, and tell them the story of their great-grandfather, and his capture by the Indians; which same, though a very interesting story to the children, might not be so to my readers; and after changing my mind about it several times, I have concluded to leave it out, as having nothing to do with the rest of my story.

V

Home Again.

"Deal very, very gently with a young child's tender heart."

With a face beaming with joy, little Agnes took her place in the cutter by her uncle on Christmas morning, and nodded good-bye to her cousins, who were crowded at the window to see her off.

"Mind you come back to dinner!" screamed little Grace, knocking with her knuckles on the window pane.

Agnes nodded again, and they were gone. Many a time during the short ride did Agnes take out of her little muff the paper in which her needle-case for her mother was rolled up, to see if it was all safe; and she never let go for a moment of the basket in which were some toys for Lewie, which she and her cousins had purchased at the village. As she drove up the road from the gate to her mother's house, it seemed to her so long since she had been away, that she expected to see great changes. She had never been from home so long before, and a great deal had happened in that fort night.

Mrs. Elwyn was reading again; indeed, she had resumed that very yellow-covered book, the reading of which Lewie's sickness had interrupted; so she had not much time for a greeting for Agnes, though she did allow her to kiss her cheek, and of course laid aside

her book, out of compliment to Mr. Wharton. But little Lewie, who was sitting in his cradle, surrounded by toys, was in perfect ecstasies at the return of Agnes.

He stretched his little arms towards her; and as she sprang towards him, and stooped to kiss him, he threw them around her neck, and clasped his little hands together, as if determined never to let her go again.

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"Sister come! sister come!" he exclaimed over and over again, with the greatest glee; "sister stay with Lewie now."

"Sister will stay a little while," said Agnes, kissing over and over again her beautiful little brother.

"No, sister *stay!*—sister shall not go!" said Lewie, in the best manner in which he could express it; but exactly *how*, we must be excused from making known to the reader, having a great horror of *baby-talk* in books.

"But I *must* go, darling; all my things are at uncle's, and I want to get some books cousin Emily is going to give me; but I will come back very soon to stay with Lewie."

"No! sister *shall* not go!" was still the cry; and Mrs. Elwyn settled the matter by saying:

"Agnes, if Lewie wants you here so much, you may as well take off your things; you cannot return to Brook Farm; besides, I want you to amuse Lewie." Agnes thought of some of the consequences of her endeavors to amuse Lewie, and sighed.

"If your mother insists upon your remaining, Agnes," said her uncle, "I will bring over your things, and Emily shall come with me, to bring the books, and tell you how to study."

"Oh, thank you, dear uncle!" said Agnes, her face brightening at once.

In the first scene in which our little hero is introduced to the reader, he certainly does not appear to advantage, as few persons would in the first stages of a fever. He was not always so hard to please, or so recklessly destructive, as he was that day; and had an intimation ever been conveyed to his mind, that it was a possible thing for any desire of his to remain ungratified, he might have grown up less supremely selfish than he did.

But the natural selfishness of his nature being constantly fed and ministered to by his doating mother, led the little fellow to understand very early that no wish of his was to be denied; and before he was two years old, he fully understood the power he held in his hands.

He was a beautiful boy; "as handsome as a picture," as Mammy said; but, for my part, I have seldom seen a picture of a child that could at all compare with Lewie Elwyn, with his golden curls, and deep blue eyes, and brilliant color. He was warm-hearted and affectionate, too, and might have been moulded by the hand of love into a glorious character. But selfishness is a deformity which early attention and care may remedy, and the grace of God alone may completely subdue; but, if allowed to take its own course, or worse, if encouraged and nurtured, it grows with wonderful rapidity, and makes a horrid shape of what might be the fairest.

Upon this text, or something very like it, Mr. Wharton spake to Mrs. Elwyn, when Agnes had carried Lewie into the next room to spin his top for him.

“Lewie is a most beautiful little fellow, certainly,” said he; “but, Harriet, take care; he is getting the upper hand of you already. It is time already—indeed, it has long been time—to make him understand that his will is to be *subservient* to those who are older.”

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To which Mrs. Elwyn replied, "How absurd, Mr. Wharton, to talk of governing a child like that!"

"There are other ways of governing, Harriet, besides the whip and the lock and key, neither of which do I approve of, except in extreme cases. Lewie could very easily be guided by the hand of love, and it rests with you now to make of him almost what you choose. A mother's gentle hand hath mighty power."

"Well, Mr. Wharton, to tell you the truth, nothing seems to me so absurd as all these ideas of nursery education; and the people who write books on the subject seem to think there is but one rule by which all children are to be governed."

"I perfectly agree with you, Harriet, that it is very ridiculous to suppose that one set of rules will answer for the education of all, except, of course, so far as the Bible rule is the foundation for all government. I think the methods adopted with children should be as numerous and different as the children themselves, each one, by their constitution and disposition, requiring different treatment; but still there are some general rules, you must admit, which will serve for all. One of these is a rule of very long standing; it is this—'Honor thy father and thy mother;' and another—'Children, obey your parents in the Lord.' Now, how can you expect your son, as he grows up, to honor, respect, or obey you, if you take the trouble to teach him, every day and hour, that *he* is the master, and you only the slave of his will. There is another saying in that same old book from which these rules are drawn, which tells you that 'A child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.'"

Mrs. Elwyn, during this conversation, kept up a series of polite little bows, but could not altogether conceal an expression of weariness, and distaste at the turn the conversation had taken. She had a sincere respect, however, for Mr. Wharton, who always exercised over her the power which a strong mind exercises over a weak one, and she felt in her heart that he was a real friend to her, and one who had the interests of herself and her children at heart.

As Mr. Wharton rose to go she said, laughingly:

"I thank you for your kind advice with regard to Lewie, Mr. Wharton, but in spite of it, I do not think I shall put him in a straight-jacket before he is out of his frocks."

"No straight-jacket is needed, Harriet; you have often written in your copy-book at school, I suppose, 'Just as the twig is bent the tree's inclined.' You remember that strange apple-tree in my orchard, which the children use for a seat, it rises about a foot from the ground, and then turns and runs along for several feet horizontally, and then shoots up again to the sky. When that was a twig, your thumb and finger could have bent it straight; but now, what force could do it. If sufficient strength could be applied it might be *broken*, but never bent again. Excuse my plain speaking, Harriet, but I see

before you so much trouble, unless that little boy's strong will is controlled, that my conscience would not let me rest, unless I spoke honestly to you what is in my mind."

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"I must say you are not a prophesier of '*smooth things*'" said Mrs. Elwyn, "but still, I hope the dismal things you have hinted at may not come to pass."

"I hope not too, Harriet," said Mr. Wharton, "but God has now mercifully spared your little boy's life, and it rests with you whether he shall be trained for His service or not."

Then calling for Agnes and Lewie, Mr. Wharton kissed them for good-bye, telling Agnes that he would bring Emily over the next day.

Mrs. Elwyn looked infinitely relieved when Mr. Wharton drove off, and returned to her novel with as much interest as ever, and in the very exciting scene into which her heroine was now introduced, she soon forgot the unpleasant nature of Mr. Wharton's "lecture," as she called it.

Agnes was contriving in her mind all the morning, how she should present the needle-case to her mother, and wondering how it would be received. It was such a great affair to her, and had cost her so much time and labor, that she was quite sure it must be an acceptable gift, and yet natural timidity in approaching her mother, made her shrink from presenting it, and every time she thought of it her heart beat in her very throat.

At length the novel was finished and thrown aside, and Mrs. Elwyn sat with her feet on the low fender gazing abstractedly into the fire. Now was the time Agnes thought, and approaching her gently, she said:

"Mamma, here is a needle-case I made for you, all myself, for a Christmas present."

The *words* could not have been heard by Mrs. Elwyn, she only knew that a voice *not* Lewie's interrupted her in her reverie.

"Hush! hush! child," she said, waving her hand impatiently towards Agnes, "be quiet! don't disturb me!"

Oh, what a grieved and disappointed little heart that, as Agnes turned away with the tears in her eyes, and a lump in her throat.

The next voice that disturbed the young widow was one to which she always gave attention:

"Mamma! mamma!" cried Lewie, pulling imperiously at her gown; "mamma! sister feels sorry, speak to sister."

"What is it, dear?" his mother asked.

"Speak to sister! sister crying," said Lewie, pulling her with all the strength of his little hands towards Agnes.

“What is the matter, Agnes? Why are you crying? What did you say to me a few moments ago?” asked her mother.

Agnes tried to say “It is no matter, mamma,” but she sobbed so bitterly that she could not form the words. But Lewie, who had seen and understood the whole thing, pulled the needle-case from his sister’s hand, and gave his mother to understand that Agnes had made it for her, and then he struck his little hand towards her and called her “naughty mamma, to make sister cry!”

More to please Lewie than for any other reason, Mrs. Elwyn took the needle-case, and said:

“Why Agnes, did you make this yourself, and for me? how pretty it is; isn’t it, Lewie? Now Agnes, you may fill it with needles for me.”

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Agnes wiped her eyes and began her task, but that painful lump would not go away from her throat. Ah! if those kind words had only come at first!

How much suffering is caused to the hearts of little children by mere thoughtlessness, sometimes in those even who love them; by a want of sympathy in their little griefs and troubles, as great and all-important to them, as are the troubles of “children of a larger growth,” in their own estimation.

VI.

The Tableaux.

“A mournful thing is love which grows to one so mild as thou,
With that bright restlessness of eye—that tameless fire of brow
Mournful! but dearer far I call its mingled fear and pride,
And the trouble of its happiness than aught on earth beside.”

—MRS. HEMANS.

Lewie recovered rapidly; and by the time that “the singing of birds had come,” the roses bloomed as brightly as ever in his cheeks; and, with his hand in that of Agnes, he roamed about the woods and groves which surrounded their home, gathering wild flowers, and watching with delight the nimble squirrel and the brilliant wild birds, as they hopped from limb to limb. The children were always happy together; Lewie was more yielding and less passionate when with his gentle sister than at other times; and it was only when again in the presence of his mother that his wilful, fretful manner returned, and he was again capricious and hard to please.

Thus, while he was still almost in his infancy, his mother began to reap the fruit of her sowing; for, while to others he could be gentle and pleasant, with her he was always fretful and capricious. Already her wishes had no weight with him, if they ran counter to his own, and commands she never ventured to lay upon him; already the little twig was taking its own bent.

The birth-days were all rigidly kept in Mr. Wharton's family, and some little pleasant entertainment provided on every such occasion. Thus, while Mr. and Mrs. Wharton failed not to make every proper and serious use of these way-marks on the journey of life, they loved to show their children how pleasant to themselves was the remembrance of the day when one more little bright face had come to cheer and brighten their earthly pilgrimage. Miss Effie was the important character in commemoration of whose “first appearance on any stage” a pleasant party had collected in Mr. Wharton's parlor, one evening in May. Mrs. Elwyn and her children were spending a few days at Brook Farm;

and the family of Dr. Rodney, and a few other little folks from the village, were invited, on Effie's birth-day, to pass the afternoon and evening.

Great had been the preparations, for they were, for the first time, to have an exhibition of the "tableaux vivants" in the evening. Mr. Wharton had constructed a large frame, which, covered with gilt paper, and having a black lace spread over it, made the illusion more perfect. Many pretty scenes had been selected by cousin Emily, who was mistress of ceremonies; and that no child's feelings might be hurt, a character was assigned for each one, in one or other of the pictures. A temporary curtain was hung across the room, which was to be drawn whenever the pictures were ready for exhibition.

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Agnes had been as busy as anybody in bringing down from a certain closet devoted to that purpose old finery, and other things which belonged to days long gone by, and her anticipations of pleasure for the evening were raised to the highest pitch. But just when all were assembled in the darkened parlor, the lights all being arranged behind the curtain so as to fall upon the pictures, Master Lewie, who was up beyond his usual bed time, and who was hardly old enough to take much interest in what was going on, declared that he was sleepy, and would go to bed. Neither Mammy nor Anne were with them at Brook Farm; and as Mrs. Elwyn seemed as much interested as any one in seeing the tableaux, Agnes knew what the result would be, if Lewie insisted upon going to bed; so she endeavored to amuse him and keep him awake till she had seen at least one tableau.

"Oh, Lewie, wait *one* moment!" said she; "Lewie will see a beautiful picture."

"Lewie don't want to see pictures; Lewie wants to go to bed. Sister, come! sing to Lewie."

"In one moment, then, little brother. Let Agnes see one picture. Won't you let sister see *one* picture?"

"No; Lewie must go to bed. Mamma, tell sister to come with Lewie."

The result was, of course, in accordance with Master Lewie's wishes, and Agnes was directed to take him up to bed. "He will very soon be asleep," her mother added, "and then you can come down."

This Master Lewie heard, and it put quite a new idea into his head, it never having occurred to him before that the person who sang him to sleep left him alone, after her task was accomplished. That was a thing he was not going to submit to, and he was so determined to watch Agnes, lest she should slip away from him, that all sleep seemed to have deserted his eyes, which were wider open, and more bright and wide awake, than ever.

Agnes laid down beside him, and, patting him gently on the cheek, she sang in a sleepy sort of way, hoping the tone of her voice would have a somniferous effect.

"Sing louder!" shouted Master Lewie.

Agnes obeyed, and sang many nursery songs suggested by Master Lewie, hoping, at the end of each one, that there would be some signs of drowsiness manifested on the part of the little tyrant; but the moment it was finished, brightly and quickly he would speak up:

"Sing that over again!—sing another!—sing 'Old Woman!'—sing 'Jack Horner,'" &c., &c.

And Agnes' heart died within her as question upon question would follow each other in quick succession, suggested by the lively imagination of Master Lewie, as to the name and parentage of "the little boy who lived by himself;" and the childless condition of the man whose "old wife wasn't at home;" and where the dogs actually *did* take the "wheelbarrow, wife and all;" he feeling perfectly satisfied of the accurate information of Agnes on all these important topics.

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Several times the little bright eyes slowly closed, and Agnes thought he was fairly conquered. Slowly drawing her arm from under his head, she began cautiously to rise; but before she had stolen a foot from the bed, he would start up and stare at her in amazement, exclaiming, "Where going, sister?" and then he seemed to learn by experience, and to determine that he wouldn't be "caught napping" again that evening.

In the meantime, the fun was going on below, and several beautiful pictures had been exhibited and admired before Agnes was missed from the darkened parlor. But now came the cry, "Agnes! Come, Agnes! Where's Agnes? She is to be in this picture." To which Mrs. Elwyn replied, that "Agnes was putting Lewie to sleep."

"And hasn't she been here at all, Aunt Harriet?"

"No," answered Mrs. Elwyn, "Lewie takes a long time to get to sleep to-night."

"That is *too bad*, I declare!" said little Grace, her cheeks reddening with vexation, "Agnes did want to see these pictures so; can't I go up and see if Lewie is asleep, Aunt Harriet."

"Better not," said Mrs. Elwyn; "you may disturb him just as he is dropping asleep, and then Agnes will have to stay much longer."

The exclamations of indignation were loud and furious from the whole party of little folks, when it was found that Agnes had been all the evening banished from the room, and they were ready to go up to Lewie's room in a body and take possession of Agnes, and bring her down in triumph. But Emily said, "stop children, and I will go."

Very quietly Emily stole into the room and up to the bedside. The children were lying with their arms about each other, Agnes' little hand was on her brother's cheek, and both were soundly sleeping. Emily touched Agnes gently and whispered in her ear, but her slumber was so very sound that she could not arouse her. "Better to let her sleep on now," said Emily, "and if Agnes only knew it, she has helped to make the prettiest tableaux we have had this evening."

Thus early was little Agnes learning to give up her own gratification for the sake of others, while the strong will of her little brother was strengthened by constant exercise and indulgence, for this was but one of many instances daily occurring, in which Agnes was obliged to relinquish her own pleasure in order to gratify the whims and caprices of her little brother. Lewie had so often heard such expressions from his mother, that almost as soon as he could speak a connected sentence, he would say, "Lewie must have his own way; Lewie must not be crossed," and in this way did his mother prepare him for the jostling and conflicts of life.

VII.

The Governess.

“An ower true tale.”

Mr. Wharton was one day writing in his study, for though a practical farmer he devoted much of his time to literary pursuits,—when there was a knock at his door, and on opening it he saw there a young woman of delicate appearance, and of so much apparent refinement and cultivation, that he was quite taken by surprise when she asked him the question, “if he had any wool to be given out on shares?”

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Mr. Wharton replied, that he had had so much trouble with those to whom he had given out wool in that way, and had been so often cheated by them, that he had said he would give out no more, but he believed he must break through his rule for once, in her favor. She seemed very grateful, and said she hoped he would have no reason to regret his kindness in giving her employment. And so it proved; Miss Edwards, (for that was her name,) gave such entire satisfaction as to her work, and the share of it she returned, that Mr. Wharton kept her for some time in constant employment. Every time she came, he was more and more pleased with her gentle and unaffected manners, and with the style of her conversation, which showed without the slightest appearance of effort, a person of great intelligence and good breeding, while an air of subdued melancholy excited an interest in her, which increased with every interview.

"She is an unmistakable lady," said Mr. Wharton to his wife, "but how she came to be living in the village, without friends, and as I believe in circumstances of great necessity, I cannot imagine. There is a slight reserve about her," he added, "which may be difficult to penetrate, but if I mistake not, she is much in need of a friend, and I think she will not long resist the voice of kindness."

Accordingly, the next time she called, Mr. Wharton, in his kind and sympathising manner, led her to speak of her own peculiar circumstances; and at length drew from her this much of her history: She was the daughter of a plain New England farmer; had had a good common school education; and was expected to devote the rest of her life to the making of butter and cheese, and to the other occupations carried on in a farmer's family. Everything that she could do to aid her father and mother she was willing and ready to perform, but she sighed for knowledge; she had learned enough to wish to know more, and she felt that there was that in her, which properly cultivated, might fit her for something higher than the making of butter and cheese. Thus, when the day's labor was ended, and the old people, as was their custom, had retired early to rest, their dutiful daughter, her work for the day well done, sought with delight her little chamber, and her beloved books, in whose companionship she passed the hours always till midnight, and sometimes till she was startled by the

"Cock's shrill clarion,"

and reminded that body and mind alike needed repose.

In her studies, and in the choice of her reading, she was guided by her pastor; and a better guide, or one more willing to extend a helping hand to the seeker for knowledge she could not have found. With such a teacher, and with such an eager desire for improvement, she could not fail to progress rapidly. On the death of her parents, both of whom she followed to the grave in the course of one year, the kind pastor took her to his own home; but not being willing to

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be even for a time a burden to him, she immediately opened a small school in a village near them. Now her kind pastor too was dead; and having heard that a teacher was wanted in the village of Hillsdale, she had come there in hopes of getting the situation. Here she was doomed to disappointment, the vacant place having been supplied but a day or two before she reached the village; and now, among entire strangers, heart-sick with disappointment, and with no friend to turn to in her distress, she was taken down with a fever. It was a kind-hearted woman, in whose house she had rented a small room, and she nursed her as if she had been a daughter, without hope of remuneration. As soon as she was sufficiently recovered to think again of work, she began to inquire eagerly for employment; and her landlady having directed her to Mr. Wharton, she had taken that long walk from the village, while yet very feeble, which resulted in the accomplishment of her wishes.

There had been a brother, she told Mr. Wharton, an only child besides herself; but, as Mr. Wharton inferred from what she said, he was a wild, unsteady youth, and he had wandered from his home some years before, and gone far west towards the Mississippi. For some time they continued to hear from him, but he had long since ceased to write. She feared that he was dead; but sometimes she had a strong hope, which seemed like a presentiment to her, that she should yet look upon his face on earth; and in this hope, she continued still occasionally to direct letters to the spot from which he had last written.

When Mr. Wharton had repeated to his wife the story of Miss Edwards, she said immediately:

“Why, is she not just the person for a governess for our younger children? No doubt, too, she might aid Emily in her studies, for the child is too delicate to send away from home.”

“Well thought of, my dear wife,” said Mr. Wharton; “and if we could persuade Harriet to let poor little Agnes join us, what a nice little school we might have. It is strange the idea has not occurred to me before, for I have thought, a great many times, what a pity it was that such a woman as Miss Edwards should spend her life in spinning wool.”

“When do you expect her again?” asked Mrs. Wharton.

“She will probably be here this afternoon.”

“Let us save her the long walk, by driving over to see her this morning: perhaps she can return with us.” And in less than an hour, Mr. and Mrs. Wharton were seated in the widow Crane’s neat little parlor, in earnest conversation with Miss Edwards.

I need not say that the offer made by Mr. and Mrs. Wharton was unhesitatingly and gratefully accepted by Miss Edwards. Those only who have felt as utterly forlorn and desolate as she had done for the last few weeks, can understand with what joy she hailed the prospect of a home among such kind and sympathizing hearts.

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And a *home* indeed she found. From the time she entered Mr. Wharton's hospitable door, she was treated as companion, friend, and sister. No more sad, lonely hours for her, so long as she remained under that roof. There were plenty of happy, bright little faces around her; there were kind words always sounding in her ear; there were opportunities enough to be useful; there were rare and valuable books for her leisure hours. With all these sources of enjoyment, could she fail to be happy?

And if Miss Edwards esteemed herself most fortunate in having found so delightful a home, Mrs. Wharton was no less so in having secured her invaluable services.

"How have I ever lived so long without Rhoda!" she often exclaimed; for the new governess, by her own earnest request, soon lost the formal title of Miss Edwards in the family, and was simply "Rhoda" with Mr. and Mrs. Wharton, and "Miss Rhoda" with the children.

"I think there is nothing that she cannot do, and do well," she added. "She is a most charming companion in the parlor, with a never-failing fund of good humor and cheerfulness; a kind and patient, and in all respects most admirable teacher, for the children; an unwearied nurse in sickness; a complete cook, if for any reason her services are required in the kitchen; and perfectly ready to turn her hand to anything that is to be done."

"And now you have not mentioned the crowning excellence of her character, my dear," said Mr. Wharton; "she is, I believe, a sincere and earnest Christian; and, as you say, I think we are most fortunate in having secured her as an inmate in our family, and a teacher for our children."

Mr. Wharton, who had unbounded influence with Mrs. Elwyn, had no great difficulty in persuading her to allow Agnes to become a member of his family, that she might with his children enjoy the benefit of Miss Edwards' instructions. Indeed, so long as Mrs. Elwyn had her darling Lewie with her, it seemed almost a matter of indifference to her what became of Agnes; and thus the neglect and unkindness of her mother were overruled for good, and Agnes was placed in the hands of those who would sow good seed in her young heart, while improving and cultivating her mind. Happy would it have been for poor little Lewie, could he have been taken from the indulgent arms of his weak and doating mother, and placed under like healthy training, where his really fine qualities of heart and mind might have been cultured, and he might early have been taught to curb that hot and hasty temper, and to restrain those habits of self-indulgence, which finally proved his ruin.

Miss Edwards remained six years in her happy home at Mr. Wharton's, and had become as they all thought essential to their comfort and happiness, when she one day received a letter, which agitated her exceedingly. She was sitting at the dinner table, when the letters were brought from the village. One was handed to her; she looked at



the superscription, at the post-mark, which was that of a town far to the south-west; her cheek flushed, and with trembling fingers she broke the seal. She glanced at the signature, and turned so pale they thought she would faint, but in a moment she was relieved by a burst of tears.

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Her long lost brother was alive! he wrote that he was married, and settled in that far distant State. One of his sister's letters (for she still continued from time to time to write to him) had lately reached him, he said, and he wished her to come to him. Her mind was immediately made up to go; she dearly loved her sweet pupils, and the kind friends who had given her a home, and a place in their hearts, but the ties of kindred were stronger than all other ties, and they drew her with resistless force towards the home of her own and only brother.

There was something about the tone of this letter which Mrs. Wharton did not like, and she had a foreboding that this journey would not be for the happiness of her friend, and tried to dissuade her from undertaking it. And in this she was entirely disinterested; for great as would be the loss of this gifted young lady to her, Mrs. Wharton was not the one to put a straw in her way, if she felt assured the journey would end happily for her.

All that she said, however, was of no avail; it had been the hope of Miss Edwards' life, once more to see this darling brother, and nothing could deter her from making the attempt. Her preparations were made in haste, and with many tears on her part, and on that of the kind friends she was leaving, and amid loud sobs and lamentations from her dear little scholars, they parted, never again to meet on earth. A tedious and perilous journey she had, by river and land, but she seemed to bear all the discomforts of the way with her own cheerful, happy spirit, and the letters she wrote to her friends from different points on the journey were exceedingly amusing and entertaining. One of them, and the last she wrote before reaching her point of destination, I will transcribe here in her own words:—

“Springdale, Oct.—”

“My beloved pupils,—I am going, in this letter, to tell you a ghost story, and a murder story, of both of which your humble servant was the heroine. But before your little cheeks begin to grow white, and your eyes to open in horror, let me tell you that the ghost was no ghost at all, and in the murder scene, nobody's life was in danger, though both matters at the time were very serious ones to me.”

“I wrote you last from a little tavern in the northern part of Virginia, while I was waiting for a conveyance to continue on my journey, the stage passing over these unfrequented roads only twice a week. It has always been my lot to have friends raised up for me when friends were most needed; and while sitting in the little parlor of the tavern, feeling very desolate, and very impatient, a gig drove up to the door, from which an old clergyman alighted. He soon entered the parlor, and in a few minutes we were engaged in a pleasant conversation, in the course of which I mentioned the circumstances of my detention in that place, and my extreme anxiety to progress in my journey.”

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"The old gentleman, it seems, had been on a three days' journey to a ministers' meeting, and was now returning home, and as he was travelling in the same direction in which I wished to go, he said it would give him great pleasure if I would take a seat in his gig, in case my heaviest trunks could be sent on by stage. This the good-natured landlord very willingly consented to attend to. The trunks were to be sent to the care of the old clergyman, who was to ship me for my destined port, and send my trunks on after me."

"You may be sure I did not hesitate about accepting the old clergyman's offer, for after jolting along with rough men, over rough roads, as I had done for many days, I anticipated with much pleasure a ride of two or three days in a gig, with the kind, pleasant old gentleman. And now comes the ghost story."

"As we were riding along through this thinly settled part of Western Virginia, I noticed occasionally large, dark, barn-like looking buildings, with the wooden shutters tightly closed. After passing two or three of these buildings, I at length asked my companion for what purpose they were used."

"'Why, those,' said he, 'are our churches. I had forgotten how entirely unacquainted you were with this part of the country, or I should have pointed them out to you.'"

"'Is it possible,' I exclaimed, 'that you worship in those dreary, dark-looking places! I must go inside of one of them on the first opportunity.'"

"Soon after I spoke, as we were ascending a hill, some part of the harness gave way, and we were obliged to alight from the gig, while the old gentleman endeavored to repair the injury."

"'How long will it take you, sir,' said I, 'to set this matter right?'"

"'Oh, some time—perhaps a quarter of an hour,' he answered."

"'And cannot I help you?' I asked. 'I believe I can do almost anything I undertake to do.'"

"'Oh, no, no,' he answered; 'you had better not undertake to mend a harness, or you will be obliged, after this, to say that you have failed in one thing; besides, I can do this very well alone.'"

"'I have a great mind to take hold and mend it, just to show you that my boast was not an idle one,' said I; 'but if you are determined to scorn my offered assistance, I will run back, and take a survey of the interior of the old church we passed a few moments since.'"

“‘You will not see much,’ the old clergyman called out after me; ‘for, as you see, the wooden shutters are kept closed during the week, and it is almost total darkness inside.’”

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"However, on I ran down the hill, and was soon at the door of the old barn-like building. The door was not fastened, and I opened it, and entered the church. At first, the darkness seemed intense, broken only by little streaks of sunlight which streamed in through the small, crescent-shaped holes in the shutters; but at length my eye became accustomed to the darkness, and I could begin to distinguish the rude seats and aisles, and even to see, at the end of the church, an elevation which I knew must be the pulpit. Determined to see all that was to be seen, I made my way along the aisle, ascended the pulpit stairs, and had just laid my hand on the door, when a tall, white figure suddenly rose up in the pulpit, and laid a cold hand on mine. I believe I shrieked; but I was filled with such an indescribable horror, that I know not what I did, when a hollow voice said:"

"Don't be afraid; I will not harm you."

"I snatched my hand from the cold grasp which held it, and fled from the church. I remember nothing more, till I opened my eyes, and found the old clergyman bathing my face with water. He had become alarmed at my long absence, and, on coming back to seek me, had found me lying on my face, on the grass, in front of the old church. We had been riding again for some time, before I summoned resolution to tell the old gentleman what I had seen in the church. He complimented me by saying, that though his acquaintance with me had been short, he was much mistaken in me, if I was a person to be deceived by the imagination; and he said he much regretted that I had not mentioned the cause of my fright before we left the old church, as it was always best to ascertain at once the true nature of any such apparently frightful object."

"We have no time to turn back now,' said he, 'as we have already lost more than half an hour; but the next best thing we can do is to stop at the first house we come to, and see if we can find out anything concerning the apparition which appeared to you in the church.'"

"We soon stopped before the door of a small log house, and at our summons a pleasant-looking woman appeared. To the inquiries of the old clergyman as to the appearance by which I had been so much alarmed, she replied:"

"Oh, it's the crazy minister, sir. He used to preach in that old church; but he's been crazy for a long time, and often he dresses himself in a long white robe, and goes and sits in the pulpit of that old church all day. He's very gentle, she added, turning to me, 'and wouldn't hurt anybody for the world; but I don't wonder you got a good fright.' So ends my ghost story; and now, if you are ready for more horrors, I will tell you my other adventure."

"Our detention near the old church, and the state of the roads, rendered heavy by late rains, made it impossible for us to reach the town at which we had hoped to spend the night; and we had made up our minds that we would stop at the first *promising*-looking establishment we should see, when the coming up of a sudden storm left us no option,

but made us hail gladly the first human dwelling we came to, though that was but a rough, rambling old hut, built of unhewn logs.”

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“There was only an old woman at home when we stopped at the door, and I fancied she looked rather *too well pleased* when we asked if she could accommodate us for the night. I must confess to you, my dear children, I felt rather nervous after the fright of that afternoon; I, who used to boast that I was ignorant of the fact of possessing such a thing as nerves; but I do think I must have been nervous, for very little things troubled me that evening, and my imagination had never been so busy before. In a very few moments, an old man, and three strapping, rough-looking youths, entered, with their axes over their shoulders, and dripping with rain; and now I began to imagine that I saw suspicious glances passing between these young men, and I certainly heard a long whispered conversation pass between two of them and the old woman in the next room. I looked towards my old friend the clergyman; but he, good, unsuspecting old soul, was nodding in his chair by the log fire. I grew more and more uncomfortable, and heartily wished we had jogged on in the pelting rain, rather than trust ourselves to such very questionable hospitality. One thing I made up my mind to, which was this—that I would not close my eyes to sleep that night, but would keep on the watch for whatever might happen.”

“The old woman gave us a very comfortable supper, and soon afterwards she asked me if I would like to go to bed. Not liking to show any distrust of my hosts, I assented with apparent readiness, and followed the old woman into a hall, and up a rude ladder, which I should have found it very difficult to mount had it not been for my early exercise in this kind of gymnastics, when searching for hen’s eggs in the barn, at my New England home.”

“At the head of the ladder was a small passageway, from which we entered the room which was to be my sleeping apartment. Whether there had ever been any door to this room or not I do not know; certain it is there was no door now; the only other room I could perceive in the upper part of the house, was a sort of a granary filled with bins to hold different kinds of grain.”

“‘Is the old gentleman with whom I came, to sleep in this part of the house?’ I asked in as careless a tone as I could assume.”

“‘No, he sleeps in the loft of the other part where the boys sleep;’ answered the old woman, and then looking at me with a grin which I thought gave her the appearance of an ugly old hag, she said, ‘Why ye ain’t afeard on us, be ye?’”

“‘I told her I had had quite a fright that day, and felt a little nervous.’”

“‘Well,’ said she, ‘ye can just go to sleep without any frights here. We shan’t do ye no harm, I reckon,’ and she left me and descended the ladder.”

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“Before going to bed I took my light, and stepping out softly I went to reconnoitre the other room, the door of which we had passed on the way to the room in which I was to spend the night: I was obliged to descend two steps to enter this room, where I found nothing frightful to be sure, there being only some old clothes hanging up, and the bins of grain of which I have spoken before. I returned to my room, and with great difficulty moved a rude chest of drawers, across the place where a door should be, on this I placed my little trunk, and the only chair in the room, an old shovel, and a broken pitcher, determined that if any one did enter the room, it should not be without noise enough to give me warning. Before this barricade I set my candle, hoping it might continue to burn all night.”

“I laid down without undressing, determined that I would only rest; I would not even close my eyes to sleep. I had laid thus as I supposed an hour, listening to the voices of the old people and their sons, as in subdued tones they talked together below. At the end of that time the door opened, and I heard stealthy steps ascending the ladder. My heart, as the saying is, was in my throat, and I could hear its every throb. The steps came nearer and nearer, and as the first foot-fall sounded on the floor of the little passage, which led to my room, I shrieked, ‘Who is there? what do you want?’”

“‘Bless your soul it’s only me; you need not scream so,’ said the old woman. ‘I’m only going to the bin for some corn-meal to make mush for your breakfast.’”

“‘I do believe the gal thinks we are going to murder her in her bed,’ I heard her say with a loud laugh as she descended the ladder; ‘you ought to see the *chist*, and the things she’s got piled on top of it, all standing in the door-way.’”

“At this the men’s voices joined in the laugh, and they sounded horribly to me. ‘Yes,’ I thought to myself, ‘how easy it would be for them to murder us in our beds, and there would be no one to tell the tale.’ Soon after this, in spite of my resolution to keep awake, sleep must have overpowered me, for I was awakened by a tremendous crash, as if the house was falling, and I opened my eyes to find myself in total darkness, and to hear soft footsteps in my room.”

“Oh, how I shrieked this time! I believe I cried ‘help! help! murder!’ and I soon heard footsteps approaching, and saw a light gleaming up the ladder way, and soon the old woman’s night-cap appeared over the chest. ‘What *is* the matter now?’ she cried with some impatience, ‘you certainly are the most *narvous* lodger I’ve ever had yet.’”

“‘Matter enough,’ said I, ‘there is some one in my room. Didn’t you hear that awful crash?’”

“‘Pshaw! it’s only our old black cat!’ said the old woman; ‘he always comes up to this room to sleep, but we thought we had shut him out.’”

“Can he climb the ladder?’ I asked.”

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“‘Just like a *human*,’ said the old woman; and, pushing aside the chest, she seized the cat, and raising the only window in the room, threw him out.”

“Again weariness overpowered me, and I slept; only to awake to new horrors; for now I heard cautious footsteps and whispered voices, and outside the grindstone was at work making something very sharp. Then the door opened, and a smothered voice said, ‘Mother, is the water hot?’”

“‘Yes, bilin’,’ answered the old woman; ‘are the knives sharp?’”

“‘All ready,’ answered the young man; ‘where’s father?’”

“‘He’s gone to the loft,’ said the old woman; and then came some whispered words, which I could not catch. You will most probably laugh at me, but my mind was now so worked up by all the agitation I had experienced, that I had not the smallest doubt that we were now to be murdered, and that the dreadful work was already going on in the loft, my kind old friend being the first victim. Still I thought I might be in time to save him yet, and there might be a bare possibility of our escape. Springing from my bed in great haste and agitation, I hurried on my shawl, and cautiously descended the ladder; but my blood froze with horror, as just then I heard a piercing shriek. In the passage below I encountered the old woman; she had just come into the house, and had an old shawl over her head, and a lantern in her hand, I thought she gave a guilty start when she saw me, as she exclaimed:”

“‘Why, bless me, gal! what are you down at this time in the morning for?’”

“‘What are *you* all up so early in the morning for?’ I asked, in a voice which I meant should strike terror to her heart.”

“‘Why, my old man and the boys had determined to kill hogs this morning,’ she answered; ‘but we tried to keep so quiet as not to disturb ye. I was afeared, though, that the squealing of the hogs would wake ye.’”

“The relief was so sudden, that I could hardly refrain from putting my arms round the old woman’s neck, and confessing all my unjust suspicions, but the fear of hurting her feelings prevented. With a tranquil mind I again climbed the ladder, and sought my humble bed, and was soon in such a sound slumber, that even the squealing of the hogs, in their dying agonies, failed to rouse me.”

“Seen by the morning light, as we were seated around the breakfast table, these midnight robbers and murderers of my fancy appeared a family of honest, hardy New Englanders, who had bought a tract of land in Western Virginia. They showed us, at a little distance, a clearing where they were just erecting a larger and more comfortable log dwelling; and the old woman assured us that if we would stop and visit them, if we

ever passed that way again, we should not have to climb a ladder, for they were going to have a 'reg'lar stairway in t'other house."

"When the time came for parting with our kind hosts, and we offered to remunerate them for their trouble, they rejected the proffered money almost with scorn."

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“No, no,’ said the old man, ‘we haven’t got quite so low as that yet; and I hope that I nor none of mine will ever come to taking pay for a night’s lodging from a traveller. We don’t keep *tavern* here.”

“The old woman’s parting advice to me was to try and ‘git over my *narvousness*; and she thought I hadn’t better drink no more strong green tea.”

“I think your tea was strong last night, my friend,’ said I; ‘and that, together with the sight of the ghost, of which I have been telling you, made me very uneasy and restless.”

“Well,’ said the old woman, ‘I hope ye won’t be so suspicious of us next time ye come; for it’s a *cartain* fact, that we never murdered any *human* yet. We do kill *hogs*; that I won’t deny.’ And she laughed so heartily, that I felt quite sure she had seen through all my fears and suspicions of the night before. So ends the murder story.”

“I wish you could have heard my old clergyman laugh, as I related to him all the horrors of the night; and when I came to mistaking the last squeal of a dying pig for his own death groan, I thought he would have rolled out of the gig. That night, which was *last* night, found us in the old gentleman’s hospitable home, where his kind lady gave me as cordial a welcome as I could desire. Here I am still with these good friends, only waiting for my trunks; and then, with God’s blessing, two days more will find me in the home of my own dear brother.—And here, with many kind remembrances to the dear ones at Brook Farm, Miss Edwards’ letter closed.”

VIII.

Bitter Disappointments.

“Oh! art thou found?
But yet to find thee thus!”

VESPER OF PALERMO.

It may be as well for us to continue the history of Miss Edwards here, though its sad sequel was not known to the family of Mr. Wharton till a long time after she had left them. The letter with which the preceding chapter closes, was the last heard from her for many weeks. Various were the surmises in the family as to the reasons for her unaccountable silence, but at length they settled down in the belief that she must have fallen a victim to some of the diseases of a new country; though why they should not have received some tidings of her fate from her brother, still remained a mystery.

At last, after many weeks, there came a letter from her, but it was short, and sad, and unsatisfactory in all respects. She had had a terrible disappointment she said, but her



friends must have forbearance with her, and excuse her from detailing the events of the past few weeks. She was now at Springdale with her kind old friend, the clergyman, and was just recovering from a long and tedious illness; she hoped soon to be able to be at work again, and a little school was ready for her, as soon as she should be sufficiently restored to take charge of it. Not one word was said of her brother, or of her reasons for returning to the home of the old clergyman.

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"She is evidently very unhappy," said Mr. Wharton, "and perhaps her funds are exhausted. She must return to us, and for this purpose I will send her the means without delay."

But still Miss Edwards did not come, and her letters were few and far between. At length there came one written in much better spirits, and in her old cheerful style, in which she informed them that she was engaged to be married to a young physician of that place. She seemed now very happy, and full of bright anticipations, not the least cheering of which, was the prospect of visiting her kind friends once more, when she should travel to the east on her bridal tour. And this was the last letter they ever received from Miss Edwards.

That same summer a package came to Mr. Wharton, directed in an unknown hand, from a place, the name of which he had never heard before. It was from a physician, and ran thus:

SIR,—I was called a few weeks since to attend a young lady, who was lying dangerously ill, at the only tavern in our little village. I found her raving in delirium, and your name, and the names of many whom I suppose to be members of your family, were constantly mingled with her ravings. She had stopped at the tavern the night before in the stage; and when the other passengers went on was too ill to proceed with them. I attended her constantly for a week or ten days, and at the end of that time, I had the happiness to find that her fever had entirely left her, and her mind was quite restored. She was, however, extremely weak, and feeling assured, she said, that she should never be able to reach the home of her kind friends, (mentioning the name of your family,) she begged earnestly for writing materials, and though I remonstrated and entreated, I found it impossible to prevent her writing. She said she had a communication which it was due to you that she should make, and she charged me over and over again, to remember your direction, and send the package to you in case she did not leave that place alive. She was busily engaged in writing one day, when the noise of wheels attracted her to the window, which she reached in time to see a gentleman alight from a chaise, who proceeded to hand out a lady. A person in the room with her, saw her put her hands to her head, and then she rushed from the back door of the house, and did not stop till she reached the woods. When found she was a raving maniac, and is so still. We have been obliged to place her in the county house, where she is confined in the apartment devoted to Lunatics, and is as comfortable as she can be made under the circumstances. The accompanying package I found just as she left it, when she dropped her pen and hastened to the window, and I now comply with her earnest request and enclose it to you.

With respect, &c.

JAMES MASTEN.

The manuscript, when opened, was found to be in Miss Edwards' well known handwriting, though the fingers that held the pen, had evidently trembled from weakness and agitation. It was with the saddest emotions, that those who had loved her so tenderly, read the following communication:

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"Painful and harrowing to my feelings as the task must be which I have undertaken, I feel that it is due to my kind and ever sympathising friends, to make them acquainted with the sad trials through which I have passed, and the bitter disappointments I have met with. I have tried to bear up with the spirit of a Christian, and to feel that these trials are sent by One who orders all things in justice and righteousness; I do submit; I am not inclined to murmur; I hope I am resigned; but heart, and flesh, and mind, are weak, and these alas! are all failing."

"With the fondest anticipations I reached the village, where I expected to be received in the arms of my long lost brother. Oh, how my heart bounded, as the prolonged sound of the stage-horn told me we were approaching the end of my journey! and how my imagination pictured the joyful meeting, the cordial welcome, the fond embrace once more of my own loved kindred! I was much surprised that my brother was not at the tavern to meet me, and more so when, on asking for his residence, the landlord hesitated, as if perplexed."

"'Edwards! Edwards!' said he; 'there is but one person of that name that I know of in all the village; but he can't be brother to such a lady as you.'"

"'Perhaps you have not been here long,' I said."

"'O yes, ma'am, nearly fifteen years,' he answered."

"'And what is the name of this man of whom you speak?'"

"'Richard, I think; they always call him Dick Edwards about here,' answered the landlord."

"I did not tell him that was my brother's name, but with a trembling heart I asked him to point me to the house of this Richard Edwards of whom he spoke."

"There was something of pity in the tone of the landlord's voice, as he told me to turn down the second lane I should come to, and go on to the last hut on the right hand. 'But I advise you not to go,' he continued, 'for I'm sure there must be some mistake.'"

I was too heart-sick to answer, but, taking my travelling-bag on my arm, I followed the directions of the landlord, and picked my way as well as I could through the mud of the miserable, filthy lane he had mentioned to me, all the time saying to myself, 'It cannot be—there surely must be some mistake,' and yet impelled irresistibly to go on.

"As I approached the door of the hut at which I knew I was to stop, I heard the sound of singing and shouting; and as I came nearer, the words of a low drinking chorus sounded on my ear. I paused before the door, and a feeling of faintness came over me. I thought, 'I will turn back, and give up the attempt. Better never to find my brother, than

to find him here, and thus.’ But again something impelled me to tap at the door. It would be such an inexpressible relief, I thought, to find myself mistaken.”

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“It was some time before I could make myself heard above the noise of drunken revelry which sounded within the hovel; but at length the door was opened by a wretched, frightened-looking woman, and a scene of indescribable misery was presented to my eyes. Around a table were seated three or four brutish-looking men, with a jug and some glasses before them. On the table was a pack of greasy-looking cards; but those who surrounded the table were too far gone to play now; they could only drink, and sing, and shout, and drink again; and one of them, in attempting to rise from the table, fell, and lay in a state of utter helplessness on the floor.”

“The man of the house was not so far gone as the rest; and when he came staggering forward, a few words sufficed to explain the reason of my appearance.”

“His answer seemed to seal my fate.”

“‘Ho! you’re Rhoda, then! I wrote to you. I thought likely enough you’d got some money. We’re pretty hard up here.’ This was said with a silly laugh and hiccough, which filled me with an indescribable loathing.”

“And was this miserable, bloated wretch my brother—that brother whom I had so longed and prayed once more to see, of whom I had thought by day, and dreamed by night, for so many long years! I turned to go without another word, but fell at the door, and lay, I know not how long, without sense or motion. When I revived, I found the woman (who, I suppose, was my sister-in-law) bathing my face. I have a dim recollection, too, of seeing some dirty, miserable-looking children, and of being asked for *money*. I laid all that I had about me on the table, and, while they were eagerly catching for it, I left the wretched place; and grasping by the fence to steady my feeble footsteps, I made my way back to the inn. I took the next stage, and then the boat, for the home of my kind old friend at Springdale, and arrived there ill in body and mind. From there I wrote you, when partially recovered. As soon as I was able, I began my school, and before long became much interested in my little scholars; and in the hospitable home of my kind old friends, regained tranquillity of mind, and after a time even cheerfulness. But other trials awaited me. My head is weary, and I must rest before I relate to you the remainder of my melancholy story.”

“There was a young physician in that place, who had recently come from the East, and settled there. He was a man of agreeable person and manners, of much general information, and of very winning address; at least, so he seemed to me. He was entirely different from all whom I had met in that new country, and was the only person, besides my old friend the clergyman and his wife, with whom it was really pleasant to converse; and I felt perfectly at ease in his society, having been assured that he was engaged to a certain Miss G——, the daughter of a merchant in the village. Though much surprised at this, she having appeared to me but a mere flippant gossip,

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and he a man of refined and cultivated intellect, still I had no reason to doubt it, and was completely taken by surprise when, after an acquaintance of a few weeks, he one day made an offer of his hand and heart to *me*. I told him what I had heard of his engagement to another, but he assured me it was the idlest village gossip. 'There was nowhere else to go,' he said, 'till I came there, and so he had occasionally visited at Mr. G——'s, but without the slightest intention of paying any serious attention to either of his daughters, who were girls not at all to his taste.'"

"The idea of this gentleman appearing in the character of a lover of *mine* was so new to me that I was obliged to take time to accustom myself to it, and to ascertain the nature of my own feelings, which I soon found were such as to satisfy me that I should commit no perjury in giving him my hand. I will not tell you how I loved him! I cannot write about it now! But for a short time I was very, very happy, and even my bitter disappointments were forgotten. But suddenly he ceased to visit me. Day after day passed and he did not come; and yet I knew that he was in the village. At length I could no longer conceal my distress from my old friend; who, being very indignant at this treatment, called my truant lover to account."

"My cheeks glow with indignation as I write it! A story had been circulated, which was afterwards traced to the G——'s, that I had left a *husband* in an Eastern State; and this man, without coming to me for a word of explanation, believed the story and deserted me. I had no friend of long enough standing there to contradict the report; I wrote to you, Mr. Wharton, but the letter could never have reached you, for no answer came; and this only confirmed the suspicions of those who had heard this slanderous story. All but my kind hosts looked upon me with suspicion; the object of the slander was accomplished; my former lover resumed his visits at the house of Mr. G——, and his attentions to his daughter. He was not worthy of a love like mine! Stranger as he had been to me, could I have believed a tale like that of him, without making an effort to investigate its truth, or giving him full opportunity to clear himself from the imputation? That place could no longer be a home for me. I left it, dear friends, and turned my face once more towards those who had been for so many years tried and true to me. But strength failed! I have been here I know not how many weeks, enduring torment of mind and body. My hope of reaching you is dying out. I *have* no hope but in God; my friend and refuge in time of trouble! I have—"

Here the writing ceased; and the next moment she had seen her faithless lover hand his bride from the carriage, and reason fled from her poor brain forever.

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The day after this letter was received found Mr. Wharton on his way to the West, to ascertain for himself the condition of Miss Edwards, and to endeavor to devise some means for her comfort and restoration, if possible. Has my reader ever visited a *county house*, and especially the apartment devoted exclusively to Lunatics? If not, I will endeavor to describe a few of the sights which met the eyes of Mr. Wharton, on his sad visit to the county house, which then stood a few miles from——. He proceeded thither in company with the physician who had written to him, and sent him the package from Miss Edwards, and it was with a heavy heart that he first saw the desolate brick building in which she had been placed, and thought, “Is this the only asylum for one so lovely and so gifted, and must she wear out her days in hopeless madness here?” Making their way through the crowd of miserable, hobbling, bandaged, blind and helpless creatures who were standing about the yard and halls, Mr. Wharton and Dr. Masten, guided by the superintendent of the county house, paused before the door of the “crazy room.” Sounds of many voices were already heard, in various tones, singing and shouting, and preaching, and when the door was opened the din was such that it was impossible for the gentlemen to hear each other speak.

What a place, thought Mr. Wharton, for those who should be kept quiet and tranquil, and who should have nothing about them but pleasant, cheerful sights. What possible hope is there of the restoration of any here!

About the large and not over clean room, were a number of *cages*, much like those you now see placed around a menagerie tent, though not so large or so comfortable as these cages of wild beasts. In each of these cages was confined a human being, and these poor creatures stricken by the hand of God, were in various stages of insanity, some wildly raving, others more quiet, and others still in a state of helpless idiocy. One poor creature had preached till her voice had sunk to a hoarse whisper, and so she continued to preach, the keeper told them, day and night, till utterly exhausted, when she would fall into a state of insensibility, which could hardly be called *sleep*, but from which she would arouse to preach again, day and night, till again exhausted.

A boy about sixteen years of age sat in one of the cages, with scarcely a rag to cover him, idly pulling through his fingers a bit of cord. This had been his employment for months, the keeper said. He was perfectly quiet, except the cord was taken from him; but then he would be quite frantic. The ends of his fingers were quite worn with drawing this cord between them, and it was necessary to supply him constantly with a new bit of cord. When asked why the boy remained nearly naked, the keeper said, they had never been able to devise any means to keep clothing upon him, or to find anything strong enough to resist the strength of his hands; but if allowed to remain in a state almost of nudity, and to have his bit of cord, he was perfectly quiet and contented.

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These, and many more sad and horrible things, were seen and heard during their visit; but Mr. Wharton's first object was to find her for whose sake he had undertaken this long journey. He knew her immediately, though her face was worn with trouble and sickness, and there was an intense and unnatural brightness about her eye. Her beautiful hair was unbound, and falling about her shoulders, as she sat in the farthest corner of her cage, perfectly quiet, and entirely unoccupied.

"Rhoda!" said Mr. Wharton, gently. She started, and put back her thick hair from her ear, at the sound of his familiar voice.

"Rhoda!" said he, "don't you remember me?"

She looked at him intently, and the expression of her eye began to change.

"The children want to see you so much, Rhoda! Emily and Effie, and Agnes and little Grace." He mentioned each name slowly and distinctly, and then spoke of his wife and the other children, and mentioned scenes and incidents connected with his home. Her eye still looked with an earnest gaze into his; her brow contracted, as if she was trying to recall some long forgotten thing; until at length, with the helplessness of an infant, she stretched her arms towards Mr. Wharton, and exclaimed, piteously:

"Oh, take me away!—take me to my home!"

"You shall go with me, Rhoda; I will not leave you here," said Mr. Wharton; and beckoning to Dr. Masten, he left the room. As he reached the door, he heard a cry of agony, and turning, he saw Miss Edwards at the front of her cage, with both arms extended towards him through the bars, and the most agonized, imploring expression upon her face. Stepping back to her, he said:

"Rhoda, I *will not* leave you. Be quiet, and I will come back very soon to take you with me. Did I ever deceive you, Rhoda?"

"Oh!" said she, putting her hand to her head, "they have all deceived me. Richard deceived me! *He* deceived me!—oh, so cruelly! Who can I trust? They all desert me. I am *all, all* alone!" And she sat down; and dropping her head upon her knees, she wept very bitterly.

When Mr. Wharton had again called the doctor from the room, he said to him:

"Doctor, this does not seem to me such a hopeless case. How any sane person could retain his senses in that awful scene, I cannot imagine; I am sure I should soon go crazy myself. But could I once remove Miss Edwards from these terrible associations, and place her in one of our Eastern asylums, where she might have cheerful companionships, and pleasant occupation for her mind and fingers, I doubt not she might be completely restored."



The doctor thought it possible, but was not so sanguine on the subject as Mr. Wharton, who, he said, had only seen the young lady in one of her calmer moods. Still he by all means advised the trial. "We have no hope of *cure*" said he, "in placing these lunatics in the County House; the only object is to keep them from injuring themselves or others. They are all of them from the families of the poor, who cannot afford to send them to an Eastern asylum. This young lady was a stranger, and without means, and so violent, at times, that restraint was absolutely necessary; so that the only thing we could do with her was to place her here till I could write to you."

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"You did the very best that could be done under the circumstances, my dear sir," answered Mr. Wharton; "but I sincerely hope the day is not far distant when your State will possess a more comfortable home than this for those afflicted as these poor creatures are. But I feel as if I could not lose a moment in removing my young friend from this place; and if you, doctor, will be so kind as to take the journey with me, and aid me in the care of her, you shall be well rewarded for your loss of time."

It was with no great difficulty that this undertaking was accomplished; and in less than a fortnight from the time when Mr. Wharton found Miss Edwards, caged like a wild beast in the County House at——, she was placed at an asylum where every comfort surrounded her. It was not long before she seemed quite at home amid these new scenes, and began to interest herself in books and work; and though her mind never fully regained its tone, she yet seemed tranquil and happy. But the scenes of trial through which she had passed had done their work upon her constitution, and she sank rapidly, until, in a little less than a year from the time of her entering the asylum, Mr. Wharton was summoned to her death-bed. He arrived but a short time before she breathed her last, and had the satisfaction to find that she knew him, to hear from her own lips the assurance that her faith in her Redeemer was firm and unshaken, and to bear her last kind messages to all the dear ones at Brook Farm. And then the poor sad heart was still—the mind was bright and clear again—for the shattered strings were tuned anew in heaven.

In a quiet nook at Brook Farm, where the willow bends, and the brook murmurs, is a spot marked out for a burying-place, and the first stone planted there bears on it the name of "Rhoda Edwards."

IX.

Emily's Trials.

"And dost thou ask what secret woe
I bear, corroding joy and youth?
And wilt thou vainly seek to know
A pang, even thou must fail to soothe?"—BYRON.

In the meantime the education of Master Lewie was going on as best it might, and in a manner most agreeable to that young gentleman's inclinations. When he chose to do so, he studied, and then no child could make more rapid advancement than he, but as he was brought up without any habits of regular application, study soon became distasteful to him, and at the first puzzling sentence he threw aside his books in disgust, and started off for play. The only thing he really loved, was music, and in his devotion to this delightful accomplishment he was indefatigable, and his proficiency at that tender age was remarkable.



But being now nine or ten years old, his mother, urged to this course by some pretty strong hints from Mr. Wharton, began to determine upon some systematic plan of education for him. And, acting upon Mr. Wharton's advice, she was so happy as to secure the services of Mr. Malcolm, the young clergyman at the village, as a tutor for Lewie, upon the condition on his part, that unlimited authority, in no case to be interfered with, should be given to him in his government of the hitherto untrained and petted child.

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And so it was settled, that Mr. Malcolm should ride over from the village every morning at a certain hour, and attend to the education of little Lewie Elwyn. It was soon observed, that as the young clergyman rode from the Hemlocks back to the village, it seemed a difficult matter for him to pass Mr. Wharton's lane, but he often, and then oftener, and at length every day, turned his horse's head up the lane, and stopped to make a call. And the children (than whom there are no quicker observers in matters of this kind) soon made up their minds that the object of Mr. Malcolm's frequent and prolonged visits was sweet cousin Emily. And they thought too, judging by the bright blush that came up in cousin Emily's usually pale cheek when he was announced, and by the look of interest with which she listened to his conversations with her uncle, or replied to him when he addressed a remark to herself, that cousin Emily was by no means indifferent to the young minister.

Having drawn their own conclusions from these premises, and watching with much interest, as children always do the progress of a love affair, they were surprised and disappointed when they found that as Mr. Malcolm's attentions increased and became more pointed, cousin Emily gradually withdrew from his society, and often declined altogether to come into the sitting room when he was there. Yet they were certain she liked him, for they often found her watching from her window his retreating figure; and sometimes before she knew that she was observed, she would be seen to wipe away the tears which were stealing unbidden down her cheek.

At length, one day, the minister came, and as he walked up the steps of the front piazza, those who caught sight of his face, saw that it was pale and agitated, and that he looked as if important matters for him were at stake. And he asked for Emily. There was no bright blush in her cheek now as she descended the stairs; it was pale and cold as marble. The interview was a long one, and when at length Mr. Malcolm mounted his horse and rode slowly away, his face was as white as when he came, but the look of suspense and expectation had passed away, and in its place was that of settled and fixed despair. Emily went to her room, and to her bed, which she did not leave for some days; when she again appeared in the family she was calm and sweet as ever, but a shade more pensive.

And the young minister came no more. That was all.

He was sometimes seen in the distant road riding rapidly by, to or from the Hemlocks, but though the horse from long custom, invariably turned his head towards Mr. Wharton's lane, he was not permitted to follow his inclinations, but was speedily hurried by.

And Emily grew paler and thinner day by day, and there was sometimes a contraction about the brow which told of intense suffering; and sometimes, early in the evening she would leave the parlor, and not appear again for the remainder of the evening. On one of these occasions Agnes followed her, as she had observed the deadly paleness of her

countenance, and feared she would faint before she reached her room. As Emily ascended the stairs, Agnes thought she heard groans, as of one in extreme pain. Emily closed her door and Agnes stood upon the outside; and now the groans were plainly to be distinguished.

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"Cousin Emily," Agnes called, "dear cousin Emily, may I come in?"

There was no answer, but those same deep groans and now and then a plaintive moaning. Agnes opened the door gently, and saw Emily upon her knees, and yet writhing as if in intense agony. She seemed to be trying to pray, and Agnes caught the words, "Oh, for strength, for strength to endure this agony, and not to murmur."

Putting her arm around her, Agnes said: "What is it, cousin Emily? Can you not tell *me*?"

Emily started at finding that she was not alone, and then said:

"Help me to rise, Agnes, and hand me those drops. I am glad that it is you: better you than any of the others. Fasten the door, Agnes."

Emily reclined upon the sofa, weak and exhausted, the cold beads of perspiration standing on her brow. Agnes sat in silence beside her, holding her thin white hands in hers. At length Emily said:

"Agnes, I try to be patient; I make an endeavor even to be cheerful; but I am indeed a great sufferer, and the anguish I endure seems, at times, more than mortal frame can bear. It is only by escaping to the solitude of my own room, to endure the agony in secret, that I am enabled to keep it to myself. I am obliged to practice evasion to escape aunty's anxious interrogatories; for, in her present state of health, I would not for the world cause her the anxiety and trouble which the knowledge of my sufferings would bring upon her."

Then, with frequent pauses for rest, Emily told the weeping Agnes *all*.

"And now," said she, "dear Agnes, you are very young for scenes like this; but I know that you possess uncommon nerve and courage. Can you, do you think, sit by my side, and hold my hand through a painful operation? I *can* endure it alone, dear, and I intended to; but as accident has revealed my sufferings to you, I feel that it would be a comfort to me to have my hand in that of one I love at that time."

"I *think* I can, cousin Emily. I believe I could do *anything* for you, dear cousin Emily."

"I do not want aunty and uncle to know of this till it is all over, Agnes. They go to the Springs to-morrow, to remain some days, as you know: and I have arranged with Dr. Rodney to come while they are gone, and bring a surgeon from the city, and it will all be over before they return."

"And is there no *danger*, cousin Emily?"



“Danger of what, dear?—of death? Oh yes; the chances are many against me; and even if the operation is safely performed, it may not arrest the disease. But to one who suffers the torture which it is the will of Heaven that I should bear, speedy death would only be a happy release. And yet, Agnes, do not misunderstand me; I would not for the world do anything to shorten my life of suffering. Oh no! ‘All the years of my appointed time will I wait till my change come.’ The course I am going to pursue is advised by the physicians, and it may be the means of restoration to health, at least for some years. Agnes, pray for me.”

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When Mrs. Wharton kissed Emily for good-bye, and told her to be a good girl, and take care of her health, she little imagined the suffering through which her gentle niece was to pass before they met again. No one dreamed of it but Agnes.

The next day, in answer to a message from Emily, the physicians came. They found her courageous and cheerful; for she was sustained by an arm all-powerful. Strength was given to her for the day and the occasion; a wonderful fortitude sustained her; and the precious promise was verified to her—"When thou goest through the waters, I will be with thee."

And Agnes, who sat with one hand over her eyes, and the other clasping that of Emily, knew only by a sudden and long-continued pressure of the hand that the knife was doing its work. There was not a groan—only one long-drawn sigh—and it was over; and the result was better than their most sanguine hopes.

Mrs. Wharton returned, after an absence necessarily prolonged to some weeks. She found Emily sitting on the sofa, looking much as she had done when they parted; and it was not till long afterward that she discovered what had been the cause of Emily's illness, and learned how much she had endured. She understood many things now which had been mysteries to her before, realizing, in some degree, the torment of mind and body through which this gentle one had passed, and the reason of the bidding down of the tenderest feelings of her heart.

Poor Emily! None but He who seeth in secret had known the agony which wrung thy loving heart to its very depths, causing even the keen torture of physical suffering to be at times forgotten. But He can, and He *does*, give strength for the occasion, whatever it may be, and however sore the trial; and leaning on His arm, His people pass securely through fires of tribulation, which, in the prospect, would seem utterly unendurable, and come out purified, even as gold from the furnace.

X.

The Tutor and the Pupil.

"Untutor'd lad, thou art too malapert."—HENRY VI.

Mr. Wharton had endeavored to give Mr. Malcolm a correct understanding of the nature of the case he was about to undertake, in becoming the instructor of the spoiled and wayward Lewie. He told him of his natural good qualities, never suffered to develop themselves, and of the many evil ones, fostered and encouraged by the unwise indulgence of his fond and foolish mother. And yet, when the young clergyman had fairly entered upon his duties as tutor at the Hemlocks, he found, that "the half had not been told him."

Lewie chafed and fretted under the slightest restraint, and had not the remotest idea of doing anything that was not in all respects agreeable to his own inclinations. The idea of compulsion was so new to him, that he was overwhelmed with amazement one day, when his tutor (after trying various means to induce him to learn a particular lesson) finally told him that that lesson must be learned, and recited, before he could leave the library. Master Lewie, fully determined in his own mind to ascertain whose will was the strongest, and whose resolution would soonest give out, now openly rebelled, and informed his master that “he would *not* learn that lesson.”

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With his handsome face flushed with passion, he struggled from his tutor, rushed to the door, and endeavored to open it; but Mr. Malcolm was before-hand with him, and quietly turning the key in the lock, and putting it in his pocket, he walked back to the table. The frantic boy now endeavored to open the windows and spring out, but being foiled in this attempt likewise, as they were securely fastened, he threw himself upon the floor as he had been in the habit of doing when crossed, ever since his baby-hood, and screamed with all the strength of baffled rage.

His anxious mother was at the door in an instant, demanding admittance. Mr. Malcolm unfastened the door, stepped out to her in the hall, and gave her a faithful account of her son's conduct during the morning. "And now, Mrs. Elwyn," said he, "the promise was, that I was not to be interfered with in my government of your son. As long as he hears your voice at the door, and knows that he has your sympathy on his side, he will continue obstinate and rebellious."

"But, Mr. Malcolm, excuse me, but you do not know how to manage him, you should soothe and coax him; he will not be driven. Oh, I cannot bear to hear him scream so," she exclaimed, as a louder roar from Lewie reached her ears; "Oh, Mr. Malcolm, I must go to him."

"Not unless you desire, madam, that I should resign at once, and forever, the charge of your son," said Mr. Malcolm, laying his hand upon the lock to prevent her carrying her purpose into execution. "I have spent this whole morning," he continued, "in expostulation and persuasion, and in endeavoring, as I always do, to make the lessons plain and interesting to my pupil; but Lewie is in one of his perverse humors, and nothing but decision as unyielding as his own obstinacy, will conquer him. If you will return to your own room and allow me the sole management of him, I will remain here to-day till I have subdued him, if the thing is possible."

"You will not use *severity*, Mr. Malcolm," said the weeping mother.

"Never in the way of corporeal punishment, madam. When I cannot govern a pupil without having recourse to such means, I will abandon him. But I must stipulate that untill Lewie submits, and learns that lesson, which he could easily learn in a few minutes, if he chose, he goes without food, and remains in the library with me. I am deeply interested in your son, Mrs. Elwyn; he is a boy of fine talents, and of too many good qualities of heart, to be allowed to go to destruction. I would save him if I can, but he must be left to me. I have the hope of yet seeing him a noble and useful character, but I must do it in my own way."

Mrs. Elwyn silently acquiesced, and withdrew to her own room very wretched. If she had been willing to inflict upon herself one tithe of the pain she suffered now, in controlling her son in his infancy, how different he might have been, as he grew up towards manhood.

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Mr. Malcolm returned to the library, and told Lewie that his mother had decided to leave them settle this matter between themselves. He should remain there, he said; he could employ himself very agreeably with the books. Lewie might lie on the floor and scream, or get up and study; but until that lesson was learned, he would not leave the library, or taste a morsel of food.

The shrieks were now renewed in a louder and more agonized tone than ever, and were plainly heard in Mrs. Elwyn's sitting-room, where, in a state bordering on distraction, she was hurriedly pacing the floor, at times almost determined to insist upon being admitted to the library, that she might take her unhappy son to her arms, and dismiss his inexorable tutor; and then deterred from this course by the promise she had made, and the deep respect which she could not but feel for the young minister. She could not but confess, too, in her inmost heart, that this discipline was really for the good of her passionate boy, though the means resorted to seemed to her severe. Of the two, she was more wretched than Lewie, who really had no small sense of enjoyment, in the consciousness of the pain and annoyance he was causing to others.

The screams now ceased, and the anxious mother really hoped that Lewie was about to comply with his tutor's wishes, and that she should soon clasp him to her breast, wipe away his tears, and soothe his troubled heart. She was already, in her mind, planning some reward for him for condescending at length to yield his stubborn will. But the quiet was only in consequence of the utter exhaustion of Master Lewie's lungs, and he took refuge in a dogged silence, still rolling on the floor. Mr. Malcolm sat reading, as much at his ease, and apparently with as much interest, as if he were the only occupant of the library.

At last the young rebel was made aware, by certain ringing sounds, and divers savory odors, that the hour of dinner had arrived; and his appetite being considerably sharpened by the excitement through which he had passed, he began to entertain the suspicion that he had been rather foolish in holding out so long in his obstinacy. He really wished that he had learned the lesson, and was free for the afternoon; but how to come down was the puzzle now. He determined to be as ugly about it as possible, thinking that his tutor might be pretty weary by that time as well as he, and might hail joyfully any tokens of submission.

So Master Lewie began to call out:

"I want my dinner!"

"What is that, Lewie?" said Mr. Malcolm, looking up quietly from his book.

"I want my *dinner*, I tell you!" roared Lewie.

Pushing his book towards him, Mr. Malcolm said, in a quiet, determined manner:

“You know the conditions, Lewie, on which you leave this room: they will not change, if we remain here together till to-morrow morning. This lesson must be learned and recited perfectly, before you taste any food.”



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Lewie murmured that “there was one good thing—his teacher would have to fast too.”

“As for me, I never take but two meals a day,” said Mr. Malcolm; “I can wait till five o’clock very well for my dinner; and should I be very hungry, your mother will doubtless give me something to eat.”

Through most of the afternoon, Lewie sat scrawling figures with his pencil on some paper which was lying near, and really beginning to suffer from the “keen demands of appetite.” After sitting thus an hour or two, he suddenly said:

“Give me the book, then, if there is no other way! I can learn that lesson in five minutes, if I have a mind.”

“I know that, Lewie,” said his tutor; “no one can learn quicker or better than you, when you choose; but you cannot have this book till you ask me for it in a different way.”

It took another hour of sulking before Master Lewie’s pride could be sufficiently humbled to admit of his asking in a civil tone for the book; but hunger, which has reduced the defenders of many a strong fortress, at last brought even this obstinate young gentleman to terms. The book was handed him, on being properly asked for, and in a very few minutes the lesson was learned, and recited without a mistake. Lewie evidently expected a vast amount of commendation from his teacher, but he received nothing of the kind. Mr. Malcolm only endeavored to make him understand how much trouble he might have saved himself by attention to his studies in the morning, and then talked to him very seriously for some moments upon the folly and wickedness of giving way to such a furious temper, endeavoring to point out some of the results to which it would be likely to lead him.

One would think that two or three such contests with his tutor, in each of which he was finally obliged to yield, would have taught our little hero *who* was the master, and would have led him, by timely compliance, to avoid the recurrence of such scenes. But no! he was so unaccustomed to having his will thwarted in any particular, that it seemed almost an impossibility for him to submit to have it crossed. The moment anything occurred in opposition to his wishes, his strong will rose rebellious; and having been accustomed to carry all before it, could only with the utmost difficulty, and after a terrible struggle, be controlled.

His kind and judicious tutor, to whom the task of instructing so wayward a youth was by no means a pleasant one, was urged to a continuance of his labors only by a stern sense of duty; having at heart the best good of his pupil, and humbly trusting that, with the blessing of God upon his efforts, he might be able at length to teach him to exercise some control over himself. This might possibly have been effected, perhaps, but for the unwise indulgence and sympathy of his foolishly-fond mother, who was ever at hand,

when Mr. Malcolm left, to listen to her son's tale of grievances, by which he sometimes succeeded in convincing her that he was most unjustly and cruelly treated.

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Lewie had become tired of the loneliness and quiet of his country home, and wished to be among other boys, and particularly to go to the school at which his cousins, the young Whartons, had been placed. They had lately been home for a vacation, and he had heard much of the *fun* they enjoyed at school; in comparison with which, his quiet life with his mother, and under the care of his tutor, seemed very tame and dull. He now became more restive and impatient under control, and seemed determined to weary out his kind tutor, in the hope that he would voluntarily relinquish his charge. In the meantime, he continued to give his mother no rest on the subject of Dr. Hamilton's school; and she, poor woman, knew not what course to take, between her desire to please her importunate son, and her dislike to offend Mr. Malcolm.

At last, however, as usual, Lewie conquered; and rushing out of one door, as he saw Mr. Malcolm enter at the other, he left his mother to inform the young minister that he was no longer to be tutor there. As far as his own comfort was concerned, this dismissal was a great relief to Mr. Malcolm; but, as he told Mrs. Elwyn, he feared that her troubles would not be lessened, but rather increased, by sending Lewie to a public school. He had never been much among other boys; and he would find his own inclinations crossed many times a day, not only by teachers, but by schoolmates, who would have no more idea of always giving up their own will than Lewie himself had, and constant trouble might be the result.

All this Mrs. Elwyn admitted; but what could she do? She was like a reed in the wind before the might of Lewie's determination, and he knew it. Ah! she was learning already that "A child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame" and sorrow; and it was with the deepest mortification that she was obliged to confess that she had suffered the golden hours of infancy to slip by, without acquiring over her son's mind that influence which every mother should and may possess. The opportunity, alas! was now lost forever. Her son had neither respect for her authority, or regard for her wishes.

XI.

Ruth Glen.

"The more I looked, I wondered more—
And while I scanned it o'er and o'er
A moment gave me to espy
A trouble in her strong black eye;
A remnant of uneasy light,
A flash of something over bright;
Not long this mystery did detain
My thoughts—she told in pensive strain
That she had borne a heavy yoke,
Been stricken by a two-fold stroke;

Ill health of body; and had pined
Beneath worse ailments of the mind.”

WORDSWORTH.

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It had been determined ever since poor Miss Edwards left the Wharton's, that the girls should be sent to the city, to boarding school, and it was without much difficulty that Mr. Wharton succeeded in obtaining Mrs. Elwyn's consent to his sending Agnes with them, that the cousins might continue their education together. Indeed, as I have before intimated, Mrs. Elwyn always listened, and answered with the utmost indifference, when any plan respecting her daughter was proposed to her. She supposed, rightly enough, that her own means might be required for the support of herself and Lewie, (for she intended to close her house and accompany Lewie to Stanwick,) and as Mr. Wharton seemed anxious to take the care of Agnes from her hands, and she knew he could well afford to do so, she made no objection whatever to the proposed plan. In short, Mr. and Mrs. Wharton regarded this lovely girl, thus cast off and neglected by her only natural protector, as their own, and cherished her accordingly.

Mrs. Wharton's health, which had delayed, for some months, the departure of the girls for the city, now seemed fully re-established; Emily, also, seemed better than she had done for years, and it was with light hearts, and many pleasant anticipations, that the three cousins, under the care of Mr. Wharton, started, for the first time, for school. At about the same time, Lewie, accompanied by his mother, went to Stanwick, and began his school life under the care of Dr. Hamilton.

The boarding-school at which Agnes and her cousins were placed, was under the superintendence of Mrs. Arlington and her daughters, ladies who had received a most thorough education in England, and who had long kept an extensive and popular boarding-school there. The hope of passing her declining days in the society of an only son, who had some years before emigrated to America, induced Mrs. Arlington, accompanied by her daughters, to follow him, and though it pleased Providence to remove this idolized son and brother, by death, in a little more than a year after their reunion in this country, the mother and daughters determined to remain, and continue their vocation here, where they had very flattering hopes of success.

Mr. and Mrs. Wharton had long known and esteemed these estimable ladies, and though, in many respects, opposed to boarding-schools in general, yet, as there seemed, at present, no other means for the girls to acquire an education, but by sending them from home, they thought that a more unexceptionable place could not be provided for them than Mrs. Arlington's school.

Mrs. Arlington, though a woman of more than sixty years of age, still possessed an erect and queen-like figure, a most dignified and stately appearance, and a face of remarkable beauty. She commanded respect at first sight, and there was no punishment greater for her pupils, than to be reported to Mrs. Arlington, and to be obliged to meet her face to face, to receive a reprimand. Her three daughters, Miss Susan, Miss Sophie, and Miss Emma, taught in different departments of the school, and were in every respect most admirably fitted for their different stations. Miss Emma

taught music; Miss Sophie, French and drawing; while Mrs. Arlington and her eldest daughter attended solely to the more solid branches of education.

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It took some little time, of course, before our young friends felt at home in so strange a place, and among so many new faces. But many of the older scholars, who had been long in the school, were very kind in coming forward to make their acquaintance, and endeavor to do away the feeling of awkwardness, ever an attendant upon the introduction to scenes so untried and new. Grace and Effie were very shy and silent at first, but the peculiarly sweet and unaffected friendliness of Agnes' manner, won every heart immediately. The younger scholars, especially, seemed to love her the moment she spoke to them, and to feel as if in her they should ever find a friend.

Agnes and her cousins were placed in a large room in the third story; this room contained three beds, one of which was taken possession of by Grace and Effie, another was occupied by two little girls, of the names of Carrie and Ella Holt and Agnes was, for the present, alone. Mrs. Wilkins, the housekeeper, informed her, however, that Mrs. Arlington expected a new scholar soon, who was to be her bed-fellow. For some reason or other, the new scholar did not arrive at the time expected, and it was not till Agnes and her cousins had been some weeks at the school, and had begun to feel quite at home there, that they were made aware, by the advent of an old hair trunk and a band-box, that the sixth occupant of their room had arrived.

The new scholar's name was Ruth Glenn. She was a strange-looking girl; very tall and thin, with a pale, greenish cast of complexion; coal-black eyes, very much sunken in her head; hair as black as her eyes, and colorless lips. When she smiled, which was very seldom, she displayed a fine set of teeth, her only redeeming feature. Her manners were as strange as her appearance. When she spoke, which was only when absolutely necessary, or in reciting her lesson, there was a constant nervous twitching about her bloodless lips; and she had a peculiar way of pulling at her long, thin fingers, as if it was her full intention to pull them off.

We cannot help being influenced by first impressions; and though Agnes felt the sincerest pity for this strange, awkward, shy girl, and did her best to make her feel at her ease, she could not but feel sorry that she was to be her bed-fellow. Ruth Glenn sat by herself in the school-room, always intently occupied with her book, having no communication with her school-mates, and always seizing on the moment of dismissal from the school-room to retire to her own apartment. And yet, as far as the girls could judge, she was full of kindness and generosity of feeling, evinced by many little quiet acts which one school-mate may always find it in her power to do for another.

One night, the third or fourth after the arrival of Ruth Glenn at the school, the girls sleeping in the room with her were suddenly aroused from sleep by loud and piercing screams from little Carrie Holt. Agnes sprang up, and was by her side in a moment. As she left her bed she perceived that Miss Glenn was not there.

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"What is the matter, Carrie? Why do you scream so, dear?" asked Agnes.

"Oh, Miss Elwyn!—that tall, white figure!—that tall, white figure! It came and stood by me, and laid its cold white hand right on my face. It was a ghost—I know it was—I saw it so plain in the moonlight. Oh, don't leave me!—don't leave me, Miss Elwyn! It will come again!" And the trembling child clung with both arms tightly around Agnes.

"I will not leave the room, Carrie," said Agnes; "but I must find out what has frightened you so. There are no such things as ghosts, Carrie: you have been dreaming."

"Oh no, Miss Elwyn, I did not dream that!" sobbed little Carrie; "I was having a beautiful dream about ho-o-o-me and mother, when that cold hand came on my cheek, and I opened my eyes, and saw that tall, white figure. Oh, it had such great hollow eyes! I saw them so plain in the moonlight!"

"Now lie down, dear little Carrie, till I find out what all this means," said Agnes. The weeping child obeyed, hugging up close to her little sister for protection.

The light had been taken away at ten o'clock, as was the invariable custom at Mrs. Arlington's; but Agnes opened both shutters, and admitted the bright moonlight into the room, making every object to be discerned almost as plainly as in the day-time. She then stepped to her own bed. Miss Glenn certainly was not there. She went to the door of her room, and found it locked on the inside, as she had left it when she went to bed. Miss Glenn, then, must still be in the room. Agnes walked around it, carefully examining every object: she then went into the closet, and felt carefully all around the walls. She began to think there was something very strange in all this; and the other girls, all of whom had been wide awake ever since they were aroused by the screams of little Carrie, were sitting up in their beds in a great state of agitation and alarm.

"I will not stay in this room another night!" said little Carrie; "I wish we dared to go down to Mrs. Arlington. Let's all go down together to Miss Emma, and ask her to come up here."

"No, no; hush, children!" said Agnes. Then she called, as loudly as she dared, without awaking those in the neighboring rooms:

"Miss Glenn! Miss Glenn! where are you?"

"Here I am! What do you want of me?" answered a smothered voice.

"Mercy on us!" shrieked Carrie and Ella in a breath, and springing with one bound on to the floor—"mercy on us! she is under our bed!"

Agnes looked under the bed, and could just distinguish something white, huddled up in one corner under the head of the bed.

“Miss Glenn! what do you mean?” exclaimed Agnes, in a tone of amazement. “Are you trying to frighten these poor children? Come out here directly.”

With all Agnes’ gentleness, she had sufficient spirit when roused, and she was now really indignant at what she supposed was a cruel attempt to frighten little Carrie and Ella. Ruth Glenn was three or four years older than Agnes, but yet she submitted at once to the tone of authority in which she was addressed, and came crawling out from under the bed.

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"I think it's a little too bad," said the trembling little sisters, crying and talking together; "it's real mean, to wake us up, and frighten us so. I mean to tell Mrs. Arlington of you to-morrow, Miss Glenn. I know our mother won't let us stay here to be frightened so!"

Ruth Glenn sat down on the edge of her own bed and said nothing, but Agnes noticed that she shivered, as if with cold.

"Come, Miss Glenn, lie down," said Agnes, "and let us see if we can have quiet for the rest of the night; we shall none of us be fit for study to-morrow, I fear."

Ruth Glenn obeyed quietly, and was soon asleep, but the others had been so agitated that it was a long time before their minds were sufficiently calmed for repose. When startled by the rising bell, they got up tired and unrefreshed, and with no very amiable feelings towards the author of the disturbance in the night. Miss Glenn went about dressing as quietly as usual, saying nothing to any one; till little Ella, who was a spirited little thing, just as she was leaving the room, turned about and said:

"Now, Miss Glenn! I am going right down to tell Mrs. Arlington about you."

To the surprise of all, this cold silent girl sat down on the bed, and wringing her hands, and rocking back and forth, and crying most piteously, she begged little Ella not to tell of her.

"I will do anything I can for you, Ella," said she, "I will help you in your lessons, whenever you want any help; only don't tell Mrs. Arlington; she will send me away perhaps, and then what shall I do!" She then implored Agnes to use her influence with the little girls, and her cousins, to ensure their silence on the subject, promising not to disturb them again, if she could help it.

"I don't know what I went to your bed for, Carrie," she said, "I did not want to frighten you."

"Why did you act so strangely then, Miss Glenn?" asked Agnes, "were you asleep?"

"I don't know; I cannot tell; don't ask me;" was all they could get from Miss Glenn, who continued to weep and wring her hands.

Though apparently very poor, Miss Glenn possessed some few rare and curious things, which she said her father, who had been a sea-captain, had brought her from other countries, and by means of some of these, she succeeded in securing the silence of the little girls. Grace and Effie were easily induced by the remonstrances of Agnes, and partly by pity for Miss Glenn's evident distress, to promise not to betray her. None of the occupants of that room felt fit for study that day, except Miss Glenn. She sat alone, as usual, and studied as perseveringly as ever. This was only the beginning of a series of nocturnal performances, continued almost every night, with every morning a

repetition of the same scene of begging and remonstrance with her room-mates, to persuade them not to betray her to Mrs. Arlington. Sometimes, as Miss Glenn was quietly leaving her bed,

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Agnes would wake and follow her, determined to see what she would do, and to prevent, if possible, her waking the other girls. At times she would seat herself upon a chest in one corner of the room, and commence a conversation with some imaginary individual near her; then she would move silently round the room, and sitting down in some other part of it, would talk again, as if in conversation with some lady next her. Then she would open the window very quietly, and look up, and down, and around, talking all the time in a low tone, but in a much more lively and animated manner than was usual with her in the day-time. She would sometimes cross over to the bed where Grace and Effie Wharton were sleeping, but just as she was about laying her hand on one of them, Agnes would touch her, and ask her what she meant by wandering about so night after night, and tell her to come directly back to bed.

“Oh,” Miss Glenn would answer quietly, “I have only been talking to the ladies, and holding a little conversation with the moon and stars—don’t mind me—go to bed—I will come.”

But Agnes would answer resolutely,

“No, Miss Glenn, I will not leave you to frighten the girls again; you must come back to bed with me, and let me hold your hand tightly in mine.” And Miss Glenn would obey immediately.

When the moon was shining brightly into the room, these performances of Miss Glenn’s were only annoying, but when the nights were very dark, and nothing could be seen in the room, it was really horrible to hear this strange girl chattering and mumbling, now in one corner, now in another, sometimes in the closet, sometimes under the beds; and one night, in a fearful thunder-storm, she seemed to be terribly excited, and when the lightning flashed upon the walls, the shadow of her figure could be seen strangely exaggerated, performing all manner of wild antics.

This conduct of Miss Glenn’s puzzled Agnes exceedingly: she could not decide in her own mind whether the girl was trying to frighten them, whether she was asleep, or whether she had turns of derangement at night. Neither of these suppositions seemed exactly to account for her singular actions. Her evident, and, Agnes doubted not, real distress, at the possibility of Mrs. Arlington being informed of her nocturnal performances, and the sacrifices of every kind that she was willing to make to ensure silence, convinced Agnes that it was not done merely to alarm them; her vivid remembrance of all that she had said or done in the night, and her answering questions, and coming to bed so readily when addressed by Agnes, without any appearance of waking up, led her to suppose it was not somnambulism; and as Miss Glenn never showed any sign of wandering of mind in the day time, Agnes could not suppose it to be derangement. Miss Glenn was a perfect enigma; night after night disturbing her room-

mates with her strange performances, and every morning going over the same scene of earnest expostulation and entreaty,

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accompanied by violent weeping, to induce them not to betray her to Mrs. Arlington. Poor little Carrie and Ella kept the secret bravely, though, on the night of the thunder-storm, they were so terrified by Miss Glenn's conduct, that, wrapping themselves in the bed-blankets, and persuading Agnes to lock the door after them, they went out, and sat upon the stairs till morning. The very next day, two sisters who slept in another room received tidings of the death of their mother, which hurried them home; and as they were not to return that quarter, little Carrie and Ella, with Agnes to intercede for them, requested to be allowed to take their vacated place. Mrs. Arlington readily acquiesced, as, she said, it would be much better to have four in each room.

Thus things went on, till, one night, Agnes was horror-stricken to find that Miss Glenn was endeavoring to climb out of the window. As I have said, they were in the third story of the building; and the distance to the ground being very great, the unfortunate girl would inevitably have been dashed to pieces upon the flag stones below, had not Agnes suddenly caught her, and, with a strength that astonished herself, succeeded in drawing her back into the room.

The terror and agitation into which Agnes was thrown by this circumstance determined her to do something decisive the very next day; she was now convinced that it was her duty, and resolved to do it, in spite of Miss Glenn's tears and persuasions. She thought it right, however, in the first place, to acquaint Miss Glenn with her determination, and began by informing her, when they were alone the next morning, of the imminent danger from which she had been so fortunate as to save her in the night. Ruth Glenn seemed to remember it all, and shuddered as she thought of it.

"Now, Ruth," said Agnes, "I really think we have all kept silence as long as could be expected, or as it is *right* that we should. You will bear witness that we have endured very patiently all this nightly disturbance. I have long been convinced, whatever may be the reason of your conduct, that you have not the control of your own actions at night; and I think we shall be very culpable if we conceal this matter longer from Mrs. Arlington; for, as you must now be convinced, the consequences may be fatal to yourself, or perhaps to others. You need not fear that Mrs. Arlington will dismiss you, but I think she will consult medical advice in your case, which most probably should have been done long before this."

Ruth acknowledged the justice of all that Agnes said, and at length consented that she should make Mrs. Arlington acquainted with all that had transpired in their room. "But, oh, Agnes!" she said, "do persuade her to let me remain, and finish my education. It has been my hope for years, that I might be enabled to prepare myself to be a governess. My father was lost at sea, and my poor mother died of a broken heart, and I was left

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all alone to take care of myself at the age of fourteen. Since then, I have sewed night and day, night and day, denying myself sleep, and almost all the necessities of life, in the hope of getting an education. That hope, with all my unwearied industry, would never have been fulfilled, had not a kind lady for whom I sewed offered to make up the requisite sum; and now, if Mrs. Arlington sends me away, what will become of me? The hope of my life will be disappointed."

"Well, I do not wish to discourage you, my dear Ruth, but you must see I think that you are totally unfitted to have children under your care at present."

"I suppose I am, Agnes, but I have been hoping that I should get over this; it seems to grow worse and worse, however, and you may now do as you choose. You have exercised great forbearance with me, dear Agnes. You have been a true friend, and whatever may be the result, you may go to Mrs. Arlington."

Mrs. Arlington was very kind, and only regretted that she had not before been made acquainted with Ruth Glenn's singular conduct. She said she did not doubt that it was entirely owing to her state of health, and her sedentary manner of life for years past, and sent immediately for her family physician, and made him acquainted with the case.

Agnes was sent for, and questioned as to Miss Glenn's actions and appearance, when thus restless at night, and she as well as the different teachers, were interrogated as to her habits in the day time. The doctor thus learned that it was with the greatest difficulty that Miss Glenn could be persuaded to take any exercise, and Agnes told him what Ruth had related to her of her mode of life for the last few years. The doctor thought it one of the most singular cases he ever met with, and prescribed a strict course of medicine, diet and exercise, insisting particularly upon the latter.

It was a hard thing to persuade Ruth to take her early morning walk, and other exercise advised by the physician, and Mrs. Arlington was at length obliged to tell her, that only upon condition of her obeying his directions, could she consent to allow her to remain in the school. This, together with the indefatigable endeavors of Agnes, prevailed upon Ruth Glenn to take the accustomed walks, which Agnes with great cunning contrived to lengthen every morning, until at length Ruth Glenn would return with a slight tinge of color in her cheek, and an unusual brightness about her eye. The result was very soon seen, in more quiet nights in the third-story-room, and, before long, Ruth confessed that she felt like another creature, and began to realize an enjoyment in life, of which she had known nothing since her childhood.

Often, however, the old feeling of indolence returned, and it was very amusing to Grace and Effie to hear poor Ruth beg and plead with Agnes to be allowed to remain quiet "just one morning," and to see how vigorously and perseveringly Agnes resisted her appeals,

rousing her up and leading her off, poor Ruth looking much like a martyr about to be dragged to the stake.

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Before Agnes and her cousins left Mrs. Arlington's school, Ruth Glenn was so changed for the better, that she would not have been recognized as the same pale, strange girl, who came there three years before. Her spirits and appetite were good, and there was no longer any complaint of disturbance at night by her room-mates.

It was a sad day in the school when Agnes and her cousins took their final leave, but no one seemed so broken-hearted as poor Ruth Glenn.

"Oh, Agnes," said she, "who will be the friend to me that you have been? Who will drag me out with such relentless cruelty?" and here she smiled sadly through her tears, "through rain and sunshine, heat and cold; I am afraid I shall be as bad as ever, for my walks will be so dull without you."

But Agnes told her she hoped she had now received sufficient benefit from her regular exercise, to be willing to make a little sacrifice, and obtained from her a solemn promise that she would continue the course they had so long pursued together.

Agnes had employed herself most perseveringly while at Mrs. Arlington's school, in becoming thoroughly acquainted with various branches of education and accomplishments, being fully determined in her own mind no longer to be a burden to her uncle, but to use the means he was so kindly putting into her hands, in enabling her to gain her own support hereafter. But she had no sooner left the school than other duties claimed her attention, as will presently be seen.

XII.

LEWIE AT SCHOOL.

"The child is father of the man."—WORDSWORTH.

Had our friend Lewie heard Mr. Malcolm's prediction relative to his school experiences, he would have had reason to think him a true prophet. He came into the school and the play-ground with the same ideas which had been predominant with him ever since his baby-hood; and though he did not, as then, continually say the *words*, his actions proclaimed as loudly, "Lewie must have his own way!—Lewie must not be crossed!" He found his school companions not quite so complying as his indulgent mother, and those over whom she had control; and before he had been long in the school, he was known by the various names of "Dictator-General," "First Consul," "Great Mogul," &c., and with these epithets he was greeted whenever he put on any of his dictatorial airs.

These constant insults and impertinences, as he called them, irritated his ungoverned spirit, and in consequence many a school-mate measured his length upon the ground in the most sudden manner, and innumerable were the fights and "rows" which were the result. The presence of Lewie seemed everywhere the signal of contention and strife,

where all had been heretofore, with very few exceptions, harmony and peace; and yet, but for his hasty and impatient temper, Lewie might have been an unparalleled favorite among his schoolmates.

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In the still summer evenings, when he took his guitar, and sat upon the steps of the portico, the boys would crowd around him, and listen in breathless silence to his sweet music. As long as his own inclinations were not crossed or interfered with, a more agreeable companion could not be found. He had the frank, open manners, which are not seldom joined with a quick temper, and in many things he showed a noble, generous disposition; but as soon as the wishes of others in their sports and recreations came in conflict with his own, his terrible passion was roused at once, and carried all before it. Many were the complaints which he carried to his mother of insult and ill-treatment; and before he had been six months at Dr. Hamilton's school, he was urging her to allow him to remove to another of which he had heard, and where he fancied he should be more happy. Mrs. Elwyn's health was not as firm as it once was; she was becoming weak and nervous, and dreaded change, and endeavored to pacify her son, and to persuade him to remain at Dr. Hamilton's school. No doubt he would have effected his object by teasing, but it was accomplished in another way.

There are boys to be found in every large school who delight in playing practical jokes, and in teasing and tormenting those who are susceptible of annoyance in this way. There was a large, stout boy in Dr. Hamilton's school, of the name of Colton, a great bully and tease, whose delight it seemed to be to torment and put into a passion one so fiery as our little hero, feeling safe from the only kind of retaliation which could injure him, as he was so much the stoutest and strongest of the two. This boy soon found that there was one point upon which Lewie was peculiarly sensitive, and the slightest allusion to which would call the red blood to his face. This was the fact of his being accompanied by his mother when he came to the school, and her having taken board in the village, that she might be near him as long as he was there. Lewie had remonstrated with his mother, when she proposed accompanying him, and had urged her to accept his Uncle Wharton's invitation to make his house her home. He was just at that age when boys love to appear independent and manly, and able to take care of themselves; and he had hoped that he should be allowed to go alone to school, as many of the other boys did, or perhaps to accompany his uncle and cousins. But to be taken there under the care of a *woman*, and to have her remain near him, as if he could not take care of himself! Lewie thought this a most humiliating state of things. But for once his mother was firm. It would be like severing her heart-strings, to separate her from her darling son; and wherever he went, she must go as long as she lived. This ingratitude on the part of Lewie and evident desire to rid himself of her company, after so many years spent in devotion to his slightest wishes, wore upon her spirits, and was one cause, perhaps the principal one, of her nervous depression, and consequent ill health.

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As soon as Colton understood the state of Lewie's feelings on this tender point, and noticed how his cheeks would flush with passion whenever the subject was mentioned, he took advantage of it to harass and enrage him, renewing the subject most unmercifully at every convenient opportunity. Thus, whenever, in their sports, Lewie took upon himself to dictate, in his authoritative way, Colton would ask the boys if they were going to be governed by a baby who had not yet broken loose from his mother's apron-strings; and when Lewie could no longer restrain his passion, and began to show signs of becoming pugnacious, Colton would advise him to "run to mother," to be petted and soothed.

For sometime prudence restrained Lewie from making an attack upon this boy, so much larger and stronger than himself, for he was almost certain that he would get the worst of it in an encounter with him. But one day when Colton was more aggravating than ever, Lewie suddenly lost all command of himself, and flew at him in a most fearful storm of rage, and with all the might of his passion concentrated in one blow, he dashed the great boy against a tree; and after he was down, and lying insensible, with his head cut and bleeding, Lewie could scarcely be restrained, by the united strength of those about him, from rushing upon his senseless body, and by renewed blows continuing to injure him.

His rage was fearful to witness, and his companions stood aghast, for they saw clearly that murder was in his heart, and that nothing but the restraint they exercised upon him, prevented him from carrying his horrible purpose into execution. Colton was borne to the house, and it was long feared that he would never entirely recover from the effects of the severe blow upon his head as he fell. Lewie seemed to feel nothing like remorse; he had always hated Colton, and everything this boy had done had tended to increase and aggravate his feelings of dislike; he thought nothing in his frantic rage of the consequences to himself, but would have rejoiced to see his tormentor dead at his feet.

This last affair decided Dr. Hamilton that it would not do to keep a boy of such fierce, unrestrained temper, longer in the school. Lewie had all this time been progressing rapidly in his studies; a fierce ambition seemed to have seized upon him, and he applied himself to his books as if he had come to the determination that he would at least rise superior to his school-mates, in his standing in the class, if they would not acknowledge his superiority in anything else.

Dr. Hamilton called soon after Lewie's attack upon Colton, to see Mrs. Elwyn, and while he spoke of Lewie as one on whom he could justly be proud, as the best and most forward scholar in his classes, he said it was impossible for him to allow him to remain; that the lives of his other pupils were hardly to be considered safe with so passionate a companion, and for the sake of the reputation of his school, he

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must ask her to save him the necessity of a public dismissal of her son. Sad by this time were the forebodings of Mrs. Elwyn, but they were useless; her remonstrances with her self-willed son were vain. If Lewie was obliged to submit to being accompanied by his mother wherever he went, he seemed determined to show her, that her wishes had not the slightest power over him. The sowing time had passed;—the reaping time had begun.

Lewie no longer urged and entreated, but merely expressed his determination to go to the school to which he had so long been desirous to remove, and his poor mother knowing that henceforth his will must be hers, made her preparations for accompanying him.

Boys are the same everywhere; and unless all are willing in some degree to relinquish their own gratification for the sake of others, there will surely be trouble. So Lewie found at Stanwick; so at the next school, and the next; for as he became dissatisfied with one and unpopular there, he removed to another, his poor mother following his fortunes everywhere. Many were the kind and remonstrating letters which Lewie received during these three years of change, from his lovely sister, but the affectionate advice contained in them as to an endeavor to gain command over his temper, and in regard to his treatment of his mother, seemed to have no permanent effect.

All this time, wherever he went, he ranked' among the highest as to his scholarship, and at the age of sixteen he entered college at C——, about ten or fifteen miles from Hillsdale. By the time they were fairly established at C——, Mrs. Elwyn's health completely failed. Lewie's time much taken up with his college duties, and even if it had not been, he was not one to wait with patience upon the humors of a nervous and fretful invalid; and the greater part of the time was spent by Mrs. Elwyn in loneliness and repining.

And now her thoughts turned often, and rested almost fondly upon the memory of her long neglected daughter. Oh! for such a kind and gentle nurse and companion to be ever near her, to minister to her wants and soothe her lonely hours. The more she thought of her, the more she longed for her presence, and it was soon after Agnes left Mrs. Arlington's and returned to Brook Farm, that she received with delight a summons to come to her mother at C——. The idea that her mother really *wished* for her, and that she could be in any degree useful to her, made her heart bound with joy; and then, too, the idea of being so near her brother, to endeavor to exercise a restraining influence upon him, was happiness in itself for Agnes.

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She found her mother greatly changed: anxiety of mind and bodily suffering had worn upon her, till her face, which might still have been young and blooming, was faded and wrinkled. She was glad to see Agnes, only because now she could be *useful* to her; and Agnes often found her whole stock of patience brought into requisition, in endeavoring to gratify the changing whims and fancies of a nervous invalid. Lewie was in ecstasies at his sister's arrival; for he did dearly love Agnes, and he now passed all his leisure time at his mother's room. Agnes thought him more gentle and tractable, and hoped that he really exercised some control over his passionate temper; but it was only, for the time, the want of provocation, and the restraining influence of his sister's presence, which kept him from any serious out-break. The grace of God alone could materially change Lewie Elwyn now.

Agnes remained many months in attendance upon her mother, who failed very gradually. As she grew weaker, she became more exacting; and though never betrayed into any expression of affection for Agnes, yet she was not willing to have her out of her sight for a moment. The consciousness of being useful to her mother, was sufficient reward for sleepless nights and days of close confinement; and Agnes resisted all Lewie's entreaties that she would leave the sick room for a while each day, and take a stroll with him.

Had Lewie been inclined to dissipation, this would have been a dangerous time for him; for his wonderful musical powers made him such a favorite, that no gathering was thought complete without him. As long as Agnes was at C——, he preferred spending his evenings with her to any party of pleasure; and after he could no longer enjoy her society, and when he began again to mingle in scenes of festivity, though sometimes betrayed into excesses, he never was habitually dissipated.

Mrs. Elwyn lingered on, becoming weaker and weaker, until, after Agnes had been with her about six months, she perceived that she was failing more rapidly, and at length was informed by the physician, that her mother could live but very few days longer. Agnes hastily summoned Mr. and Mrs. Wharton, who arrived only in time to witness the death-bed scene. Just before her death, Mrs. Elwyn seemed to awake to a sudden realization of the great mistakes of her life with regard to her son and daughter. She seemed to see now, as clearly as others had seen all along, the evils of her own management, and to trace the unhappy results to their proper source. It was sad to hear her, when all too late to remedy these evils, lament over "a wasted life—a worse than wasted life;" and so, with words of remorse upon her lips, she, who had had such power for good in her hands, passed away from earth.

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And Agnes returned to her uncle's house, leaving her brother at college. As soon as she had taken a little time to recruit, and to consider, she began to look about for a situation as governess, much against the wishes of every member of her uncle's family, who would have considered it a privilege to keep her always with them. About this time, a distant relative of Mrs. Wharton's, a Mr. Fairland, in passing from his Western home to the city, stopped to make them a visit. He was a plain, kind-hearted man, and seemed to take a particular interest in Agnes, with whose father and grandfather he had been intimately acquainted. Mr. Fairland had made quite a fortune by successful speculation, in a large Eastern city; but the extravagance of his wife and daughters, who were not willing to be outdone in dress or establishment by any of their neighbors, made such rapid inroads upon his newly-acquired wealth, that Mr. Fairland soon became convinced that it was leaving him as rapidly as it came. So he thought it the part of prudence to beat a retreat at once; and, in spite of the tears and remonstrances of his wife and eldest daughters, he removed the whole family to the beautiful village of Wilston, near which place he owned some fine and flourishing mills.

It was while speaking of his new home, and its many beauties, at Mr. Wharton's breakfast table, that Mr. Fairland mentioned the only drawback to his happiness there, which, he said, was the want of the advantages of education for his younger children, who were running wild without any instruction, as their mother was unwilling to allow them to attend the village school. He had long been looking, he said, for a governess for them—one who would bring them up with right habits and principles, at the same time that she was instructing their minds.

Agnes seized the first opportunity in which she could find Mr. Fairland alone, to propose herself as governess to his children. This was more than Mr. Fairland had dared to hope for, and her proposal was hailed by him with gratitude and joy. He wished her to return immediately with him; but Agnes had some preparations to make, and her uncle was not willing to part with her quite yet: he promised, however, to bring her himself in the course of a month. A serious illness, however, deranged all Mr. Wharton's plans and as soon as he was able to travel, business of the utmost importance called him to the city; so that Agnes, who disliked to keep Mr. Fairland waiting for her any longer, wrote to him when he might expect her, and, much against Mrs. Wharton's wishes, set out alone in the stage for Wilston.

XIII.

NEW SCENES FOR AGNES.

"The stranger's heart! oh, wound it not!
A yearning anguish is its lot;
In the green shadow of the tree,
The stranger finds no rest with thee."

“And when may we expect to be favored with the presence of this paragon of perfection, and embodiment of all wisdom, papa?” asked Miss Evelina Fairland, with what was intended for the utmost girlish sprightliness of manner; for, although it was only at breakfast, Miss Evelina never laid aside her manner of extreme youth, as she thought it best to be continually in practice.

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Her father answered quietly, that he expected Miss Elwyn by the afternoon stage.

"Is she one of these prim, *old-maidish* governesses, like our poor old Miss Pratt?" asked Miss Calista, a lady of something over thirty, and rather the worse for twelve years' wear, in the way of balls and parties, the theatre and the opera. Indeed, at the breakfast table, Miss Calista looked considerably older than she really was, with her pale, faded cheeks, and her hair "en papillottes;" but, in the afternoon, by the use of a little artificial bloom, some cork-screw ringlets, and a manner as gay and girlish as that of her sister, she appeared quite another creature.

To Miss Calista's question Mr. Fairland, with an amused pucker about the mouth, answered:

"Oh, I shall tell you nothing about her looks; you must wait and judge for yourselves. There's one thing I will say, however. I suppose you can't alter your looks, girls; but, as far as manners are concerned, I wish very much that I could place my two eldest daughters under Miss Elwyn's tuition."

"Perhaps she will condescend to take a class, twice or three times a week, in 'manners for six-pence,'" said the sprightly Miss Evelina. "I should like to see Calista and myself curtsying, and walking, and leaving and entering a room, as we used to be obliged to do for old Miss Pratt. Wouldn't you, Calista?"

"Let's see," said Mr. Fairland, whose reminiscences were not always of the most agreeable nature to the young ladies—"let's see. How long is it since you and C'listy were under the care of Miss Pratt? I think it must be nigh twenty years."

"Twenty years, papa!—absurd!" shrieked Miss Calista; "why, you must be losing your memory!"

Now, if Mr. Fairland's daughters were touchy on the subject of their *ages*, their father was no less so on that of his *memory*, as Miss Calista well knew when she made the foregoing remark.

"Losing my memory indeed, Miss C'listy! My memory is as sound as ever; and, to prove it to you, I will inform you, that I shall be sixty-four years old this coming August; and by the same token, you are just exactly half my age; and if you don't believe it, you may just take a look at the family record, in the big Bible."

"C'listy's *scratched out her date*," said little Rosa, "and so has Evelina."

"Hold your tongue, you impertinent little minx!" said Miss Calista; "I really hope the prinky old governess who is coming will be able to whip a little manners into you. I really wonder you can allow the children to be so pert, mamma!"

The lady addressed as "*mamma*" was the second wife of Mr. Fairland, a rather handsome, but very languid lady of forty, who was sleepily sipping her coffee during the foregoing conversation. Now, as Mrs. Fairland did not look much older (perhaps not at all older, at the breakfast table,) than the oldest of her step-daughters, the young ladies quite prided themselves on so youthful a "*mamma*;" and when in company, or at the various watering-places to which, in former times, they had succeeded in dragging their parents, they hung round her, and asked her permission to do this and that, with the most child-like confidence in her judgment.

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This was by no means relished by the step-mother, who had no fancy for matronizing daughters so nearly her own age, and who wished no less fervently than the young ladies themselves, that something in the shape of a husband would appear to carry each of them off. She never failed after such a display of filial affection on their part to explain to those near her; that the young ladies were her *step-daughters*; and to mention how odd it sounded to her when she was first married, to hear those great girls as tall as herself, call her “mamma.”

It was a beautiful evening in the pleasant month of July, when Agnes entered the lovely village of Wilston, and drove through its one long street, to the spacious and rather showy dwelling of Mr. Fairland. Agnes had heard much of the beauty of Wilston, but her heart was now so oppressed with many agitating emotions, at the near prospect of the new and strange scenes upon which she was about to enter in so new a character, that not even the loveliness of the landscape, with its variety of hill, and dale, and woodland, on the one hand, and on the other the peaceful lake tinged with crimson by the setting sun, had power to win her attention.

Yet we need not fear for Agnes, that in thus appearing in the character of a governess, she will lose aught of her gentle dignity, or quiet self-possession. Agnes was a *lady* in every sense of the term, and place her where you would, or under whatever circumstances, she would invest her occupation with a dignity all her own, and make it honorable; winning from all around her an involuntary respect and homage. Though ever kind and amiable, and ready to oblige, she will never *cringe* to those who, by the favors of fortune, are placed for the time in circumstances more prosperous than her own. Tried, she may be by their arrogance, and airs of assumed superiority; but with the inward conviction which in spite of her modesty she must possess, that in all that is of real and true worth she is far above them, she will toil on undisturbed in her vocation, anxious only to fulfil her duty towards God, and toward those whom He has placed under her influence; and to acquit herself well of the high responsibility resting upon her.

Mr. Fairland met Agnes at the door, with his kind pleasant face, and with both hands extended to give her a cordial welcome to his roof. Mrs. Fairland rose languidly from her chair to receive the governess, and gave her a ceremonious, and to Agnes a most chilling greeting. The young ladies were out walking; but presently a troop of noisy children, who from some part of the grounds where they were at play, had seen the arrival of the stranger, came bursting rudely into the room. These, as Agnes supposed, were her future pupils, and a most unpromising set they at first sight appeared.

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The eldest, "Tiney," was a heavy, dull looking girl of about ten years of age. Her eyes had no more brightness or expression in them than two balls of lead, and her flabby colorless cheeks hung down each side of her mouth, giving that feature much the expression of a bull-dog, while a sullen fierceness about her face, increased the resemblance to that animal. Her teeth, utterly unacquainted with the action of a brush, were prominent, so that her lip seldom covered them, and her uncombed hair hung rough and shaggy around her unattractive face. Agnes at once guessed that this poor child was deficient in intellect, and unamiable in temper.

The next, *Rosa*, was a wild, handsome little gipsey, with eyes as black as jet, and as bright as diamonds, a brilliant color shining through her sunburnt cheek, and with straight black hair, no better cared for than her sister Tiney's.

The third little girl, *Jessie*, was very fair, with beautiful deep blue eyes, and golden curling hair; but the curls were all in tangles, for no one took the trouble to keep them in order, except on great occasions, when the poor child was put to the torture of having it brushed and combed, and laid in ringlets, which for the time were the special pride of her mother.

"You'll have enough to do, Miss Agnes, to tame all these rough spirits," said Mr. Fairland, "they have been running wild ever since we left the city, and a more rude and ungoverned set of little desperadoes, it has never been your lot to meet with, I'll venture to say." And then addressing them, he said, "come here, children, what do you stand there gaping for, with your thumbs in your mouths, as if you had never seen anybody before? Tiney! Rosa, you witch! Jess, my chicken! come up here this minute, and speak to Miss Elwyn."

But Tiney only pouted her ugly mouth and scowled; and Rosa, making a sudden dart for her mother's chair, retreated behind it, peering out her black eyes occasionally, to take a look at the stranger; while Jessie ran and sprang into her father's lap, hiding her little tangled head on his shoulder. And now a whooping and shouting made known the approach of Master Frank, the son and heir, a young individual of about four years of age, who, nothing daunted by the stranger's appearance, made for his father's chair, and proceeded to dislodge his sister Jessie from her seat, and to establish himself in her place. Jessie screamed, and scratched, and pulled in vain. Frank, though younger, was much the strongest, and the fight ended by the sudden descent of Miss Jessie to the floor, and the ascension of Master Frank into the vacated place.

"Be quiet now, will you, Frank, and speak to Miss Elwyn," said his father.

"Hallo! is that Miss Elwyn?" exclaimed Master Frank, aloud; "why, C'lista said she was old and ugly."

"Well, C'listy didn't know, did she?" said his father.

“And Ev’lina said she’d train us well, and whip us, and shut us up, and be awful cross all the time. She doesn’t look like that, does she, papa?”

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"No, she does not," said his father; "and I guess Evelina must have been mistaken too."

Agnes was all this time looking at Frank, very much amused, and laughing quietly at the description which had been given of her to the children.

"You think I do not look so very terrible, then, Master Frank," said she; "do you think you will ever like me?"

"I don't know," said Master Frank, boldly; "if you don't make me *mind*, I'll like you."

"But she *is* going to make you mind, Master Frank," said his father; "and, do you know, I have promised Miss Elwyn that she shall do just what she pleases with you all, and nobody shall interfere."

"In *school hours*," said Agnes.

"Yes, in school hours, and out of school hours, except when their mother or I are present: they are always to obey you, Miss Elwyn. I wish that to be understood in the family. But, my dear," said he to his wife, "perhaps Miss Elwyn would like to change her dress before tea."

Mrs. Fairland languidly directed Tiney to show Miss Elwyn to her room; but the only notice taken of this command by Miss Tiney was a stupid, sullen stare. Agnes had risen to leave the room; but perceiving that Tiney did not stir, she turned, and putting out one hand toward Rosa, said, in her own bright, winning way:

"*This* little black-eyed girl will show me the way, I'm sure."

There was no resisting the gentle kindness of Agnes, and the confidence of little Rosa was won immediately. Coming out from behind her mother's chair, she put her hand in that of Agnes, and led her up stairs into a large room, on the second floor, overlooking the beautiful lake.

"What a very pleasant room!" said Agnes. "Is this to be mine?"

"Yes," answered Rosa, who, having once found her tongue, showed that she could make very rapid use of it when she chose—"and that bed is yours, and that one is for me and Jessie."

"'Jessie and *me*,' you mean, Rosa, do you not?"

"I'm the *oldest*," answered Rosa.



"I know that, Rosa; but recollect, whenever you speak of any *one*, no matter who, in connection with yourself always to mention the other person first. Will you remember that?"

"Yes, I'll try," answered Rosa. She then proceeded to inform Agnes, that her mamma had wished to give her a little room on the other side of the hall, but papa said she should have this room, because it was so pleasant, and he had heard her say that she was so fond of the water.

"That was very kind of your papa," said Agnes; "and where does Tiney sleep?"

"Oh, Tiney sleeps with Susan, because she has fits, you know."

"*Who* has?—Susan?" asked Agnes.

"No, Tiney has fits, and nobody likes to take care of her but papa and Susan."

Agnes was disappointed to find that she was not to have a room to herself. "I came here to instruct these children," said she to herself, "not to act in the capacity of nursery-maid. However, I will bear it patiently for the present; perhaps I shall gain an influence over them, by having them so constantly with me, that I could not acquire in any other way. There is so much to be corrected in their habits and language, besides their being so woefully ignorant!"

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Agnes continued talking pleasantly to little Rosa, while she was dressing; and when they went down stairs, hand in hand, the very pleasantest relations appeared to be established between them.

“What shall we call you?” asked Rosa.

“You may call me ‘cousin Agnes,’ if you choose,” she answered, “and if your papa and mamma are willing.”

“Oh, I shall like that!” said Rosa.

Soon after Agnes and little Rosa re-entered the sitting-room, the Misses Fairland returned from their walk. They were gayly and showily attired in the very height of the fashion, and entered the door talking and laughing very loudly; but when introduced to Miss Elwyn, they stopped and opened their eyes in unaffected amazement. As Agnes rose with graceful ease to meet them, looking so lovely in her deep mourning dress, and with her rich waving chesnut hair, simply parted on her forehead, and gathered in a knot behind, there was a most striking contrast between her and the gaudily dressed, beflooned, and beflowered ladies, who were fashionably and formally curtsying, and presenting her the tips of their fingers.

Though younger by some years than the youngest of the Miss Fairlands, there was a dignified self-possession about Agnes, which was quite astonishing to them. Though rather of the *hoyden-ish* class themselves, they could not fail at once to recognize the air of refinement which marks the true lady, and while intending by their own appearance to over-awe the new governess, they were so completely taken by surprise by her perfect ease and composure of manner, that they alone appeared stiff and awkward, and she unembarrassed and easy.

And this was the prim old-maidish governess they had been expecting! this fresh, blooming, lovely looking girl! It was by no means a pleasant surprise to the Misses Fairland. However, she was nothing but a *governess* after all; and could easily be kept in the back ground; it was to be hoped she would know her place and keep it.

The Misses Fairland made the mistake very common with persons of weak mind, and little cultivation at that, and instead of judging of others by their intrinsic worth, character, or intellect, formed their estimate only by the outward circumstances in which they found them. Had this same Agnes Elwyn come to make a visit to her far away cousins, in her own carriage, and surrounded by external marks of wealth, they would have been ready to fall down and worship her; but coming as a *governess*, and by the *stage*, what notice could she expect from the Misses Fairland! These young ladies had so often been made wretched, by intentional slights from those in whose sphere they had aspired to move, that they did not doubt Agnes would be rendered equally uncomfortable by their own neglect.

The tea-bell rang, and the Misses Fairland hastened to take off their bonnets and soon re-appeared at the tea-table, where they took up the entire conversation, telling of all they had heard and seen, in their calls through the village. For like the ancient Athenians, these young ladies literally “spent their time in nothing else, but to hear or to tell of some new thing.”

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In the midst of the conversation there was a sudden bustle, and Tiney rose hastily from the table. Her father immediately left his chair, and went round to her place, and took her by the arm. There was a ghastly and disturbed look about poor Tiney's face, and an expression of terrible malignity about her eye, and as she passed the chairs of her little sisters, one screamed loudly and then the other, and when she came near Agnes, it was with great difficulty that she too could resist the inclination to scream with the pain, caused by a terrible pinch from the fingers of Tiney, which left its mark upon her arm for many days.

Mr. Fairland led the child from the room, and as the door closed after them, Agnes heard a succession of the most piercing shrieks, as if all the strength of the sufferer's lungs were expended upon each one.

"Oh, dear! Susan is out, and your father will need assistance," said Mrs. Fairland; "but really, these scenes have such an effect upon my nerves, that I find it necessary to avoid them altogether."

"And so do I," said Miss Calista, "indeed I always suffer with a severe headache after them."

"And they are so utterly disagreeable to me, to to be more candid than either of you," said Miss Evelina, "that I always keep as far out of the way as possible."

"Can I be of any use?" asked Agnes, partly rising and looking towards Mrs. Fairland. She would have followed poor Tiney and her father immediately, but did not wish to appear to pry into that of which nothing had been mentioned to her, and of which they might not like to speak out of their own family.

"Oh, do go, Miss Elwyn, if you have the *nerve*," said Mrs. Fairland.

The reader knows enough of Agnes to feel assured that her *nerves* were never in the way, if opportunity offered to make herself useful to the suffering; and the moment Mrs. Fairland answered her, she left the room, and, guided by those still piercing shrieks, she passed through a long hall, and entered a small bath-room, where she found Mr. Fairland holding the struggling Tiney, who presented a shocking appearance. Her face was now quite purple, and the white froth stood about her mouth; and her father was holding both of her hands in one of his, to quiet her frantic struggles.

"Oh, bless you, Miss Agnes!" said Mr. Fairland, as soon as she opened the door; "set that water running immediately till it is quite hot, and take off this poor child's stockings and shoes. You see I can do nothing."

As quickly and as quietly as possible Agnes did as she was directed; and then also, by Mr. Fairland's direction, took down a bottle of medicine, always kept ready for this

purpose in the bath-room, and dropped some of it for him. In a few moments, the shrieks subsided to moans, as Tiney lay with her head back on her father's shoulder.

"Poor child!" said Mr. Fairland, wiping her lips and forehead, "she is a dreadful sufferer."

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"Has she been so long?" asked Agnes.

"Ever since her third year," answered Mr. Fairland, "though, at first, the attacks were comparatively slight; but of late years they have grown more and more severe. Her intellect, as you perhaps have already noticed, is much weakened by them, and her temper, naturally very sweet, is at times almost fiendish. It seems to be her great desire, while suffering so intensely, to injure all within her reach."

Agnes now understood the reason of the screams of the children, and also of the pinch she had received as Tiney passed her chair. When poor Tiney's moans had become more faint, Mr. Fairland said:

"Agnes, will you sing? Music seems to soothe her more than anything else, after the extreme suffering is over."

Agnes sang, with her marvellously sweet voice, a simple air: presently poor Tiney turned her head, and fixed her half-closed eyes on Agnes' face. Then she said, from time to time, in a dreamy way, "Pretty!—sweet! Sing more;" and then she lay perfectly quiet, and soon fell into a gentle slumber. Often and often, after that, when poor Tiney was seized with these excruciating attacks, as soon as the first intense suffering was over, she would say, "Cousin Agnes, sing!" and, from the time she heard the gentle tones of Agnes' voice, she would be quiet and gentle as a lamb. The effect could be likened to nothing but the calming of the evil spirit which possessed the monarch of Israel, by the tones of the sweet harp of David.

XIV.

THE SCHOOL IN THE WEST WING.

"Scatter diligently, in susceptible minds,
The germs of the good and beautiful,
They will develop there to trees, bud, bloom,
And bear the golden fruit of paradise."

Agnes found it no easy task to bring into training minds so ignorant and so utterly undisciplined as those of her little pupils. Left entirely to themselves, as they had been for many months, with a mother too indolent to trouble herself about any systematic plan of government, and a father too easy and good-natured to carry out the many plans he was ever forming for their "breaking in;" scolded and fretted at by their older sisters, to whom they were perfect torments; by turns playing harmoniously, and then quarrelling most vigorously,—they roamed the house and grounds, doing mischief everywhere, and bringing wrath upon their heads at every turn.

With a perfect horror of anything like *study*, they had expected with great dread the arrival of a governess, as putting a final stop to all their fun and freedom. This dread had been in nowise diminished by the constant remarks of their older sisters upon governesses in the abstract, and their own expected governess in particular. One evening with Agnes served to dispel the horror, so far as she was concerned, though the dread of books was still as great as ever. Before the evening was over, Agnes had them all round her, as she sat on the sofa, telling them beautiful stories, and asking them questions.

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"Have you any pretty flowers in the woods about here?" she asked.

"Oh, lots!" answered Rosa; "yellow flowers, and blue flowers, and white flowers."

"Then if you would like to learn something of Botany, so as to know the names of all these beautiful flowers, we will take many pleasant rambles in the woods, and gather the lovely wild flowers, and I will teach you how to press them."

"But we haven't got any *Botany books*," said little Jessie.

"Oh, I think we shall not need any *books*, for all the Botany I shall teach you, Jessie; and if we do, we will take the leaves of the flowers for the leaves of the books, and the flowers themselves for the pictures. Do you not think we can make beautiful books that way? Jessie, can you read?"

"I can!" said Rosa, while Jessie hung her curly head.

"And can you *write*, Rosa?"

"No. I can make straight marks," answered Rosa.

"And what can you do, Master Frank?"

"Oh, Frank doesn't know anything?" said Jessie. "He did know his ABC's once, but he's forgot them all."

"Take care, Miss Jessie, that he does not read before you," said Agnes. "Your papa says we are to take the west wing for our school-room; you must show me where it is, and after a day or to get in order, and to make each other's acquaintance, we will begin school in earnest."

The next morning Agnes took the toilettes of her two little room-mates under her care, and when they appeared at the breakfast-table, the rest of the family hardly knew them, they looked so tidy and sweet. And poor Tiney, who gazed with astonishment at her two little sisters, made her appearance at Agnes' door soon after breakfast, to ask "if she wouldn't make *her* look nice too."

Agnes found so little to sympathise with, and took so little pleasure in the society of the ladies of the Fairland family, that she longed for her school to begin, that she might have useful occupation for her thoughts and time. On the appointed morning therefore, she was well pleased to meet her little pupils in the pleasant little room in the "west wing," and to begin in earnest her labors as a teacher. Such a pile of soiled, well-thumbed, and dogs-eared books, as the children produced, Agnes had never seen together, and on opening them she found that the young Fairland's had been exercising their taste for the fine arts, by daubing all the pictures from a six-penny paint-box.

“Now, my dear children,” said she, “the first thing we shall do every morning, will be to read in the Bible; but I do not see any Bible or Testament among your books; I suppose you each own one, do you not?”

If Agnes had been a little longer in the family of Mr. Fairland, perhaps she would not have asked this question; for she soon found that she had come into a family of as complete heathens, as she would have found if she had gone to be governess among the Hindoos. There was a “family Bible” in the house to be sure, but the only use to which it had ever been applied, was that of registering the births of the family, and the testimony it bore proved so exceedingly disagreeable to the Misses Fairland, that as Rosa has informed us, they took the liberty one day of erasing it.

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Agnes told the children to ask their papa if they might each have a Bible of their own, to which he consented, and when the Bibles were brought home, the exclamations of derision from the Misses Fairland, were loud and long.

“A missionary in disguise!” they exclaimed; “a saint in the form of a governess; come to convert us all, and the first thing is an importation of Bibles!” and many were the sneering and sarcastic remarks and allusions which came to the ears of Agnes, but she kept on her way quiet and undisturbed. Agnes was perfectly astonished to find how utterly unacquainted these children were with the contents of the Bible. It was all new to them; and after she had read to them every morning, she would gather them around her, and tell them in simple language the sweet stories from the Bible, while they listened, the younger ones with their bright, wide-open eyes fixed upon her face, as if they could not lose a word; and even poor Tiney loved to lay her head in Agnes’ lap, and hear of Him who ever sympathised with the sick and suffering.

It was very strange, and very interesting to Agnes, to hear the remarks these children made, and the many questions they would ask on subjects so new to them; and as they had not yet learned to look at the character of God, as revealed in his Son, with the reverence which better instructed children feel, they often spoke of Him as they would of any good man of whom they might hear, and in a way which would seem too irreverential, were I to tell you all they said.

Once when Agnes had been telling them of some of the miracles of our Saviour, in curing the sick, and giving sight to the blind, and hearing to the deaf, Rosa with her bright black eyes fixed intently on her face, said with the utmost earnestness:

“Why, He was real *good*, wasn’t He?”

“Yes,” said Agnes, “always good and kind, and always ready to help the sick and suffering.”

“He could cure *anybody*, couldn’t He?” continued Rosa.

“Yes; He was *all-powerful*,” answered Agnes.

“Could He cure Tiney?” asked Jessie.

“Yes; if Tiney had lived when Christ was on earth, or if He was here now, He could say the word, and make her well.”

And then they asked, “Where is He now?” and “How can we talk to Him now?” and “Why will He not cure Tiney now?” And Agnes tried, in the most simple manner, to teach them the nature of the prayer of faith.

Once, when she was talking to them of our Saviour's meekness under injuries, and telling them of His bitter sufferings, and the kindness of His feelings towards His persecutors, the large tears rolled down their cheeks, and Rosa made a practical application of the lesson at once, by saying:

"The next time Tiney pinches me, cousin Agnes, I don't mean to slap her back again."

"Nor I either," said Jessie.

And Tiney whispered, "I will *try* and not hurt them next time."

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Frank, who had been choking down something in his throat, as he sat in his chair, said, in an unsteady voice:

"Is it all true_?"

"Every word of it, Franky," said Agnes.

"I've got something in my eye," said Frank, rubbing both eyes very hard with the back of his hands; and then throwing himself on the settee, he cried bitterly for a long time.

Agnes taught them many pretty hymns; and as they all had good voices, and loved music dearly, they were never so happy as in singing, morning and evening, these sweet hymns with Agnes. Even poor Tiney, who was passionately fond of music, readily caught the tunes, though it was almost impossible to teach her the words.

The very first Sunday that Agnes passed under the roof of Mr. Fairland, was enough to convince her that the Sabbath day with them was passed much like all other days. She was shocked to see novels, and other light and trashy works, in the Lands of the Misses Fairland on this holy day, and to hear them *howling* snatches of opera tunes, as they ran up and down the stairs. These young ladies sometimes went to church in the morning, to be sure, especially if they had lately received new bonnets from the city, which they wished to display for the envy or admiration of their neighbors. Mrs. Fairland was too indolent to take the trouble, even if she possessed the inclination, to appear at church; and Mr. Fairland looked upon this seventh day of the week literally as a day of rest, in which to recruit the exhausted energies of the body, in preparation for the labors of another week. The day was passed by him in looking over the newspapers, or sleeping in his large chair, with his red silk handkerchief over his head; and towards evening, he usually took a stroll over to his mills, or around his grounds, to mark out what was necessary to be done on the coming week.

Agnes felt the importance of exerting in this ungodly family a strictly religious influence; but, except with her own little pupils, she did not attempt, at first, to do so in any other way than by her own quiet, consistent example. Mr. Fairland was much surprised when Agnes requested permission to take the children to church with her he readily granted it, however, as he invariably did the wishes of Agnes; and from that time, Mr. Fairland's pew had at least four or five occupants, on the morning and evening of the Sabbath day. Though not required by her engagement to do so, Agnes kept the children with her on Sunday, reading to them, singing with them, or telling them beautiful Bible stories; and those pleasant Sabbaths spent with her they never forgot, nor did they ever lay aside the habits they acquired under her care.

"What a pleasant day Sunday is!" exclaimed little Rosa; "I never knew it was such a pleasant day before."

"It's cousin Agnes makes it so pleasant," said blue-eyed Jessie.

"It is because you spend it as God directs, that it is a pleasant day to you, dear children," said Agnes; "and I wish you to remember that it will always be a happy day, if you spend it in His service, 'from the beginning unto the end thereof.'"

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Even if I were sufficiently acquainted with them to detail all the plans of Agnes for the education and improvement in manners and habits of her rude and ignorant little pupils, I should not do so here. They required peculiar training and an unfailing stock of patience, and it was long before any very perceptible change was wrought in their almost confirmed habits of carelessness, or any improvement in their rude and unformed manners; but at length a material change was apparent, and even the Misses Fairland could not keep their eyes closed to the visible improvement of the children. They were all much more gentle and quiet; and even poor Tiney softened much, under Agnes' gentle influence, and the light of intelligence began to beam in her heretofore dull eye. For the first time in her life, she was gaining useful ideas; and the consciousness that she was learning something as well as her sisters, seemed to make her happier and more kindly in her feelings.

It was not long before the door would open gently, as the sound of their evening hymn was heard, and Mr. Fairland, who was extravagantly fond of sweet and simple music, would steal into the room, and seat himself in the corner. And when he heard the voices of his children singing the praises of God, and saw his poor Tiney, hitherto so neglected, joining with eager interest in the singing, the tears would glisten in his eye, and roll unbidden down his cheek. Then he began to find his way to the school-room on Sunday evenings, and Agnes always took the opportunity on such occasions, to question the children on the elements of religious truth, that their young voices might be the means of instructing their father, who was more ignorant even than they, on these all-important subjects. At these times he never said one word, but when he left the room, it was often wiping the tears first, from one cheek and then from the other, and the heavy tread of his feet could be heard far into the night, as he walked the whole length of the two large parlors, with his hands behind him, and his head bent down. Before Agnes had been six months in the family, the good people sitting in the church at Wilston, one Sunday, opened their eyes with astonishment, to see Mr. Fairland walk into church and take his seat in a pew; and still more were they amazed, to see him do the same thing in the afternoon. It was a surprise to Agnes too; for though she had not failed to notice an unusual solemnity about Mr. Fairland, yet no word on the subject of his duty in this matter had ever passed between them.

Thus in the strict and conscientious performance of her daily duties, passed the summer with Agnes, with one delightful break, of a fortnight's vacation, spent with the dear loving friends at Brook Farm, where she saw much of her dear brother Lewie, who rode over every evening and passed the night, returning to his college duties early in the morning. The quick eye of a sister's love soon detected that all was not right with Lewie. He was as affectionate as ever, and if possible handsomer; but the faults of his childhood had grown with his growth and strengthened with his strength; his temper seemed more hasty and impetuous than ever, and there was a dashing recklessness about him which gave his sister many a heart-ache; and she had painful, though undefined fears for the future, for her rash and hot-headed brother.

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Her kind friends at Brook Farm, who fancied from some things they drew from Agnes, that her home at the Fairlands' was not in all respects a happy one, urged her most earnestly not to return there, but without success. Agnes was convinced that there the path of duty lay, at least for the present, and nothing could make her swerve from it.

"Remember then, my sweet niece," said her uncle, as he kissed her at parting, "this is your home, whenever, for any reason, you will make us so happy as to return to it."

The winter passed by very quietly to Agnes, in her accustomed round of duties; indeed she was happier than she had yet found herself under Mr. Fairland's roof, in consequence of the absence of the two young ladies, who having by some means or other succeeded in securing an invitation out of some acquaintances in the city, to make them a short visit, inflicted themselves upon them for the whole winter, and did not return to Wilston till the spring was far advanced. Their hosts, in order to rid themselves of such persevering and long-abiding guests, began to make their preparations long before the usual time for closing their house and going to the country, and the Misses Fairland, invulnerable as they proved all winter to anything like a *hint*, were obliged to take this intended removal of their friends as a "notice to quit," which they accordingly did.

One bright spot to Agnes this winter, was a visit of a week from Lewie, who took his vacation at the time of the holidays to run up and see his sister.

He had his guitar with him, and his voice, which had gained much in depth and richness, was indescribably sweet. It seemed as if Mr. Fairland never would tire of hearing the brother and sister sing together. His mills and everything else were forgotten, while he sat silently in his great chair with his eyes closed, listening hour after hour to the blended harmony of their charming voices.

That happy week was soon over, and the brother and sister parted. The next time Agnes heard the sound of her brother's guitar, under what different circumstances did its tones strike upon her ear!

XV.

The Strangers in the Rookery.

"If thou sleep alone in Urrard,
Perchance in midnight gloom
Thou'lt hear behind the wainscot
Sounds in that haunted room,
It is a thought of horror,
I would not sleep alone

In the haunted room of Urrard,
Where evil deeds are done.”

—UNKNOWN.

“What do you think, Calista? What *do* you think?” exclaimed Miss Evelina Fairland, one day soon after their return from the city, bursting in, in a great state of excitement. “Two of the *handsomest* men have come to the village, one of them is a Mr. Harrington; isn’t it a lovely name? and he has purchased “*the Rookery*” do you believe! some say that he is a young man, others that he is a widower. They have come down to hunt and fish, and he was mightily taken with “the Rookery,” and in spite of ghosts and goblins he has actually bought it;” and here Miss Evelina paused to take breath.

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"The Rookery" was a large old mansion which had once been a very handsome dwelling. It stood quite alone on a rising ground a little out of the village, and was surrounded with an extensive lawn, which on one side sloped down the lake, over which were scattered magnificent elms; and there was only one thing that prevented "the Rookery" from being the most delightful residence in the country. This was the well-attested fact that the house was haunted; and though at different times, those who were above being influenced by these idle fears, had fitted up the place and endeavored to live there, yet there could be no comfort in so large a house without servants, and not one could be found to remain in it more than one night. Servants were brought from a distance, but they soon heard in the village the story of the lady who died so mysteriously in that house twenty years before, and how she *walked* every night, and then of course they heard sounds, and saw sights; and they too, forthwith took their departure.

So the old house was quite falling into decay when these two brave men came down and took possession of it; and fitting up comfortably two or three of the most tenantable rooms, they there kept bachelors' hall, unterrified and undisturbed, at least by *spirits*. A few days after the announcement of the arrival of the strangers in the village, a widow lady of the name of Danby came to make a visit to the Fairland's. She had with her a little girl, her only child, a wilful, spoiled little thing, who took her own course in everything, utterly regardless of the wishes or commands of others. In the afternoon, as Agnes was preparing to start with her little pupils for their accustomed walk, Mrs. Danby said:

"Bella wishes to accompany you, Miss Elwyn, but you must take good care of her."

"I will do my best, Mrs. Danby," said Agnes, "but one thing I shall insist upon, and that is, that Bella shall obey me as my own little scholars do."

Miss Bella was not at all pleased with the idea of obeying any one, and so she was continually showing off her independent airs as they walked, hiding behind trees, describing eccentric circles around the rest of the party, or darting off in tangents. At length she became so troublesome, that Agnes determined to shorten their walk, and turned to retrace their steps; at this Miss Bella was highly indignant, and declared "that she would not go back, she would go on, down there by the water."

They were at this time near an open space, which reached to the water, at the end of which was a dock, for the convenience of those who wished to go out upon the lake in boats. Agnes endeavored to detain the wilful child, but she suddenly pulled away from her, and started like the wind for the dock. Agnes called, and the children screamed, in vain; faster and faster ran the little witch, still looking behind every moment to see if she was pursued, till at length she tripped over a log, and fell far out into the water. Agnes clasped her hands in speechless terror, while the cries of the children were loud and agonizing. Just then a boat in which were two gentlemen rounded a point of land near

them, and made rapidly for the struggling child, who in another moment was lifted into the boat, and handed up to the arms of Agnes.

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Agnes was too much agitated to take particular notice of these strangers, but taking off her shawl she wrapped the dripping child in it, while one of her preservers carried her into a cottage near by, Agnes and the still weeping children following. When the child was placed in the kind woman's bed, and little Rosa was sent home to ask Susan for some clothes to put on her, with special directions not to alarm Mrs. Danby, Agnes returned to the sitting-room of the cottage, to thank the strangers who had so opportunely come to their assistance, when what was her astonishment to find that one of them was her old friend, Tom Wharton.

"And you knew I was in town, Mr. Wharton, and have been here three or four days without coming to see me," said she.

"Oh! you know I don't do things just like other people," answered Tom; "and to tell the truth, though I have no fear of ghosts and hobgoblins, I have not yet had the courage to face two famous man-hunters, who I hear reside under the same roof with you, Agnes. But it is time I should introduce you to my friend Mr. Harrington, the present proprietor of "the Rookery," together with all the spirits, black and white, red and grey, who are the inhabitants thereof."

Agnes was glad to meet Mr. Harrington, of whom she had often heard her uncle speak in terms of great admiration, as an accomplished gentleman and a Christian; and one who used the large property he had inherited in deeds of benevolence and usefulness. They had been for some time in conversation about the friends at Brook Farm, from whom the two gentlemen had lately parted, when little Rosa returned.

Rosa found that her older sisters and Mrs. Danby had gone out for a walk; so it was a very easy matter to get some dry clothes for Bella, and bring her safe home before her mother heard of the accident. What was the surprise of the Misses Fairland, as, in coming down the street, they saw Agnes returning, accompanied by one of the handsome strangers whose acquaintance they had been "dying" to make; while the other followed, carrying little Bella Danby in his arms. A few words sufficed to tell the story of the accident, and to introduce the strangers, who, with the utmost cordiality, were urged to come in; an invitation which was unhesitatingly accepted by Mr. Harrington, and rather reluctantly by Mr. Tom Wharton. Mrs. Danby, pale and agitated, took her little darling in her arms, and hurried to her own room, there to administer certain restoratives, and, much against the young lady's will, to place her again in bed.

Mr. Harrington, having now gained the *entree* to Mr. Fairland's house, seemed inclined to be a frequent visitor, much to the gratification of the ladies Calista and Evelina, who laid siege to him right and left. If my reader possessed the key to Mr. Harrington's real object in coming to Wilston, perhaps he would be as much amused as the gentleman himself at the efforts, so exceedingly apparent, to gain for one of them possession of his hand and fortune; for that Mr. Harrington was wealthy, they were well assured. They each kept out a *hook*, too, for Mr. Tom Wharton, in case the other was successful in

taking the more valuable prey; but the bait was by no means tempting to Mr. Tom, who darted off, leaving his friend, unsupported and alone, to resist the attacks of these practised, but hitherto unsuccessful anglers.

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"Well, Harrington," said Mr. Tom Wharton to his friend one day, "since your object in bringing me down here with you is accomplished, I must now leave you to your fate. What that may be, in the midst of attacks from spirits by night, and from more substantial persecutors by day, I cannot divine; but if there is anything left of you, I shall hope to see you in the city before long, and to hear the account you have to give of yourself."

"I thank you for your services thus far, my dear friend," said Mr. Harrington; "still, I think it would be the part of disinterested friendship to stay and help me a little longer."

"I can't—I can't stand it, Harrington. *You* may be able to bear it better; but I'm not used to this sort of thing, and I don't know how to get along with it at all. Your case is a hard one, I acknowledge, my friend; but having some business of my own to attend to, I must leave you to fight out your own battles." And Mr. Tom Wharton, resolutely closed his ears to his friend's appeals, and took his departure.

A beautiful little boat which Mr. Harrington had ordered from the city having arrived, he called, one afternoon, at Mr. Fairland's, to ask the ladies if they would take a sail with him upon the lake. Most eagerly the Misses Fairland consented, and were leaving the room to prepare to go, when Mr. Harrington turned to Agnes, who happened to be in the room, and said:

"May I not hope for the pleasure of Miss Elwyn's company too?" Upon which Miss Evelina, with a childishly-confidential air, raised herself on tiptoe, and whispered in his ear:

"It is not *at all* necessary to ask her: we never feel obliged to, I assure you. She is only *governess to the children*."

But Mr. Harrington renewed his invitation, which Agnes had respectfully declined, when Mr. Fairland entered the room, and Mr. Harrington appealed to him.

"Go? Certainly Agnes must go; she has never been on the lake in a sail-boat, and I have often heard her say she would delight to go. Come, Agnes! put on your things without a word, and go along."

Thus urged, Agnes consented to go, though she felt a little uncomfortable at the silent displeasure of the Misses Fairland. There was a pleasant breeze, and the little boat flew like a bird over the dancing waves. Agnes, a devoted admirer of nature, was in an ecstasy which she could not conceal, as one beautiful view succeeded another during their sail up the lake; but the other ladies were so much occupied in trying the effect of *art*, that they had no eye for the beauties of *nature*. The breeze soon died away, leaving them far from home, and Mr. Harrington was obliged to take to his oars; and long before the village was in sight, the gentle moon had begun her walk through "golden gates,"

throwing across the water a brilliant column of light, sparkling and dancing in glorious beauty on the gentle ripples of the lake.

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"Now is the time for music," said Mr. Harrington; "for truly

'Music sounds the sweetest
Over the rippling waves.'"

But for once the Misses Fairland were obliged to relinquish the opportunity of charming by their united voices; the only music in which they were practised, and which they thought worth listening to, being of the flourishing, trilling, running, quavering, shrieking kind; and this they could not attempt without their "notes" and the "instrument." Mr. Harrington then proposed to Agnes to sing some sweet old-fashioned airs; and laying down his oars, he took a seat beside her, and joined his rich tenor to the strangely-melodious tones of her voice; and as the harmony floated over the water, it seemed almost like the music of heaven. This was a state of things by no means agreeable to the two neglected ladies in the other end of the boat, and Miss Calista began to be afraid of the night air, and Miss Evelina was taken with a hacking cough; so that Mr. Harrington was obliged to resume his oars, and row them rapidly to the village.

Mr. Harrington consented to moor his boat, and accompany the ladies up to the house to tea. Anxious to try the effect of their own accomplishments, the Misses Fairland, soon after tea, led the conversation to the subject of music, and were easily persuaded to attempt, with the "notes" and "instrument," some of their favorite songs. And now began a flourishing and screaming unparalleled in the annals of music. Miss Calista screamed, "I love only thee!" and then Miss Evelina shrieked, "I love only thee!" and then Miss Calista trilled it—and Miss Evelina howled it—and Miss Calista quavered it—and Miss Evelina ran it—and then one of them started on it, and the other ran and caught up with her—and then one burred for some time on thee-e-e-e-e, while the other ran up and down, still asserting as rapidly as possible, and insisting boldly, and stoutly asseverating, "I love only thee!"—and then, with a combined shriek, they made known the fact once more and finally, and then the ears of their hearers were allowed to rest.

"Now, girls, if you have done with that clatter," said Mr. Fairland, "I want Agnes to sing for *me* one of those sweet old Scotch songs; it will be quite refreshing after all this screeching."

"Oh!" said Miss Calista, rising from the instrument, and casting up her eyes at Mr. Harrington, "my dear old papa has the *oddest, old-fashioned* taste!"

But as soon as Agnes began to sing, it seemed as if Mr. Harrington's taste was quite as "odd" and "old-fashioned" as that of the "dear old papa" himself; for he was guilty of the impropriety of not hearing what Miss Evelina was saying to him, and soon rose and took his stand by the piano, where he showed very plainly that he had no ear for any other sound than that of Agnes' voice.

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Agnes went to bed with some very pleasant thoughts that night; for, though tongues may be silent, eyes can tell their story very soon; and it *is* a pleasant thing to find one's self an object of interest to some noble heart; and particularly grateful was it to Agnes, in her present lonely, toiling life. And she needed all the inward peace and comfort she possessed, to enable her to bear the increased ill-nature of Mrs. Fairland and her daughters; for the "mamma" was no less displeased than the young ladies themselves at the prospect of the failure of one of their cherished plans.

And now, when Mr. Harrington called, there was generally some excuse contrived for sending Agnes from the room, and for keeping her busy in some other part of the house; and though Agnes was indignant at this evident desire to get her out of the way, by putting upon her labor which they had no right to require of her, yet, at the time, and in Mr. Harrington's presence, she would not contest the point, but quietly left the room. This never happened, however, when Mr. Fairland was present, as the good man, if he had fully seen through all the plans of his wife and daughters, could not have discomfited them more surely than he always contrived to do.

In the meantime, the ladies Calista and Evelina never for a moment relaxed their efforts, or ceased to practise their arts, upon the wealthy and agreeable stranger.

"How *charming* your place must be Mr. Harrington!" said Miss Evelina one evening; "I do delight in these old haunted mansions; there is something so delightfully romantic about them."

"And have you really heard any of these strange noises at night?" asked Miss Calista.

"Noises?—enough of them," he answered; "I have sometimes been so disturbed, that I could not sleep at all."

"And what *did* you do?" asked the young ladies in a breath, their eyes dilating with horror.

"Why, in the first place," said Mr. Harrington, "I bought a *terrier*, and in the next a large *rat-trap*; and by means of both, I succeed in laying several of the spirits every night, and have strong hopes that, before long, perfect quiet will be restored to the haunted mansion."

Then calling Jessie, who was in the room, to his side, Mr. Harrington took her in his lap, and said:

"You remind me very much of a little blue-eyed, flaxen-haired girl I have in the city."

"Why, have you a little girl?" Mr. Harrington, asked the young ladies.

"Yes, two of them," he answered.

“Oh, how I *doat* on children!” exclaimed Miss Calista.

“Cousin Agnes, what is the meaning of *doat*?” screamed Master Frank, running up to Agnes, who just then entered the room.

“What is it to *doat* on any one?”

“It is to love them very dearly;” answered Agnes quietly.

“Ho! C’listy says she *doats* on children—she doats on us, don’t she Rosa?” and Master Frank laughed such a laugh of derision, that Mr. Harrington was obliged to say something very funny to little Jessie, who was still sitting on his knee, in order to have an excuse for laughing too.

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Miss Calista fairly trembled with concealed rage, and soon succeeded in having Master Frank sent off to bed. Indeed, Frank was the cause of so much mortification to Miss Calista, that she would gladly have banished him too from the parlor, but he was lawless, and no one in the house could do anything with him but Agnes.

Mr. Harrington was very fond of children, and often had long conversations with little Frank, whose bold, independent manners seemed to please him much. One evening when he was talking to him, Frank said:

"Mr. Harrington I'm saving up my money to buy a boat just like yours."

"You are, hey, Frank? and how much have you got towards it?" asked Mr. Harrington.

"Oh! I've got two sixpences, and a shilling, and three pennies;" said Frank. "I keep all my money in a china-box, one of C'listy's boxes she used to keep her red paint in; *this*, you know!" touching each cheek with his finger.

This was too much for Miss Calista; she rushed from the room, and vented her indignation in a burst of angry tears, and the next time she met Master Frank, she gave him a slap upon his cheek, which made it a deeper crimson than the application of her own paint would have done. All these slights and mortifications were revenged upon poor Agnes, who would gladly have left a place where she was so thoroughly uncomfortable; but the thought of the children, to whom she had become attached, and who seemed now to be rewarding her pains and trouble by their rapid improvement, deterred her from taking a step which should separate her from them forever. Poor Tiney too, who seemed rapidly failing under the power of disease, and who clung to her so fondly, how could she leave her?

XVI.

Death and the Fugitive.

"She came with smiles the hour of pain to cheer,
Apart she sighed; alone, she shed the tear,
Then, as if breaking from a cloud she gave
Fresh light, and guilt the prospect of the grave."

—CRABBE.

One summer night, Agnes, who had been up till very late, soothing and quieting poor Tiney, and had at last succeeded in singing her to sleep, left her in Susan's care, and returned to her own room. It was a lovely, warm, moonlight evening, and Agnes stood by her raised window, watching the shadows of the tall trees which were thrown with such vivid distinctness across the gravel walks and the closely trimmed lawn, and

thinking of a pleasant walk she had taken that day, and of some one who joined her, (as was by no means unusual,) on her return from the woods with the younger children.

Suddenly her reverie was broken by the sound of a few chords struck very lightly and softly upon a guitar. The sound came from the clump of trees, the shadows of which Agnes had just been admiring; and she supposed they were the prelude to a serenade. Her heart whispered to her who the musician might be, for though she had never heard him, with whom her thoughts had been busy, touch the guitar, yet with his ardent love for music, she did not doubt that he might if he chose, accompany his rich voice upon so simple an instrument.

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But now the blood which had crimsoned her cheek flowed back tumultuously to her heart, as she heard a voice she could not mistake, humming very softly the notes of a sad and touching air, which she and Lewie had often sung together. This plaintive singer could be no other than her brother. But why here, at night, and in this clandestine manner, evidently trying to win her attention, without arousing that of others? The house seemed quiet: and Agnes, throwing a shawl about her, quickly descended the stairs, and, quietly opening a side door, crossed the lawn, and in another moment stood beside her brother, under the shade of the tall old elms.

“Lewie! is it indeed you?”

He made no answer, he said not one word, but, drawing Agnes to a seat under one of the trees, he seated himself beside her, and laying his head upon her shoulder, he was quiet for a few moments; and then Agnes felt his frame tremble with sudden emotion, and heard a deep sob.

“Lewie! my brother! do speak to me! What is it? Do not keep me in suspense! What dreadful thing has happened?”

“Agnes,” said he, with a sudden and forced calmness, the words coming slowly from between his white, stiffened lips—“Agnes, it is—*murder!*”

Agnes did not scream—she did not faint—forgetfulness for a moment would have been a relief. In a flash she had comprehended it all.

“Lewie,” said she, “is there blood upon this hand?”

“Agnes, it is true; your brother is a murderer! No less a murderer, because the blow was struck in the heat of sudden passion, and when the brain was inflamed with wine; and no less a murderer, because it was repented of the moment given, and before the fatal consequences were suspected. My sister, I am a fugitive and a wanderer, hunted by the officers of justice, and doomed to the prison or the gallows.”

It seemed to Agnes like a fearful dream! It was too dreadful to be true! The thought crossed her mind, perhaps it *is* a dream; she had had dreams as vivid, and had awakened with such a blessed feeling of relief. But no! she clasped Lewie’s cold hand in hers, and felt assured it was all reality. For a few moments she could only bury her face in her hands, and rock to and fro and groan. She was aroused from this state of agonized feeling by Lewie, who said:

“And now, what shall I do, Agnes? I have come all this way on foot, and at night, to see you once more, and to ask you what I should do? Oh that I had been more willing to follow your gentle guidance before, sweet sister!—but I have followed nothing but the dictates of my own ungoverned passions. Shall I try to escape, or shall I give myself up



for trial? On my word, Agnes, I am not a murderer by intention. I was excited; something was said which tried my quick temper; I answered with a burst of sudden passion; more taunting words followed; and, quicker than the lightning's flash, I had

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dealt the blow which laid my class-mate dead at my feet I was sobered in one moment; and oh, Agnes! what, *what* would I not have given to restore my murdered friend to life! —not for my own sake; for I never thought of myself till urged by my terror-stricken companions to fly. Then I thought of my own safety; and, my darling sister, I thought of you, and determined that you should hear of your brother's disgrace and crime from no lips but his own. I have been hanging about here all day, but could not see you; and finding no other way to call your attention, I borrowed this guitar at the tavern, and have been watching from these trees, till I saw a white form at a window, which I knew was yours. Now, Agnes, what shall I do?"

"Oh, Lewie, what can I say but *fly*, and save yourself from an ignominious fate! It may not be right counsel; but how can a sister advise otherwise? My poor, poor brother!" And Agnes was relieved by a passionate burst of tears. And now came the time for parting. He must go, for they would be likely to seek him in the home of his only sister, —he must go quickly and quietly;—and, with a few hurried words, in which his sister commended him to God, and entreated him to go to *Him* for pardon and peace, and with one last fond embrace, they parted. Agnes returned to the house with feeble, staggering steps, stricken to the very heart.

No sleep visited the eyes of Agnes that night; and when she appeared in the breakfast room the following morning, her pale and haggard countenance showed marks of extreme suffering, which should have been respected even by the Misses Fairland. But no! their quick ears had also caught the tones of the guitar, and rushing to a window on that side of the house, in the expectation of a serenade, they had seen Agnes as she crossed the lawn, and returned again to the house. Here was food for conjecture, and jealousy for the suspicious ladies, and they had long been awaiting the arrival of Agnes in the breakfast room, hoping to have the mystery cleared up.

"May we be informed, Miss Elwyn," began Miss Calista, "how long you have been in the habit of receiving signals from lovers, and stealing out at night to give them clandestine meetings in the grove?"

A bright blush suffused the cheek of Agnes, which died away immediately, leaving it of an ashy paleness, as she said:

"I have met no lover in the grove, Calista, at least not what *you* mean by a lover," she added, thinking this might be an evasion, for did not her brother love her dearly?

"Not what *I* call a lover," said Miss Calista; "a very nice distinction! then you do not deny that you met what *you* call a lover in the grove. Indeed you need trouble yourself to make no denial, for Evelina and I both watched you."

Agnes rose from the table, and all who were gathered around it were amazed at the unusual vehemence of her manner, as with an expression of intense wretchedness upon her face, she exclaimed:

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"Oh! *do, do* let me alone! do leave me in quiet; for I am very, very unhappy!"

And hastily, and with great agitation, Agnes left the room.

Mr. Fairland, who was so much interested in a paragraph in the paper, which appeared to shock him exceedingly, that he had not heard the ill-natured remarks of his daughters, looked up just as Agnes rose from the table, and heard her agonized address.

With more sternness than usual, he asked his daughters what they had been saying to Agnes, and on hearing their account of the conversation, he exclaimed:

"Poor Agnes! you will see in this paper girls something that will shock you, and will perhaps inspire you with a little sympathy for one whom it seems to be your delight to torment. You may perhaps now guess who it was that Agnes met in the grove last night."

The Misses Fairland were really shocked to read the account of the murder, and to read the name of Lewis Elwyn as the murderer; and something like remorse for a moment visited their minds, that they had added to the sufferings of the already burdened heart of Agnes.

"Poor fellow! poor young man!" exclaimed Mr. Fairland; "such a handsome fellow as he was, and such a sweet singer too! this seems to have been done in a sudden passion; and not without provocation too. But it is an awful thing! Poor Agnes! she must not attempt to teach the children while she is so distressed; and I do desire girls, that you will have the *decency*, if you have not the *feeling*, to leave her entirely undisturbed."

Days passed on and nothing was heard of the fugitive. Oh, what days of restless and painful suspense to Agnes! Had she not had constant and unusual occupation for her time, it seemed to her that she could not keep her reason. But poor Tiney had grown suddenly and alarmingly worse, and the physician said a very days at most would terminate her sufferings. With all the distressing thoughts which crowded upon her, Agnes remained by the bed-side of the little sufferer, endeavoring to soothe and cheer her descent to the dark valley.

Mrs. Fairland, who though indolent and indifferent in many things with regard to her children, was not altogether without natural affection, passed much of her time, during the last two or three days of Tiney's life, in her room, sitting quietly near the head of the bed. Mr. Fairland, who seemed more overcome even than Agnes expected, hardly ever left the bed-side. The older sisters looked in occasionally for a few moments, but their "nerves" (always ready as an excuse with people destitute of feeling) would not allow their staying for more than five minutes at a time, in the room of the sick child. The younger children wandered restlessly about the house, their little hearts oppressed by

the first approach of death among their number; sometimes coming in quietly to look at the dying sister, and then wandering off again.

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"Cousin Agnes, *must I die?*" asked Tiney, the day before her death, as Agnes and her father and mother were sitting near her.

"You are not afraid to die, dear Tiney, are you?" asked Agnes in reply.

"No, I shall love to die, because you told me I would never be sick any more; but I feel a *little* afraid to go to Heaven."

"Afraid to go to Heaven, dear Tiney! And why should you be afraid to go there?" asked Agnes, in astonishment; for she had, oftener than ever, of late, talked to the failing child of the glories of heaven, and did not doubt that, even with her poor weak mind, she had so trusted by faith in the merits of an all-sufficient Redeemer, that through those merits her spirit would be welcomed to that blissful abode.

"I was thinking," answered Tiney, "that I don't *know anybody*, there; not a single soul; and I feel so shy with strangers. Will they love me there, cousin Agnes, as you and papa do?"

Agnes could not repress the tears at this question, so natural, perhaps, to a simple child, and yet one which she had never thought of as likely to occur to one before. But she talked to Tiney so soothingly and sweetly of Him who loved little children when on earth, and who was watching for her now, and would send some lovely angel to bear her to His breast, that poor Tiney lost her fears, and longed for the hour of her release. And it came the next morning. Just as the glorious sun was rising over the lake, the spirit of poor little suffering Tiney left its earthly dwelling, and began its long and never-ending day of happiness.

Oh! what a brilliant light shone for once in those dark gray eyes, as Tiney raised them, with a look of wonder and astonishment and joy, as if she saw far, far beyond the limits which bounded her mortal sight!—and as, with an enraptured expression, she murmured something about "that lovely music," the light faded from the still wide open and glassy eye; and Agnes, passing her hand gently over the lids, said, "Mr. Fairland, she is gone!" and the first thought of her sad heart was, "Oh that I too were at rest!" But she checked it in one moment, when she remembered that there were duties and conflicts and trials before her yet; and she determined she would go forward, in the Divine strength, into the furnace which she must needs go through, in order to be refined and purified.

Once, during Tiney's last sickness, a messenger called for Agnes, and put a note and a little bouquet of green-house flowers into her hand. At first, Agnes hoped that the note might contain tidings of her brother; but though disappointed in this respect, the contents of the note were soothing and grateful to her troubled heart. The words were simply these:

"Is there *anything* I can do for you? And if you need a friend, will you call upon me?"
The note was signed "C.H."

At first Agnes merely said, in a despairing tone, "Oh no! nothing can be done;" and then, feeling that a different answer should be sent to a message so kind, she tore off a bit of the paper, and wrote upon it:

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"Nothing can be done for me now. Believe me, I will not hesitate to call upon you, when you can do me any good."

The day after Tiney's death, officers came to search Mr. Fairland's house for the fugitive, having traced him to Wilston. Every corner of the house was searched, and even the chamber of death was not spared. The search, of course, was unsuccessful; but, the day after poor Tiney's funeral, came tidings to Agnes of the arrest of her brother. He was taken at last, and safely lodged in the jail at Hillsdale, where he was to await his trial.

And now Agnes, whose office ever seemed of necessity to be that of consoler and comforter, must leave her little charge, and go to be near her brother. It was a bitter parting; it seemed as if the children could not let her go; and the scene recalled so vividly to Agnes the parting with Miss Edwards at Brook Farm, that the recollection made her, if possible, still more sad, as she thought the resemblance might be carried out even to the end, and the close of this earthly scene to her might be as melancholy as was that of her beloved teacher.

She promised Mr. Fairland that, as soon as she could attend to it, she would ascertain if there were vacancies in Mrs. Arlington's school for Rosa and Jessie, and also if Mr. Malcolm would consent to take charge of Frank's education; and, accompanied by Mr. Fairland, she left Wilston, as she supposed, forever.

XVII.

The Jail.

"I may not go, I may not go,
Where the sweet-breathing spring-winds blow;
Nor where the silver clouds go by,
Across the holy, deep blue sky;
Nor where the sunshine, warm and bright
Comes down, like a still shower of light;
I must stay here
In prison drear;
Oh! heavy life, wear on, wear on,
Would God that thou wert gone."

—FANNY KEMBLE.

They reached Brook Farm late in the evening, and here the greeting, though not as noisy and joyous, was warmer, and if possible more affectionate than ever. They all loved Lewie in spite of his many faults, and their sympathy was most sincere and

heartfelt for Agnes, who was very dear to them all. As soon as Agnes could speak to Mr. Wharton alone, she said:

"Uncle, have you seen him?"

"Every day, dear Agnes, and have been with him some hours each day."

"And how does he feel, dear Uncle?"

"Relieved, I think, on the whole; that the suspense is over thus far. He says he would not live over again the last three weeks for worlds. Many and many a time he had almost resolved to return and give himself up for trial; but the thought of you, Agnes, prevented. He said that you must be a sharer in all his trouble and disgrace, and if he could spare your distress and suffering, by escaping from the country, he meant to try and do it, and then he would soon be forgotten, except by the few who cared for him."

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"And how does he feel about the—the result, uncle?"

"Hopeful, I think; he seems to think it cannot be brought in murder, when murder was so far from his intention."

"And what do *you* think, uncle?"

"I am inclined to think with Lewie, dear; there is always a leaning towards mercy, and your brother has counsel, the very best in the State."

"Oh, uncle, how very kind! how can we ever repay you for your kindness?"

"No thanks to me in this matter, Agnes; Mr. W—— has been retained by one who does not wish his name known; one who would be glad, I fancy, to have a nearer right to stand by you through these coming scenes, but who will not trouble you with these matters at present."

A bright blush came up in Agnes' cheek, and as suddenly died away as she said:

"One question more, uncle; when will it take place—the trial, I mean?"

"It will probably come on in November," her uncle answered.

"Two long months of imprisonment for my poor brother!" said Agnes.

"But remember, Agnes, those two months will be diligently employed by his counsel in preparing his defence."

"And by those on the other side, in making strong their cause against him, uncle. My poor dear Lewie! how I long to see him; and yet how I dread the first meeting, oh! if that were only over!"

The next morning, immediately after breakfast, Mr. Wharton and Agnes drove over to Hillsdale. Agnes shuddered, and turned pale, as they drew near the gloomy jail with its iron-barred windows, and closing her eyes she silently prayed for strength and calmness for the meeting with her brother. Mr. Wharton conducted her to the door of the room in which her brother was confined, and left her there, as he knew they would both prefer that their first meeting should be without witnesses. In one respect Agnes was agreeably disappointed; she had expected to find her brother in a close, dark dungeon; and was much surprised to find herself in a pleasant, light room, with table, books, writing materials, and everything very comfortable about him; the only things there to remind her that she was in a prison, being the locked door, and the grated window.

Agnes had been preparing herself ever since she first received the tidings of her brother's arrest, for this meeting; and she went through it with a calmness and composure which astonished herself. But poor Lewie was completely overcome. He knew his sister would come to him; but he had not expected her so soon, and the first intimation he had of her arrival, was the sight of her upon the threshold of his door.

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“Poor Agnes! poor dear sister!” said he, as soon as he could speak; “what have I ever been from my childhood up, but a source of trouble and distress to you. You were punished for my ungoverned temper all through your childhood; you are suffering for it now; you will have to suffer for it more, till your bloom is all gone, and you are worn to a skeleton. If I had dared, Agnes—if I had dared, I should have put an end to this mortal existence; and thus I should have saved you all this coming disgrace and misery. But I had not the courage to lay violent hands upon myself, and go, a deliberate suicide, into the presence of my Maker. I have tried all other means; I have gone through exposure and fatigue, which at any other time I know would have killed me; I have laid out all night in the rain; I, who used to be so susceptible to cold, but nothing seemed to hurt me. I have been reserved for other and more terrible things. And you, Agnes, who are always kind, and forbearing, and self-sacrificing, it seems to be your fate ever to suffer and endure for others. Oh, my sister, you deserve a happier lot!”

“Don’t talk so, dear Lewie!” said Agnes; “you have given me very many happy hours, and all the little troubles of ‘long, long ago’ are forgotten. And now, what greater pleasure can I have than that of sitting with you here, working and reading, and trying to wile away the tedious hours of your captivity?”

“Agnes! this must not be! I cannot allow it. It will brighten the whole day for me, if you will come and spend an hour or two with me every morning; but I cannot consent that you shall be immured for the whole day in the walls of this gloomy prison-house.”

“But what can you do, Lewie? I am going to be obstinate for once, and take my own course. Uncle will drive me over every morning, and come for me at night; and I am going to enjoy a pleasure long denied me, of spending every day with my darling brother.”

“Oh, Agnes! this is too, too much!”

“Not too much at all, Lewie. Do you think I could be happy anywhere else than with you? What should I do at uncle’s but roam the house, restless and impatient, every moment I am absent from you? And the nights will seem so long, because they separate me from you!”

“Oh! how utterly undeserving!—how *utterly undeserving* such love and devotion!” said Lewie, pacing up and down the room. “Sweet sister!—dearest Agnes!—now has my prison lost all its gloom; and were it not for the future, I might be happier here than when out in the world; for temptation here is far from me, and only good influences surround me.”

“And what of the future, dear?”

“Of my trial, Agnes? Well, I hardly know what to say. My friends and lawyers try to keep up my spirits, and mention to me many hopeful things; and, for the time, I too feel encouraged. But I can think of many things that a skilful lawyer can bring up against me, and which would weigh very heavily. I am trying to think of the *worst* as a *probability*; so that if it comes, I shall not be overwhelmed.”

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“Oh!” said Agnes, shuddering, and covering her eyes, as if to shut out some horrid spectacle, “it cannot be! I cannot bring myself to contemplate it for a moment!”

“And yet it *may be*, Agnes! or they may spare my life, and doom me to wear out long years of imprisonment, and then send me out into the world a blighted and ruined man! That is the best I can hope for; and but for the disgrace which would come upon me, I should say the sudden end is better.”

“And what of the future *after that*, Lewie? for that, after all, is the great concern.”

“The *eternal future* you mean, Agnes. Ah! my sister, the prospect there is darker and more dreary still. I know enough of religion to feel assured that my short life has not been spent in the way to prepare me for a future of happiness; and I am not yet so hardened as to pretend not to dread a future of misery.”

“God grant such may not be your fate, dear brother. Whether life be long or short, happy or sorrowful, our future depends upon heart-felt repentance here, and faith in the ‘sinner’s Friend.’ You have now time for quiet and reflection. Oh! improve it dear Lewie, in so humbling yourself before Him whom you have offended, and in so seeking for pardon, that He will bless you and grant you peace.”

“I see, Agnes,” said her brother, with a sad smile, “you want me to follow in the footsteps of all other offenders and criminals, who, after doing all the mischief possible, and living for their own selfish gratification while abroad in the world, spend the time of their imprisonment in acts of penitence and devotion, and go out of the world, as they all invariably do, in the full odor of sanctity, in peace with God, and in charity with men.”

“Is my advice to you in any way different, my dear brother, from what it was when you were free and unrestrained? Indeed, so much did I dread the effect of your undisciplined temper, and so assured did I feel that for you the grace of God was peculiarly necessary, that I have feared I sometimes made my presence unwelcome by my constant warnings and admonitions.”

“Never, Agnes—never, dearest sister! I always thanked you from my inmost heart for your kind, loving, tender counsel; and though apparently I turned it off lightly and carelessly, yet it often sank deep in my heart; and when parted from you, I often thought what a miserable wretch I was not to give better heed to it.”

“Yet, Lewie dear, I will not deny that I think the need more urgent than ever for repentance and pardon now. I do not wish to harrow up your feelings, dear brother; but, oh! it is an awful thing to send a fellow-creature into eternity!”

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“And do you think that thought ever for a moment leaves me, Agnes? Indeed, I think that while I have been skulking and hiding, hunted and pursued from one place to another, and since I have been shut up in these walls, every harrowing thought that could possibly be brought before my mind, has been dwelt upon till it seemed sometimes as if I should go mad. I have mourned for Cranston as if I had no hand in his death; I have thought of him in all his hope and promise; I have thought of his poor mother and sisters, till the tears have rained from my cheeks; and I believe I have been sincere in my feeling, that if by suffering an ignominious death, I could restore my murdered friend to life, I should be *glad* to be the sacrifice. And then when I thought of *myself* as the cause of all this suffering, it seemed as if it ought not to be a matter of wonder or complaint if the verdict should be, that such a wretch should cumber the earth no longer. And yet, Agnes, in the eye of Him who looketh only on the heart, I believe I was as much a murderer when I struck down my school-mate in the playground as now. For in the height of my passion then, I think I should have been glad to have killed him. But the thought of *murder* did not enter my heart when I struck poor Cranston; it was a sort of instinctive movement; the work of a moment; and had not the murderous weapon been in my hand, the effects of the blow would have been but slight.”

Many such conversations as these passed between the young prisoner and his sister, during those two months preceding the trial—every day of which, except during church hours on Sunday, Agnes passed with him from morning till night, almost as much a prisoner as he, except that hers was not compulsory. This time was faithfully improved by Agnes, in endeavoring to lead her brother to right views upon the subject of his own condition in the sight of a Holy God. He was very gentle and teachable now, and before the day of trial came, Agnes hoped that her brother was a true penitent, though his own hopes of pardon were faint and flickering.

Mr. Malcolm too, often visited young Elwyn, in whom he was most deeply interested; and his gentle teachings and fervent prayers were eagerly listened to by the youthful prisoner. Mr. W——, his counsel, came often, also, but in his endeavors to keep up the spirits of Lewie and his sister, his manner was so trifling and flippant that it grated on their feelings painfully. He was working as laboriously it seemed, as the enormous fee promised him would warrant, leaving no stone unturned which would throw some favorable light on young Elwyn’s case. Thus days and weeks passed on, and in the midst of increasing agitation and excitement, the day of trial came.

When the brother and sister parted the evening before the trial, Agnes once more renewed the entreaties she had so often made that Lewie would allow her to remain by his side during the painful events of the coming day. But his refusal was firm and unyielding.

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"No, no, dear sister, pray do not urge it," said he. "I know I shall be too much agitated as it is; I do not believe I can go through it with even an appearance of calmness alone; and how much more difficult it would be for me with you by my side. I know I could not bear it. No! Agnes, remain in the village if you prefer it, but do not let me see your dear face again till my fate is decided. Let us pray once more together, sweet sister—let us pray for mercy from God and man." And when they arose from their knees they took their sad farewell, and Agnes accompanied her uncle to the house of her kind friend, Dr. Rodney, where she was to remain till the trial was over.

XVIII.

The Trial.

"The morn lowered darkly; but the sun hath now,
With fierce and angry splendor, through the clouds
Burst forth, as if impatient to behold
This our high triumph. Lead the prisoner in."

—VESPERS OF PALERMO.

To say that, long before the hour fixed for the trial, the court room was crowded to its utmost capacity with eager and expectant faces, would be to repeat what has been written and said of every trial, the events of which have been chronicled; but it would be no less true for that. And when the young prisoner was brought into the room, his handsome face pale from agitation and recent confinement, and with an expression of intense anxiety in his eye, all not before deeply interested for the friends of the unfortunate Cranston were moved to pity, and strongly prepossessed in his favor.

Mr. W——, the counsel for the prisoner, was an able and eloquent lawyer. He was a small, slight man, with a high, bald forehead; and a pair of very bright, black, restless eyes. His manner was naturally quick and lively; but he well knew how to touch the tender strings, and make them give forth a tone in unison with his own, or with that which he had adopted for his own to suit the occasion. He had an appearance, too, of being assured of the justice of his cause, and perfectly confident of success, which was encouraging to the prisoner and his friends.

After the necessary preliminaries and statements had been gone through with, the witnesses against the prisoner and in his favor were called, who testified to the fact of the murder, and to the prisoner's natural quickness of temper, inducing fits of sudden passion, which, even in childhood, seemed at times hardly to leave him the mastery of himself. Friends, school-mates, college-mates, in turn gave their testimony to the prisoner's kindness of heart, which would not suffer him to harbor resentment; and yet

many instances were mentioned of fierce and terrible passion, utterly heedless of results for the moment, and yet passing away quick as the lightning's flash.

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It was shown that he had no ill-will to young Cranston; on the contrary, they were generally friendly and affectionate; that they had been so throughout the evening on which the fatal deed was done. It was at a supper table, when all were excited by wine; and Cranston, who was fond of a joke, and rather given to teasing, and being less guarded than usual, introduced some subject exceedingly unpleasant to young Elwyn. The quick temper of the latter was aroused at once, and he gave a hasty and angry reply. The raillery was pushed still farther; and before those about him had time to interfere, the fatal blow was struck in frantic passion.

“And is this no palliating circumstance,” said Mr. W——, “that God has given to this young man a naturally fierce and hasty temper, which could not brook that which might be borne more patiently by those whose blood flows more coldly and sluggishly? Is there no difference to be made in our judgment of men, because of the different tempers and dispositions with which they were born? Of course there is!—*of course* there is! It has been clearly shown that there was no malice aforethought in this case; the injury was not brooded over in silence, and the plan matured in cold blood to murder a class-mate and friend. No! on the moment of provocation the blow was struck, with but the single idea of giving vent to the passion which was bursting his breast. And those who witnessed his deep remorse and agony of mind, when he discovered the fatal effects of his passion, as, all regardless of his own safety, he endeavored to restore his expiring friend to life, have assured me, that though they were witnesses of the whole scene, they felt for *him* only the deepest commiseration.”

And here Mr. W—— paused and wiped his eyes repeatedly, and the sobs of the young prisoner were heard all over the court room.

“There was one,” Mr. W—— continued, “of whom he wished to speak, and whom, on some accounts, he would have been glad to bring before the jury to-day. But he would not outrage the feelings of his young friend by urging him to consent to the entreaties of his lovely sister, that she might be permitted to sit by his side in that prisoner’s seat to-day. She is his only sister; he her only brother; and they are orphans.” (Here there was a faltering of the voice, a pause, which was very effective; and after apparently a great effort, Mr. W—— went on.)

“She has sat beside him hour after hour, and day after day, in yonder dreary jail, endeavoring to make the weary hours of solitude and captivity less irksome, and lead the prisoner’s heart away from earthly trouble to heavenly comfort. Her hope in the jury of to-day is strong. She believes they will not doom her young and only brother to an ignominious death, and a dishonored grave; she even hopes that they will not consign him to long years of weary imprisonment; she feels that he is changed; that he no longer trusts to his own strength to overcome his naturally strong and violent passions; but that his trust is in the arm of the Lord his God, who ‘turneth the hearts of men as the rivers of water are turned.’”

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"May He dispose the hearts of these twelve men, on whom the fate of this youth now hangs, so that they shall show, that like Himself they are *lovers of mercy*."

And Mr. W—— sat down and covered his face with his handkerchief. The hope and expectation of acquittal now were very strong.

And now slowly rose the counsel for the prosecution. Mr. G—— was a tall thin man, of a grave and stern expression of countenance; his hair was of an iron-gray, and his piercing gray eye shone from under his shaggy eye-brows like a spark of fire. It was the only thing that looked like *life* about him; and when he first rose he began to speak in a slow, distinct, unimpassioned manner, and without the least attempt at eloquence.

"He *had* intended," he said, "to call a few more witnesses, but he found it was utterly unnecessary; those already called had said all he cared to hear; indeed, he had been much surprised to hear testimony on the side of the prisoner which he should have thought by right his own. No one attempts to deny the fact of the killing, and that the deed was done by the hand of the prisoner. The question for us to decide is, was it murder? was it man-slaughter? or was it *nothing at all*? for to that point my learned adversary evidently wishes to conduct us."

"The young man it appears, by the testimony of friends and school-mates, has always been of a peculiarly quick and fiery temper; so much so it seems, that a playful allusion, or what is commonly called a *teazing* expression, could not be indulged in at his expense but his companion was instantly felled to the ground. And was *he* the one to arm himself with bowie-knife or revolver? Should one who was perfectly conscious that he had not the slightest control over his temper, keep about him a murderous weapon ready to do its deed of death upon any friend who might unwittingly, in an hour of revelry, touch upon some sore spot?"

"As soon would I approach a keg of gun-powder with a lighted candle in my hand, as have aught to do with one so fiery and so armed for destruction. It has been said that it is the custom for young men in some of our colleges to go thus armed; the more need of signal vengeance upon the work of death they do. Gentlemen of the jury, if this practice is not loudly rebuked we shall have work of this kind accumulating rapidly on our hands."

"It was done in the heat of frenzied passion, and so the prisoner must go unpunished.' My learned friend argued not so, when he appeared in this place against the murder Wiley; poor, ignorant, and half-witted; who with his eyes starting from his head with starvation, entered a farmer's house, and in the extremity of his suffering demanded bread. And on being told by the woman of the house to take himself off to the nearest tavern and get bread, caught up a carving knife and stabbed her to the heart, seized a piece of bread, and fled from the house. He had a fiendish temper too; it was rendered fiercer by starvation; and when asked why he did the dreadful deed, he said he never

could have dragged himself on three miles to the nearest tavern, and he had no money to buy bread when he got there. He must die anyway, and it might as well be on the gallows as by the road-side."

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“He, poor fellow, had no friends; he had been brought up in vice and misery; he had no gentle sister to lead him in the paths of virtue, a kind word was never spoken to him; a crust of bread was denied him when he was starving; and above all, he had no wealthy friend to pay an enormous counsel fee, and my learned opponent standing where he did just now, called loudly on the jury and said, ‘away with such a fellow from the earth!’”

“Do not think me blood-thirsty or unfeeling. The innocent sufferer in this case, the sister of this unfortunate young man, has my deepest sympathy and commiseration, as she has that of this audience and the jury. But could those here present have gone with me”—(here the speaker paused, too agitated to proceed)—“to yonder desolated home; had they seen a mother, lately widowed, and four young sisters, around the bier where lay the remains of the murdered son and brother—their only hope next to God—he for whom they were all toiling early and late, that, when his education was completed, he in turn might work for them,—had they heard that mother’s cry for strength, now that her last earthly prop was thus rudely snatched away, they would have found food for pity there. I tell you, my friends, I pray that I may never be called upon to witness such a scene again!”

Wiping his cheeks repeatedly, Mr. G——resumed:

“These tears surprise me; for I am not used to the ‘melting mood,’ and I cannot afford to weep as readily as my learned opponent, who will count his pile of bank notes for every tear he sheds, and think those tears well expended. I speak for an outraged community; my sympathies are with the poor—with the widow and the fatherless—with those whose only son and brother has been cut off in his hope and promise, and consigned to an early grave.”

“Shall these things take place unnoticed and unpunished?—and for a light and hasty word, shall our young men of promise be cut down in the midst of their days, and the act go unrebuked of justice? I look not so much at this individual case as to the general good. Were I to look only on the prisoner, I too might yield to feeling, and forget justice. But feeling must not rule here: in the court room, justice alone should have sway; and I call upon the jury to decide as impartially in this case as if the poorest and most neglected wretch, brought up in vice and wretchedness, sat there, instead of the handsome and interesting prisoner; and I call upon the jury to show that, though in private life they may be ‘lovers of mercy,’ yet, where the general good is so deeply involved, they are determined to ‘deal justly’ with the prisoner.”

The judge then gave his charge to the jury, which was thought to lean rather to the side of the prisoner, though he agreed with Mr. G——, that some sharp rebuke should be given to the practice, so common among the young men in some of our colleges, of carrying about with them offensive weapons.

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The prisoner was led back to the jail; the jury retired; and it being now evening, the court room was deserted.

XIX.

The Sealed Paper.

“Sister, thy brother is won by thee.”—MRS. HEMANS.

The verdict would not be made known till the next morning. Oh! what a night of mental torture was that to the devoted sister of the prisoner! The terrible suspense left it out of her power to remain quiet for a moment, but she restlessly paced the room, watching for the dawn of day, and yet dreading the signs of its approach. Her aunt, who remained with her during that anxious night, endeavored as well as she could to soothe and calm her excited feelings; but how little there was to be said; she could only point her to the Christian's never-failing trust and confidence; and it was only by constant supplications for strength from on high, as she walked the room, that Agnes was enabled to retain the slightest appearance of composure, or, as it seemed to her, to keep her brain from bursting.

The longest night will have an end, and morning at length dawned on the weary eyes of the watchers. The family rose and breakfasted early, for an intense excitement reigned throughout the house. Agnes begged to be allowed to remain in her own room; and though, in compliance with the entreaties of her friends, she endeavored to eat, she could not swallow a morsel. Mr. Wharton came early; and soon after breakfast, he and Dr. Rodney went out. At nine o'clock the court were to assemble, to hear the verdict; and from that moment, Agnes seated herself at the window, with her hands pressed on her aching forehead, and her eyes straining to catch the first glimpse of them as they returned.

She sat thus for an hour or more at the window, and at the end of that time the crowds began to pass the house, and she soon caught sight of Dr. Rodney and her uncle. They did not hasten as if they had joyful news to tell, and as Agnes in her agitation rose as they approached the gate, and watched their faces as they came up the gravel walk, she saw there enough to tell her the whole story; and pressing both hands upon her heart she sat down again, for she had no longer strength to stand. In a few moments she heard her uncle's step coming slowly towards her room. As the door opened very gently she did not raise her head; it had fallen upon her breast, and she was asking for strength to bear what she knew was coming. When at length she looked towards her uncle she saw him standing with his hand still on the lock, and gazing at her intently. His face was of an ashy paleness, and he seemed irresolute whether to approach her or to leave the room.

“Uncle,” gasped Agnes, “do not speak now; there is no need; I see it all,” and slowly she fell to the floor and forgot her bitter sorrow in long insensibility. When she recovered it was nearly mid-day, and only her aunt was sitting by her bedside.

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"Aunty," said she, as if bewildered, "what time is it?" Her aunt told her the time.

"And is it possible," said Agnes, "that I have slept so late?" and then pressing her hands to her head, she said:

"Who said '*condemned*' and '*sentenced*'?"

"No one has said those words to you, dear Agnes," said Mrs. Wharton.

"But oh, aunty!" she exclaimed, seizing Mrs. Wharton's hand, "it is *true*, is it not? Yes, I know it is. My poor young brother! And here I have been wasting the time when he wants me so much. I must get up this moment and go to him."

Her aunt endeavored to persuade her to remain quiet, telling her that Mr. Malcolm was with Lewie, and that he was not left alone for a moment. Agnes insisted, however, upon rising, but on making the attempt her head became dizzy and she sank back again upon her pillow; and this was the beginning of a brain fever, which kept her confined to her bed in unconscious delirium for more than three weeks. In her delirium she seemed to go back to the days of her childhood, and live them over again with all the trouble they caused her young heart. Sometimes she fancied herself a lonely prisoner again in the cold north room, and sometimes pleading with her little brother, and begging him to "be a good boy, and to try and not be so cross." At one time Dr. Rodney had little hope of her life, and after that he feared permanent loss of reason, but in both fears he was disappointed. Agnes recovered at length, and with her mind as clear as ever.

During the days when she was convalescing, but still too weak to leave her bed, her impatience to get to her brother was so great, that the doctor feared it would retard her recovery. It could not be concealed from her that Lewie was ill, and the consciousness that she was so necessary to him, made it the more difficult for Agnes to exercise that patience and calmness which were requisite to ensure a return of her strength. Lewie had taken to his bed, immediately after his return to the jail, on the morning of the sentence, and had not left it since. He seemed fast sinking into a decline, and much of the good doctor's time was taken up in ministering at the bed-side of the brother and sister.

At length Agnes was so much better that the doctor consented to her paying her brother a visit. She found him in the condemned cell, but no manacles were necessary to fetter his limbs, for a chain stronger than iron bolts confined him to his bed, and that strong chain was perfect weakness. Though his cell was darker and more dungeon-like, yet through the kindness of friends the sick young prisoner was made as comfortable as possible. By a very strong effort Agnes so far commanded herself as to retain an appearance of outward composure, during that first meeting after so long and so eventful a separation; and now began again the daily ministrations of Agnes at the bed-

side of her brother, for in consideration of his feeble condition his sister was permitted to remain with him constantly.

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Lewie knew that he was failing; "I think," said he to Agnes, "that God will call for my spirit before the time comes for man to set it free. But oh! Agnes, if I could once more look upon the green earth, and the blue sky, and breathe the pure fresh air; and die *free*."

It was after longings for freedom like these, that when Agnes returned to Dr. Rodney's one evening, (for ever since the trial, at the earnest request of the kind doctor and his wife, she had made their house her home except when with her brother,) she found her cousin Grace, who often came over to pass the night with her, waiting her arrival with tidings in her face.

"Agnes," said she, "I have heard something to-day which may possibly cast a ray of hope on Lewie's case yet."

"What can it be, dear Grace?" asked Agnes.

"Who do you think the new Governor's wife is, Agnes?"

"I am sure I cannot imagine."

"Do you remember that strange girl, Ruth Glenn?"

"Certainly."

"Well, it is she. Only think how strange! I have no idea how much influence she has with the Governor; but unless she has changed wonderfully in her feelings, she would do anything in the world to serve you, Agnes, as she ought."

"Oh, blessings on you, Grace! I will go; there *may* be hope in it; and if poor Lewie could only die free; for die he must, the doctor assures me—perhaps before the flowers bloom."

"Father will go with you, Agnes. I have been talking with him about it."

"Oh, how very, very kind you all are to us!" said Agnes. "Then, no time must be lost, Grace; and if uncle will go with me, we will start as early as possible in the morning."

Agnes rose early the next morning, with something like a faint tinge of color in her cheek, lent to it by the excitement of hope; and after visiting her brother, to give some explanation of the cause of her absence, she took her seat in the carriage by her uncle, for they must ride some miles in order to reach the cars.

They reached the Capitol that afternoon; and Agnes, who felt that she had very little time to spare, left the hotel a few moments after their arrival in the city, and, leaning on her uncle's arm, sought the Governor's house. Agnes felt her heart die within her as she ascended the broad flight of marble steps. Years had passed, and many changes

had taken place since she had met Ruth Glenn. Would she find her again in the Governor's lady?

Mrs. F—— was at home, and Mr. Wharton left Agnes at the door, thinking that, on all accounts, the interview had better be private. "He should return for her in an hour or two," he said, "when he intended to call upon the Governor, who had once been a class-mate and intimate friend."

Having merely sent word by the servant that an old friend wished to see Mrs. F——, Agnes was shown into a large and elegantly-furnished parlor, to await her coming. In a few moments, she heard a light step descending the stairs, and the rustling of a silk dress, and the Governor's lady entered the room.

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Could it be possible that this blooming, elegant, graceful woman was the pale, nervous Ruth Glenn, whom Agnes had befriended at Mrs. Arlington's school? To account for this extraordinary change, we must go back a few years, which we can fortunately do in a few moments, and give a glance at Ruth Glenn's history.

She had left school almost immediately after Agnes and her cousins, having been recommended by Mrs. Arlington to a lady who was looking for a governess to her children. Here she became acquainted with a lawyer who visited frequently at the house; a middle-aged man, and a widower, who was just then looking out for some one to take care of himself and his establishment. By one of those unaccountable whims which men sometimes take, this man (who, from his position and wealth, might have won the hand of almost any accomplished and dashing young lady of his acquaintance,) was attracted towards the plain, silent governess, and he very soon, to the astonishment of all, made proposals to her, which were accepted.

Soon after their marriage, business made it necessary for Mr. F—— to go to Europe, and Ruth accompanied him. A sea voyage and two years' travel abroad entirely restored her health, and with it came, what her husband had never looked for—*beauty*; while the many opportunities for improvement and cultivation which she enjoyed, and the good society into which she was thrown, worked a like marvellous change in her manners. All her nervous diffidence banished, and in its place she had acquired a dignified self-possession and grace of manner, which fitted her well for the station of influence she was to occupy. Soon after her return, her husband was elected Governor; and the city was already ringing with praises of the loveliness and affability of the new Governor's wife.

No wonder, then, that as Agnes rose to meet her they stood looking at each other in silence for a moment; Agnes vainly endeavoring to discover a trace of Ruth Glenn in the easy and elegant woman before her, and Mrs. F—— trying to divine who this guest who had called herself an old friend might be.

For sickness and sorrow had changed Agnes too. Her bright bloom was all gone; her charming animation of manner had given place to a settled sadness; and though still most lovely, as she stood in her deep mourning dress, she was but a wreck of the Agnes Elwyn of former years.

But when after a moment Agnes said, "Ruth, do you not know me?"

The scream of delight with which Ruth opened her arms, and clasped her to her breast, crying out, "*Agnes Elwyn!*—my dear, dear Agnes!" convinced her that in heart at least her old school-mate was unchanged. Ruth immediately took Agnes to her own room, that they might be undisturbed, for she guessed at once her purpose in coming; and then Agnes opened to her her burdened heart; relating all her brother's history; telling her of his naturally strong passions, and saying all that was necessary to say, in justice

to her brother, of the injudicious training he had received; at the same time treating her mother's memory with all possible delicacy and respect.

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"And now, dear Ruth," she said, "I do not come to ask that my young brother shall be permitted to walk forth to do like evil again;—there would be no danger of that, even if he were not greatly changed, as I solemnly believe he is, in heart and temper; for his doom is sealed; consumption is wasting his frame;—we only ask that we may carry him forth to die and be buried among his kindred. Oh! how he pines for the free air and the blue sky, and longs to die elsewhere than in a condemned cell! If I might be permitted to remove him to my uncle's kind home, where he could have comforts and friends about him, I could close his eyes, it seems to me, with thankfulness, for I do believe that the Christian's hope is his."

Ruth's sympathizing tears had been flowing down her cheeks, as, with her hand clasping that of Agnes, she had listened to her sad story. She now rose, and said she would go to her husband, who was slightly indisposed, and confined to his room, and prepare him to see Agnes. "And do, Agnes, talk to him just as you have done to me," she said. "He is called a stern man; but he has tender feelings, I can assure you, if the right chord is only touched."

Ruth was gone a long time, and Agnes walked the floor of her room in a state of suspense and agitation only equalled by that of the night after the trial. At length Ruth returned: she looked sad and troubled.

"Agnes," said she, "you must see my husband yourself, and say to him all you have said to me. He is deeply grateful for all you have done for me, and would do anything in the world for you except what he thinks, or what he seems to think, would be yielding to the call of feeling at the expense of justice. He says his predecessor has been much censured for so often granting pardons to criminals, especially to any who had influential friends; and I fear that, in avoiding his errors, he will go to the opposite extreme. He remembers your brother's case well, and says, that though it could not be called *deliberate* murder, still it was murder; and he agrees with the lawyer, Mr. G——, that some signal reproof should be given to this practice among the young men of carrying about them offensive weapons. This is all he said; but he has consented to see you, and is expecting you. I shall leave you alone with him; and oh! Agnes, do speak as eloquently as you did to me. I know he cannot resist it."

The Governor, a tall, fine-looking man, was wrapped in his dressing-gown, and seated in his easy chair. He rose to receive Agnes, gave her a cordial welcome as a friend to his wife, and bade her take a seat beside him; but there was something in his look which said, that he did not mean to be convinced against his better judgment by two women.

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Agnes was at first too much agitated to speak; but the Governor kindly re-assured her, by asking her some questions about her brother's case, and soon she thought of nothing but him; her courage all revived; and with an eloquence the more effective from being all unstudied, she told her brother's story to the Governor. "He is so young," said she, "only eighteen years old; and yet he must die. But, oh! sir, if you would but save him from being dragged in his weakness to a death of shame, or from lingering out his few remaining days in that close, dark cell; oh! if he might only die free!"

"Ruth tells me," said the Governor, quietly, "that your uncle, Mr. Wharton, is with you. Is it William Wharton, of C—— County?"

Agnes answered in the affirmative.

"Once a very good friend of mine," said he; "but it is many years since we have met. Where is he?"

"He came to the door with me," answered Agnes, "and will return for me soon. He hoped to have the pleasure of seeing you, sir."

"I will see him when he comes," said the Governor. "Go you back to Ruth, my dear young lady. I will think of all you have said."

When Mr. Wharton called, he was admitted to the Governor; and the two former friends, after a cordial greeting, were closeted together for a long time. He confirmed all that Agnes said of her brother, and assured the Governor that it was the opinion of physicians that he could not recover, and might not last a month. He spoke long and feelingly of the devotion of Agnes to her brother, in attendance upon whom, in his loneliness and imprisonment, she had worn out health and strength.

The eyes of the Governor now glistened with emotion as he said, "Well, well, I hope I shall not be doing wrong. At what time do you leave in the morning, Mr. Wharton?"

"In the very first train. Agnes cannot be longer from her brother's bedside."

"Can you bring her here for one moment before you leave?"

"Certainly."

"Well, then, tell her to lie down to-night, and sleep in peace; and may Heaven bless a sister so devoted, and a friend so true."

The Governor was not so well when Mr. Wharton and Agnes called the next morning; but Ruth appeared, her face radiant with joy, and, throwing her arms around Agnes' neck, she put into her hand a *sealed paper*.

XX.

Twice Free.

“Oh liberty!

Thou choicest gift of Heaven, and wanting which
Life is as nothing.”—KNOWLES.

Oh! the sunshine, and the glad earth, and the singing of the birds of early spring, to the prisoner, sick, and worn, and weary! How the feeble pulse already begins to throb with pleasure, and life which had seemed so valueless before, looks lovely and much to be desired now.

The official announcement of the pardon reached Hillsdale almost as soon as Agnes herself, and the friends of the young prisoner lost no time in removing him as gently and as comfortably as possible, to his uncle's kind home at Brook Farm. Here nothing was left undone by his devoted friends to soothe his declining days; and with a heart overflowing with gratitude and love, Lewie sank quietly towards the grave.

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He was very gentle now, and the change in him was so great, that his sister doubted not that repentance and faith had done their work. His own doubts and fears were many, though sometimes a glimmering of hope would beam through the clouds which seemed to have gathered about him. One day, after a long conversation with Agnes upon the love and mercy of God, he said:

"Well Agnes, it may be, there is hope for me too; I know He is all-powerful and all-merciful; why, as you say, should not his mercy extend even to me?"

"He is *able* and *willing* to save unto the uttermost," said Agnes.

"Unto—the—uttermost! Unto—the—uttermost!" repeated the sick youth slowly; then looking up with his beautiful eye beaming with expression;—

"Yes, Agnes," said he, "I will trust him!"

Day by day he grew weaker, and at times his sufferings were intense; but such a wonderful patience and calmness possessed him, and he seemed so to forget self in his thought for others, that Mrs. Wharton said, in speaking of him:

"I never so fully realized the import of the words '*a new creature*.' Who would think that this could be our impetuous, thoughtless Lewie, of former times."

"You must make some allowance for the languor of sickness, my dear," said Mr. Wharton, who of course did not see so much of the invalid as those who had the immediate charge of him.

"Weakness, I grant, would make him less impetuous and violent," answered his wife, "but would it make him patient, and docile, and considerate, if there were not some radical change in his feelings and temper?"

During the last few days of his life, and when the flickering flame was hourly expected to die out, his uncle saw more of him, and he, too, became convinced of the change in Lewie, and was certain that for him to die would be gam. And at last, with words of prayer upon his lips and a whisper of his sister's name, he sank away as gently as an infant drops asleep.

"How like he looks," said old Mammy, with the tears streaming down her withered cheeks, "how like he looks, with the bonny curls lying round his forehead, to what he did the day he lay like death at the Hemlock's, when he was only two years old."

Mrs. Wharton's mind immediately reverted to the scene, and to that young mother's prayer of agony, "Oh, for his life! his life!" and as she thought over the events of that short life of sin and sorrow, she said within herself, "Oh! who can tell what to choose for

his portion! Thou Lord, who knowest the end from the beginning, choose Thou our changes for us, and help us in the darkest hour to say, 'Thy will be done.'"

And in the quiet spot where the willow bends, and the brook murmurs, by the side of his mother, and near the grave of Rhoda Edwards, rest the remains of *Lewie*.

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It is strange how much a human heart may suffer and yet beat on and regain tranquillity, and even cheerfulness at last. It is a most merciful provision of Providence, that our griefs do not always press upon us as heavily as they do at first, else how could the burden of this life of change and sorrow be borne. But the loved ones are not forgotten when the tear is dried and the smile returns to the cheek; they are remembered, but with less of sadness and gloom in the remembrance; and at length, if we can think of them as happy, it is only a pleasure to recall them to mind.

So Agnes found it, as after a few months of rest and quiet in her uncle's happy home, the gloom of her sorrow began to fade away, the color returned to her cheek, and she began to be like the Agnes of former times. And now that health and energy had returned, she began to long for employment again, and though she knew it would cost a great struggle to leave her dear friends at Brook Farm, she began to urge them all to be on the watch for a situation for her as governess or teacher.

At length, one day, some months after her brother's death, Mr. Wharton entered the room where she was sitting, and said:

"Agnes, there is a gentleman down stairs, who would like to engage you to superintend the education of his children."

If Agnes had looked closely at her uncle's face, she would have observed a very peculiar expression there; but only laying aside her work, she said:

"Please say to him, uncle, that I will come down in one moment."

With a quiet step and an unpalpitating heart, Agnes opened the parlor door, and found herself alone with—Mr. Harrington!

And here we will end our short chapter, though enough was said that morning to make it a very long one, as it certainly was an eventful one in the history of Agnes.

XXI

The Winding Up or the Turning Point, whichever the Reader likes Best.

"Still at thy father's board
There is kept a place for thee
And by thy smile restored,
Joy round the hearth shall be."—MRS. HEMANS.

"He will not blush that has a father's heart,
To take in childish plays a childish part,

But bends his sturdy back to any toy
That youth takes pleasure in, to please his boy.”—Cowper

“What do you think, Calista?—what *do* you think?” asked Miss Evelina Fairland of her sister, about two years after she had asked these same questions before. “There are masons, and carpenters, and painters, and paperers, and gardeners, at work at the old Rookery; a perfect army of laborers have been sent down from the city. What can it mean?”

“I cannot imagine, I am sure,” answered Miss Calista, “unless Mr. Harrington is really going to settle down, and look out for a wife at last.” And Miss Calista looked in the glass over her sister’s shoulder, and both faces looked more faded and considerably older than when we saw them last.

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“Do you know,” said Miss Evelina, “that I really believe Agnes Elwyn thought the man was in love with *her*?”

“Absurd!” exclaimed Miss Calista. “Besides, if he ever had entertained such a thought, he would not, of course, think of anything of the kind since that affair of her brother’s. Such a disgrace, you know!”

The appearance of the old Rookery changed so rapidly, that it seemed almost as if the fairies had been at work; and in a few weeks, glimpses of a fair and elegant mansion, with its pretty piazzas and porticos, could be seen between the noble oaks which surrounded the mansion. And now Miss Calista and Evelina, who kept themselves informed of all that was going on at the Rookery, reported that “the *most magnificent* furniture” had come, and the curtains and pictures were being hung, and it was certain that the owner of the place would be there soon.

At length a travelling carriage, in which was seated Mr. Harrington, with a lady by his side, and two little girls in front, was seen by these indefatigable ladies to drive rapidly through the street, and out towards the Rookery. The lady was in mourning, and her veil was down. Who could she be?

And now it was rumored in the village that Mr. Harrington was actually married; and whenever he met any of his old acquaintances, he invited them with great cordiality to call to see his wife. The Misses Fairland determined not to be outdone by any, and, the more effectually to conceal their own disappointment, were among the first to call.

Who can conceive of their astonishment and mortification, when they found that the mistress of the Rookery was no other than the former governess, Agnes Elwyn! Agnes received them with the utmost kindness; begged them to ask their father, whom she remembered with much affection, to come very soon to see her; was much pleased to hear how happy Rosa and Jessie were at Mrs. Arlington’s; and brought them tidings of Frank, who was under Mr. Malcolm’s care.

“And where is that delightful gentleman who was with Mr. Harrington, when he was here two summers since—Mr. Wharton I think his name was?” asked Miss Evelina.

“Mr. Tom Wharton? Oh, he will be here in a few days. He has purchased the place next to us, and is about to build there. I suppose, as it is no longer a secret, I may tell you that he is soon to be married to my cousin, Effie Wharton. They will remain with us most of the time till their house is finished.”

The countenances of the visitors fell on hearing this, and they soon rose and took leave.

And now we know not better how to wind up or *run down* our story, than to pass over two or three years and introduce our reader to another Christmas party at Mr.

Wharton's, for it still is the custom, for all the scattered members of the family to gather in the paternal mansion to spend the Christmas holidays.

Mr. and Mrs. Wharton appear as a fine-looking middle-aged couple, on whom the years sit lightly, for their lives have been happy and useful ones, and there is no such preservative of fresh and youthful looks, as a contented mind and an untroubled conscience. The two older sons are married. Robert is settled as a clergyman in a western village, and Albert as a merchant in the city; these with their wives, most charming women both, are there.

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Mr. Malcolm, who wondered more and more that he ever had the presumption to suppose that such a woman as Emily Wharton could fancy him, at last so recovered from his disappointment as again to entertain thoughts of matrimony; and he and our friend Grace have been married about six months, and are nicely settled in their own pretty house at Hillsdale, where Mr. Malcolm is still the loved and honored pastor. Cousin Emily, calm and tranquil as ever to all outward appearance, aided in the preparations and appeared at the wedding, and it was no cause of wonderment to any, that she was confined to her bed the next day with one of her nervous headaches, for great excitement and fatigue were always too much for cousin Emily.

Mr. Tom Wharton and Effie are at home too, the former no whit more sedate, in consequence of the added dignities of husband and father which attach to him.

And our own dear Agnes is there too, with her husband, her two little step-daughters, and her own little boy, a noble, handsome little fellow, but with some traits of character which occasionally cause a pang to cross the heart of his mother; they remind her so of the childhood of one whose sun went down so early and so sadly. But we hope much that proper training, with the divine blessing, will so mould and guide this tender plant, that it will grow up to be an ornament and a blessing to all around, Agnes makes just such a step-mother as we should expect, and her dear little girls feel that in her they have indeed found a mother.

But long after all the rest of the large party have been seated at the dinner-table, there remains a vacant seat, and here at last slowly comes the expected occupant.

What, cousin Betty! alive yet? Yes, and "alive like to be," till she has finished her century. She retains many of her old, strange habits, but has long since given up *dying*, as others begin to expect such an event to happen in the ordinary course of nature; indeed, it rather hurts cousin Betty's feelings to be spoken of as a very aged person, or as one whose time on earth is probably short. She is laying her plans for the future as busily as any one, and it may be that her old wrinkled face will be seen in its accustomed haunts long after some of the blooming ones around that board are mouldering in the grave.

Old Mammy too, whose home has been with Agnes ever since her marriage, has come back to her old home for the Christmas holidays. But Mammy is a good deal broken, and nothing is required of her by her kind mistress, except such little offices as it is a pleasure to her to perform.

Cousin Emily, the "old maid cousin," as she calls herself, is in great demand; indeed, as she says, she is a perfect "bone of contention," and in order to keep peace with all, she has had to divide the year into four parts, and give three months to each of those who have the strongest claim upon her time. It is always a season of rejoicing when cousin

Emily arrives, with her ever cheerful face, her entertaining conversation for the older ones, and her fund of stories and anecdotes for the children.

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After dinner came an old-fashioned Christmas frolic, and the older ones were children again, and the children as wild and noisy as they chose to be. Mr. Wharton on entering the room suddenly, saw his nephew, Mr. Tom, going around the room on all fours, as a horse, driven by his only son and heir, Master Tom, junior.

"Tom," said Mr. Wharton suddenly, "how do you prefer calf's head?"

"What do you mean by that, uncle?" said Mr. Tom, pausing a moment and looking up.

"I took some notes of a certain conversation which took place some years ago," said his uncle, "in which a certain young gentleman called a certain old gentleman *a calf*, because he made such a fool of himself as to be a horse for his little son to drive; and this young gentleman said he would sooner eat his head, than make such an exhibition of himself."

"Well, circumstances do alter cases, don't they, uncle?" said Mr. Tom, beginning to prance about again under the renewed blows of the whip in Master Tom junior's hand.

Mrs. Arlington and her daughters still keep their school, which is as popular and flourishing as ever. Rosa and Jessie Fairland are still under their care, and it is a great pleasure to Agnes to see what fine, agreeable girls they are growing up to be. They retain a warm affection for Agnes and pass many a pleasant day at the Rookery, when they are at home for a vacation. Frank is still under Mr. Malcolm's care, and a member of his family, Mr. Malcolm finds him a much more tractable pupil than one we know of, to whom he tried to do his duty many years ago. And we must not close without saying a word of the kind, true-hearted, Ruth Glenn. Governor F——, at the close of his term of office was re-elected, and when at last he left the city and returned to his country home, it was with the deep regrets of all the many friends which his residence in the capitol had not failed to create for himself, and his amiable wife. As she passed within a few miles of Wilston, Mrs. F—— turned out of her way to stop and pay Agnes a short visit, and she found again the bright and cheerful Agnes of former times; and many a pleasant hour the friends enjoyed together, in talking over the days and *nights* at Mrs. Arlington's school, for even out of the latter they could now draw some amusing recollections.

Miss Calista and Miss Evelina are still on the "look out." The wife of the clergyman at Wilston, having died about a year since, Miss Calista, ever ready to take advantage of any *opening*, began immediately to attend church very regularly, and with a vary sanctimonious and attentive air. It remains to be seen whether anything comes of it.

And now our task is done. If the sad story of the short life of poor Lewie, will be the means of leading any mother to use more carefully and more conscientiously, the power which she *alone* possesses now, of training aright the little plants in her nursery, so that they may grow up fair and flourishing, and bear good fruit; and in time repay her care by

the fragrance and beauty and comfort which they shower about her declining days, it will be enough. And may each little plant, so trained, bloom evermore in the paradise of God.

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THE END.

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Who is Cousin Cicely?—We begin to think Cousin Cicely is *somebody*, and feel disposed to ask, who is she? We several months ago noticed her "Lewie" in this journal. It is a story with a fine moral, beautiful and touching in its development. It has already quietly made its way to a circulation of *twelve thousand*, "without beating a drum or crying oysters." Pretty good evidence that there is something in it. Our readers have already had a taste of "Ups and Downs," for we find among its contents a story entitled "Miss Todd, M.D., or a Disease of the Heart," which was published in this journal a few months ago We venture to say that *no one* who read has forgotten it, and those who



remember it will be glad to know where they can find plenty more of the “same sort.”—*U.S. Journal*.

* * * Sketches of life as it is, and of some things as they should be; all drawn with a light pencil, and abounding with touches of real genius, Cousin Cicely has improved her former good reputation in our opinion, by this effort.—*The Wesleyan*.