

From the Worlds of Andre Norton

**The
Scribbling
Women**
By Andre Norton

Edited by Jay P. Watts of
Andre-Norton-Books.com
The Official Website of
The Estate of Andre Norton

The Scribbling Women: Women Writers of the Victorian Era
By Andre Norton

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For My Mother

Whose collection of Victorian novels first introduced
me to the work of the “Scribbling Women” and
without whose aid this book could never have been
written.

“America is now wholly given over to a damn mob of scribbling Women and I should have no chance of success while the public taste is occupied with their trash.”

“—and should be ashamed of myself if I did succeed. What is the mystery of these innumerable editions of the ‘Lamplighter,’ and other books neither better nor worse?—worse they could not be, and better they need not be, when they sell by the 100,000.”

Nathaniel Hawthorne writing from Britain to his publisher (1855)

SCRIBBLING WOMEN

(Summary)

The first third of the nineteenth century saw the rise in America of the woman writer, daring to enter a field considered before to be wholly masculine. The century itself showed the trend in that culture and the arts (Or the appreciation and judgment on them) fell to the women and were considered almost entirely their interest -- men were so occupied with growing business affairs that it was largely considered a waste of time to show any interest in such fields.

Five women in America knew so well -- seemingly by instinct -- what was desired in that field by the buying public (Largely of their own sex) that they became our first best-sellers and so monopolized the field that they were in some instances bitterly resented by the male authors -- as witness Hawthorne's bitter and spiteful comment to his publisher concerning them.

Some of these books, now well over a hundred years old, are still to be found today. For the majority of the writers had one thing in common -- they knew how to tell a story. Mary J. Holmes, Elizabeth Whetheral (Susan Warner), Maria Cummings, August Evans Wilson, Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth, were the first professional feminine writers who dominated the fiction field for more than half a century. They came from varied backgrounds and were very different as to character but they had the magic-touch in their chosen field.

Since the Victorian period is becoming more and more of interest in our own time and collectors are beginning to look about them with newly awakened attention for the minutiae of detail -- these books are the source for much which has been overlooked in the past. Here one discovers the small details of daily life, clothing, manners and customs. These five have captured for the readers of any time the essence of their own times.

Recent letters in a book collector's magazine have shown there is an interest in these women -- about whom the modern generation knows little or nothing. Portions of this manuscript were published in serial form in the magazine "The Book Mart". (1981 thru 83)

The form of SCRIBBLING WOMEN is dual -- giving a short biography of each writer and then excerpts from her works which display to the best the particular talent she displayed. There is included also a listing of her titles for any who would like to go hunting for them as collector items.

The work was written some years ago intended for university publication. Unfortunately, through a series of events, it was lost and only recently has it been returned to the author. It should be of interest in a wide field -- in feminist circles because it deals with women who invaded a masculine field in a repressive age and triumphed -- to the social historian or general reader interested in what was the daily life of the Victorian era with morals and manners greatly stressed -- to the person looking for a new field of collecting (The latter is the approach of some who are looking for a beginner's luck in a virgin field).

The author at the time of writing had access to material now gone past reclaiming -- such as interviews with elderly people in one case who had known Mary J. Holmes in her old age. In compiling material for a work of this nature the writer has to depend on the assistance of others in gathering sources. And I wish to take this opportunity to express my appreciation for the kind aid of the following:

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Note: Bibliographical listing is at the end of this manuscript.

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THE SCRIBBLING AGE

By Andre Norton

When Nathaniel Hawthorne wrote his famous letter attacking those of his professional rivals who wore hoops and lace caps (they were Respectable Females and would never have appeared in public lacking either of those proven accessories of a lady's toilet) he was in the perilous position of the fabled young Netherlander who dammed a rising sea with a thumb in the dyke wall. The life literary hither to had been the vocation and avocation of gentlemen. Gentlewomen were considered learned if they could read the Scriptures, write their names, and cast the household accounts.

But now there was a growing class of readers "who knew not Joseph", and had little desire to be introduced to him either. The same half year in which "Mosses From an Old Manse" Earned Mr. Hawthorne one hundred and forty-four dollars, gave Miss Susan Warner the far more satisfying sum of forty-five hundred for "The Wide, Wide World". Mr. Hawthorne might be a genius and was producing classics for the future, but Miss Warner could give the current reading public what they wanted – for the standards of the public, as strict and exacting as those of the professional critic who sneered at them, were not the same at all.

In 1840 American fiction entered upon what might be termed the "Scribbling Age." It was a period of vast commercial and geographical expansion, marked by the rise of a new leisure class, a class yet unknown in Europe, its power not based upon the ownership of land nor upon accident of birth, but upon its own money making abilities -- the American Middle Class. And it was to the taste of this class the "scribblers" consciously or unconsciously appealed. For the type of fiction they produced was sentimental, chaste, conservative -- to be associated with tradition, respect for the past, and pride in achievement.

The small merchant who speculated with success sent his daughter to boarding school and his son to an academy as a matter of pride. Education was, in his estimation, one of the marks of gentle birth. Such a move was the proper exposition to the community that he was on the way up the social ladder. In turn his wife made her own assertions of position by hiring a maid or two and enjoying new leisure. She entered into a world which became more and more a strictly feminine domain. The home was her kingdom and the husband and father (far from being the boorish tyrant, the hearthside bully accepted and portrayed as usual in the English novel of the same period) existed for the purpose, supreme and lawful, of supplying his wife and fashionably large family with unthreatened financial security. The world of business was a strange and ungentle jungle into which the men vanished at regular intervals. It had its own language, customs and ethics, and it was no concern of any lady. (This was the theory -- in practice life was often different. But sentimental fiction is more largely occupied with correct theories of conduct and the desired standards, rather than with real facts.)

The scarcity of women in a country still not too far removed from colonial and frontier status had already given American women an advantage over their English and European sisters in freedom of action and choice. And the new dual system of worlds made their position in their own even more important. A woman was a delicate flower, to be cherished. The generation who doted on the ultra-feminine novels was a generation who worked with the some grim zeal to preserve a wan pallor of completion their descendants now display, in acquiring a sun tan. Ladies -- perfect ladies -- were frail of health dazzling fair of face, pious and meek, fighting the sordid horrors of the world with their natural high nobility.

Material wealth was swift in coming during the Forties and the Fifties and women adjusted to it quickly. What was unheard of luxury for the mother was accepted as a necessity by the daughter. There was an almost pathetic desire for "culture", but what these women meant by that term was far different from the connotation the same word held across the Atlantic.

This new feminine ruler of the household became easily a queen in a society founded upon the domestic circle of the home. And she had

power which no lady of the nobility, no king's mistress, had ever held. She was the supreme arbitrator in the arts, in social deportment, and domestic ethics and standards. Her Lares and Penates were twins and she saw that all her world worshiped openly at the shrine of Domesticity and "Culture."

And, since the hard working men who supplied the background for these powerful gods had little or no leisure or interest outside the counting houses or their own places of business, it developed that four fifths of the reading public were now women.

They had for the first time their magazines, designed to fit their taste alone, monthlies, quarterlies, weeklies. In the Fifties Harper's wryly states!
"Literature has gone in pursuit of the million, penetrated highways and hedges, pressed its way into cottages, factories, omnibuses and railroad cars, and become the most cosmopolitan thing of the century."

For this is the generation which supplied the mill girls of Lowell with libraries and fostered in them a desire to publish their own writings, which nurtured a whole new field in fiction -- slanting it toward the "lady."

More leisure, more money, and a confusion of culture with education, led in the 1850s to the biggest book buying boom America had ever seen. And when it ended with the financial crash of 1857, there had been more best-sellers appear than in any other previous decade -- a few golden years for writers and publishers alike, a very fortuitous time in which to launch a literary career as the genteel females who had an instinctive knowledge of the tastes of their sex speedily discovered.

And these magazines, books, short stories, serials, were not aimed at the literary minded caste of New England, but at the half-educated middle class. The works of Hawthorne, Melville and Thoreau went a-begging, but there was no lack of readers for the serials in the New York Ledger, the Saturday Evening Post, and Godey's Lady's Book.

Authorship of such serials in these magazines was an easy step to the post of best-seller. Mrs. Southworth and Mary Jane Holmes both

achieved it in that fashion. And the attitude of the highly influential editor of Godey's, Sarah Hale, had much to do with the emergence of women writers. Until her time a woman who dared to enter the masculine field of letters published her work anonymously or under initials, if she had not chosen a pseudonym. Mrs. Hale demanded that her contributors boldly sign their own names. It was now possible to be both a lady and an authoress in the eyes of the polite world.

As Mrs. Kirkland in her contemporary review of Mrs. Browning's "Aurora Leigh" triumphed:
"A woman may now enjoy the reputation of being clever without ceasing to be regarded as a woman. This is the glory of our age which should never be forgotten."

And the scribbling women did not intend that any of these new privileges or opportunities should remain unexplored in their bid for wider horizons.

Naturally these magazines were highly moral. Bonner of the New York Ledger on his retirement from the publishing lists, recited what had been his credo for the most widely accepted periodical in the field.

"When I first bought the Ledger I pictured to myself an old lady in Westchester with three daughters aged about twenty, sixteen, and twelve. Of an evening they came home from a prayer meeting and not being sleepy, the mother takes up the Ledger and reads aloud to the girls. From the first day I got the Ledger to present time there has never appeared one line which the old lady in Westchester would not like to read to her daughters."

And Bonner knew what he was talking about. Five years after the Ledger was founded, in 1860, it had a circulation of 400,000, and this when the total population of the country was only 31,000,000. To be published in the ledger marked one as having arrived as a popular writer of fiction.

But what type of fiction did that old lady in Westchester deem suitable amusement for her bevy of young lady daughters?

Romance, safely de-sexed, innocuous adventures, and, of course, sentiment. That was an unbeatable combination for sales value.

Editors had their own standards for judging manuscripts. The anonymous lady or gentleman responsible for the monthly appearance of a pure offering known as "The Lily" warned would-be contributors:

"When a new work is to be purchased let inquiry be, will it promote virtuous and useful knowledge, will it afford innocent pleasure, will it cheer the hour of sorrow, or console the heart in its moments of affliction?"

Fiction had been long regarded as born on the wrong side of the blanket, but by 1835 there was a growing belief that even stories could do all the editor of The Lily demanded.

And since women preferred fiction, their demand raised novels (much as they were still vocally abhorred) to permanent commercial superiority over all forms of literature. Novels were so rightly considered the property of females that the New York booksellers frankly used such ads as "To the ladies: Novels for winter evening amusement."

Plots and characterization were largely stereotyped. There was a complete set of characters on the side of the angels, who could be readily recognized at their first appearance on the scene and with whom the reader was at once familiar.

The Heroine: frequently an orphan, often with a clouded birth hinting at the sinister. Her ambitions were thwarted by poverty and persecution but her native talents led her into the position of governess or ward in a patrician family. She is, of course, beautiful, deeply religious, very charitable, learned, and easily moved to tears upon occasions of either joy or sorrow.

The Hero: the reformed rake of the late eighteenth century is still in some favor. But he must now share the stage with the pure-souled young man of blameless past, who may also be an orphan of questionable parentage. The only real demand made of either rake or paragon of all masculine virtues is to be financially solvent. He is sometimes allowed minor faults and is almost always more mature than his bride to be -- often being in his thirties when she is a girl in her teens. He may be a cynic or a misanthrope because of an early

betrayal of trust, and his talents must always exceed those of the heroine's.

Minor good characters such as school girl friends of the heroine or boyhood chums of the hero may display such faults as jealousy, false pride, social ambition or indifference to the claims of religion -- from which errors they are naturally weaned by the fine example set by their noble companions.

Mothers, if good, are the ideal protectors of the home and often saintly invalids -- if bad, shallow members of smart society with snobbish social aims.

And there are generally present and ever ready with good advice an elderly patriarch or matriarch who believes in God's justice and the innate goodness of mankind.

On the debt side of the ledger stand another list of stock characters.

The disillusioned and cynical belle, usually in quest of a husband, any husband, and who generally makes a poor marriage, ending in tragedy, after she has sufficiently bedeviled the heroine.

The wife deserter who is a direct descendant of the earlier rake-seduced.

The female fiend (often a sister or stepsister) whose principal aim is to gain the hero's attention -- to which end she lies, inflicts mental torture on the heroine, sometimes going to the length of bodily harm -- conducting herself in the general pattern of Cinderella's relatives by marriage. Included in the same class of fiends are the diabolical stepmothers or stepfathers who try to force their wards into distasteful marriages or covet the estates of the rightful heirs.

The righteous characters' are unusually kind, just, handsome, talented and charming. (Only the unrighteous among the women are over attractive in a sexual fashion.) They are permitted to be tolerant on minor questions of ethics or conduct and they possess some capacity for success in normal enterprise. For reasons of plot they are pushed close to the edge of disaster -- sometimes bringing calamity

down upon themselves because of some stubborn adherence to a code of honor or a religious belief.

And intermingled with the sentimentality and the melodrama are small outcrops of practical and realistic advice which the reader could apply to her own life with valuable results. One can learn by diligent perusal the proper treatment of aged parents, the correct behavior for a young lady left alone in a city, the benefits of proper business practices, and even the right conduct for an actress who wishes to avoid scandal while engaging in such a dubious calling.

The emphasis shifts from the sensational action to the suffering of the characters in measured turns and there is a recognized use of pathetic or artistic descriptive interludes which have no purpose but to dress the scene -- without influencing the plot.

But some of the older plot elements, beloved by the early nineteenth and late eighteenth century novelists, continue to linger on.

The hard-hearted parents who force the heroine into a detested marriage, the long suffering wife abused by a tyrannical husband, the rake reformed by a pure heroine, all these had made their appearance long before, but they could still hold a reader's attention.

Novels had developed in England and the standards first set overseas, but when one compares the American light novel of 1850 through 1880 with those from Britain, one cannot but note difference in more than background alone -- in spite of the continuation of familiar characterization and creaking plots which had been used since Anne Radcliffe, Fanny Burney and Clara Reeves first won fame and fortune with their fashioning.

One outstanding divergence is the attitude of the author toward parental meddling in the lives of their children. Where the English writer such as Rosa Carey, Charlotte Yonge, Ouida -- allows the parent to tyrannize over his or her offspring and apparently heartily agrees with the dire punishments meted out by vengeful Heavenly Powers upon any child bold enough to resent such bullying. The American novel by Southworth, Holmes or Cummins suggests the ill which ensues from such grinding parental control is sheer cruelty on the

part of the older generation and has no base in justice. The only well known exception to this on our side of the ocean in the lamentable life of Elsie Dinsmore under the supervision of her intolerable father.

Another change is the treatment of married life. The rebel wife is a theme which fascinated authoresses of this period. (Was it born of wishful thinking? It may be noted that the spinster writers were far harder on the rebels than those who had enjoyed the married state before they took to their pens.) But no American husband could play the bully with the apparent wholehearted approval of the writer who created him as he was allowed to do in say the novels of Miss Yonge. While none of the bestselling novelist were "advanced" or "new women", they did dare to discuss openly and with sympathy the plight of the deserted wife, (Mrs. Southworth was one herself and knew the terrors of the situation.), the wife who was married for her money without any love entering into the bargain (Mrs. Holmes), the double standard of morals used by men to excuse their transgressions (Augusta Evans Wilson). And when they had strong opinions on such subjects they defended them firmly, without yielding ground when opposed.

But almost all the problems dealt with were domestic, True to the over-riding interests of their day, a book to be a success must be bound by the limits of the family and the household. Since women had decided that fiction was now a proper medium for introducing culture to the immediate home circle, fiction must be, of course, improving to the reader. Realism when it meant, even in shadow fashion, "coarseness", was to be excluded. If one read novels (still a suspect occupation in many circles) one must naturally be elevated by them.

So the red blooded characterization and freedom of speech which had been given story telling by Fielding and Smollett were now taboo, and the proper heroine the poor orphan Cinderella, pious and learned as well as pure and beautiful, was granted long soliloquies intended to instruct and inform.

Poetry did not appeal to all tastes, and the intellectualism of a text was too involved and heavy a diet for the majority of half-educated readers. But one could compromise with fiction -- if it elevated. By the middle Forties the novel had excluded the mechanics of business and

politics -- worlds its readers shrank from entering -- and straight ethical and theological problems (social problems in the deeper sense were never mentioned) were handled with the extreme simplicity of a Sunday-school text.

The stories were narrow in their treatment and background. But within those very narrow boundaries these novels did have their good points.

Mrs. Gaskell with the penetration of a writer-critic said frankly: "These American novels unconsciously reveal all the little household secrets, we see the meals as they are put on the table, we learn the dresses which those who sit down to them wear -- we hear their kindly family discourses, we enter into their home struggles and we rejoice when they gain the victory."

In other words, if a modern research worker wants an excellent picture of the domestic mind, manners, and customs of the period, let him turn to these light novels and he will learn how three-quarters of middle nineteenth century America lived.

There were a few dissenting voices raised against the narrowness of this world behind the comfortable bulwarks erected by the moral tone of such novels. Fanny Kemble, during her residence in Lenox, complained that the silly prudery of American women took all the life out of novel writing.

On the other hand the surge of new ideas in the Forties and Fifties provided details of fashionable fads and fancies which the authoresses used in abundance. Phrenology, hydropathy, health foods, mesmerism, spiritualism, temperance, Anti-slavery, "Brook Farm", and the other seekings for a home grown utopia, all had their day of honor between hard covers. Some novels became out and out propaganda for one cause or another if the writer was completely carried away in sympathy with the new belief or cause. But the flood of what one critic termed "pious histories of precocious, flirtatious young girls" continued to dominate the field.

1850 to 1860 was a momentous time in literary history. For it witnessed the birth in the novelists' heavens of five glowing stars -- five women who invaded a territory hitherto almost wholly male to

The Scribbling Women

become the first American Best-Sellers. Five in a single decade, it had never happened before, and it has seldom happened since.

And who were these lady authoresses who knew exactly how to give the public what it wanted most?

Susan Warner, a shy, retiring neurotic, hidden away on an island in the Hudson, dogged by ill health and the specter of poverty. As Elizabeth Wetherall she wrote "The Wide, Wide World" and started the landslide.

Maria Cummins, another recluse, even more cut off from the world by ill health and family circumstances, but who was able to paint a picture of the slums of Boston which will compete with the best of Dickens, painstaking in her descriptions, eager in her lovingly set forth details of the travel she could not enjoy in person.

Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth who inked a pen that continued to scribble energetically for more than one generation of adoring readers. Who gave us the mysterious manor-house of the south, the family curse, shipwrecks, murders, and magnolia scented romances as fast as her often tired fingers could move across a page -- swift unending streams of despicable ends and noble heroes, President's levees and fashionable bells.

Mrs. Mary Jane Holmes who took Cinderella's cause for her basic plot and produced it regularly, complete with ugly sisters, wicked stepmother, romantic southern gentleman hero to sweep off the plain school ma'am for a good many profitable years.

Augusta Evans Wilson -- five pounds of erudition to five ounces of action -- the champion of the learned maiden, the delight of seekers after culture. To be read only with the dictionary close at hand.

These are Hawthorne's scribbling women and they can be poured into no common mold -- they were individualists in life as well as in work. Two were happy and contented wives, one was a very unhappy grass widow, the remaining two spinsters. Four lived long lives, one died young. Three were breadwinner of large families, two wrote only for the satisfaction of creation.

What did they have in common? An ability which has been tossed aside by some of our greatly esteemed modern novelists -- they could and did tell an interesting and absorbing story with a clearly defined plot. And the public welcomed their work, book after book, year after year. Did they deserve Hawthorne's sweeping damnation of their labors?

TEARS, BUSY TEARS

(Bio of Susan Warner)

By Andre Norton



Susan Warner

Although Henry Whitney Warner was an unsuccessful lawyer rather than an impractical philosopher, the life lived by his daughters paralleled in insecurity and driving responsibility that of the Alcott girls. Existing even closer to the edge of dire want than the Alcotts -- for the Warners were ultra-reserved and had no friends to supply both material and spiritual aid -- Susan Warner taught herself how to write best sellers which lifted the whole family into fairly comfortable circumstance for the remainder of their quiet lives. There was, however, one great and abiding difference between the Warners and the Alcotts, and perhaps it was the difference which made "Little Woman" a living work to be read unto this day, while "The Wide, Wide World" is now a literary curiosity. The Warners had no sense of humor, life was indeed "duty" as far as they were concerned. While the Alcotts felt free to laugh, and they did.

The Warner family came of rock-ribbed New England stock. Henry Warner's father was one of nine sons who lined up together (the youngest was fifteen at the time) to join the Continental army in a body. The young recruit survived the war and ended by marrying his Colonel's daughter. But farm life was all Jason Warner had to offer his bride. Their sons, Henry and William, worked early and late to gain the book-learning not thought necessary to their station in life. They taught the lower grades in school while they themselves studied in the higher ones.

Young Henry Warner, equipped with the training in law he had struggled so hard to earn for himself, migrated to the fast growing city of New York. During 1812 he served in the army in an administrative post in the city. And there he married Ann Bartlett who had been raised in a home of wealth.

Susan was their second child and for a time the only surviving one. The only granddaughter of a wealthy grandmother, she was potted and favored. Her father was following the court circuit and was often away from home for weeks, leaving young Susan the center of a household of adoring women.

The birth of a sister, Henrietta, was bitterly resented by the small girl. And from this period her home life was divided between the more modest establishment of the young lawyer father and the estate of her grandmother where she lived for long periods of time. Henrietta and another baby born later did not live long, and Susan again became the only child and the center of the family.

How much this see-saw in family relationships contributed to her later insecurity we cannot determine. But she was always painfully reserved with strangers, given to bouts of sick fear which actually prostrated her, and for the rest of her life had little communication with those outside a small circle of friends who managed to breach the wall the Warner's erected about themselves. It is apparent that to be a friend of the family it was necessary to go all the way and not be frightened by rebuffs.

Her formal schooling was limited to a six month period away from home to which very limited reference was afterwards made in the family chronicles: But she had a talent for drawing, and she wrote stories in copy books, and kept a journal. Above all she read, constantly and voluminously. Her much younger sister Anne recalls in her biography of her sister a vivid memory of watching Susan ride off in their grandmother's coach, eating some special sweetmeat and

reading so engrossedly that she did not wave goodby to those left behind.

Even after the birth of Anne and the death of her mother, Susan continued to spend much of her time at her grandmother's. Her father's sister, Aunt Fanny, came to take over the management of the Warner household and there were no ties of duty to hold Susan.

She was fiercely independent, seeking in this desire to be "different" the attention she had not been sure of since early childhood. A sybarite by nature, with a strong love for warmth and bright colors, she objected to Anne's copying of her dresses or in any way infringing upon what she had taken for her own in manners and ways.

The life which was most real to her lay between the pages of the books she devoured. When bedtime candles were extinguished she would huddle on the hearth and read by the light of the dying fire. For her absorption in this other world, the carriage waited and breakfast went uneaten unless she was forcibly aroused.

Not pretty, tall, with a long neck and sloping shoulders, she was frail and a worry to more practical members of the family. And since she was a perfectionist, the displeasure of those about her whom she loved could and did goad her into trying to fit herself to a more conventional pattern of living.

Her journal entry at the age of twelve reads: "I find that I have spent a most unprofitable week, and as unprofitable a Sunday. The more shame for me. I am now old enough to do better."

And: "Father and Aunt would be glad if I would give up playing sedentary plays altogether, and he has prohibited my playing than for two or three days past, it is not improbable that I am the better for it."

These sedentary plays -- reading the descriptions of them left by Anne, as fragmentary and illusive as they are, can only remind one strongly of the Angeria in which the Brontes found an outlet for their undisciplined genius. The Brontes began with a company of wooden soldiers on which to pin the action of their imagined kingdoms. But the Warners made their own actors and actresses -- cardboard dolls, the-earliest-ones an inch or so long. With these were tables, Chairs, bedsteads, all cut and put together. An old footstool turned on its side formed the stage and the plays went on for days. Later, even as the Brontes had discovered, they found that it was not necessary to have the actual physical properties -- the play could go on in the mind--in "talking stories".

During the summers the family moved to the old colonial homestead in Canan where the Warner girls had the companionship of cousins close to them in age. In one corner of the big living room their voices made a hum which rivaled that of the spinning wheel still in use there as they worked out these long series of adventures together. Complicated plots, stretching, sometimes not over days or weeks, but years, occupied them all. Susan got the current heroes out of difficulties with flights of imagination which left the others gasping and claiming unfair competition. She drew up lists of proper names and of nations for the others to choose from for their portions of the tale. But they suspected, and often accused her of studying up the story during the day and plotting ahead. To her the dangers were all real and critical and the people present and alive.

On Sunday afternoons, gathering up shawls and scarves for costumes, the younger generation went into the meadows where, by the hay stacks, they read the Bible aloud, debated Bible questions, and acted out Bible stories.

While Susan Warner's pious stories were to begin the school of "Sunday School Literature" in the days to come, she was well read in the secular literature of the day. Her education was mostly self-gained, for though she had regular tutors, she was but an irregular pupil. Her father taught daughters grammar, history, and literature -- the use of the globes (a quaint addition to the feminine education of that day), and tried to teach Susan Latin and Greek but her awkwardness so offended his critical sense that he at last gave up this task in disgust. She had tutors for singing, Italian, and the piano.

But she continued to depend upon reading for her education. In an attempt to ration her inordinate consumption of fiction her father began reading aloud. And between these sessions she was not permitted to touch the books. Though during the reading of "Waverly" she begged to be allowed to see the name "Flora McIver" in print. In this way as a family group they enjoyed the Waverly novels, Shakespeare, Dickens, Paradise Lost, Maria Edgeworth's works, Boswell's Johnson, Goldsmith, Hume, and The Swiss Family Robinson.

But the censorship imposed by "Victorianism" was already in force. There were works not "suitable for a young lady". Mr. Warner marked those passages of "The Wandering Jew" which his daughters might read and the rest of the book remained a closed secret.

Brought up in a retired fashion, not even mingling with her contemporaries in school, fastidious to a high degree, and extremely

reserved, Susan also showed signs of that snobbishness which was later apparent in her books. Such an entry in her journal as the following foreshadowed “Fleda’s” reaction to the country women of “Queechy”:

“One thing annoys me much. The girls who come to help her in harvest time will call Aunt Fanny by her Christian name, and will come into the front room and sit down as if they were equals. This worries me and makes me angry, though Auntie says it is foolish.”

We can well imagine that any farmer’s daughter “helping out” in the Warner household honestly believed herself to be the equal of Miss Susan Warner and would have been not only hurt but angry at the suggestion that she was not.

Susan was fifteen in 1837, a tall, too-slender, introverted girl, her health poor, largely because of constant study and lack of exercise. But to this time she had led the sheltered, cloistered existence of a convent bred novice. And she visibly shrank from romance and men except as they appeared in print. When a friend laughingly commented on the frequent visits of a gentleman to the house, she returned bitingly:

“I hope I shall never be reduced so low as to make my conversation about such things.”

But it was in this year that their peaceful, happy life came to a sudden and dark end. Henry Warner to this date had prospered in the financial schemes being spun out of New York. No merchant, he had drifted along on the stream of rising income making a series of investments, eager to gather enough to retire and live as a scholarly country gentleman. His brother was now chaplain at West Point and, having visited there often, Henry took a fancy to the small island in the river, privately owned and within rowing distance of the Academy.

He finally purchased Martlaer’s Rock (now Constitution Island) and drew up plans for making it into a fine estate. The old Pre-Revolutionary farm house was deemed too old-fashioned and crude to be the Warner home. But it was this same house which sheltered them after the crash.

For 1837 was a panic year, and Henry Warner was not only wiped out but left with a vicious law suit and a mountain of debts, Beaten and unable to face the future in the city or attempt another start, he withdrew with his family to the island.

Anne was young and stable enough to accept the change eagerly. But to Susan it was the end of the secure world. She was ridden by fears, the list of which, made out in her sister’s account, is lengthy. She was, we are told precisely, afraid of storms, burglars, steamboats,

horses, cattle, worms, snakes, mice, bats, and caterpillars. Before she seated herself on any chair out of doors she would inspect it carefully up and down for the presence of any creeping thing. During the night she arose at intervals to try the bedroom door to be sure it was locked. Papers had to be kept from her in times of public disaster and a few years later she passed through a nervous crisis during which the tester rings of her high poster bed rattled with the force of her trembling body.

Yet she was transported into the wilds of an overgrown island, there, by main force of an iron will, to make herself the staunch core of a family, to defer to and bolster a defeated man, and be the support of a sister and an aunt. What a torture this was is revealed in her slow physical breakdown and the Sufferings (undoubtedly psychomatic) which made the rest of her life a misery.

In place of the gentleman's estate they had pictured only months before planning extensive gardens, private bridle paths, pacing off the foundations of the mansion-to-be, the Warner's found themselves engulfed by ragged fields waist-high in uncut hay, tangled brush, and thickets of scrubby trees. There was no money to hire other hands to hack at this maze. So the Warner girls themselves tackled the problem of clearing living space about the century old house they were trying to make habitable. They chopped branches to free ground and to provide their own firewood. Thereby breaking the local bounds of conventionality. Once when so at work some trick of acoustics across the water brought them the words of an oarsman in a passing boat which gave them a fairly clear idea of how they stood in the eyes of the male members of the community: "They go out to chop and saw instead of mending stockings. They'd a better a darn sight stay at home and wash the dishes, and let the servants do it."

Only there were no servants -- except an odd job man in periods of affluence later on -- and they did darn socks, and wash the dishes as well.

Susan found work to occupy her mind as well during these hard months by teaching both her young sister and a cousin who chose to share part of their exile. She taught Italian, French and music. And struggled herself to keep up her own studies, reading Tasso, French history, and keeping her journal in French for practice.

But lessons with-Susan had many of the attributes of the old "talking stories" of happier days. Instead of the lists of names and countries for imagined heroic action, the children drew slips of paper daily from a box provided by Susan. Lettered on each in decorative

old English script was the name of a city, a country, a state, or a personage. This was to be studied thoroughly with all references tracked down. It might be “Richard the First”, to include “warriors of his reign”, “learned men”, “events” etc.

In spite of their poverty and the crudeness of their new surroundings the entire Warner family continued to live in an atmosphere of learning and books. Friends reported years later that they would sit at the breakfast table for hours -- talking of some subject, fetching reference books one after another to prove some point, until the dishes were banished and the table covered with volumes.

Susan became so obsessed with the necessity for research, so governed by her meticulous desire for absolute truth, that in later years one could hardly force a direct assertion out of her. She was determined on unwavering correctness. It is this humorless, dutiful, searching approach to life which plunged her at last into the center of emotional religious experience.

A snub from an associate of earlier days hurt her so deeply that she turned to search for the promise of another life in which lost wealth and forfeited social position would not matter. And, with that intensity and drive with which she attacked all intellectual questions, she began the study of the principles of religious belief, coming at last to the moving “conversion” of the Victorian era.

The Warner financial position declined steadily and uncertainty about the future must have been an abiding ogre ever at Susan’s shoulder.

Henry Warner, with dim hopes of recovering his law practice, went to New York for a winter, leaving the women alone on the island. It was in these dark, lonely days that Anne Warner suggested they develop one of their childhood games into a commercial product which might be sold to bring them in the needed ready cash for supplies of food, candles, and clothing.

The game, based on natural history, was christened “Robinson Crusoe’s Farmyard”. Anne, tied to the couch in the big living room by illness for most of the winter, worked with the books her sister brought her, the girls choosing the proper animals together. There were twenty-four cards in the pack, tame and wild animals mixed, and these were painted by hand -- their own cat serving as one of their models. Their father brought them the necessary white cardboard from New York. Each card contained questions which were answered in a small accompanying book.

Henry Warner offered the finished product in New York and it was purchased by George Putnam. The girls were to color the cards at so much a sheet to add to their meager earnings.

This offer arrived at a dark moment. The law suit so long a burden had been settled against the Warners and they were gathering family treasures which must be sold to satisfy the claim when the cases of cards arrived. That evening the sisters sat down in a stripped room, barren of many loved heirlooms, to paint cards. For a year and a half they continued this work, adding their bit to the family funds.

But it was during this same busy winter that Susan began writing what was to be her masterpiece -- "The Wide, Wide World". Again it is Anne who provides us with a picture of Susan's debut as an author. She tells the story of how they were engaged in washing the tea dishes one evening when Aunt Fanny said suddenly: "Sue, I believe if you would try, you could write a story."

And as Susan Warner put away teacups the first glimmer of plot crossed her mind -- the picture of a child tossed out on the world.

Religion was the keynote of the book -- its whole atmosphere was emotionally pious. As Anne tells us: "It was written in closest reliance upon God, for thoughts, for power, and for words. Not the mere vague wish to write a book that should do service to her Master, but a vivid, constant looking to him for guidance and help: The worker and the work both laid humbly at the Lord's feet. In that sense the book was written upon her knees, and the Lord's blessing has followed it, down to this day."

In New England at this date the morbid beliefs of the Puritan had either been distilled into a seeking liberalism as typified by the circles in which the Alcotts, Emerson and the Concord philosophers moved, or turned into the highly emotional channels feeding upon the "revivals". Susan Warner was too reticent to be given an outlet by the "revival", but she was not attracted either by the liberalism of the transcendentalists. Her beliefs, as expressed in her books, were tinged with the gloominess of the older day.

On the other hand, apart from the highly emotional attitude toward religious subjects, she gave in her writing pictures of contemporary life which are still arresting, drawing upon the backgrounds furnished by the old Warner New England properties and the New York she had known as a girl.

As she worked Anne and Aunt Fanny read the manuscript, though never quite to the point of her daily stint. And it was Anne who named the book which took little over a year to write.

The manuscript was speedily returned from Carters with no explanation. And the comment scrawled upon its first page by a Harper's reader -- "Fudge" -- was humiliating. But Henry Warner continued to offer it to publisher after publisher. George Putnam, receiving it in turn, took it home over the weekend and gave it to his mother to read. She returned it with the solemn injunction that if he never published anything else, he should this. Mrs. Putnam knew her reading public -- she was entirely correct.

But, still uncertain as to the fate of her first effort Susan was already writing again. That summer Mrs. Sigourney announced a four hundred and fifty dollar prize for the best essay on female patriotism, to be eventually published in a magazine called "The Ladies' Wreath". And Miss Warner took up her pen to compete.

When the news of acceptance of "The Wide, Wide World" came from Putnam's, Susan was totally ignorant as to the mechanics of proof reading. The Putnam family knowing of the isolated life of the Warner island, suggested that she come to New York and spend some weeks with them, correcting proof -- since the mails were uncertain and time was essential. Together Susan and Anne painstakingly copied the list of corrections for proof out of an old encyclopedia, and Susan ventured out into the world as an authoress.

For three weeks in September and October of 1850 she lived with the Putnams, correcting the proof. It became her custom -- and later a set pattern of life -- to rise early in the morning and correct ten pages or more before breakfast. Since it was still considered not quite in the best of taste for a wellborn young lady to write for publication, she used as a pen name that of her grandmother, Elizabeth Wetherall. (While Anne, in her own literary efforts later used that of their other grandmother, Amy Lathrop.)

The book was issued on December 12, 1850, and within three months had sold fifteen hundred copies. Within two years it had gone into fourteen editions. It was just what the reading public wanted, religion, sentiment, and an American scene contrasted with elegant Scottish social life.

The New York Times trumpeted: "One book like this is not produced in an age." And it became the first best seller in the history of American fiction.

Here was the Christian maiden, the perfection of young womanhood (though far removed from the ordinary mortals one met in daily life). "The Wide, Wide World" was the history of the education of such a maiden, how she could be forced into the pattern

of perfection, the mold desired by her elders -- taught the virtues of resignation, suffering, loving kindness, faith and charity.

Of course there were those who remained stubbornly set against the perfection of Ellen Montgomery. After the issue of the book in England, Lord Frederick Hamilton described it somewhat snappishly as being about "a tiresome little girl named Ellen Montgomery, who apparently divided her time between reading her pocket Bible and indulging in paroxysms of tears."

And the London review of 1855 stated that it was "too emotional for children".

But such dissenters were few. On the other hand we have "Incomparable work, read with the most heartfelt sympathy and delight" or "Almost faultless excellence of *The Wide, Wide World*." Those critics liked it.

For Susan's Warner's productions were teary, the salt streams flowed across the pages in endless waves. Her readers loved it. And according to the *Christian Review* she succeeded "Better than any other writer in our language in making religious sentiment appear natural and attractive, in a story that possesses the interest of a romance." Romances were bad—"The Wide, Wide World" was entirely pure and good.

The fortunes of the Warner family had reached a very low ebb in the month preceding the publication of Susan's work of art, *Against* all her instincts and desires she was about to try for a position as governess. But writing had already become so much a part of her that she had started "Queechy", finishing the first chapter before the first of December. Good news came on December seventh -- she had won Mrs. Sigourney's prize and could now buy the winter cloaks and hats for all three Warner ladies.

And on December Seventeenth Henry Warner returned from a New York trip with the author's copies of "The Wide, Wide World" in his luggage. Susan's Christmas gift to Anne this year was one of those prized volumes appearing appropriately enough for the season patterned with red page edging.

And in January came the first public notice of her work when her father read aloud the reviews printed in *The Evening Post*, *The Boston Chronicle*, and *The Literary World*.

But one could not eat reviews, however laudatory -- nor burn them for work candles. And there was no cash in the winter darkened island home. The-sisters, when they wanted to read their work to each other in the evenings, were forced to depend upon the unsteady

light furnished by a strip of rag embedded in a saucer of lard. It was not until later that Henry Warner made one of his periodic visits home, bringing food and other supplies -- and the new one volume edition of "The Wide, Wide World" brave with gilt.

February Twenty-Second found the last of the first edition sold, and by now the book had become so popular that, it being temporarily out of print, those shops still fortunate enough to have one or two copies left raised the price to two dollars and a quarter or two dollars and a half.

That was all very well but Susan herself had not yet received any of the money her work had earned. And she had no idea of whether the book was a success or not. Undecided about the future she wrote George Putnam a frank letter, asking whether or not he deemed it well for her to continue her literary efforts or to turn to the needle for support. His reply was that the book was now selling well in the second edition and that "many have chosen the pen with less warrant and encouragement."

Now the money came. While most of it was banked against a future the Warner's for the rest of their lives never quite trusted to be bright some went for a piano, the black silk dresses which were then the badges of the respectable lady, and for riding habits and a mount. Once long before they had planned a course of rides about the island, now they were going to see that early dream come into partial realization.

And now "Queechy" was also finished. Putnam was only lukewarm about the book, but he brought out an edition of five thousand copies, a bigger start than he had ever granted any novel bearing his imprint before. And in June Susan was able to note confidently in her journal that "Queechy has met with great favor and keeps selling."

Sell it did. And because of its pictures of small town American life in the mid-nineteenth century it can safely be read-today with profit by the researcher in social history.

But Susan had gone back to work. She set herself a regular program of production -- three or four pages a day, using very large sheets of notepaper and writing with a fine hand, the lines close together, so that four pages meant a large number of words. The entries in her journal during this period read:

"Accomplished but three pages, and those by the hardest effort. Can that be worth much which is so excessively difficult to produce? What do I want? Rest, I think, sometimes, and perhaps spirit -- spirit

for my work at least. I am glad now when I got through my task and can come down stairs to my German, music and reading.”

But the winter of 1852 and their improved financial standing brought them to New York. Anne was writing also and both sisters had proof to correct. Printer’s messengers would leave the big rolls of proof sheets at ten or eleven at night--the sisters would find these waiting when they arrived home from a reception or a pleasant evening in company. But before daylight, when the messengers arrived to collect the sheets again, they were always done.

A new world opened to the Warner girls, the door pushed ajar by the Putnams. A staid society it was, but a literary one, and the sisters blossomed in its somewhat pallid glow. They ventured on entertainment in return, improvising and proud of doing much with very little.

Having had to crowd into a few lodging rooms, they turned a big square-closet into a reception room, ingenuously hanging its walls with red canton flannel (then very new) which the sisters assured each other did resemble velvet by candle light. There were three camp chairs to be strategically placed, and a fresh supply of coffee and sugar beside the fine German coffee machine. Anne made their cake and buns: And the old fashioned silver candelabra, one of the few remaining relics of their affluent past shared the table with the cake stand. Some evenings they regaled as many as thirty guests, among them the Carey sisters and the Putnam family.

In return the Warners enjoyed the assemblies at the Putnams, where visiting lions such as Thackery and Lowell were on display. And Susan’s comment on William Makepeace Thackery went down in the small talk of literary history: “He is an excellent man, but there is a whole world he knows nothing of -- a world which I know.”

Susan was not engaged on a new work of history this season. Instead she labored over what she considered to be a monumental piece of serious research. “The Law and the Testimony” was advertised for publication in August, 1855. Eight hundred and forty pages made up the text on the great doctrines of Christianity, brought together under their separate heads. Henry Warner aided in hunting up the quoted passages and outlining the subject matter.

Part of this was done in the city and part on the island to which they returned in the spring. Now they established a regular pattern for their days. Arising at half past six in the morning, they rode on the ring established in nearby fields. Since there was only one horse, they went to this solemn exercise supplied with books and sewing, and

were employed between turns on the mount. Returning home at eleven they took a dip in the river bath house before settling down at their desks.

Children's books became their "bread and butter" writing. Susan's "Mr. Rutherford's Children" contains some excellent pictures of New York hotel life as well as of country scenes. And it provides a very good description of how well-to-do children of the period were educated.

But "The Wide, Wide World" continued to bring in the checks which were slowly pulling the Warners out of debt and into the security Susan craved. The good days, however, did not last. There was another panic in 1857 and the Warner sisters had to surrender their small savings to retain title to the island. Again shadows gathered and the girls worked with energetic grimness.

They did everything to raise money, wrote -- children's books, novels, articles -- corrected compositions for a boarding school, made up dictation papers for a teacher, went without all but bare necessities and made their own clothes. No more trips to New York and pleasant evenings in the box room with the red flannel drapes. Instead they remained on the island during the winter of 1858-1859 and wrote jointly on "Say and Seal".

And the winter days followed the almost military mold of those lived by the cadets of West Point, if not more severe. For the sisters arose before five A.M. and were already hard at work when gun and reveille turned out the corps across the river.

The night before they prepared bread and butter, saw that the kindling basket was full and the tea-kettle ready on the hearth in the Revolutionary period room which was their study. Anne got up at four-thirty and had the fire burning, the kettle near boiling, a tray of cups and saucers set out, and the green shaded student lamp burning. They ate together and then settled to work amid the sleeping household, sure of no interruptions for several hours.

Steady application brought results. But they were never free of the fear of poverty. Their pleasures were limited and almost pitiful in their narrowness. In January 1860 Susan received a New Year's gift from Anne, a stereoscope and six views. And being on a visit to New York she made the stupendous discovery that one of the shops offered a dozen views for a dollar, to be chosen from any on a large table. The sisters went to work with their customary careful thoroughness and were a whole morning considering and selecting, coming away with the scenes they could never hope to see in life,

Melrose, the Castle of Edinburg, Egypt, Wales -- Susan studied these eagerly, using them to piece out her research reading for her books to come.

This was the second winter they had in town and they spent most of their working hours at the Astor Library where Dr. Cogswell set aside a special corner and a table for their convenience.

But again the good times did not last. The outbreak of war put an end to wide book buying. And on August Fourteenth, 1861, Susan notes in her journal that they could not afford the three dollars and fifty cents apiece which would mean new summer dresses.

Books did not sell well, they would have to find other means of support. In January, 1861, they worked out a prospectus for a child's magazine. And they were able to start with three hundred subscribers. This venture lasted two years until the rising prices brought on by war wiped it out. They lost nothing on it, however. And the books they had written for it as serials were published in hard covers: "Melbourne House", "Daisy", "The Old Helmet".

Susan also wrote a series of Bible books for children. Compiling all the known material on manners and customs, geography and exploration of Biblical lands. Intent upon exact research she used her slender funds to import source material. In contrast to this Biblical research she also began a series of short stories intended for older readers and based upon strange family histories and legends of the surrounding Hudson Valley. Many of these she retailed to close friends before writing them out, and all were dramatic and largely tragic, a large number dealing with trouble arising from misdirected or lost letters.

"Ellen Montgomery's Bookshelf" comprised a series of short juvenile narratives separately bound and intended for sale to Sunday School Libraries. The grind of turning out this material must have worn down Susan's none too steady nerves but the fear of their income not matching their yearly needs was the whip under which both sisters worked.

This same pressure kept Susan from retaining the copyright of her later works as she dared not wait for the slower return of royalties but sold each manuscript as it was finished.

After her father's death in 1875 her health steadily declined and she died, worn out by work and the fear of insecurity, in 1885, having given most of her life to the support of a family of four and the maintenance of the island home which was a constant drain upon their funds.

She was buried at West Point as her contacts with the academy and the cadets were close. For many years she had conducted a Bible class on Sunday afternoons for the cadets, who considered it a high privilege to be invited to attend these informal gatherings in the orchard on the island. After graduation many of these boys continued to correspond from far away Army posts.

Anne Warner was the last survivor of the family and upon her death it was discovered that the island had been willed, by the wish of both sisters, to West Point. It remains a possession of the Academy to this day.

What did this nervous, driven, never truly happy woman have to offer which made her novels household treasures for two generations and gave her a secure place in the minor reaches of American literature?

She was an innovator in several fields. Had it not been for "The Wide, Wide World" we might not have had "Little Women" For she was the first writer to combine -- for girls and their mothers -- American characters and a natural background. She introduced the "Sunday School" book, a narrative in which fervid evangelism was coupled with a home atmosphere and an interesting plot. Her books can still be read with profit by social historians who wish a picture of manners, customs, and country society as it existed a hundred years ago.

Critics on such magazines as the North American Review said of her books: "As a matter of pure judgment, we must place their pictures of American country life and character above all their other merits since we know not where, in any language, we shall find their graphic truth excelled."

While another criticism is just as apt but would not be considered in the least complimentary today: "No living writer, not even Mrs. Stowe, knows better how to open the fountain of tears, or goes more directly to the heart of the readers."

Nowadays an author has no desire to open fountains of tears, and would rather appeal to the head than the heart. But in her day Susan Warner gave the public exactly what they wanted and produced the first American best-seller.

Known works of Susan Warner:

Alphabetical Order:

Bread and Oranges	My Desire
The Broken Walls of Jerusalem and the Rebuilding of Them	Nobody
The Christmas Stocking	The Old Helmet
Daisy	Opportunities
Diana	Pine Needles
The End of a Coil	Queechy
The Flag of France	The Rapids of Niagara
The Gold Chickasee (with her sister Anne)	A Red Wallflower
Heimwarts	Say and Seal
The Hills of the Shatemuc	Scepters and Crowns
The House in Town	Stephen
The House of Isreal	Trading
The Kingdom of Judah	Den Vide, Vide Verden
The Law and the Testimony	Walks from Eden
The Letter of Credit	“What She Could”
The Little Camp on Eagle Hill	The Wide, Wide World
The Little House of Cape Cod	Willow Brook
Melbourne House	Wych Hazel
Mr. Rutherford’s Children	

NEW HOME IN THE COUNTRY

Excerpt from "The Wide, Wide World" 1850

By Susan Warner

The morning sun was shining full and strong in Ellen's eyes when she awoke. Bewildered at the strangeness of everything around her, she raised herself on her elbow, and took a long look at her new home. It could not help but seem cheerful. The bright beams of the sunlight streaming in through the windows lighted on the wall and the old wainscoting, and paintless and rough as they were, Nature's own gilding more than made amends for their want of comeliness. Still Ellen was not much pleased with the results of her survey. The room, was good-sized, and perfectly neat and clean. It had two large windows opening to the east, through which, morning by morning, the sun looked in, that was another blessing. But the floor was without the sign of a carpet, and the bare boards looked to Ellen very comfortless. The hard finished walls were not very smooth nor particularly white. The doors and woodwork, though very neat, and even carved with some attempt at ornament, had never known the touch of paint, and had grown in the course of years to be of a light brown color. The room was very bare of furniture, too. A dressing-table, pier-table, or what-not, stood between the windows, but it was only a half circular top of pine board set upon three very long, bare-looking legs -- altogether of a most awkward and unhappy appearance, Ellen thought, and quite too high for her to use with any comfort. No glass hung over it, nor anywhere else. On the north side of the room was a fireplace, against the opposite wall stood Ellen's trunk and two chairs. That was all, except the cot bed she was lying on, and which had its place opposite the windows. The coverlid of that came in for a share of her displeasure, being of home-made white and blue worsted mixed with cotton exceedingly thick and heavy.

"I wonder what sort of a blanket is under it," said Ellen, "if I can ever get it off to see! Pretty good, but the shoots are cotton: and so is the pillow case."

She was still leaning on-her elbow, looking around her with a rather discontented face, when some door opened-downstairs, a great noise of hissing and spluttering came to her ears, and presently there stole to her nostrils a steaming odor of something very savory from the kitchen. It said as plainly as any dressing-bell that she had

better get up. So up she jumped, and set about the business of dressing with great alacrity. Where was the distress of last night? Gone -- with the darkness. She had slept well, the bracing atmosphere had restored strength and spirits, and the bright morning light made it impossible to be dull or down-hearted, in spite of the new cause she thought she had found. She went on quickly with the business of the toilet, but when it came to the washing, she suddenly discovered that there were no conveniences for it in her room -- no sign of pitcher or basin, or stand to hold them. Ellen was slightly dismayed, but presently recollected her arrival had not been looked for so soon, and probably the preparations for it had not been completed. So she finished dressing, and then set out to find her way to the kitchen. On opening the door, there was a little landing-place from which the stairs descended just in front of her and at the left hand another door, which she supposed must lead to her aunt's room. At the foot of the stairs Ellen found herself in a large square room or hall, for one of its doors, on the east, opened to the outer air, and was in fact the front door of the house. Another Ellen tried on the south side, it would not open. A third, under the stairs, admitted her to the kitchen.

The noise of hissing and spluttering now became quite violent, and the smell of cooking, to Ellen's fancy, rather too strong to be pleasant. Before a good fire stood Miss Fortune holding the end of a very long iron handle, by which she was kept in communication with a flat vessel sitting on the fire, in which Ellen soon discovered all this noisy and odorous cooking was going on. A tall tin coffee-pot stood on some coals in the corner of the fireplace, and another little iron vessel in front also claimed a share of Miss-Fortune's attention, for she every now and then leaned-forward to give a stir to whatever was in it, making each time quite a spasmodic effort to do so without quitting her hold on the long handle. Ellen drew near and looked on with great curiosity, and not a little appetite, but Miss Fortune was far too busy to give her more than a passing glance. At length the hissing pan was brought to the hearth for some new arrangement of its contents, and Ellen seized the moment of peace and quiet to say, "Good morning, Aunt Fortune."

Miss Fortune was crouching by the pan turning her slices of pork. "How do you do this morning?" she answered without looking up.

Ellen replied that she felt a great deal better.

"Slept warm, did you?" said Miss Fortune, as she set the pan back on the fire. And Ellen could hardly answer, "Quite warm, ma'am," when the hissing and spluttering began again as loud as ever.

"I must wait," thought Ellen, "till this is over before I say what I want to. I can't scream out to ask for a basin and towels."

In a few minutes the pan was removed from the fire, and Miss Fortune went on to take out the brown slices of nicely fried pork and arrange them in a deep dish, leaving a small quantity of clear fat in the pan. Ellen, who was greatly interested, and observing every step most attentively, settled in her own mind that certainly this would be thrown away, fit for nothing but the pigs. But Miss Fortune didn't think so, for she darted into some pantry close by, and returning with a cup of cream in her hand, emptied it all into the pork fat. Then she ran into the pantry again for a little round tin box, with a cover full of holes, and shaking this gently over the pan, a fine white shower of flour fell upon the cream, The pan was than replaced on the fire and stirred, and to Ellen's astonishment the whole changed, as if by magic, to a thick, stiff, white froth. It was not till Miss Fortune was carefully pouring this over the fried slices in the dish that Ellen suddenly recollected that breakfast was ready, and she was not.

"Aunt Fortune," she said timidly, "I haven't washed yet, there's no basin in my room."

Miss Fortune made no answer nor gave any sign of hearing, she went on dishing up breakfast. Ellen waited a few minutes.

"Will you please, ma'am, to show me where I can wash myself."

"Yes," said Miss Fortune, suddenly standing erect, "you'll have to go down to the spout."

"The spout, ma'am," said Ellen, "what's that?"

"You'll know it when you see it, I guess," answered her aunt, again stooping over her preparations. But in another moment she arose and said, "just open that door there behind you, and go down the stairs and out at the yard and you'll see where it is, and what it is too."

Ellen still lingered, "Would you be as good as to give me a towel ma'am" she said timidly.

Miss Fortune dashed past her and out of another door, whence she presently returned with a clean towel which she threw over Ellen's arm, and then went back to her work.

Opening the door by which she had first seen her aunt enter the night before, Ellen went down a steep flight of steps, and found herself in a lower kitchen, intended for common purposes. It seemed not to be used at all at least there was no fire there, and a cellar-like feeling and smell instead. That was no wonder, for beyond the fireplace on the left hand was the opening to the cellar, which, running under the other part of the house, was at the same level with

this kitchen. It had no furniture but a table and. Two chairs. The thick heavy door stood open. Passing out, Ellen looked around her for water, in what shape or form it was to present itself she had no very clear idea. She soon spied, a few yards distant, a little stream of water pouring from the end of a pipe or trough raised about a foot and a half from the ground, and a well-worn path leading to-it, left no doubt of its being "the spout" But when she reached it Ellen was in no small puzzle as to how she should manage. The water was clear and bright, and poured very fast into a shallow wooden trough underneath, whence it ran off into the meadow and disappeared.

"But what shall I do without a basin," thought Ellen, "I can't catch any water in my hands, it runs too fast. If I only could get my face under there -- that would be fine."

Very carefully and cautiously she tried it, but the continual sputtering of the water had made the board so slippery that before her face could reach the stream she came very near tumbling headlong, and so taking more of a cold bath than she wished for. So she contented herself with the drops her hands could bring to her face -- a scanty supply, but those drops were deliciously cold and fresh. And afterwards she pleased herself with holding her hands in the running water, till they were red with the cold. On the whole Ellen enjoyed her washing very much. The morning air came playing about her, it's cool breath was on her cheek with health in its touch. The Early sun was shining on tree, and meadow, and hill, the long shadows stretched over the grass and the very brown out-house looked bright. She thought it was the loveliest place she had ever seen. And that sparkling trickling water was certainly the purest and sweetest she had ever tasted. Where could it come from? It poured from a small trough made of the split trunk of a tree with a little groove or channel two inches wide hollowed out in it, But at the end of one of these troughs, another lapped on, and another at the end of that, and how many there were Ellen could not see, nor where the beginning of them was. Ellen stood gazing and wondering, drinking in the fresh air, hope and spirits rising every minute, when she suddenly recollected breakfast! She hurried in. As she expected her aunt was at the table, but to her surprise, and not at all to her gratification, there was Mr. Van Brunt at the other end of it, eating away, very much at home indeed. In silent dismay Ellen drew her chair to the side of the table.

"Did you find the spout?" asked Miss Fortune.

"Yes, ma'am."

"Well, how do you like it?"

"Oh, I like it very much indeed," said Ellen. "I think it is beautiful."

Miss Fortune's face rather softened at this, and she gave Ellen an abundant supply of all that was on the table. Her journey, the bracing air, and her cool morning wash, all together, had made Ellen very sharp, and she did justice to the breakfast. She thought never was coffee so good as this country coffee, nor anything so excellent as the brown bread and butter, both as sweet as bread and butter could be, neither was any cookery so entirely satisfactory as Miss Fortune's fried pork and potatoes. Yet her teaspoon was not silver, her knife could not boast of being either sharp or bright, and her fork was certainly made for anything else in the world but comfort and convenience, being of only two prongs, and those so far apart that Ellen had no small difficulty to carry the potato safely from her plate to her mouth. It mattered nothing, she was now looking on the bright side of things and all this only made her breakfast taste the sweeter.

Ellen rose from the table when she had finished, and stood a few minutes thoughtfully by the fire.

"Aunt Fortune," she said at length timidly, "if you've no objection, I should like to go and take a good look all about."

"Oh yes," said Miss Fortune, "go where you like, I'll give you a week to do what you please with yourself."

"Thank you, ma'am," said Ellen, as she ran off for her bonnet, "a week's a long time. I suppose" thought she, "I shall go to school at the end of that."

Returning quickly with her white bonnet, Ellen opened the heavy kitchen door by which she had entered last night, and went out. She found herself in a kind of long shed. It had very rough walls and floor, and overhead showed the brown beams and rafters, two little windows and a door were on the side. All manner of rubbish lay there, especially at the farther end. There were scattered about and piled up various boxes, boards, farming and garden tools, old pieces of rope and sheepskin, old iron, a cheese press, and what not. Ellen did not stay long to look, but went out to find something pleasanter. A few yards from the shed door was the little gate through which she had stumbled in the dark, and outside of that Ellen stood still awhile. It was a fair, pleasant day, and the country scene she looked upon was very pretty. Ellen thought so. Before her, at a little distance, rose the great gable end of the barn, and a long row of outhouses stretched away from it towards the loft. The ground was strewn thick with chips, and the reason was not hard to find, for a little way off,

under an old stunted apple tree, lay a huge log, well chipped on the upper surface, with the axe resting against it, and close by some sticks of wood both chopped and unchopped. To the right the ground descended gently to a beautiful plane meadow, skirted on the hither side by a row of fine apple trees. The smooth green flat tempted Ellen to a run, but first she looked to the left. There was a garden, she guessed, for there was a paling fence which enclosed a pretty large piece of ground: and between the garden and the house a green slope ran down to the spout, That reminded her that she intended making a journey of discovery up the course of the long trough. No time could be better than now, and she ran down the slope.

The trough was supported at some height from the ground by little heaps of stones placed here and there along its whole course. Not far from the spout it crossed a fence, Ellen must cross it too to gain her object, and how that could be done was a great question, she resolved to try, however. But first she played awhile with the water, which had great charms for her. She dammed up the little channel with her fingers, forcing the water to flow over the-side of the-trough: there was something very pleasant in stopping the supply of the spout, and-seeing the water trickling over where it had no business to go, and she did not heed that some of the drops took her frock in their way. She stooped her lips to the trough and drank of its sweet current, -- only for fun's sake, for she was not thirsty. Finally, she set out to follow the stream up to its head. But poor Ellen had not gone more than half way towards the fence, when she all at once plunged into the mire. The green grass growing there had looked fair enough but there was running water and black mud under the green grass, she found to her sorrow. Her shoes, her stockings, were full. What was to be done now? The journey of discovery must be given up. She forgot to think about where the water came from, in the more pressing question, "What will Aunt Fortune say?" -- and the quick wish came that she had her mother to go to, However, she got out of the slough, and wiping her shoes as well as she could on the grass, she hastened back to the house.

The kitchen was all put in order, the hearth swept, the irons at the fire, and Miss Fortune was just pinning her ironing blanket on the table.

"Well, what's the matter?" she said, when she saw Ellen's face, but as her glance reached the floor, her brows darkened. "Mercy on me!" she exclaimed with slow emphasis, "What on earth have you been about? Where have you been?"

Ellen explained.

“Well, you have made a figure of yourself! Sit down!” said her aunt shortly, as she thrust a chair down on the hearth before the fire, “I should have thought you’d have wit enough at your age to keep out of the ditch.”

“I didn’t see any ditch,” said Ellen.

“No, I suppose not,” said Miss Fortune, who was energetically twitching off Ellen’s shoes and stockings with her forefinger and thumb, “I suppose not! You were staring up at the moon or stars, I suppose.”

“It all looked green and smooth,” said poor Ellen, “one part just like another, and the first-thing I knew I was up to-my ankles.”

“What were you there at all for?” said Miss Fortune, shortly enough.

“I couldn’t see where the water came from, and I wanted to find out.”

“Well, you’ve found out enough for one day, I hope. Just look at those stockings! Ha’n’t you got never a pair of colored stockings, that you must go poking into the mud with white ones?”

“No, ma’am.”

“Do you mean to say you never wore any but white ones at home?”

“Yes, ma’am, I never had any others.”

Miss Fortune’s thoughts seemed too much for speech, from the way in which she jumped up and went off without saying anything more. She presently came back with an old pair of grey socks, which she bade Ellen put on as soon as her feet were dry.

“How many of those white stockings have you?” she said.

“Mamma bought me a half-a-dozen pairs of new ones just before I came away, and I had as many as that of old ones besides.”

“Well, now, go up to your trunk and bring’m all down to me -- every pair of white stockings you have got. There’s a pair of old slippers you can put on till your shoes are dry.” She said, flinging them to her, “they aren’t much too big for you.”

“They’re not much too big for the socks, they’re a grout deal too big for me,” thought Ellen, but she said nothing. She gathered all her stockings together and brought them downstairs, as her aunt had bidden her.

“Now you may run out to the barn to Mr. Van Brunt, you’ll find him there, and tell him I want him to bring me some white maple bark when he comes home to dinner -- white maple bark, do you hear?”

Away went Ellen, but in a few minutes came back. "I can't get in," she said.

"What's the matter?"

"Those great doors are shut, and I can't open them. I knocked, but nobody-came!"

"Knock at a barn Door!" said Miss Fortune, "You must go in-at the little cow-house door, at the left, and go round. He's in the lower born-floor."

The barn stood lower than the level of the chip-yard, from which a little bridge led to the great doorway of the second floor. Passing down the range of outhouses, Ellen came to the little door her aunt had spoken of. "But what in the world should I do if there be cows inside there?" she said to herself. She peeped in, the cow-house was perfectly empty, and cautiously and with many a fearful glance to the right and left, lest some terrible horned animal should present itself, Ellen made her way across the cow-house and through the barn-yard, littered thick with straw, wet and dry, to the lower barn-floor. The door of this stood wide open. Ellen looked with wonder and pleasure when she got in. It was an immense room -- the sides showed nodding but hay up to the ceiling, except here and there an enormous upright post, the floor was perfectly clean, only a few locks of hay and grains of wheat scattered upon it, and a pleasant sweet smell was there, Ellen could not tell of what. But no Mr. Van Brunt. She looked about for him, she dragged her disagreeable slippers back and forth over the floor in vain.

"Hilloa! What's wanting?" at length cried a rough voice she remembered very well, but where was the speaker? On every side, to every corner, her eyes turned without finding him. She looked up at last. There was the round face of Mr. Van Brunt peering down at her through a large opening or trap-door in the upper floor.

"Well," said he, "have you come out here to help me thresh the wheat?"

Ellen told him what she had come for.

"White maple bark, well," said he in his slow way, "I'll bring it, I wonder what's in the wind now."

So Ellen wondered, as she slowly went back to the house, and yet more, when her aunt set her to tacking her stockings together two by two.

"What are you going to do with them, Aunt Fortune?" she at last ventured to say.

"You'll see when the time comes."

“Mayn’t I keep out one pair?” said Ellen, who had a vague notion that by some mysterious means her stockings were to be prevented from ever looking white any more.

“No, just do as I tell you.”

Mr. Van Brunt came at dinner-time with the white maple bark. It was thrown forthwith into a brass kettle of water, which Miss Fortune had already hung over the fire. Ellen felt sure this had something to do with her stockings, but she could ask no questions, and as soon as dinner was over she went up to her room, it didn’t look pleasant now. The brown wood-work and rough dingy walls had lost their gilding. The sunshine was out of it, and what was more, the sunshine was out of Ellen’s heart too. She went to the window and opened it, but there was nothing to keep it open, it slid down again as soon as she let it go. Baffled and sad, she stood leaning her elbows on the window-sill, looking out on the grass-plat that lay before the door, and the little gate that opened on the lakes, and the smooth meadow and rich broken country beyond. It was a very fair and pleasant scene in the soft sunlight of the last of October, but the charm of it was gone for Ellen, it was dreary. She looked without caring to look, or knowing what she was looking at, she felt the tears rising to her eyes, and, sick of the window, turned away. Her eyes fell on her trunk, her next thought was of her desk inside of it, and suddenly her heart sprang. “I will write to mamma!” No sooner said than done. The trunk was quickly open, and hasty hands pulled out one thing after another till the desk was reached.

“But what shall I do?” thought she, “There isn’t a sign of a table. Oh, what a place! I’ll shut my trunk and put it on that. But here are all these things to be put back first.”

They were eagerly stowed away, and then kneeling by-the side of the trunk, with loving hands, Ellen opened her desk. A sheet of paper was drawn from her store, and properly placed before her, the pen was dipped in the ink, and at first with a hurried, and then with a trembling hand she wrote, “My dear Mama.” But Ellen’s heart had been swelling and swelling, with every letter of those three words, and scarcely was the last “a” finished, when the pen was dashed down, and flinging away from the desk, she threw herself on the floor in a passion of grief. It seemed as if she had her mother again in her arms, and was clinging with a death-grasp not to be parted from her. And then the feeling that she was parted! As much bitter sorrow as a little heart can know was in poor Ellen’s now. In her childish despair she wished she could die, and almost thought she should. After a

time, however, though not a short time, she rose from the floor and went to her writing again, her heart a little eased by weeping, yet the tears kept coming all the time and she could not quite keep her paper from being blotted. The first sheet was spoiled before she was aware, she took another.

The letter finished was carefully folded, enclosed, and directed, and then with an odd mixture of pleasure and sadness, Ellen lit one of her little wax matches, as she called them, and sealed it very nicely. She looked at it fondly a minute when all was done, thinking of the dear fingers that would hold and open it, her next movement was to sink her face in her hands, and pray most earnestly for a blessing upon her mother and help for herself -- poor Ellen felt she needed it. She was afraid of lingering lest tea should be ready, so, locking up her letter, she went downstairs.

The tea was ready. Miss Fortune and Mr. Van Brunt were at the table, and so was the old lady, whom Ellen had not seen before that day. She quietly drew up her chair to its place.

"Well," said Miss Fortune, "I hope you feel better for your long stay upstairs."

"I do, ma'am," said Ellen, "A great deal better."

"What have you been about?"

"I have been writing, ma'am."

"Writing what?"

"I have been writing to Mama."

Perhaps Miss Fortune heard the trembling of Ellen's voice, or her sharp glance saw the lip quiver and eyelid droop. Something softened her. She spoke in a different tone, asked Ellen if her tea was good, took care she had plenty of the bread and butter, and excellent cheese, which was on the table, and lastly cut her a large piece of the pumpkin pie. Mr. Van Brunt too looked once or twice at Ellen's face as if he thought all was not right there. He was not so sharp as Miss Fortune, but the swollen eyes and tear stains were not quite lost upon him. After tea, when Mr. Van Brunt was gone, and the tea things cleared away, Ellen had the pleasure of finding out the mystery of the brass kettle and the white maple bark. The kettle now stood in the chimney corner. Miss Fortune, seating herself before it, threw in all Ellen's stockings except one pair, which she flung over to her, saying, "There, I don't care if you keep that one." Then, tucking up her sleeves to the elbows, she fished up pair after pair out of the kettle, and wringing them out hung them on chairs to dry. But, as Ellen had

opined, they were no longer white, but of a fine slate color. She looked on in silence, too much vexed to ask questions.

“Well, how do you like that?” said Miss Fortune at length, when she had got two or three chairs round the fire pretty well hung with a display of slate-colored cotton legs.

“I don’t like it at all.” said Ellen.

“Well I do, how many pair of white stockings would you leave to drive into the mud and let me wash out every week?”

“You wash!” said Ellen in surprise, “I didn’t think your doing it.”

“Who did you think was going to do it? There’s nothing in this house but goes through my hand, I can tell you, and so must you. I suppose you’ve lived all your life among people that thought a great deal of wetting their little finger, but I’am not one of ‘em, I guess you’ll find.”

Ellen was convinced of that already.

“Well, what are you thinking of?” said Miss Fortune presently.

“I’m thinking of my nice white darning cotton,” said Ellen. “I might just as well not have had it.”

“Is it wound or in the skein?”

“In the skein.”

“Then just go right up and get it. I’ll warrant I’ll fix it so that you’ll have a use for it.”

Ellen obeyed, but musing rather uncomfortably what else there was of hers that Miss Fortune could lay hands on. She seemed in imagination to see all her white things turning brown. She resolved she would keep her trunk well locked up, but what if her keys should be called for?

She was dismissed to her room soon after the dyeing business was completed. It was rather a disagreeable surprise to find her bed still unmade, and she did not like the notion that the making of it in the future must depend entirely upon herself, Ellen had no fancy for such handiwork. She went to sleep in somewhat the same dissatisfied mood with which the day had begun, displeasure, at her coarse heavy coverlid and cotton sheets again taking its place among weightier matters, and dreamed of tying them together into a rope by which to let herself down out of the Window, but when she had got so far, Ellen’s sleep became sound, and the end of the dream was never known.

THE APPLE "BEE"

Excerpt from "The Wide, Wide World" 1850

By Susan Warner

As the party were all gathered it was time to set to work. The fire in the front room was burning up finely now, but Miss Fortune had no idea of having pork-chopping or apple-paring done there. One party was dispatched downstairs into the lower kitchen, the others made a circle round the fire. Everyone was furnished with a sharp knife, and a basket of apples was given each two or three, now, it would be hard to say whether talking or working went on best. Not faster moved the tongues than the fingers, not smoother went the knives than the flow of talk, while there was a constant leaping of quarters of apples from the hands that had prepared them into the bowls, trays or what not that stood on the hearth to receive them. Ellen had nothing to do, her aunt had managed it so, though she would gladly have shared the work that looked so pretty and pleasant in other people's hands, Miss Fortune would not let her, so she watched the rest, and amused herself as well as she could with hearing and seeing, and standing between Alice and Jenny Hitchcock, she handed them the apples out of the basket as fast as they were ready for them. It was a pleasant evening that. Laughing and talking went on merrily, stories were told, anecdotes, gossip, jokes, passed from mouth to mouth, and not one made himself so agreeable or had so much to do with the life and pleasure of the party, as Alice. Ellen saw it, delighted. The pared apples kept dancing into the bowls and trays, the baskets got empty surprisingly fast, Nancy and Ellen had to run to the barrels in the shed again and again for fresh supplies.

"Do they mean to do all these to-night?" said Ellen to Nancy on one of these occasions.

"I don't know what they mean, I am sure," replied Nancy, diving down into the barrel to reach the apples, "if you asked me what Miss Fortune meant I might ha' given a guess."

"But only look," said Ellen – "only so many done, and all these to do! -- Well, I know what busy as a bee' means now if I never did before."

"You'll know it better to-morrow, I can tell you."

"Why?"

"Oh, wait till you see. I wouldn't be you to-morrow for something though. Do you like sewing?"

“Sewing!” said Ellen. “But girls! Girls! What are you leaving the door open for?” sounded from the kitchen, as they hurried in.

“Most got through, Nancy?” inquired Bob Lawson. (Miss Fortune had gone downstairs.)

“Ha’n’t begun to, Mr. Lawson. There’s every bit as many to do as there were at your house t’other night.”

“What on airth does she want with such a sight of ‘em.” inquired Dan Dennison.

“Live on pies and apple-sass till next summer.” suggested Mimy Lawson.

“That’s the stuff for my money!” replied her brother, “Taters and apple-sass is my sass in winter.”

“It’s good these is easy got,” said his sister Mary, “the sass is most of the dinner to Bob most commonly.”

“Are they fixing for more apple-sass downstairs?” Mr. Dennisen went on rather dryly.

“No-mush” said Juniper Hitchcock – “sassages!”

“Humph!” said Dan, as he speared up an apple out of the basket on the point of his knife, “Ain’t that something like what you call killing two --.”

“Just that exactly,” said Jenny Hitchcock, as Dan broke off short, and the mistress of the house walked in. “Ellen,” she whispered. “Don’t you want to go downstairs and see when the folks are coming up to help us? And tell the doctor he must be spry, for we ain’t going to get through in a hurry,” she added, laughing. “Which is the doctor, ma’am?”

“The doctor -- Doctor Marshchalk -- don’t you know?”

“Is he a doctor?” asked Alice.

“No, not exactly, I suppose, but he’s just as good as the real. He’s a natural knack at putting bones in their places, and all that sort of thing. There was a man broke his leg horribly at Thirlwall the other day, and Gibson was out of the way, and Marshchalk set it, and did it famously, they said. So go, Ellen, and bring us word what they are all about.”

Mr. Van Brunt was the head of the party in the lower kitchen. He stood at one end of the table, cutting with his huge knife the hard frozen pork into very thin slices, which the rest of the company took, and before they had time to thaw cut up into small dice on the little boards Mr. Van Brunt had prepared. As large a fire as the chimney would hold was built up and blazing finely, the room looked as cozy and bright as the one up stairs, and the people as busy and as

talkative. They had less to do, however, or they had been more smart, for they were drawing to the end of their chopping of which Miss Janet declared herself very glad, for she said, "The wind came sweeping in under the doors and freezing her feet the whole time, and she was sure the biggest fire ever was built couldn't warm that room." an opinion in which Mrs. Van Brunt agreed perfectly. Miss Janet no sooner spied Ellen standing in the chimney-corner than she called her to her side, kissed her, and talked to her a long time, and finally fumbling in her pocket brought forth an odd little three-cornered pin-cushion which she gave her for a keepsake. Jane Huff and her brother also took kind notice of her, and Ellen began to think the world was full of nice people. About half-past eight the choppers went up and joined the company who were paring apples, the circle was a very large one now, and the buzz of tongue, grew quite furious.

"What are you smiling at?" asked Alice of Ellen, who stood at her elbow.

"Oh, I don't know," said Ellen, smiling more broadly, and presently added, "they're all so kind to me."

"Who?"

"Oh, everybody -- Miss Jenny, and Miss Jane Huff, and Miss Janet, and Mrs. Van Brunt, and Mr. Huff, they all speak so kindly and look so kindly at me but it's very funny what a notion people have for kissing - - I wish they hadn't -- I've run away from three kisses already, and I'm so afraid somebody else will try next."

"You don't seem very bitterly displeased." said Alice, smiling.

"I am, though, I can't bear it," said Ellen, laughing and blushing.

"There's Mr. Dennison caught me in the first place and tried to kiss me, but I tried so hard to get away I believe he saw I was really in good earnest and let me go. And just now, only think of it, while I was standing talking to Miss Jane Huff downstairs, her brother caught me and kissed me before I knew what he was going to do. I declare it's too bad." said Ellen rubbing her cheek very hard as if she would rub off the affronts.

"You must let it pass, my dear, it is one way of expressing kindness, they feel kindly towards you or they would not do it."

"Then I Wish they wouldn't feel quite so kindly," said Ellen, "That's all. Hark! What was that?"

"What is that?" said somebody else, and instantly there was a silence, broken again after a minute-or two by the faint blast of a horn.

"It's old Father Swaim, I reckon," said Mr. Van Brunt "I'll go fetch him in."

"Oh yes! Bring him in -- bring him in." was heard on all sides.

"That horn makes me think of what happened to me once," said Jenny Hitchcock to Ellen. "I was a little girl at school, not so big as you are, and one afternoon, when we were all as still as mice and studying away, we heard Father Swaim's horn --"

"What does he blow it for?" said Ellen, as Jenny stooped for her knife which she had let fall.

"Oh, to let people know he's there, you know. Did you never see Father Swaim?"

"No."

"La! He's the funniest old fellow! He goes round and round the country carrying the newspapers, and we get him to bring us our letters from the post-office, when there are any. He carries 'em in a pair of saddle-bags hanging across that old white horse of his, I don't think that horse will ever grow old, no more than his master, and in the summer he has a stick so long -- with a horse's tail tied to the end of it, to brush away the flies, for the poor horse had his tail cut off pretty short. I wonder if it isn't the very same," said Kenny, laughing heartily, "Father Swaim though he could manage it best, I guess."

"But what was it that happened to you that time at school?" said Ellen.

"Why, when we heard the horn blow, our master, the schoolmaster, you know, went out to get a paper, and I was tired with sitting still, so I jumped up and ran across the room and then back again, and over and back again five or six times, and when he came in one of the girls up and told on it. It was Fanny Lawson," said Jenny in a whisper to Alice, and I think she ain't much different now from what she was then. I can hear her now, 'Mr Starks, Jenny Hitchcock's been running all round the room.' Well, what do you think he did to me? He took hold of my two hands and swung me round and round by the arms till I didn't know which was head and which was feet."

"What a queer schoolmaster!" said Ellen.

"Queer enough, you may say that. His name was Starks, the boys used to call him Starksifaction. We did hate him, that's a fact. I'll tell you what he did to a black boy of ours -- you know our black Sam, Alice? -- I forget what he had been doing, but Starks took him so, by the rims of the ears and danced him up and down upon the floor."

"But didn't that hurt him?"

“Hurt him! I guess it did! Ho meant it should. He tied me under the table once. Sometimes when he wanted to punish two boys at a time ho would set them to spit in each other’s faces.”

“Oh, don’t tell me about him!” cried Ellen, with a face of horror, “I don’t like to hear it.”

Jenny laughed, and just then the door opened and Mr. Van Brunt and the old news-carrier came in.

He was a venerable, mild-looking old man, with thin hair as white as snow, he wore a long snuff-colored coat, and a broad-brimmed hat, the sides of which were oddly looped up to the crown with twine, his tin horn or trumpet was in his hand. His saddle-bags were on Mr. Van Brunt’s arm. As soon as she saw him Ellen was fevered with the notion that perhaps he had something for her, and she forgot everything else. It would seem that the rest of the company had the same hope, for they crowded round him shouting out welcomes and questions and inquiries for letters, all in a breath.

“Softly, softly,” said the old man, sitting down slowly, “not all at once, I can’t attend to you all at once, one at a time -- one at a time.”

“Don’t attend to ‘em at all till youre ready,” said Miss Fortune, “let ‘em wait.” And she handed him a glass of cider.

He drank it off at a breath, smacking his lips as ho gave back the glass to her hand, and exclaiming, “That’s prime!” Then taking up his saddle-bags from the floor, he began slowly to undo the fastenings.

“You are going to our house to-night, ain’t you, Father Swaim?” said Jenny.

“That’s where I was going,” said the old man, “I was agoing to stop with your father, Miss Jenny, but since I’ve got into-farmer Van Brunt’s hands I don’t know any more what’s going to become of me, and after that glass of cider I don’t care much. Now, let’s seen let’s see Miss Jenny Hitchcock, here’s something for you. I should like very much to know what’s inside of that letter, there’s a blue seal to it. Ah, young folks, young folks!”

“‘Jedediah B, Lawson,’ -- there’s for your father, Miss Mimy, that saves me a long tramp, if you’ve twenty-one cents in your pocket, that is, if you ha’n’t, I shall be obliged to tramp after that. Here’s something for ‘most all of you, I’m thinking. ‘Miss Cecilia Dennison’, your fair hands -- how’s the Squire? Rheumatism, eh? I think I am a younger man-now than your father, Cecilly, and yet I must ha’ seen a good many more years than Squire Dennison, I must surely, ‘Miss Fortune Emerson’, that’s for you, a double letter, ma’am.”

Ellen with a beating heart had-pressed nearer and nearer to the old man, till she stood close by his right hand, and could see every letter as he handed it out. A spot of deepening red was on each cheek as her eye eagerly scanned letter after letter, it spread to a sudden flush when the last name was read. Alice watched in some anxiety her keen look as it followed the letter from the old man's hand to her aunt's, and thence to the pocket, where Miss Fortune coolly bestowed it. Ellen could not stand this, she sprang forward across the circles.

"Aunt Fortune, there's a letter inside of that-for me! -- Won't you give it to me? -- Won't you give it to me?" she repeated, trembling.

Her aunt did not notice her by so much as a look, she turned away and began talking to someone else. The red had left Ellen's face when Alice could see it again, it was livid and spotted from stifled passion.

She stood in a kind of maze. But as her eyes caught Alice's anxious and sorrowful look, she covered her face with her hands, and as quick as possible made her escape out of the room.

For some minutes Alice heard none of the hubbub around her. Then came a knock at the door, and the voice of Thomas Grimes saying to Mr. Van Brunt that Miss Humphrey's horse was there.

"Mr. Swaim," said Alice, rising, "I don't like to leave you with these gay friends of ours, you'll stand no chance of rest with them tonight. Will you ride home with me?"

Many of the party began to beg Alice would stay to supper, but she said her father would be uneasy. The old news-carrier concluded to go with her, for he said "there was a pint he wanted to mention to Parson Humphreys that he had forgotten to bring for'ard when they were talking on that 'ere subject two months ago." So Nancy brought her things from the next room and helped her on with them, and looked pleased, as well she might, at the smile and kind words with which she was rewarded. Alice lingered at her leave-taking, hoping to see Ellen, but it was not till the last moment that Ellen came in. She did not say a word, but the two little arms were put around Alice's neck, and held her with a long, close earnestness which did not pass from her mind all evening afterward.

When she was gone the company sat down again to business, and apple-paring went on more steadily than ever for awhile, till the bottom of the barrel was seen, and the last basketful of apples was duly emptied. Then there was a general shout, the kitchen was quickly cleared, and everybody's face brightened, as much as to say, "Now for fun!" While Ellen, and Nancy and Miss Fortune and Mrs. Van

Brunt were running all ways with trays, pans, baskets, knives and buckets, the fun began by Mr. Juniper Hitchcock's whistling in his dog and setting him to do various feats for the amusement of the company. There followed such a rushing, leaping, barking, laughing, and scolding on the part of the dog and his admirers, that the room was in an uproar. He jumped over a stick, he got into a chair and sat up on two legs, he kissed the ladies' hands, he suffered an apple-paring to be laid across his nose, then threw it up with a jerk and caught it in his mouth. Nothing very remarkably certainly, but, as Miss Fortune observed to somebody, "If he had been the learned pig there couldn't ha' been more fuss made over him."

Ellen stood looking on, smiling partly at the door and his master, and partly at the antics of the company. Presently Mr. Van Brunt, bending down to her said ---

"What is the matter with your eyes?"

"Nothing" said Ellen starting -- "at least nothing that's any matter I meant."

"Come here," said he, drawing her on one side, "tell me all about it -- what is the matter?"

"Never mind -- please don't ask me, Mr. Van Brunt. I ought not to tell you -- it isn't any matter."

But her eyes were full again, and he still held her fast doubtfully.

"I'll tell you about it, Mr. Van Brunt," said Nancy, as she name past them, "you let her go, and I'll tell you by-and-by."

And Ellen tried in vain afterwards to make her promise she would not.

"Come, June," said Miss Jenny, "we have got enough of you and Jumper -- turn him out, we are going to have the cat now. Come! Puss, puss in the corner! Go off in t'other room, will you, everybody that don't want to play. Puss, puss!"

Now the fun began in good earnest, and few minutes had passed before Ellen was laughing with all her heart, as if she had never had anything to cry for in her life. After "Puss, puss in the corner" came "Blindman's-buff", and this was played with great spirit, the two most distinguished being Nancy and Dan Dennison, though Miss Fortune played admirably well. Ellen had seen Nancy play before, but she forgot her own part of the game in sheer amazement at the way Mr. Dennison managed his long body, which seemed to go where there was no room for it, and vanish into air just when the grasp of some grasping "blind-man" was ready to fasten upon him. And when he was blinded, he seemed to know by instinct where the walls were,

and keeping clear of them he would swoop like a hawk from one end of the room to the other, pouncing upon the unlucky people who could by no means get out of the way fast enough. When this had lasted a while there was a general call for "the fox end the goose", and Miss Fortune was pitched upon for the latter, she having in the other game showed herself capable of good generalship. But who for the fox? Mr. Van Brunt?

"Not I," said Mr. Van Brunt -- "There ain't nothing of the fox about me, Miss Fortune would beat me all hollow."

"Who then, farmer?" said Bill Huff, "come, who is the fox? Will I do?"

"Not you, Bill, the goose'ed be too much for you."

There was a general shout, and cries of "Who then?" "Who then?"

"Dan Dennison," said Mr. Van Brunt. "Now look out for a sharp fight."

Amidst a great deal of laughing and confusion the line was formed, each person taking hold of a handkerchief or band passed around the waist of the person before him, except when the women held by each other's skirts. They were ranged according to height, the tallest being next their leader the "goose" Mr. Van Brunt and the elder ladies, and two or three more, chose to be lookers on, and took post outside the door.

Mr. Dennison began by taking off his coat, to give himself more freedom in his movements, for his business was to catch the train of the goose, one by one, as each in turn became hindmost, while her object was to baffle him and keep her family together, meeting him with outspread arms at every rush he made to seize one of her brood, while the long train behind her, following her quick movements and swaying from side to side to get out of the reach of the furious fox, was sometimes in the shape of the letter C, and sometime in that of the letter S, and sometimes looked liked a long snake with a curling tail. Loud was the laughter, shrill the shrieks, as the fox drove them hither and thither, and seemed to be in all parts of the room at once. He was a cunning fox that, as well as a bold one. Sometimes, when they thought him quite safe, held at bay by the goose, he dived under or leaped over her outstretched arms, and almost snatched hold of little Ellen, who being the least was the last one of the party. But Ellen played very well, and just escaped him too or three times, till he declared she gave him so much trouble that when he caught her he would "kiss her the worst kind." Ellen played none the worse for that, however she was caught at last, and kissed too, there was no help for

it, so she bore it as well as she could. Then she watched, and laughed till the tears ran down her cheeks to see how the fox and the goose dodged each other, what tricks were played, and how the long train pulled each other about. At length Nancy was caught, and then Jenny Hitchcock, and then Cecilia Dennison, and then Jane Huff, and so on, till at last the fox and the goose had a long struggle for Mimy Lawson, which would never have come to an end if Mimy had not gone over to the enemy.

There was a general pause. The hot and tired company were seated round the room, panting and fanning themselves with their pocket-handkerchiefs, and speaking in broken sentences, glad to rest even from laughing. Miss Fortune had thrown herself down on a seat close by Ellen, when Nancy came up and softly asked, "Is it time to beat the eggs now?" Miss Fortune nodded, and then drew her close to receive a long whisper in her ear, at the end of which Nancy ran off.

"Is there anything I can do, Aunt Fortune?" said Ellen, so gently and timidly that it ought to have won a kind answer.

"Yes," said her aunt, "you may go and put yourself to bed, it's high time long ago." and looking round as she moved off she added "Go!" - with a little nod that as much as said, "I am in earnest."

Ellen's heart throbbed, she stood doubtful. One word to Mr. Van Brunt and she need not go, that she knew. But as surely too that word would make trouble and do harm. And then she remembered, "A charge to keep I have!" She turned quick and quitted the room.

Ellen sat down on the first stair she came to, for her bosom was heaving up and down, and was determined not to cry. The sounds of talking and laughing came to her ear from the parlour, and there at her side stood the covered-up supper, for a few minutes it was hard to keep her resolve. The thick breath came and sent very fast.

Through the fanlight of the hall door, opposite to which she was sitting, the bright moonlight streamed in, and presently, as Ellen quieted, it seemed to her fancy like a gentle messenger from its maker, bidding his child remember him, and then came up some words in her memory that her mother's lips had fastened there long ago, "I love them that love me, and they that seek me early shall find me." She remembered her mother had told her it is Jesus who says this. Her lost pleasure was well-nigh forgotten, and yet as she sat gazing into the moonlight Ellen's eyes-were gathering tears very fast.

"Well, I am seeking Him," she thought, "can it be that He loves me! Oh, I am so glad!"

But they were glad tears that little Ellen wiped away as she went upstairs, for it was too cold to sit there long if the moon was ever so bright.

She had her hand on the latch of the door when her grandmother called out from the other room to know who was there.

"It's I, grandma."

"Ain't somebody there? Come in here -- Who is it?"

"It's I, grandma." said Ellen, coming to the door.

"Come in here, deary," said the old woman, in a lower tone, "What is it all? What's the matter? Who's downstairs?"

"It's a bee, grandma, there's nothing the matter."

"A bee! Who's been stung? What's all the noise about?"

"Tisn't that kind of a bee, grandma, don't you know? There's a parcel of people that came to pare apples, and they've been playing games in the parlour -- that's all."

"Paring apples, eh? Is there company below?"

"Yes, ma'am, a whole parcel of people."

"Dear me" said the old lady, "I oughtn't to ha' been abed! Why ha'n't Fortune told me? I'll get right up. Ellen, you go in that fur closet and bring me my paddysoy that hangs there, and then help me on with my things, I'll get right up. Dear me! What was Fortune thinking about?"

The moonlight served very well instead of candles, After twice bringing the wrong dresses Ellen at last hit upon the "paddysoy", which the old lady knew immediately by the touch. In haste, and not without some fear and trembling on Ellen's part, she was arrayed in it, her best cap put on, not over hair in the best order, Ellen feared, but the old lady would not stay to have it made better, Ellen took care of her down the stairs, and after opening the door for her went back to her room.

A little while had passed, and Ellen was just tying her night-cap string and ready to go peacefully to sleep, when Nancy burst in.

"Ellen! hurry! You must come right downstairs."

"Downstairs! why, I am just ready to go to bed."

"No matter, you must come right away down. There's Mr. Van Brunt says he won't begin supper till you come."

"But does Aunt Fortune know?"

"Yes, I tell you! And the quicker you come the better she'll be pleased. She sent me after you in all sorts of a hurry. She said she didn't know where you was."

“Said she didn’t know where I was! Why she told me herself --” Ellen began and then stopped short.

“Of course!” said Nancy, “Don’t you think I know that? But he don’t, and if you want to plague her you’ll just tell him. Now come and be quick, will you. The supper’s splendid.”

Ellen lost the first view of the table, for everything had begun to be pulled to pieces before she came in. The company were all crowded round the table, eating and talking and helping themselves, and ham and bread and butter, pumpkin pies and mince pies and apple pies, cakes of various kinds, and glasses of egg-nogg and cider, were in everybody’s hands, one dish in the middle of the big table had won the praise of every tongue, nobody could guess and many asked how it was made, but Miss Fortune kept a satisfied silence, pleased to see the constant stream of comers to the big dish till it was near empty. Just then Mr. Van Brunt, seeing Ellen had nothing, gathered up all that was left and gave it to her.

It was sweet and cold and rich. Ellen told her mother afterwards it was the best thing she had ever tasted except the ice-cream she once gave her in New York. She had taken, however, but one spoonful when her eye fell upon Nancy, standing back of all the company, and forgotten. Nancy had been upon her good behavior all the evening, and it was a singular proof of this that she had not pushed in and helped herself among the first. Ellen’s eye went once or twice from her plate to Nancy, and then she crossed over and offered it to her. It was eagerly taken, and, a little disappointed, Ellen stepped back again. But she soon forgot the disappointment. “She’ll know now that I don’t bear her any grudge,” she thought.

“Ha’n’t you got nothing?” said Nancy, coming up presently, “That wasn’t your’n that you gave me, was it?”

Ellen nodded smilingly.

“Well, there ain’t no more of it,” said Nancy “The bowl is empty.”

“I know it,” said Ellen.

“Why, didn’t you like it?”

“Yes, very much.”

“Why, you’re a queer little fish,” said Nancy, “what did you get Mr. Van Brunt to let me in for?”

“How did you know I did?”

“Cause he told me. Say -- what did you do it for? Mr. Dennison won’t you give Ellen a piece of cake or something? Here -- take this,” said Nancy, pouncing upon a glass of egg-nog which a gap in the

company enabled her to reach, "I made it more than half myself. Ain't it good?"

"Yes, very," said Ellen, smacking her lips, "what's in it?"

"Oh, plenty of good things. But what made you ask Mr. Van Brunt to let me stop tonight? You didn't tell me -- did you want me to stay?"

"Never mind," said Ellen, "Don't ask me any questions."

"Yes, but I will though, and you've got to answer me. Why did you? Come! Do you like me? -- say."

"I should like you, I dare say if you would be different."

"Well, I don't care," said Nancy, after a little pause, "I like you, though you're as queer as you can be. I don't care whether you like me or not. Look here, Ellen, that cake there is the best I know it is, for I've tried them all. You know I told Van Brunt I would tell him what you were crying about?"

"Yes, and I asked you not, Did you?"

Nancy nodded, being at the moment still further engaged in "trying" the cake.

"I am sorry you did. What did he say?"

"He didn't say much to me -- somebody else will hear of it, I guess.

"He was mad about it, or I am mistaken. What makes you sorry?"

"It will only do harm, and make Aunt Fortune angry."

"Well, that's just what I should like if I were you. I can't make you out."

"I'd a great deal rather have her like me," said Ellen. "was she vexed when grandma came down?"

"I don't know, but she had to keep it to herself if she was, everybody else was so glad, and Mr. Van Brunt made such a fuss. Just look at the old lady, how pleased she is. I declare, if the folks ain't talking of going. Come, Ellen, now for the cloaks! You and me'll finish our supper afterwards."

That, however, was not to be. Nancy was offered a ride home to Mrs. Van Brunt's and a lodging there. They were ready cloaked and shawled, and Ellen was still hunting for Miss Janet's things in the moonlit hall, when she heard Nancy close by, in-a lower tone than common, say --

"Ellen will you kiss me?"

Ellen dropped her armful of things, and taking Nancy's hands, gave her truly the kiss of peace.

When she went up to undress for the second time, she found on her bed -- her letter! And with tears Ellen kneeled down and gave

earnest thanks for this blessing, and that she had been able to gain Nancy's goodwill.

A MATTER OF CONSCIENCE

Excerpt from "The Wide, Wide World" 1850

By Susan Warner

Her other safeguard was the precious hour alone which she had promised John never to lose when she could help it. The only time she could have was the early morning before the rest of the family were up. To this hour, and it was often more than an hour, Ellen was faithful. Her little Bible was extremely precious now, Ellen had never gone to it with a deeper sense of need, and never did she find more comfort in being able to disburden her heart in prayer of its load of cares and wishes. Never more than now had she felt the preciousness of that friend who draws closer to his children the closer they draw to him. She had never realized more the joy of having him to go to. It was her special delight to pray for those loved ones she could do nothing else for, it was a joy to think that he who hears prayer is equally present with all his people, and that though thousands of miles lie between the petitioner and the petitioned for, the breath of prayer may span the distance and pour blessing on the far-off heed. The burden of thoughts and affections gathered during the twenty-three hours, was laid down in the twenty-fourth, and Ellen could meet her friends at the breakfast-table with a sunshiny face. Little they thought where her heart had been, or where it had got its sunshine.

But not withstanding this, Ellen had too much to remember and regret than to be otherwise than sober -- soberer than her friends liked. They noticed with sorrow that the sunshine wore off as the day rolled on, that though ready to smile upon occasion, her face always settled again into a gravity they thought altogether unsuitable. Mrs. Lindsay fancied she knew the cause, and resolved to break it up.

From the first of Ellen's coming her grandmother had taken the entire charge of her toilet. Whatever Mrs. Lindsay's notions in general might be as to the propriety of young girls learning to take care of themselves, Ellen was much too precious a plaything to be trusted to any other hands, even her own. At eleven o'clock regularly every day

she went to her grandmother's dressing-room for a very elaborate bathing and dressing, though not a very long one, for all Mrs. Lindsay's acts were energetic. Now, without any hint as to the reason, she was directed to come to her grandmother an hour before the breakfast time, to go through then the course of cold-water sponging and hair-gloving that Mrs. Lindsay was accustomed to administer at eleven. Ellen heard in silence and obeyed, but made up her hour by rising earlier than usual, so as to have it before going to her grandmother. It was a little difficult at first, but she soon got into the habit of it, though the mornings were dark and cold. After a while it chanced that this came to Mrs. Lindsay's ears, and Ellen was told to come to her as soon as she was out of bed in the morning.

"But, grandmother," said Ellen, "I am up a great while before you, I should find you asleep, don't I come soon enough?"

"What do you get up so early for?"

"You know, ma'am, I told you some time ago. I want some time to myself."

"It is not good for you to be up so long before breakfast, and in these cold mornings. Do not rise in the future till I send for you."

"But, grandmother, that is the only time for me, there isn't an hour after breakfast that I can have regularly to myself, and I cannot be happy if I do not have some time."

"Let it be as I said," said Mrs. Lindsay.

"Couldn't you let me come to you at eleven o'clock again, ma'am? Do grandmother!"

Mrs. Lindsay touched her lips, a way of silencing her that Ellen particularly disliked, and which both Mr. Lindsay and his mother were accustomed to use.

She thought a great deal on the subject, and came soberly to the conclusion that it was her duty to disobey. "I promised John," she said to herself, "I will never break that promise! I'll do anything rather. And besides, if I had not it is just as much my duty -- a duty that no one here has a right to command me against. I will do what I think right come what may."

She could not without its coming to the knowledge of her grandmother. A week, or rather two, after the former conversation, Mrs. Lindsay made inquiries of Mason, her woman, who was obliged to confess that Miss. Ellen's light was always burning when she went in to call her.

“Ellen,” said Mrs. Lindsay the same day, “have you obeyed me in what I told you the other morning about lying in bed till you are sent for?”

“No, ma’am.”

“You are frank, to venture to tell me so. Why have you disobeyed me?”

“Because, grandmother, I thought it was right.”

“You think it is right to disobey me, do you?”

“Yes, ma’am, if --.”

“If what?”

“I mean, grandmother, there is one I must obey even before you.”

“If what?” repeated Mrs. Lindsay.

“Please do not ask me, grandmother, I don’t want to say that.”

“Say it at once, Ellen.”

“I think it is right to disobey if I am told to do what is wrong.” said Ellen in a low voice.

“Are you to be the judge of right and wrong?”

“No, ma’am.”

“Who, then?”

“The Bible.”

“I do not know what is the reason,” said Mrs. Lindsay, “that I cannot be very angry with you. Ellen, I repeat the order I gave you the other day. Promise me to obey.”

“I cannot, grandmother, I must have that hour, I cannot do without it.”

“So must I be obeyed, I assure you, Ellen. You will sleep in my room henceforth.”

Ellen heard her in despair, she did not know what to do. Appealing was not to be thought of. There was, as she said, no time she could count upon after breakfast. During the whole day and evening she was either busy with her studies or masters, or in the company of her grandmother or Mr. Lindsay, and if not there, liable to be called to them at any moment. Her grandmother’s expediency for increasing her cheerfulness had marvelous ill-success. Ellen drooped under the sense of wrong, as well as the loss of her greatest comfort. For two days she felt and looked forlorn, and smiling now seemed to be a difficult matter. Mr. Lindsay happened to be remarkably busy those two days, so that he did not notice what was going on. At the end of them, however, in the evening, he called Ellen to him, and whisperingly asked what was the matter.

“Nothing, sir,” said Ellen, “only grandmother will not let me do something I cannot be happy without doing.”

“Is it one of the things you want to do because it is right, whether convenient or not?” he asked smiling Ellen could not smile.

“Oh, father,” she whispered, putting her face close to his, “If you would only get grandmother to let me do it!”

The words were spoken with a sob, and Mr. Lindsay felt her warm tears upon his neck. He had, however, far too much respect for his mother to say anything against her proceedings while Ellen was present, he simply answered that she must do whatever her grandmother said. But when Ellen had left the room, which she did immediately, he took the matter up Mrs. Lindsay explained and insisted that Ellen was spoiling herself for life and the world by a set of dull religious notions that were utterly unfit for a child, that she would very soon get over thinking about her habit of morning prayer, and would then do much better. Mr. Lindsay looked grave, but with Ellen’s tears yet wet upon his cheek, he would not dismiss the matter so lightly, and persisted in desiring that his mother should give up the point, which she utterly refused to do.

Ellen meanwhile had fled to her own room. The moonlight was quietly streaming in through the casement, it looked to her like an old friend. She threw herself down on the floor, close by the glass, and after some tears which she could not help shedding, she raised her head and looked thoughtfully out. It was very seldom now that she had a chance of the kind, she was rarely alone but when she was busy.

“I wonder if that same moon is this minute shining in at the glass door at home? -- No, to be sure it can’t this minute -- what am I thinking of? -- But it was there or will be there, let me see, east, west, it was there some time this morning, I suppose, looking right into our old sitting-room. Oh, moon, I wish I was in your place for once, to look in there too! But it is all empty now, there’s nobody there, Mr. Humphreys would be in his study, how lonely, how lonely he must be! Oh, I wish I was back there with him! -- John isn’t there though -- no matter -- he will be, and I could do so much for Mr. Humphreys in the meanwhile. He must miss me. I wonder where John is -- nobody writes to me, I should think someone might. I wonder if I am ever to see them again. Oh, he will come to see me surely before he goes home! But then he will have to go away without me again -- I am fast now -- fast enough -- but oh! Am I to be separated from them forever? Well, I shall see them in Heaven!”

It was a "Well" of bitter acquiescence, and washed down with bitter tears.

"Is it my bonny Miss Ellen?" said the voice of the housekeeper, coming softly in, "Is my bairn sitting a' her lane in the dark? Why are we no wi' the rest o' the folk, Miss Ellen?"

"I like to be alone, Mrs. Allen, and the moon shines in here nicely."

"Greeting!" exclaimed the old lady, drawing nearer, "I kenit by the sound o' your voice, greeting eenow! Are ye no wee!, Miss Ellen? What vexes my bairn? Oh, but your father would be vexed an' he kenned it!"

"Never mind, Mrs. Allen," said Ellen, "I shall get over it directly, don't say anything about it."

"But I'm wae to see ye," said the kind old woman, stooping down and stroking the head that again Ellen had bowed on her knees. "Will ye no tell me what vexes ye? Ye shuld be as blithe as a bird the lang day."

"I can't, Mrs. Allen, when I am away from my friends."

"Frinds! And she has mair frinds than yourself, Miss Ellen, or better frinds? - father and mither and a', where wad ye find thee that will love ye mair?"

"Ah, but I haven't my brother!" sobbed Ellen.

"Your brother, Miss Ellen? An' wha's he?"

"He's everything, Mrs. Allen! he's everything! I shall never be happy without him! -- Never! Never!"

"Hush, dear Miss Ellen! for the love of a' that's gude, dinna talk that gate! And dinna greet sae! Your father wad be sair vexed to hear ye or to see ye."

"I cannot help it," said Ellen, "it is true."

"It may be sae, but dear Miss Ellen, dinna let it come to your father's ken, ye're his very heart's idol, he disna merit aught but gude frae ye."

"I know it, Mrs. Allen," said Ellen, weeping, "and so I do love him -- better than anybody in the world, except two. But oh, I want my brother -- I don't know how to be happy or good either without him. I want him all the while."

"Miss Ellen, I kenned and loved your dear mither weel for mony a day, will ye mind if I speak a word to her bairn?"

"No, dear Mrs. Allen, I'll thank you. Did you know my mother?"

"Wha shuld if I didna? She was brought up in my arms, and a deer lassie. Ye're no muckle like her, Miss Ellen, ye're mair bonny than her, and no a'thegither sae frack, though she was douce and kind too."

"I wish--." Ellen began, and then stopped.

"My dear bairn, there is Ane above who disposes a' things for us, and He isna well pleased when His children fash themselves wi' His dispensations. He has ta'en and place you here, for your ain gude I trust, -- sure it's for the gude of us a', -- and if ye haena a' things ye wad wish, Miss Ellen, ye hae Him, dinna forget that, my ain bairn."

Ellen returned heartily and silently the embrace of the old Scotch woman, and when she left her, set herself to follow her advice. She tried to gather her scattered thoughts and smooth her ruffled feelings, in using this quiet time to the best advantage. At the end of half-an-hour she felt like another creature, and began to refresh herself with softly singing some of her old hymns.

The argument which was carried on in the parlour sank at length in silence without coming to any conclusion.

"Where is Miss Ellen?" Mrs. Lindsay asked of a servant that came in.

"She is up in her room, ma'am, singing."

"Tell her I want her."

"No, stop," said Mr. Lindsay, "I'll go myself."

Her door was a little ajar, and he softly opened it without disturbing her. Ellen was still sitting on the floor before the window, looking out through it, and in a rather low tone singing the last verse of the hymn "Rock of Ages", "While I draw this fleeting breath, -- When my eyelids close in death, -- When I rise to worlds unknown, And behold Thee on Thy throne, -- Rock of Ages, cleft for me, Let me hide myself in Thee."

Mr. Lindsay stood still at the door Ellen paused a minute, and then sang "Jerusalem, my happy home." Her utterance was so distinct that he heard every word. He did not move till she had finished, and then he came softly in.

"Singing songs to the moon, Ellen?"

Ellen started and got up from the floor.

"No, sir, I was singing them to myself."

"Not entirely, for I heard the last one. Why do you make yourself sober singing such sad things?"

"I don't, sir, they are not sad to me, they are delightful. I love them dearly."

"How came you to love them? It is not natural for a child of your age, what do you love them for, my little daughter?"

"Oh, sir, there are a great many reasons, I don't know how many."

"I will have patience, Ellen, I want to hear them all."

"I love them because I love to think of the things the hymns are about, I love the tunes, dearly, and I like both the words and the tunes better, I believe, because I have sung them so often with friends."

"Humph! I guessed as much, Isn't that the strongest reason of the three?"

"I don't know, sir, I don't think it is."

"Is all your heart in America, Ellen, or have you any left to bestow on us?"

"Yes, sir."

"Not very much?"

"I love you, father." said Ellen, laying her cheek gently alongside of his.

"And your grandmother, Ellen?" said Mr. Lindsay, clasping his arms about her.

"Yes, sir."

But he well understood that the "yes" was fainter.

"And your aunt -- speak, Ellen."

"I don't love her as much as I wish I did," said Ellen, "I love her a little, I suppose. Oh, why do you ask me such a hard question, father?"

"That is something you have nothing to do with," said Mr. Lindsay, half laughing. "sit down here," he added, placing her on his knee, "and sing to me again."

Ellen was heartened by the tone of his voice, and pleased with the request, She immediately sang with great spirit a little Methodist hymn she had learned when a mere child. The wild air and simple words singularly suit each other.

"O Canaan--bright Canaan -- I am bound for the land of Canaan. O-Canaan! It is my happy, happy home -- I am bound for the land of Canaan."

"Does that sound sad, sir?"

"Why, yes, I think it does, rather, Ellen. Does it make you feel merry?"

"Not merry, sir, it isn't merry, but I like it very much."

"The tune or the words?"

"Both, sir."

"What do you mean by the land of Canaan?"

"Heaven, sir."

"And do you like to think about that? At your age?"

"Why, certainly, sir! Why not?"

“Why do you?”

“Because it is a bright and happy place,” said Ellen gravely, “where there is no darkness, nor sorrow, nor death, neither pain nor crying, and my mother is there, and my dear Alice, and my Saviour is there, and I hope I shall be there, too.”

“You are shedding tears now, Ellen.”

“And if I am, sir, it is not because I am unhappy. It doesn’t make me unhappy to think of these things -- it makes me glad, and the-more I think of them the happier I am.”

“You are a strange child. I am afraid your grandmother is right, and that you are hurting yourself with poring over serious matters that you are too young for.”

“She would not think so if she knew,” said Ellen, sighing. “I should not be happy at all without that, and you would not love me half so well, nor she either. Oh, father,” she exclaimed pressing his hand in both her own and laying her face upon it, “do not let me be hindered in that! Forbid me anything you please, but not that! The better I learn to please my best friend, the better I shall please you.”

“Whom do you mean by ‘your best friend’?”

“The Lord my Redeemer.”

“Where did you get these notions?” said Mr. Lindsay after a short pause.

“From my mother, first, sir.”

“She had none of them when I knew her.”

“She had afterwards, then, sir, and oh!” Ellen hesitated, “I wish everybody had them too!”

“My little daughter,” said Mr. Lindsay, affectionately kissing the cheeks and eyes which were moist again, “I shall indulge you in this matter but you must keep your brow clear or I shall revoke my grant. And you belong to me now, and there are some things I want you to forget, and not remember, you understand? Now don’t sing songs to the moon any more tonight -- good-night, my daughter.”

“They think religion is a strange melancholy thing,” said Ellen to herself as she went to bed, “I must not give them reason to think so -- I must let my rushlight burn bright! -- I must take care -- I never had more need!”

And with an earnest prayer for help to do so, she laid her head on the pillow.

Mr. Lindsay told his mother he had made up his mind to let Ellen have her way for a while, and begged that she might return to her old

room and hours again. Mrs. Lindsey would not hear of it. Ellen had disobeyed her orders, she said she must take the consequences.

"She is s bold little hussy to venture it," said Mr. Lindsay, "but I do not think there is any naughtiness in her heart."

"No, not a bit. I could not be angry with her. It is only these preposterous notions she has got from somebody or other."

Mr. Lindsay said no more. Next morning he asked Ellen privately what she did the first thing after breakfast. "Practice on the piano for an hour." she said.

"Couldn't you do it at any other time?"

"Yes, sir, I could practice in the afternoon, only grandmother likes to have me with her."

"Let it be done then, Ellen, in the future."

"And whet shell I do with the hour after breakfast, sir?"

"Whatever you please." said he, smiling.

Ellen thanked him in the way she knew he best liked, and gratefully resolved he should have as little cause as possible to complain of her. Very little cause indeed did he or anyone else have. No fault could be found with her performance of duty, and her cheerfulness was constant and unvarying. She remembered her brother's recipe against loneliness, and made use of it, she remembered Mrs. Allen's advice, and followed it, she grasped the promises, "He that cometh to Me shall never hunger," and "Seek and ye shall find," precious words that never yet disappointed any one, and though tears might often fall that nobody knew of, and she might not be so merry as her friends would have liked to see her, though her cheerfulness was touched with sobriety, they could not complain, for her brow was always unruffled, her voice clear, her smile ready.

After a while she was restored to her own sleeping-room again and permitted to take up her former habits.

MR. CARLETON'S CONVERSION

Excerpt from "Queechy" 1852

By Susan Warner

Mr. Carleton now became more reserved and unsociable than ever. He wearied himself with thinking. If he could have got at the books, he would have spent his days and nights in studying the

evidences of Christianity, but the ship was bare of any such books, and he never thought of turning to the most obvious of all, the Bible itself. His unbelief was shaken, it was within an ace of falling in pieces to the very foundation, or rather he began to suspect how foundationless it had been. It came at last to one point with him, -- if there were a God, he would not have left the world without a revelation, -- no more would he have suffered that revelation to defeat its own end by becoming corrupted or alloyed, if there was such a revelation it could be no other than the Bible, -- and his acceptance of the whole scheme of Christianity now hung upon the turn of a hair. Yet he could not resolve himself. He balanced the counter-doubts and arguments, on one side and on the other, and strained his mind to the task, -- he could not weigh them nicely enough. He was in a maze, and seeking to clear and calm his judgment that he might see the way out, it was in vain that he tried to shake his dizzied head from the effect of the turns it had made. By dint of anxiety to find the right path reason had lost herself in the wilderness.

Fleda was not, as Mr. Carleton had feared she would be, at all alienated from him by the discovery that had given her much pain. It wrought in another way, rather to add a touch of tender and anxious interest to the affection she had for him. It gave her however much more pain than he thought. If he had seen the secret tears that fell on his account he would have been grieved, and if he had known of the many petitions that little heart made for him he would hardly have loved her more than he did.

One evening Mr. Carleton had been a long while pacing up and down the deck in front of little Fleda's nest, thinking and thinking, without coming to any end. It was a most fair evening, near sunset, the sky without a cloud except two or three little dainty strips which set off its blue. The ocean was very quiet, only broken into cheerful suites of waves that seemed to have nothing to do but sparkle. The sun's rays were almost level now, and a long path of glory across the sea led off toward his sinking disk. Fleda sat watching and enjoying it all in her happy fashion, which always made the most of everything good, and was especially quick in catching any form of natural beauty.

Mr. Carleton's thoughts were elsewhere, too busy to take note of things around him. Fleda looked now and then as he passed at his gloomy brow, wondering what he was thinking of, and wishing that he could have the same reason to be happy that she had. In one of his turns his eye met her gentle glance, and vexed and bewildered as he

was with study there was something in that calm bright face that impelled him irresistibly to ask the little child to set the proud scholar right. Placing himself beside her, he said,

“Elfie, how do you know there is a God? -- What reason have you for thinking so, out of the Bible?”

It was a strange look little Fleda gave him. He felt it at the time, and he never forgot it. Such a look of reproach, sorrow, and pity, he afterwards thought, as an angel's face might have worn. The question did not seem to occupy her a moment. After this answering look she suddenly pointed to the sinking sun and said,

“Who made that, Mr. Carleton?”

Mr. Carleton's eyes, following the direction of hers, met the lone bright rays whose still witness-bearing was almost too powerful to be borne. The sun was just dipping majestically into the sea, and its calm self-assertion seemed to him at that instant hardly stronger than its vindication of its Author.

A slight arrow may find the joint in the armour before which many weightier shafts have fallen powerless. Mr. Carleton was an unbeliever no more from that time.

THE QUILTING PARTY

Excerpt from “Queechy” 1852

By Susan Warner

Miss Anastasia was a little surprised and a good deal gratified, Fleda saw, by her coming, and played the hostess with great benignity. The quilting-frame was stretched in an upper room, not in the long kitchen, to Fleda's joy, most of the company were already seated at it, and she had to go through a long string of introduction before she was permitted to take her place. First of all Earl Douglass's wife, who rose up and taking both Fleda's hands squeezed and shook them heartily, giving her with eye and lip a most genial welcome. This lady had every look of being a very clever woman, a “manager” she was said to be, and indeed her very nose had a little pinch which prepared one for nothing superfluous about her. Even her dress could not have wanted another breath from the skirt and had no fullness to spare about the body. Neat as a pin though, and a well-to-do look through it all. Miss Quackenboss Fleda recognized as an old friend, gilt

beads and all. Catherine Douglass had grown up to a pretty girl during the five years since Fleda left Queechy, and gave her a greeting half smiling, half shy. There was a little more affluence about the flow of her drapery, and the pink ribbon round her neck was confined by a little dainty Jew's harp of a brooch, she had her mother's pinch of the nose, too. Then there were two other young ladies, -- Miss Letitia Ann Thornton, a tall grown girl in pantalettes, evidently a would-be aristocrat from the air of her head and lip, with a well-looking face and looking well knowing of the same, and sporting neat little white cuffs at her wrists, the only one who bore such a distinction. The third of these damsels, June Healy, impressed Fleda with having been brought up upon coarse meat and having grown heavy in consequence, the other two were extremely fair and delicate, both in complexion and feature. Her aunt Syra Fleda recognized without particular pleasure and managed to seat herself at the quilt with the sewing-women and Miss Hannah-between them. Miss Lucy Finn she found seated at her right hand, but after all the civilities she had just gone through Fleda had not the courage just then to dash into business with her, and Miss Lucy herself stitched away and was dumb.

So were the rest of the party rather. The presence of the newcomer seemed to have the effect of a spell. Fleda could not think they had been as silent before her joining them as they were for some time afterwards. The young ladies were absolutely mute, and conversation seemed to flag even among the elder ones, and if Fleda raised her eyes from the quilt to look at somebody she was sure to see somebody's eyes looking at her, with a curiosity well enough defined and mixed with a more or less amount of benevolence and pleasure. Fleda was growing very industrious and feeling her cheeks grow warm, when the checked stream of conversation began to take revenge by turning its tide upon her.

"Are you glad to be back to Queechy, Fleda?" Said Mrs. Douglass from the opposite far end of the table.

"Yes, ma'am," said Fleda, smiling back her answer, -- "on some accounts."

"Ain't she growed like her father, Mis' Douglass?" said the sewing-women. "Do you recollect Walter Ringgan -- what a handsome feller he was?"

The two opposite girls immediately found something to say to each other.

"She ain't a bit more like him than she is like her mother," said Mrs. Douglass, biting off the end of her thread energetically. "Amy Ringan was a sweet good woman as ever was in this town."

Again her daughter's glance and smile went over to the speaker.

"You stay in Queechy and live like Queechy folks do," Mrs. Douglass added, nodding encouragingly, "and you'll beat both on 'em."

But this speech jarred, and Fleda wished it had not been spoken.

"How does your uncle like farming?" said Aunt Syra.

A home-thrust, which Fleda parried by saying he had hardly got accustomed to it yet.

"What's been his business? What has he been doing all his life till now?" said the sewing-women.

Fleda replied that he had had no business, and after the minds of the company had had time to entertain this statement she was startled by Miss Lucy's voice at her elbow.

"It seems kind o' curious, don't it, that a man should live to be forty or fifty years old and not know anything of the earth he gets his bread from?"

"What makes you think he don't?" said Miss Thornton rather tartly.

"She wa'n't speaking o' nobody," said Aunt Syra.

"I was -- I was speaking of man -- I was speaking abstractly," said Fleda's right hand neighbor.

"What's abstractly?" said Miss Anastasia scornfully.

"Where do you get hold of such hard words, Lucy?" said Mrs. Douglass.

"I don't know, Mis' Douglass, -- they come to me, -- it's practice, I suppose. I had no intention of being obscure."

"One kind o' word's as easy as-another I suppose, when you're used to it, ain't it?" said the sewing-woman.

"That's abstractly?" said the mistress of the house again.

"Look in the dictionary, if you want to know," said her sister.

"I don't want to know -- I only want you to tell."

"When do you get time for it, Lucy? Ha'n't you nothing else to practice?" pursued Mrs. Douglass.

"Yes, Mis' Douglass, but then there are times for exertion, and other times less disposable, and when I feel thoughtful, or low, I commonly retire to my room and contemplate the stars or write a composition."

The sewing-women greeted this speech with an unqualified ha! ha! and Fleda involuntarily raised her head to look at the last speaker, but there was nothing to be noticed about her, except that she was in rather more order than the rest of the Finn family.

“Did you get home safe-last night?” inquired Miss Quackenboss, bending forward over the quilt to look down to Fleda.

Fleda thanked her, and replied that they had been overturned and had several ribs broken.

“And where have you been, Fleda, all this while?” said Mrs. Douglass.

Fleda told, upon which all the quilting party raised their heads simultaneously to take another review of her.

“Your uncle’s wife ain’t a Frenchwoman, be she?” asked the sewing-woman.

Fleda said “Oh no”-- and Miss Quackenboss remarked that “she thought she wa’n’t,” whereby Fleda perceived that it had been a subject of discussion.

“She lives like one, don’t she?” asked Aunt Syra.

Which imputation Fleda also refuted to the best of her power.

“Well, don’t she have dinner in the middle of the afternoon?” pursued Aunt Syra.

Fleda was obliged to admit that.

“And she can’t eat without she has a fresh piece of roast meat on the table every day, can she?”

“It is not always roast.” said Fleda, half vexed and half laughing.

“I’d rather have a good dish o’ bread and ‘lasses than the hull on’t.” observed old Mrs. Finn, from the corner where she sat manifestly turning up her nose at the far-off joints on Mrs. Rossitur’s dinner-table.

The girls on the other side of the quilt again held counsel together, deep and low.

“Well didn’t she pick up all them notions in that place yonder? -- Where you say she has been?” Aunt Syra went on.

“No,” said Fleda “everybody does so in New York.”

“I want to know what kind of a place New York is, now,” said old Mrs. Finn drawlingly. “I s’pose it’s pretty big, ain’t it?”

Fleda replied that it was.

“I shouldn’t wonder if it was a’most as far as from here to Queechy Run, now, ain’t it?”

The distance mentioned being somewhere about one-eighth of New York’s longest diameter, Fleda answered that it was quite as far.

"I s'pose there's plenty o' mighty rich folks there, ain't there?"

"Plenty, I believe." said Fleda.

"I should hate to live in awfully!" was the old woman's conclusion.

"I should admire to travel in many countries," said Miss Lucy, for the first time seeming to intend her words particularly for Fleda's ear. "I think nothing makes people more genteel. I have observed it frequently."

Fleda said it was very pleasant, but though encouraged by this opening could not muster enough courage to ask if Miss Lucy had a "notion" to come and prove their gentility. Her next question was startling, -- if Fleda had ever studied mathematics.

"No," said Fleda "have you?"

"O my, yes! There was a lot of us concluded we would learn it, and we commenced to study it a long time ago. I think it's a most elevating --."

The discussion was suddenly broken off, for the sewing-woman exclaimed as the other sister came in and took her seat,

"Why Hannah! You ha'n't been makin' bread with that crock on your hands!"

"Well Mis. Barnes!" said the girl, -- "I've washed 'em, and I've made 'bread with 'em, and even that didn't toke it off."

"Do you look at the stars, too, Hannah?" said Mrs. Douglass.

Amidst a small hubbub of laugh and talk which now became general, poor Fleda fell back upon one single thought -- one wish, that Hugh would come to fetch her home before tea-time. But it was a vain hope. Hugh was not to be there till sundown, and supper was announced long before that. They all filed down, and Fleda with them, to the great kitchen below stair and she found herself placed in the seat of honour indeed, but an honour she would gladly have escaped, at Miss Anastasia's right hand, a temporary locked-jaw would have been felt a blessing. Fleda dared hardly even look about her, but under the eye of her hostess the instinct of good breeding was found sufficient to swallow everything, literally and figuratively. There was a good deal to swallow. The usual variety of cakes, sweetmeats, beef, cheese, biscuits, and pies, was set out with some peculiarity of arrangement which Fleda had never seen before, and which left that of Miss Quackenboss elegant by comparison. Down each side of the table ran an advanced guard of little sauces, in Indian file, but in companies of three, the file leader of each being a saucer of custard the follower a ditto of preserves, and the third keeping o sharp lookout in the shape of pickles, and to Fleda's unspeakable

horror she discovered that the guests were expected to help themselves at will from these several stores with their own spoons, transferring what they took either to their own plates or at once to its final destination, which last mode several of the company preferred, The advantage of this plan was the necessary display of the new silver teaspoons which Mrs. Douglass slyly hinted to Aunt Syra were the moving cause of the tee-party. But Aunt Syra swallowed sweetmeats and would not give heed.

There was no relief for poor Fleda. Aunt Syra was her next neighbor and opposite to her, at Miss Anastasia's left hand, was the disagreeable countenance and peering eyes of the old crone her mother, Fleda kept her own eyes fixed upon her plate and endeavoured to see nothing but that.

"Why here's Fleda ain't eating anything," said Mrs. Douglass. "wont you have some preserves? Take some custard, do! -- Anastasy, she ha'n't a spoon -- no wonder!"

Fleda had secretly conveyed hers under cover.

"There was one" said Miss Anastasia looking about where one should have been, -- "I'll get another as soon as I give Mis. Springer her tea."

"Ha'n't you got enough to go around?" said the old woman plucking at her daughter's sleeve, "Anastasy! -- ha'n't you got enough to go round?"

This speech which was spoken with a most spiteful simplicity Miss Anastasia answered with super-silence, and presently produced spoons enough to satisfy herself and the company. But Fleda! No earthly persuasion could prevail upon her to touch pickles, sweetmeats, or custard that evening, and even on the bread and cakes she had a vision of hands before her that took away her appetite. She endeavoured to make a show with hung beef and cups of tea, which indeed was not Pouchong, but her supper came suddenly to an end upon a remark of her hostess, addressed to the whole table, that they needn't be surprised if they found any bits of pudding in the gingerbread, for it was made from the molasses the children had left the other day. Who "the children" were Fleda did not know, neither was it material.

It was sundown, but Hugh had not come when they went to the upper rooms again. Two were open now, for they were small, and the company promised not to be such. Fathers and brothers and husbands began to come, and loud talking and laughing and joking took place of the quilting chit-chat. Fleda would fain have absorbed

herself in the work again, but though the frame still stood there the minds of the company were plainly turned aside from their duty, or perhaps they thought that Miss Anastasia had had admiration enough to dispense with service. Nobody shewed a thimble but one or two old ladies, and as numbers and spirits gathered strength, a kind of romping game was set on foot in which a vast deal of kissing seemed to be the grand wit of the matter. Fleda shrank away out of sight behind the open door of communication between the two rooms, pleading with great truth that she was tired and would like to keep perfectly quiet, and she had soon the satisfaction of being apparently forgotten.

In the other room some of the older people were enjoying themselves more soberly. Fleda's ear was too near the crack of the door not to have the benefit of more of their conversation than she cared for. It put quiet of mind out of the question.

"He'll twist himself up pretty short, that's my sense of it, and he won't take long to do it, nother." said Earl Douglass' voice.

Fleda would have known it anywhere from its extreme peculiarity. It never either rose or fell much from a certain pitch, and at that level the words gurgled forth, seemingly from an ever-brimming fountain, he never wanted one, and the stream had neither let nor stay till his modicum of sense had fairly run out. People thought he had not a greater stock of that than some of his neighbours, but he issued an amount of word-currency sufficient for the use of the county.

"He'll run himself agin a post pretty quick." said Uncle Joshua in a confirmatory tone of voice.

Fleda had a confused idea that somebody was going to hang himself.

"He ain't workin' things right," said Douglass, -- "he ain't a workin' things right, he's takin' hold o' everything by the tail end. He ain't studied the business, he doesn't know when things is right, and he doesn't know when things is wrong, -- and if they're wrong he don't know how to set 'em right. He's got a feller there that ain't no more fit to be there than I am to be Vice President of the United States, and I ain't a-going to say what I think I am fit for, but I ha'n't studied for that place and I shouldn't like to stand an examination for 't, and a man hadn't ought to be a farmer no more if he ha'n't qualified himself, That's my idea. I like to see a thing done well if it's to be done at all, and there ain't a stitch o' land been laid right on the hull farm, nor a furrow driv' as it had ought to be, since he came on to it, and I say, Squire Springer, a man ain't going to get along in that way, and

he hadn'to. I work hard myself, and I calculate to work hard, and I make a livin' by 't, and I'm content to work hard. When I see a man with his hands in his pockets, I think he'll have nothin' else in 'em soon. I don't believe he's done a hand's turn himself on the land the hull season!"

And upon this Mr. Douglass brought up.

"My son Lucas has been workin' with him, off and on, pretty much the hull time since he came, and he says he ha'n't begun to know how to spell farmer yet."

"Ay,ay! My wife -- she's a little harder on folks than I be -- I think it ain't worth while to say nothin' of a man without I can say some good of him--that's my idee--and it don't do no harm, nother, -- but my wife, she says he's got to let down his notions a peg or two afore they'll hitch just in the right place, and I won't say but what I think she ain't maybe fur from the right. If a man's above his business he stands a pretty fair chance to be below it someday. I won't say myself, for I haven't any acquaintance with him, and a man oughtn't to speak out of what he is knowing to, -- but I have heard say, that he wasn't as conversationable as it would ha' been handsome in him to be, all things considerin'. There seems to be a good many things said of him, somehow, and I always think men don't talk of a man if he don't give 'em some occasion, but anyhow I've been past the farm pretty often myself this summer, workin' with Seth Plumfield, and I've took notice of things myself, and I know he's been makin' beds o' sparrowgrass when he had owght to ha' been makin' fences, and he's been helpin' that little girl of his'n set her flowers, when he would ha' been better sot to work lookin' after his Irishman, but I don't know as it made much matter nother, for if he went wrong Mp, Rossitur wouldn't know how to set him right, and if he was a going right Mr. Rossitur would ha' been just as likely to ha' set him wrongs Well I'm sorry for him."

"Mr. Rossitar is a most gentlemanlike man." said the voice of Dr. Quackenboss.

"Ay -- I dare say he is," Earl responded in precisely the same tone. "I was down to his house one day last summer to see him -- He w'n't to hum, though."

"It would be strange if harm come to a man with such a guardian angel in the house as that man has in his'n." Said Dr. Quackenboss.

"Well she's a pretty creetur!" said Douglass, looking up with some animation. "I wouldn't blame any man that sot a good deal by her. I

will say I think she's as handsome as my own darter, and a man can't go no farther than that I suppose."

"She won't help his farming much, I guess," said Uncle Joshua, -- "nor his wife, nother."

Fleda heard Dr. Quackenboss coming through the doorway and started from her corner for fear he might find her out there and know she had heard.

He very soon found her out in the new place she had chosen and came up to pay his compliments. Fleda was in the mood for anything but laughing, yet the mixture of the ludicrous which the doctor administered set her nerves a twitching. Bringing his chair down sideways at one angle and his person at another, so as to meet at the moment of the chair's touching the floor, and with a look and smile slanting to match, the doctor said,

"Well, Miss Ringgan, has -- a -- Mrs. Rossitur, -- does she feel herself reconciled yet?"

"Reconciled, sir?" said Fleda.

"Yes -- a -- to Queechy?"

"She never quarreled with it, sir." said Fleda, quite unable from laughing.

"Yes, -- I mean -- a -- she feels that she can sustain her spirits in a different situation?"

"She is very well, sir, thank you."

"It must have been a great change to her -- and to you all -- coming to this place."

"Yes, sir, the country is very different from the city."

"In what part of New York was Mr. Rossitur's former residence?"

"In State Street, sir."

"State Street, -- that is somewhere in the direction of the Park?"

"No, sir, not exactly."

"Was Mrs. Rossitur a native-of the city?"

"Not of New York. O Hugh, my dear Hugh," exclaimed Fleda in another tone, -- "what have you been thinking of?"

"Father wanted me," said Hugh. "I could not help it, Fleda."

"You are not going to have the cruelty to take you -- a -- cousin away, Mr. Rossitur?" said the doctor.

But Fleda was or once happy to be cruel, she would hear no remonstrance. Though her desire for Miss Lucy's "help" had considerably lessened she thought she could not in politeness avoid speaking on the subject after being invited there on purpose. But Miss Lucy said she "calculated to stay at home this winter." unless she sent

to live with somebody at Kenton for the purpose of attending a course of philosophy lectures that she heard were to be given there. So that matter was settled, and clasping Hugh's arm Fleda turned away from the house with a step and heart both lightened by being out of it.

MR. CARLETON PROPOSES

Excerpt from "Queechy" 1852

By Susan Warner

"My dear Elfie -- you need not fear being misunderstood --."

Fleda started and looked up to see what he meant. But his face said it so plainly, in its perfect intelligence and sympathy with her, that her barrier of self-command and reserve was all broken down, and hiding her head in her hands upon his breast she let the pent-up burden upon her heart come forth in a flood of unrestrained tears. She could not help herself. And when she would fain have checked them after the first burst and hidden them.

According to her habit to wait another time, it was out of her power, for the same kindness and tenderness that had set them a flowing, perhaps witting of her intent, effectively hindered its execution. He did not say a single word, but now and then a soft touch of his hand or of his lips upon her brow, in its expressive tenderness would unnerve all her resolution and oblige her to have no reserve at that time at least in letting her secret thoughts and feelings be known, as far as tears could tell them. She wept, at first in spite of herself and afterwards in the very luxury of indulged feeling, till she was quiet as a child, and the weight of oppression was all gone. Mr. Carleton did not move, nor speak, till she did.

"I never knew before how good you were, Mr. Carleton." said Fleda raising her head at length, as soon as she dared, but still held fast by that kind arm.

"What new light have you got on the subject?" said he, smiling.

"Why," said Fleda, trying as hard as ever did sunshine to scatter the remnant of a cloud, -- it was a bright cloud too by this time, "I have always heard that men cannot endure the sight of a woman's tears."

"You shall give me a reward then, Elfie."

“What reward?” said Fleda.

“Promise me that you will shed them nowhere else.”

“Nowhere else? --”

“But -- here -- in my arms.”

“I don’t feel like crying anymore now,” said Fleda evasively, -- “at least,” -- For drops were falling rather fast again, -- “not sorrowfully.”

“Promise me, Elfie.” said Mr. Carleton after a pause.

But Fleda hesitated still and looked dubious.

“Come! --”he said smiling, -- “You know you promised a little while ago that you would have a particular regard to my wishes.”

Fleda’s cheeks answered that appeal with sufficient brightness, but she looked down and said demurely,

“I am sure one of your wishes is that I should not say anything rashly.”

“Well? --”

“One cannot answer for such wilful things as tears.”

“And for such wilful things as men?” said he smiling.

But Fleda was silent.

“Then I will alter the form of my demand. Promise me that no shadow of anything shall come over your spirit that you do not let me either share or remove.”

There was no trifling in the tone, -- full of gentleness as it was, there could be no evading its requesting. But the promise demanded was a grave one. Fleda was half afraid to make it. She looked up, in the very way he had seen her do when a child, to find warrant for her words before she uttered them. But the full, clear, steadfast eye into which she looked for two seconds, authorized as well as required the promise, and hiding her face again on his breast Fleda gave it, amid a gush of tears every one of which was illumed with heart-sunshine.

MAGNOLIAS AND MELODRAMA

(Bio of Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth)

By Andre Norton



E. D. E. N. Southworth circa 1860

Emma Dorothy Eliza Nevitte Southworth did more than earn a very comfortable and genteel living with her pen -- she mothered a type of writing which, in the hands of -- shall we say -- her "spiritual" -- great-granddaughters, was to split into two forms, both still widely popular.

For the melodramas which flowed in steady waves of ink from under her racing fingers were the far off ancestors of both the "Gone With The Wind" historical novel, and the "If-I-Had-But-Known" school of mystery story, so ably produced in our own time by Mary Roberts Rinehart and Mignon Eberhart, to mention but two of the leading portrayers of the innocent-damsel-in-distress.

The pillared southern mansion, while not her personal property alone (Augusta Evans Wilson had also staked a claim upon that profitable backdrop), was one of her cherished stage settings. Her faithful and kindly Negro slaves, drooping lily maidens, rakish Villains or villain-heroes, appear before its chaste white columns over and over again to engage in carefully plotted murders, disasters of nature, end all forms of sudden death, wild accusation in a Welter of tangled motive and climax. Here may live that heiress changed in her cradle, the pure young man who is victim of a suppressed will, or the hidden bride rising to confront an errant spouse. And though this plantation may vary to include wild and rugged mountains or the saloons of

fashionable Washington, or even a Scottish castle, the action remains practically the same.

In her own life Emma, herself, played several of her favorite roles. She was in turn, a half-orphan, misunderstood and forlorn, a deserted wife, and lest of all, a wealthy and famous authoress queening over a salon of celebration in the nation's capital. In addition she also possessed the heritage she was so fond of bestowing upon her hapless heroines, she was the descendant of a notable "First Family", maybe not of Virginia, but of that sister state almost as renowned, Maryland.

She was the eldest daughter of the second family of Captain Charles le Compte Nevitte, an importing merchant of Alexandria, Virginia. Once wealthy, the Captain suffered severe losses during the War of 1812 when he had placed his fleet of ships at the service of the government, only to have them and his fortune swept away. In addition his army service of the same period left him with a wound from which he never recovered.

In 1816, when he was forty-five and a widower, he married Susanna George Wailes of a well known Maryland family. The bride was only fifteen, the daughter of a widow who accompanied the Nevittes to their new home in Washington. This was the Hillman house built by George Washington as a haven for his old age.

Here Emma was born in December, 1819 (according to tradition in the very room the Father of his country had selected as his own), and from the first She seemed to be shadowed by as unfortunate-a destiny as those she forced upon her major characters. When she was no more than a year old she developed an eye infection which left her blind until she was almost four. In addition she was not an attractive child in either features or manners, and both imaginative and sensitive beyond her years. The death of her father in 1823, made doubly melodramatic by her baptism in the Catholic faith beside his death bed, came as a great emotional shock.

She was small, thin, dark, and, in her own words, "shy, awkward, and unattractive. Year after year from my eighth to sixteenth year I grew more lonely retired more into myself, until notwithstanding a strong, ardent temperament I became cold, reserved and abstracted, even to absence of mind."

This retirement was undoubtedly caused, or at least greatly aggravated, by the character of her only full sister Charlotte, a beautiful child of whom both the household and any visitors made much. Emma was deeply jealous of her and her family contacts

become limited to her grandmother, Mrs. Dorothy Wailes, and the company of the slaves. From Uncle Biggs, one of these servants, she drew her early religious beliefs, and from the others she learned a wealth of old family lore, ghost stories, and legends of the countryside. One of her few and deeply enjoyed pleasures was to sit in the kitchen and listen to the talk -- not only at home in Washington, but also on the plantations of her mother's kin in St. Mary's, Maryland.

Captain Nevitte's death left his family in straitened circumstances. Mrs. Nevitte turned to one of the few possible occupations then open to a lady of birth in Washington -- the keeping of a boarding house. In that baldly new city the hotels were few and senators and members of the House were glad to find decent lodging in semi-private homes. But the Nevitte venture failed and the family was only kept afloat by Mrs. Wailes' moderate income.

However, in 1826, when Emma was six, her mother married Joshua Laurens Henshaw of Boston. He had come to Washington as secretary to Daniel Webster. But after his marriage he opened a school, and to him Emma was indebted for her education. She not only acquired a taste for the classics, but in addition she read everything she could lay her hands upon. This semi-self education by wide reading was enriched during her visits to St. Mary's by an unconscious form of research which was to prove priceless to her in the future. An excellent rider and a fearless explorer, she roamed the countryside, mounted or afoot, listening to the turns of speech, treasuring the stories of family disaster, secrets, skeletons which she heard.

And, when she was in her teens, her own family was involved in a mystery which could have been lifted from one of her novels-to-come. Her half brother Leonidas Nevitte of Georgetown, left Washington on the Philadelphia stage. He never reached the port, nor was he ever heard from again, in spite of family and police efforts to trace him.

By the time she was sixteen her education was considered complete. She graduated from her stepfather's school and took up her own teaching career. And in 1840 she married Frederick S. Southworth of Utica, described, perhaps charitably as an-inventor. The couple moved west to Wisconsin.

Whatever Mr. Southworth invented, he was not successful. In fact, Emma's husband and his activities are mysteries over which she herself threw much veiling cover. Her account of the following few years is extremely hazy. For Emma was a lady of her day, and

domestic difficulties were never then publicly aired. But it is apparent that, from the first, Mrs. Southworth was required to contribute to the family support, for there are records of her teaching in Plattville, Wisconsin.

In 1844 she returned to Washington with two children, Raymond and Charlotte Emma. The evidence, scanty as it is, points to the conclusion that Mr. Southworth was an impractical gentleman who lived on his wife's earning and finally departed to greener pastures -- perhaps California. The bitter scenes in "The Bridal Eve" and "Ishmael" which treat in detail the fate of wives cursed by such husbands may be, and probably were, written from her own knowledge of the straits to which a woman in this position could be reduced.

References made by her in 1855 to "supporting a family of five" suggest that, after her success as a writer was secure, Mr. Southworth returned, to become a drain on her finances. But it is not certain that they ever lived together again and he died in Europe at the beginning or the Civil War.

Returning to Washington as she says "a widow in fate, but not in fact", she gave such an impression of respectability (something of a feat in the days when separation and divorce were the deepest of social sins) that Reverend William Matthews and other leaders in the community used influence to have her appointed assistant teacher in the Fourth District school. For the salary of two hundred and fifty dollars a year she taught for three years and then was assigned as assistant in the girls' grammar department. And in 1848 she became the principal of the new Primary Department, turning over two rooms on the first floor of her home for the use of the school. Here she taught eighty pupils at one time, putting into practice methods of her own for which she is still remembered in the history of Washington education. But her pay continued to be pitifully small, and it was increasingly difficult, as her own children grew older, to make ends meet. There was one auxiliary to school teaching which could be followed in moments of unoccupied time -- a woman might write. And there was now just opening a period which welcomed the creations of scribbling women.

On Christmas Eve, 1845, Ema set down on paper her first serious attempt at fiction -- an old Christmas legend of St. Mary's "The Irish Refugee". She sent this to Dr. Snodgrass of the Baltimore Saturday Visitor and it was accepted.

To a woman of immense powers of imagination and a natural gift for plotting, both of which were her best tools, this taste of success must have been an almost unneeded spur. Here was work which satisfied her inner longings, which she could enjoy doing, and for which she would actually be paid the good cold cash so badly needed in the family! All one had to have was a pen, paper, and some scraps of time in which to allow the flood of material in her mind to spill out for print.

A second story, "The Wife's Victory" was taken by Dr. Gamaliel Bailey of the National Era. Dr. Bailey became not only her editor, but a valued friend. At his home she was introduced to the shining knight of the Abolition forces, John Greenleaf Whittier, and made such an impression upon the Quaker poet that he suggested to Bailey her engagement for a weekly contribution.

But Emma was not, subconsciously, satisfied with the limited scope of the short story form. She began a novelette for the Era, "Sybil Brotherton", only to discover that she could not artistically conclude it within the agreed upon space. It was bringing her ten dollars a column and she began to fear that the editor might believe that she was guilty of padding for this reason alone. However, Dr. Bailey called upon her after school only to assure her that she was doing right to continue it to what she believed the proper length.

Having tasted the freedom of plot-action allowed in the novel, she now ambitiously embarked on one she intended from the beginning to be a complete book, and not just an over-grown novelette. And her instinctive belief in her powers to write an interesting long narrative proved right. "Retribution" was first printed as a serial in the Era in 1849. It had been written after school hours in snatched moments of time, but it was so popular with the reading public that Harpers issued it between boards.

Her popularity held not only with the general public. John Greenleaf Whittier, corresponding editor of the Era, continued to take an interest in her career. How much sales value his review of "Retribution" might have had is, as always, problematical. He grouped the novel with current offerings of Bulwer, James and Andersen, and his conclusion was: "It may well be doubted whether, in terseness of diction, searching analyses of character, intensity of passion, and power of description, anyone of them can be regarded as superior to this production of our country woman."

But the reading and book buying public did not need such a hearty spur from any reviewer. They had already discovered Mrs. Southworth and found her products good.

On the other hand a single adverse review appeared in the Saturday Evening Post, finding fault with her free use of foreign words, commenting harshly on, her distinction between divine and moral retribution.

If ever a writer worked against odds Emma Southworth did when she penned her first book: She was teaching more than eighty pupils each school day, as well as keeping house under all the inconveniences suffered by housewives of her unstreamlined era. In addition, her son was seriously ill and she had taken on the duties of a nurse. Most of the book was written in snatched intervals while sitting up at night with the invalid. And her second novel, "The Deserted Wife", came into being under the same strained conditions. But the surety of an eager market was all the encouragement she needed. For, from the publication of "Retribution", she never had a story refused. And there is a strong possibility that during these first years when she was becoming established she was furnishing serials and short stories for both the Era and the Saturday Evening Post.

The result of continued writing was an improvement in finances and a chance to leave the schoolroom for a pleasanter day at her desk. In 1850 she was able to rent "Prospect Cottage" in Georgetown, a home she later purchased. Here it was that she entertained Mrs. Stowe, then a struggling beginner in the same field, who had come to Washington in hopes of making a paying contact with the Era. Their acquaintance became strongly cemented and, while they were rivals on the best seller lists at a later date, they were always firm friends.

But the constant pressure of work was not conducive to health and Mrs. Southworth's began to fail. In 1850 she spent the summer at Shannondale Springs, Virginia, hoping to find the restful holiday she needed. The result was another novel "Shannondale", which promoters of the spa hailed with considerable joy, knowing that it would bring them a larger quota of visitors the following year. And they were in no way disappointed.

In spite of eye trouble and continued ill health she proceeded on her established course of pouring out serials for the Post from 1849 to 1857. Finally her overworked eyes began to fail and her condition was complicated by a complete breakdown in 1855.

She always believed that a firm bond of friendship existed between her readers and her, so from time to time sending them messages to

be printed in the weeklies which carried her fiction. Now she was to inform them of her sufferings and beg their indulgence for her enforced silence. In these five years of overwhelming labor she had written eleven volumes, among them her most powerful and popular novels. And considering that this production came long years before the use of the typewriter and without the aid of a secretary, it is a feat to astound any modern writer or editor.

In 1857 the seal of complete approval was put upon her-popularity -- she had arrived! For in this year she was engaged to write exclusively for the New York Ledger. No other accolade could mean more to the popular fiction writer of the period. Various figures have since been quoted on her assured income from this contract, the lowest being six thousand a year, the highest ten thousand. But even the minimum gave her an income far beyond the dreams of the two hundred and fifty dollar a year schoolmistress she had been a dozen years before.

Literary piracy flourished on both sides of the Atlantic. If the novels of Dickens, Trollope, and their lesser followers were blithely published without payment to the authors on this shore, American authors suffered after the same fashion from English thefts of their work. In 1859 Mrs. Southworth sailed for England to try to force some sort of a settlement for the thousands of her books which had been issued there. Financially the trip was a failure, but again she came home with a budget of material she was able to draw upon for years. In addition she had moved in British literary circles and Mrs. Stowe had equipped her with an introduction to Lady Byron which had made her a life-long friend and opened to her the world of the nobility about which she had written and was to write so much.

It was 1862 before Emma Southworth returned to a Washington which was now the capital of a nation at war. And she immediately threw herself with the same vigor which had marked her writing into work for the cause of the Union.

Over the gate of Prospect Cottage was nailed by her orders the Stars and Stripes, and those who would visit her, Unionist, Confederate sympathizer, or neutral Marylander, were sternly told, "Whoever comes to my door must pass under that!" She nursed sick and wounded at camp and hospital until she herself came down with the smallpox.

Her beloved home was turned into a reserve hospital, sometimes housing as many as twenty-seven soldiers. And one of her ever-to-be-prized possessions in after years was the heavy walnut bed used by

President Lincoln for three nights on his way to and from the battle fields. When the war was at last over she provided food and shelter for any Union soldier on his Way home. Her son, who was studying medicine, worked in the hospitals, and in May, 1864, her daughter married Union Captain James Valentine Lawrence.

The coming of peace brought a new form of social life which Emma Southworth thoroughly enjoyed. The literary society of the capital gathered at her home every Friday for "conversations". Whittier was, often her guest and she discussed with him the plot of her own favorite, "Ishmael", saying afterwards that to his criticism she felt the book owed much of its success. During the Christmas seasons she began to hold receptions for the literati, assisted by her half-sister Mrs. Baden, also a writer.

She moved north to Yonkers, in 1876 and lived there for fifteen years. But in 1890 she returned to Prospect Cottage. Although she was now seventy and had almost thirty years of steady literary effort behind her, she was as tied to her desk as ever. Now she used the typewriter, teaching herself the mastery of the keyboard. And it is to her inventive mind that modern writers owe the manuscript box envelope for mailing, though this discovery was later patented by others. For four days a week she worked methodically, sending the finished manuscript by Uncle Aleck, her old servant, to the post-office every Friday afternoon. Her last two books, "The Incarnate Fiend" and "An Angel Unawares" were never published.

She died on June 30, 1899, and she had not altogether outlived her public for inexpensive editions of her novels continued to be issued by reprint houses well into the next century. And for certain qualities she can bear re-examination even today.

It was a matter of pride with her that some of her most unbelievable scenes were founded upon actual events, and it is not uncommon to find in her books footnotes explaining such passages with the simple statement "a fact." Her characters, too, she insisted were often drawn from friends and acquaintances. And she once had an experience not unlike Tollope's when he was led to kill off the redoubtable Mrs. Proudie after hearing her discussed at his club. For, having used a friend as model for hero of a serial in the Ledger, Emma heard the gentleman criticize her character bitterly, not realizing that he, himself, was the origin of the creature. Emma laughingly vowed, "I'll have the gentleman shot in the next issue of the paper." She kept her promise, having to introduce in the new installment another hero

to preserve the continuity of the tale. Which in itself is a remarkable example of her plotting ability.

The backgrounds for most of her stories are patterned on those of Mrs. Radcliffe's Gothic school--a medley of dark, wild landscapes steep mountain roads, old, old houses, and although they are in the main supposed to be located in the Blue Ridge section of Virginia, these possess little kinship to the natural American scene. Her lavishly described plantation homes are also too good to be true. While under the power of her pen pre-war Washington was raised from a provincial city just beginning to climb out of the raw mud of its building to a state of almost royal polish.

Emotionally her created world was also larger than life. Self-sacrifice is generally associated with marriage. Her wistful maidens and forsaken wives are all forgiving and outdo Griselda in meek patience, her heroes (unless patterned on the angelic Ishmael) may be the half-reformed rake of again the earlier sentimental school. On the other hand she introduces realism with her minor characters, who often -- to the modern reader -- come alive against the cardboard of the major players.

It is that word "players" which best describes all of Mrs. Southworth's character.

There can be no wonder that book after book was speedily adapted for the stage sometimes (as in the case of "The Bridal Eve") before serial had been completed. For, upon reading, it is amazing to see how these stories fall naturally into a series of vivid dramatic action scenes. They are played rather than narrated. And the plot is more than the players.

The lack of revision--since the books were written in installments at a white heat of creation and sent directly to meet magazine deadlines -- is very apparent. Undoubtedly she was capable of more lasting work, but economic necessity forced her to write what come easily and sold readily.

But her immense popularity also indicates that her work was just what the readers of that day hoped to discover between the covers of a book when they wanted amusement. And so drastic have even the standards of light fiction changed that we cannot adequately judge such novels today. It is also true that she looked backward in writing, for she mirrored the manners, customs and social codes of the twenties, thirties and forties, rather than those of the fifties, sixties, and seventies.

One of her most irritating mannerisms -- to the modern reader though apparently acceptable to her contemporaries, was her habit of stepping into the story with a direct statement. Such expressions as "You and I know, reader", "Mark you this", "The reader is informed already", "I am about to harrow", "Reader! This boy is our hero" abound. Perhaps this came from the same desire to establish a personal relationship with her readers which led her to address those chatty explanations about her work methods and her general state of health in open magazine letters.

She inserted the popular fads of the day into her stories. Magnetism, physiognomy, the slavery question, phrenology, were used in turn as they captured the public's interest. Although she was anti-slavery in her beliefs, she incorporated both sides of the argument into some of her books. And she is perhaps unique in introducing such characters as the "Odd-job Professor" of "Ishmael", a free man of color, educated enough to teach the orphan Ishmael his first lessons, proud of his own abilities and modest standing in the community. While the picture she paints in subdued colors of the slave couple--who, in the "Mother-in-law", work steadily not only to save the money necessary to buy their gifted daughter's freedom, but also to support their penniless master -- is more effective to our modern tastes in showing the real tragedy of slavery than the lurid melodrama of "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

In "Broken Pledges" (1855) we have the case of a slave of mixed race who is driven to murder by an unfeeling master, and also the disaster visited upon married slaves divided by the lust of the overseer, a situation which again ends in violent death. In "The Bride's Dowry" we are told of the plantation owner who is forbidden by law to free his own children.

Not only did she use the institution of slavery itself for plot materiel. But she was the first American writer to portray the marked social caste system which existed among the slaves themselves, the vast gulf between field hands and house servants. And this caste system was also referred to for action. The Christmas festivities, revival meetings, coon hunting, tall tales of the slaves, are woven throughout her books to lighten the melodramatic action. Her years of listening at kitchen hearths were not wasted.

Of course, true to her era, the moral is dangled constantly before her renders, and she can rightly be accused of didacticism, which was the curse of the fiction of her period. But with the use of strict moralizing asides she was earnestly following the deep belief that

fiction must elevate or it had no right to be. Pure amusement was still associated with sin

To lighten such spates of serious head-shaking she introduces some humor -- almost entirely provided by her minor or Negro characters. But it is always gently refined humor, eminently suitable for a book by a lady, and it is in the form of exaggerated dialogue or the long since discarded style of the misspellings and twisted words used by an uneducated individual.

Not only did she strive to introduce humor in the pattern of dialogue but she tried also for realism and interest by the same means. In her later books even her didactic ideas spout from the mouths of her characters rather than appear in self-conscious asides.

And she attempted a wide range of idiom -- seldom successfully. We find her reporting in garbled words the conversation of lower class Scottish, German, Irish, Jewish immigrants and servants, in addition to the homely (and much more natural) speech of American country people, old ladies, and children. Her worst point is the total lack of restraint, the overabundance of "color" gives to the longer speeches a humor not intended.

Her plotting ability was her strongest tool, but even this failed her during the long stream of hastily written books. Having found a certain situation effective once, she tended to use it again and again. Brides changed just before they reached the altar, secret marriages, bigamy, innocent men accused of murder, appear over and over. And not only situations but types of characters and even names are repeated from book to book.

But her meticulous descriptions of dress, of manners in polite society, of moral codes, can be read with profit by the modern researcher to gain a picture of social life of the period from 1830 to 1850, perhaps not exactly as it was, but as the highest standards of taste expected and hoped it would be.

At any rate Emma Southworth knew how to "Give the ladies what they want." "The Hidden Hand", published serially in the Ledger, was said to be the most popular work that that epitome of public taste ever printed. Forty different versions of it played the theaters here and abroad. At one time three different plays made from the novel were running simultaneously in London. The book was reprinted in 1885 for the third time, twenty-four years after its first appearance.

Her total serial publication was fifty books, written in the forty years from her first in 1846 to her last new novel "Deed Without a Name" in 1886.

So much of a drawing card to any publication were her works that the Saturday Evening Post from time to time issued a supplement of her current serial to each new subscriber, to induce yearly subscriptions. This must have worked well as her serials alone are said to have increased the circulation of the magazine from twelve hundred to thirty thousand.

With all her faults of style, diction, and lack of revision, she had one superb gift and several minor ones. She was a natural born story teller. Even today it is difficult for any one reading for amusement to put aside one of her tales before its always highly dramatic denouement. In later period she might have found her place as a creator of day-time-television serials -- In fact modern script writers are missing inspiration in not surveying her work with thoughts of adaption.

Added to this ability to plot, she possessed a strong sense of drama. At times her books read as if while she wrote them she were reporting some play being acted before her as her pen raced to capture it all. Her pictures of Negro life and social customs are illuminating. And she spoke up vigorously for the rights of women -- not for their use of the ballot box (she was violently opposed to the demands made by the "emancipated females"), but for their relief from actual wrongs, pointing out with all the fury of a Dickens the vicious inequalities of certain laws.

Had she not been driven by the whip of economic need, she might have occupied a larger niche in American literary history. But Mrs. E.D.E.N. Southworth may still have charms for those who seek out her now battered -- and very hard to find -- novels. The impression she leaves is that here was a natural dramatist who never discovered her true field.

Works Traced to E. D. E. N.

Southworth

Editors Note: Order not known -- but (sequel) is to Title listed above it.

Ismael	Cruel as the Grave
Self Raised (sequel)	Tried for his Life (sequel)
Em	The Lost Heir of Linlithgow
Em' Courtship	A Noble Lord (sequel)
Em's Husband	A Beautiful Fiend
The Bride's Ordeal	Victor's Triumph (sequel)
Her Love or Her Life (sequel)	Nearest and Dearest
Erma the Wanderer (sequel)	Little Nea's Engagement (sequel)
Gloria	Unkown

The Scribbling Women

David Lindsay (sequel)	Mystery of the Raven Locks
A Love Won and Lost (sequel)	The Hidden Hand
The Trail of the Serpent	Capitola's Peril (sequel)
A Tortured Heart (sequel)	Fair Play
The Test of Love (sequel)	Elfie's Vision (sequel)
Love's Suspense (sequel)	How He Won Her (sequel)
A Deed Without A Name	Shannondale
Dorothy Harcourt's Secret (sequel)	The Doom of Deville
To His Fate (sequel)	The Broken Engagement
When Love Gets Justice (sequel)	The Christmas Guest
For a Women's Love	The Missing Bride
An Unrequited Love (sequel)	The Fortune Seeker
A Leap in the Dark	The Family Doom
The Mysterious Marriage (sequel)	The Maiden Widow (sequel)
Her Mother's Secret	The Mother-In-Law
Love's Bitterest Cup (sequel)	Retribution
When Shadows Die (sequel)	India
Sweet Love's Atonement	The Curse of Clifton
Zenobia's Suitors (sequel)	The Lost Heiress
The Unloved Wife	The Widow's Son
When the Shadow Darkens (sequel)	The Bride of Llewellyn (sequel)
Only a Girl's Heart	The Bridal Eve
Gertrude's Sacrifice (sequel)	The Two Sisters
The Rejected Bride (sequel)	Eudora
A Husband's Devotion (sequel)	Love's Labor Won
Gertrude Hadden (sequel)	The Bride's Dowry
Reunited (sequel)	The Lady of the Isle
Why Did He Wed Her?	The Deserted Wife
For Whose Sake (sequel)	The Wife's Victory
The Rector's Daughter (sequel)	The Three Sisters
A Skeleton in the Closet	Viva
Brandon Coyle's Wife (sequel)	The Discarded Daughter
When Love's Shadow Flee (sequel)	The Gypsy's Prophecy
The Changed Brides	The Haunted Homestead
A Bride's Fate (sequel)	The Artist's Love
Lost Lady of Lone	
Struggle of a Soul (sequel)	

THE VILLAINESS FOILED!

Excerpt from "The Mother-In-Law" 1851

By E.D.E.N. Southworth

The bishop opened his book.

A dead silence fell upon the crowd. Their eyes were riveted upon the group. Many noticed the fearful paleness of the bride's face, and saw her lean heavily upon the arm of the bridegroom. The bishop, in a deep and earnest voice, thus commenced the impressive marriage ceremony.

"Dearly beloved, we are gathered together here in the sight of God, and in the face of this company, to join together this man and this woman in holy matrimony, which is commended by St. Paul to be honorable among all men, and therefore is not by any to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly, but reverently, discreetly, advisedly, soberly, and in the fear of God. Into this holy state these two people come now to be joined. If any man can show just cause why they may not be lawfully joined together, let him now speak, or else hereafter hold his peace."

"I can!" shouted a clear, high, imperious voice, and the doors flew open and Gertrude Lion burst, "a beautiful embodied storm," among them. She, too, in festal garments, a shining dark-blue satin studded with glittering sapphires, and her magnificent hair rolling in a golden glory to her feet. Her commanding stature, her glowing color, her blazing eyes, the glory of imperious brow, might have made the guilty in that crowd deem that an avenging angel stood among them.

Struck statue-still, less by the interruption than by the splendidly beautiful Amazon that made it, the assembled company was held in a spell of silence while they gazed at her.

There she stood in her sublime beauty, radiating a cold splendor, like a sun-struck iceberg.

Only one instant was the crowd held in that spell of wonder-stricken silence and then a hum of many voices rolled through the crowd, as they exclaimed or inquired of one another, "Who is this?" "What does this mean?" "Ha!" "What!" "How?" "Who is she?"

"Silence, every one of you!" thundered the Amazon, bringing the loaded end of her riding-whip down upon the table with a resounding ring.

"Who is this woman?" asked the bishop, in a low whisper, of Mrs. Armstrong.

"Oh, a lunatic, a mad woman of the mountains! Arrest her!"

"Hold your tongue, Mrs. Armstrong!" shouted the giantess, raising the end of her riding-whip and making a step toward her. "I am Gertrude Lion, and you know me, and so does James Frobisher, Earl of Clonmachnois!" said she, fixing her eyes upon the bridegroom.

James Frobisher, Earl of Clonmachnois, was standing there, giving his whole attention to the half-fainting bride.

"Leave that man, come to me, Louise." said Gertrude, in a voice full of commanding tenderness, opening her arms and holding them out to the poor bride, who with an instinctive bound cleared the circle and fell upon the broad and sheltering breast of the Amazon.

"There, there, there, there, be a good girl!" dove-like cooed the Falcon, gently caressing her.

"Young lady," begun the bishop, "will you please to --."

"Shut up!" snapped the giantess, and then gave her attention to her charge. "There, there, don't weep, Louise, or I shall."

"Madam, the assembled company are amazed, confounded at your singular conduct! In their name I demand the meaning of this. Upon what pretense have you arrested this marriage?" said the bishop, advancing and standing before her in all the venerableness of his age and office. "I insist instantly upon hearing from your lips from what cause and to what end you have arrested this marriage."

The Amazon raised her imperious brow, end, looking him steadily in the eyes, answered: "Because the would-be bride is the wife of another man!"

"How -- what!" exclaimed the bishop.

A thrill of exclamatory astonishment ran through the crowd.

"Madam, you should be very sure of what you advance!" exclaimed the bishop, with solemnity.

"Ask the bride herself. Louise, answer, I command you! Are-you the wife of Louis Stuart-Gordon or not?"

"Oh, I am! I am! Indeed I am the wife of Louis Stuart-Gordon!"

"You hear her?" said Gertrude, triumphantly.

"She is mad -- mad, I say!" exclaimed Mrs. Armstrong, striding forward. "Gentlemen, will none of you arrest this mad woman?"

Gertrude threw a glance of mingled triumph and defiance over the astounded crowd. Her eye lighted in its roving upon a new-comer.

Louis Stuart-Gordon, pale, travel-stained, and dusty, stood among them.

"Take her, Louis," exclaimed she, tossing her charge into his arms. "Take her, Louis, as my free gift, and swear by the name of Gertrude

Lion henceforth and for evermore, amen! Take her and hear her hence, for I have the devil's own work to do!"

"An avenging angel's tather!" replied Louis, receiving the fainting form of Louise in his arm, "An avenging angel's rather!"

"It amounts to about the same thing." replied Gertrude.

And terrible was the brow that the Gerfalcon now turned toward the assembled company.

"Arrest her, she is mad!" exclaimed Mrs. Armstrong, terror stricken by the appalling look of the Amazon.

Gertrude raised one hand up as though appealing to Heaven.

"Hear me all who are gathered in this house. I denounce Hortense Armstrong as the murderer of Genevieve, the first wife of Doctor Armstrong! I denounce her as having abandoned the eldest child of her husband, and as having concealed and suppressed the will by which that child was acknowledged and constituted the heiress of the half of the Mount Crystal estate! I denounce her as having conspired against the liberty of that child, in having her procured to be sold as a slave! And I appeal to Heaven to confute or corroborate my testimony!" and the avenger raised her hand reverently. "Behold! Look to Mrs. Armstrong! She is falling."

Mrs. Armstrong had suddenly dropped to the floor, her throat swollen, her face purple, her whole frame convulsed! She was lifted and borne from the room. And the company broke up in confusion.

"A word with you, Gertrude the Destroyer?" commanded the Earl of Clonmachnois, beckoning the Amazon to the recess of a bay window. Gertrude still "vibrating with the thunder" she had spent, followed him, weak as a fainting elephant.

"Terrible denouncer! What have you done? Have you any proofs of what you charge this woman with?"

"Proofs! Every proof that will satisfy my own mind! None, perhaps, that would convict her in a court of justice."

"Explain!"

"That little girl, Zoe, the schoolmaster's adopted child who was attached at The Lair as the property of Miss Somerville -- that same Zoe was the eldest daughter of Doctor Hector Armstrong and Genevieve Somerville, his first wife by a secret marriage. This marriage was concealed to avert the anger of his father and the disinheritance of the son. Genevieve had no proofs of her marriage in her own possession, and the birth of her child was concealed by

Harriet, her foster-mother, to save the poor motherless girl from the terrible wrath of her father.”

“This concealment was effected under circumstances inducing the suspicion that Zoe was the child of George and Harriet. By the machinations of Mrs. Armstrong these circumstances were long afterwards used to procure the attachment of Zoe as a slave, in order that she might be got out of the way! This, however, is in advance of my story. Soon after the birth of her child Genevieve Somerville died suddenly, and under suspicion of poison.”

“Soon after that event, Miss Blackiston married Doctor Armstrong. He promised Harriet, who was in his confidence, to acknowledge and take home his daughter -- a promise that he deferred to perform from time to time in fact, he stood in awe of his wife. Finally he died without having performed his promise. Just before he was taken to his bed he saw Harriet and told her that he had made a will acknowledging his marriage with Miss Genevieve Somerville, acknowledging her daughter Zoe, and constituting her heiress to half his estates. He said that he was resolved to reveal the whole matter to his wife. We believe that he did. But he died, and no mention was ever made of a will, and no step was taken by his widow to restore his eldest daughter to her rights. If there was a will, as we firmly believe there was, Mrs. Armstrong probably destroyed it, with all that could have proved the parentage of Zoe.”

“But the servant, then -- Harriet! Why did she not disclose the secret?”

“Because it would have done every sort of harm and no good. It would have covered an honest family with shame and confusion without restoring Zoe to her rights.”

“I do not see that.”

“Do you not know, then, that, however honest and good they may be, the oath of a slave or other colored person will not pass in a slave state against a white person? The disclosure would have nearly killed the proud old Major Somerville because he could not prove the marriage. Therefore Harriet determined to keep the secret, at least until the death of Major Somerville. You know the events that followed that death. Harriet and George were taken for debt, Zoe was attached. It was two months before Harriet and George were redeemed from prison. When they came out, the first thing they heard, with astonishment, was that Zoe had been attached, but was now at liberty.”

“The first thing they did then was to divulge to Miss Somerville and to Mrs. Stuart-Gordon and myself the secret of Zoe’s birth. Then General Stuart-Gordon was admitted to the confidence, and he busied himself in investigating the affair. Being unable to find the clew to any other proofs but those of George and Harriet, it was deemed prudent to take no rash step in the matter, but to watch the course of circumstances, and in the meantime to be as kind as possible to Zoe. And I suppose, with their rascally prudence, they would have ‘watched the course of circumstances’ to this day if I had not taken the matter up and trusted in God for the result.”

“Gertrude the Avenger! But this other matter of Mrs. Louie Stuart-Gordon, explain that.”

“Mrs. Armstrong, through her omnipotent influence over her daughter, separated her from her husband for no other reason than because General Stuart-Gordon married a second time. Afterwards she effected a divorce, and would have broken her-heart, and Louis’ heart, and drawn you into marriage with a woman whom you know very well you only pitied and did not love, Jamie, if it had not been for me.”

“Gertrude the Preserver! Gertrude, I never admired you so much in all my life as this evening!”

In the meantime a scene of death was transpiring above stairs. In a thickly curtained room, upon a stately bed, lay the wreck of the haughty and majestic Hortense Blackiston Armstrong, still in her robes of state -- a magnificent ruin! The bishop, still in his canonicals, and another clergyman of the Episcopal faith, stood on one side of the bed, a physician and surgeon on the other, Louis Stuart-Gordon stood supporting Louise at the foot of the bed. The bishop, summoned to the house to perform a marriage ceremony, was now reading the solemn service of the dying.

Mrs. Armstrong had never spoken or given the slightest sign of intelligence from the moment of her fall. Her attack was apoplexy -- a disease to which her full habit of body rendered her peculiarly liable. Terrible was the struggle between death and the strong physical organization he had to conquer!

All night long the swollen and purple face was contorted -- all night long that strong body was convulsed. It was the dawn of day before that haughty face was composed -- before that proud form was still in the rigidity of death -- before that imperious spirit had “Migrated to the great secret!”

Peace be with her! We do not know whether or not she were guilty of the worst crimes laid to her charge, since nothing but strong circumstantial evidence rested against her. We heard her accusation - - we heard not her defense. She was struck speechless and powerless! Let us judge her leniently or leave her with her God!

CAPITOLA DEFENDS HER HONOR

Excerpt from "The Hidden Hand" 1859

By E.D.E.N. Southworth

Taking advantage of the time when she knew he would be absorbed in a game of chess with John Stone, and she should be safe from interruption for several hours if she wished, she went to Major Warfield's little armory in the closet adjoining his room, opened his pistol case, and took from it a pair of revolvers, closed and locked the case, and withdrew and hid the key that they might not chance to be missed until she should have time to replace them.

Then she hurried back to her own chamber, locked the pistols up in her own drawer, and wearied out with so much excitement, prepared to go to rest. Here a grave and unexpected obstacle met her, she had always been accustomed to kneel and offer up to heaven her evening's tribute of praise and thanks giving for the mercies of the day, and prayers for protection and blessing through the night.

Now she knelt as usual, but thanksgiving and prayer seemed frozen on her lips! How could she praise or pray with such a purpose as she had in her heart?

For the first time Capitola doubted the perfect righteousness of that purpose which was of a character to arrest her prayers upon her lips.

With a start or impatience and a heavy sigh, she sprang up and hurried to bed.

She did not sleep, but lay tossing from side to side in feverish excitement the whole night -- having, in fact, a terrible battle between her own fierce passion and her newly awakened conscience.

Nevertheless, she arose by daybreak in the morning, dressed herself, went and unlocked her drawer, took out the pistols, carefully loaded them, and laid them down for service.

Then she went downstairs, where the servants were only just beginning to stir, and sent for her groom, Jem, whom she ordered to saddle her pony and also to get a horse for himself, to attend her in a morning ride.

After which she returned upstairs, put-on her riding habit, and buckled around her waist a morocco belt, into which she stuck the two revolvers. She then threw around her shoulders a short circular cape that concealed the weapons, and put on her hat and gloves and went below.

She found her little groom already at the door with the horses. She sprang into her saddle, and, bidding Jem follow her, took the road toward Tip-Top.

She knew that Mr. Le Noir was in the habit of riding to the village every morning, and she determined to meet him. She knew, from the early hour of the day, that he could not possibly be ahead of her, and she rode on slowly, to give him an opportunity to overtake her.

Probably Craven Le Noir was later that morning than usual, for Capitola had reached the entrance of the village before she heard the sound of his horse's feet approaching behind her.

She did not wish that their encounter should be in the streets of the village, so she instantly wheeled her horse and galloped back to meet him.

As both were riding at full speed, they soon met.

She first drew rein, and, standing in his way, accosted him with:
"Mr. Le Noir!"

"Your most obedient, Miss Black!" he said, with a deep bow.

"I happen to be without father or brother to protect me from affront sir, and my uncle is an invalid veteran whom I will not trouble! I am, therefore, under the novel necessity of fighting my own battles! Yesterday sir, I sent you a note demanding satisfaction for a heinous slander you circulated against me! You replied by an insulting note. You do not escape punishment so! Here are two pistols, both are loaded, take either one of them, for, sir, we have met, and now we do not part until one of us falls from the horse!"

And so saying, she rode up to him and offered him the choice of the pistols.

He laughed -- partly in surprise and partly in admiration, as he said, with seeming good humor:

"Miss Black, you are a very charming young woman, and delightfully original and piquant in all your ideas, but you outrage all the laws that govern the duello. I have the right to the choice of time,

place and arms. I made that choice yesterday. I renew it to-day. When you accede to the terms of the meeting I shall endeavor to give you all the satisfaction you demand! Good-morning, miss.”

And with a deep bow, even to the flaps of the saddle, he rode past her “That base insult again!” cried Capitola, with the blood rushing to her face.

The lifting her voice, she again accosted him:

“Mr. Le Noir!”

He turned, with a smile.

She threw one of the pistols on the ground near him, saying:

“Take that up and defend yourself.”

He waved his hand in negation, bowed, smiled, and rode on.

“Mr. Le Noir!” she called, in a peremptory tone.

Once more he turned.

She raised her pistol, took deliberate aim at his white forehead, and fired—

Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang! Bang!

Six times without an instant’s intermission, until her revolver was spent.

When the smoke cleared away, a terrible vision met her eyes!

It was Craven Le Noir with his face covered with blood, reeling in his saddle, from which he soon dropped to the ground.

In falling, his foot remained hanging in the stirrup. The well-trained cavalry horse stood perfectly still, though trembling in a panic of terror from which he might at any moment start to run, dragging the helpless body after him.

Capitola saw this danger, and not being cruel, she tempered justice with mercy, threw down her spent pistol, dismounted from her horse, went up to the fallen man, disengaged his foot from the stirrup, and, taking hold of his shoulders, tried with all her might to drag the still breathing form from the dusty road where it lay in danger of being run over by wagons, to the green bank, where it might be in comparative safety.

But that heavy form was too much for her single strength. And, calling her terrified groom to assist her, they removed the body.

Capitola than remounted her horse and galloped rapidly into the village and came up to the “Ladies’ entrance” of the hotel, where, after sending for the proprietor, she said:

“I have just been shooting Craven Le Noir for slandering me, he lies by the roadside at the entrance of the village, you had better send somebody to pick him up.”

"Miss!" cried the astounded inn-keeper.

Capitola distinctly repeated her words and then, leaving the innkeeper, transfixed with consternation, she crossed the street and entered a magistrate's office, where a little, old gentleman, with a pair of green spectacles resting on his hooked nose, sat at a writing table, giving some directions to a constable, who was standing hat in hand before him.

Capitola waited until this functionary had his orders and a written paper, and had left the office, and the magistrate was alone, before she walked up to the desk and stood before him.

"Well, well, young woman! Well, well, what do you want?" inquired the old gentleman, impatiently looking up from folding his papers.

"I have come to give myself up for shooting Craven Le Noir, who slandered me," answered Capitola, quietly.

The old man let fall his hands full of papers, raised his head and stared at her over the tops of his green spectacles.

"What did you say, young woman?" he asked, in the tone of one who doubted his own ears.

"I say that I have forestalled an arrest by coming here to give myself up for the shooting of a dastard who slandered, insulted and refused to give me satisfaction." answered Capitola, very distinctly.

"Am I awake? Do I hear aright? Do you mean to say that you have killed a man?" asked the-dismayed magistrate.

"Oh, I can't say as to the killing! I shot him off his horse and then sent Mr. Merry and his men to pick him up, while I came here to answer for myself!"

"Unfortunate girl! And how can you answer for such a dreadful deed?" exclaimed the utterly confounded magistrate.

"Oh, as to the dreadfulness of the deed that depends upon the circumstances," said Cap, "and I can answer for it very well. He made addresses to me. I refused him. He slandered me. I challenged him. He insulted me. I shot him."

"Miserable young woman, if this be proved true, I shall have to commit you!"

"Just as, you please," said Cap, "but bless your soul, that won't help Craven Le Noir a single bit!"

As she spoke several persons entered the office in a state of high excitement--all talking at once, saying:

"That is the girl!"

"Yes, that is her!"

“She is Miss Black, old Warfield’s niece.”

“Yes, he said she was.” etc., etc., etc.

“What’s all this, neighbors, what is all this?” inquired that troubled magistrate, rising in his place.

“Why, sir, there’s been a gentleman, Mr. Craven Le Noir, Shot.

He has been taken to the Antlers, where he lies in articulus mortis, and we wish him to-be confronted with Miss Capitola Black, the young woman here present, that he may identify her, whom he accuses of having shot six charges into him, before his death. She needn’t deny it, because he is ready to swear to her!” said Mr. Merry, who constituted himself spokesman.

“She accuses herself.” said the magistrate, in dismay.

“Then, sir, had she better not be taken at once to the presence of Mr. Le Noir, who may not have many minutes to live?”

“Yes, come along,” said Cap, “I only gave myself up to wait for this, an as he is already at hand, let’s go and have it all over, for I have been riding about in this frosty morning air for three hours, and I want to go home to get breakfast.”

“I am afraid, young woman, you will scarcely get home to breakfast this morning.” said Mr. Merry.

“We’ll see that presently.” answered Cap, composedly, as they all left the office, and crossed the street to the Antlers.

They were conducted by the landlord to a chamber on the first floor, where upon the bed lay stretched, almost without breath or motion, the form of Craven Le Noir. His face was still covered with blood that the by-stander had scrupulously refused to wash off until the arrival of the magistrate. His complexion, as far as it could be seen, was very pale. He was thoroughly prostrated, if not actually dying.

Around his bed were gathered the village doctor, the landlady and several maid servants.

“The squire has come, sir, are you able to speak to him?” asked the landlord, approaching the bed.

“Yes, let him swear me,” feebly replied the wounded man, “and then send for a clergyman.”

The landlady immediately left to send for Mr. Goodwin, and the magistrate approached the head of the bed, and, speaking solemnly, exhorted the wounded man, as he expected soon to give an account of the works done in his body, to speak the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth, without reserve, malice, or exaggeration, both as to the deed, and the provocation.

"I will -- I will -- for I have sent for a minister and I intend to try to make my peace with heaven." replied Le Noir.

The magistrate then directed Capitola to come and take her stand at the foot of the bed, where the wounded man, who was lying on his back, could see her without turning.

Cap came as she was commanded and stood there with some irrepressible and incomprehensible mischief gleaming out from under her long eye lashes and from the corners of her dimpled lips.

The magistrate then administered the oath to Carven Le Noir, and bade him look upon Capitola and give his evidence.

He did so, and under the terrors of a guilty conscience and of expected death, his evidence partook more of the nature of a confession than an accusation. He testified that he had addressed Capitola, and had been rejected by her, then, under the influence of evil motives, he had circulated insinuations against her honor, which were utterly unjustifiable by fact, she, seeming to have heard of them, took the strange course of challenging him -- just as if she had been a man. He could not, of course, meet a lady in a duel, but he had taken advantage of the technical phraseology of the challenged party, as to time, place and weapons, to offer her a deep insult, then she had waylaid him on the highway, offered him his choice of a pair of revolvers, and told him that, having met, they should not part until one or the other fell from the horse, he had again laughingly refused the encounter except upon the insulting terms he had before proposed. She had then thrown him one of the pistols, bidding him defend himself. He had laughingly passed her when she called him by name, he had turned and she fired -- six time in succession and he fell. He knew no more until he was brought to his present room. He said in conclusion he did not wish that the girl should be prosecuted, as she had only avenged her own honor, and that he hoped his death would be taken by her and her friends as a sufficient expiation of his offenses against her, and lastly, he requested that he might be left alone with the minister.

"Bring that unhappy young woman over to my officer, Ketchum." said the magistrate, addressing himself to a constable. Then turning to the landlord, he said:

"Sir, it would be a charity in you to put a messenger on horseback and send him to Hurricane Hall for Major Warfield, who will have to enter into a recognizance for Miss Black's appearance at court."

"Stop," said Cap, "don't be too certain of that! Be always sure you're right -- then go ahead! Is not anyone here cool enough to

reflect that if I had fired six bullets at a man's forehead and every one had struck, it should have blown his head to the sky? Will not somebody at once wash his face and see how deep the wounds are?"

The doctor who had been restrained by the others now took a sponge and water and cleaned the face of Le Noir which was found to-be well peppered with split peas!

Cap looked around, and, seeing the astonished looks of the good people, burst into an irrepressible fit of laughter, saying, as soon as she had got breath enough:

"Upon my word, neighbors, you look more shocked, if not actually more disappointed, to find that, after all, he is not killed, and there'll be no spectacle, than you did at first when you thought murder had been done."

"Will you be good enough to explain this, young woman?" said the magistrate.

"Certainly, for your worship seems as much disappointed as the others!" said Cap. Then turning toward the group around the bed, she said:

"You have heard Mr. Le Noir's last dying speech and confession as he supposed it to be, and you know the maddening provocations that inflamed my temper against him. Last night, after having renewed his insulting answer to my challenge, there was evil in my heart. I do assure you! I possessed myself of my uncle's revolvers and resolved to waylay him this morning and force him to give me satisfaction, or if he refused -- well, no matter! I tell you, there was danger in me! But, before retiring to bed at night, it is my habit to say my prayers, now the practice of prayer and the purpose of red-handed violence cannot exist in the same person at the same time! I wouldn't sleep without praying, and I couldn't pray without giving up my thoughts of fatal vengeance upon Craven Le Noir. So at last I made up my mind to spare his life, and teach him a lesson. The next morning I drew the charges of the revolvers and reloaded them with poor powder and dried peas! Everything else has happened just as he told you! He has received no harm, except in being terribly frightened, and in having his beauty spoiled! And as for that, didn't I offer him one of the pistols, and expose my own face to similar damage? For I'd scorn to take advantage of anyone!" said Cap, laughing.

Craven Le Noir had now raised himself up in a sitting position and was looking around with an expression of countenance which was a strange blending of relief at this unexpected respite from the grave and intense mortification at finding himself in the ridiculous position

which the address of Capitola and his own weak cowardice and credulity had placed him.

Cap went up to him and said, in a consoling voice:

“Come thank heaven that you are not going to die this bout! I’m glad you repented and told the truth, and I hope you may live long enough to offer heaven a truer repentance than that which is the more effect of fright! For I tell you plainly that if it had not been for the Grace of the Lord, acting upon my heart last night, your soul might have been in Hades now!”

Craven Le Noir shut his eyes, groaned and fell back Over-powered by the reflection.

“Now, please your worship, may I go home?” asked Cap, demurely, popping down a mock courtesy to the magistrate.

“Yes -- Go! Go! Go! Go! Go!” said that officer, with an expression as though he considered our Cap an individual of the animal kingdom whom neither Buffon nor, any other natural philosopher had ever classified, and who, as a creature of unknown habits, might sometimes be dangerous.

Cap immediately availed herself of the permission, and went out to look for her servant and horses.

But Jem, the first moment he had found himself unwatched, had put out as fast as he could fly to Hurricane Hall, to inform Major Warfield of what had occurred.

And Capitola after losing a great deal of time in looking for him, mounted her horse and was just about to start, when who should ride up in hot haste but Old Hurricane, attended by Wool.

“Stop there!” he shouted, as he saw Cap.

She obeyed, and he sprang from his horse with agility of youth, and helped her to descend from hers.

Then drawing her arm within his own, he led her into the parlor, and putting an unusual restraint upon himself, he ordered her to tell him all about the affair.

Cap sat down and gave him the whole history from beginning to end.

Old Hurricane could not sit still to hear. He strode up and down the room, striking his stick upon the floor, and uttering inarticulate sounds of rage and defiance.

When Cap had finished her story he suddenly stopped before her, brought down the point of his stick with a resounding thump upon the floor and exclaimed:

“Demmy, you New York newsboy! Will you never be a woman? Why the demon didn’t you tell me, Sirrah? I would have called the fellow out and chastised him to your heart’s content! Hang-it, miss, answer-me and say!”

“Because you are on the invalid list and I am in sound condition and capable of taking my own part!” said Cap.

“Then, answer me this, while you were taking your own part, why the foul fiend didn’t you pepper him with something sharper than dried peas?”

“I think he is quite as severely punished in suffering from extreme terror and intense mortification and public ridicule.” said Cap.

“And now, uncle, I have not eaten a single blessed mouthful this morning, and I am hungry enough to eat up Cyp, or to satisfy Patty.”

Old Hurricane, permitting his excitement to subside in a few expiring grunts, rang the bell and gave orders for breakfast to be served.

And after that meal was over he set out with his niece for Hurricane Hall.

A DEBUT AT THE PRESIDENT’S “DRAWING ROOM”

Excerpt from “Ishmael” 1864

By E.D.E.N. Southworth

Claudia went deeper into her preparations for her first appearance in society at the President’s first drawing room of the season.

The night of nights for the heiress came. After dinner Claudia indulged herself in a long nap, so that she might be quite fresh in the evening. When she woke up she took a cup of tea, and immediately retired to her chamber to dress.

Mrs. Middleton superintended her toilet.

Claudia wore a rich point-lace dress over a white satin skirt. The wreath that crowned her head, the necklace that reposed upon her bosom, the bracelets that clasped her arms, the girdle that enclosed her waist, and the bunches of flowers that festooned her upper lace dress, were all of the same rich pattern -- lilies of the valley, whose blossoms were formed of pearl, whose leaves were of emeralds, and whose dew was of diamonds. Snowy gloves and snowy shoes completed this toilet, the effect of which was rich, chaste, and elegant

beyond description. Mrs. Middleton wore a superb dress of ruby-colored velvet.

When they were both quite ready, they went down into the drawing room, where Judge Merlin, Mr. Middleton, and Ishmael were awaiting them, and where Claudia's splendid presence suddenly dazzled them. Mr. Middleton and Judge Merlin gazed upon the radiant beauty with undisguised admiration. And Ishmael looked on with a deep unuttered groan. How dared he love this stately, resplendent queen? How dare he hope she would ever deign to notice him? But the next instant he reproached himself for the groan and the doubt -- how could he have been so fooled by a mere shimmer of satin and glitter of jewels?

Judge Merlin and Mr. Middleton were in the conventional evening dress of gentlemen, and were quite ready to attend the ladies. They had nothing to do, therefore, but to hand them to the carriage, which they accordingly did. The party of four, Mr. and Mrs. Middleton, Judge Merlin, and Claudia, drove off.

Ishmael and Beatrice remained at home. Ishmael to study his law books, Beatrice to give the boys their supper and see that the nurses took proper care of the children.

The carriage rolled along Pennsylvania Avenue. The weather had changed since sunset, and the evening was misty with a light, drizzling rain. Yet still the scene was a gay, busy, and enlivening one, the gas lamps that lighted the avenue gleaned brightly through the rain drops like smiles through tears, the sidewalks were filled with pedestrians, and the middle of the street with vehicles, all going in one direction, to the President's palace.

A decorously slow drive of fifteen minutes brought our party through this gay scene to a gayer one at the north gates of the President's park, where a great crowd of carriages were drawn up, waiting their turn to drive in.

The gates were open and lighted by four tall lamps placed upon the posts, which illuminated the whole scene.

Judge Merlin's carriage drew up on the outskirts of this crowd of vehicles, to wait his turn to enter, but he soon found himself enclosed in the center of the assemblage by other carriages that had come after his own. He had to wait full fifteen minutes before he could fall into the procession that was slowly making its way through the right hand gate, and along the lighted circular avenue that led up to the front entrance of the palace. Even on this misty night the grounds were gayly illuminated and well filled. But crowded as the scene was,

the utmost order prevailed. The carriages that came up the right-hand avenue, full of visitors, discharged them at the entrance hall and rolled away empty down the left-hand avenue, so that there was a continuous procession of full carriages coming up one way and empty carriages going down the other.

At length Judge Merlin's carriage, coming slowly along the line, drew up in its turn before the front of the mansion. The whole facade of the White House was splendidly illuminated, as if to express in radiant light a smiling welcome. The halls were occupied by attentive officers, who received the visitors and ushered them into cloakrooms. Within the house also, great as the crowd of visitors was, the most perfect order prevailed.

Judge Merlin and his party were received by a civil, respectable official, who directed them to a cloakroom, and they soon found themselves in a close, orderly crowd moving thitherward. When the gentlemen had succeeded in conveying their ladies safely to this bourne and seen them well over its threshold, they retired to the receptacle where they were to leave their hats and overcoats before coming back to take their parties into the saloon.

In the ladies' cloakroom Claudia and her chaperone found themselves in a brilliant, impracticable crowd. There were about half-a-dozen tall dressing glasses in the place, and about half-a-hundred young ladies were trying to smooth braids and ringlets and adjust wreaths and coronets by their aid. And there were about half-a-hundred more in the center of the room, some taking off opera cloaks, shaking out flounces, and waiting their turns to go to the mirrors, some, quite ready and waiting the appearance of their escort at the door to take them into the saloon, and besides these some were coming in and some were passing out-continually, and through the open doors the crowds of those newly arriving and the crowds of those passing on to the reception rooms were always visible.

Claudia looked upon this seething multitude with a shudder.

"What a scene!" she exclaimed.

"Yes, but with it all, what order! There has never been such order and system in these crowded receptions as now under the management of Mrs----." said Mrs. Middleton, naming the accomplished lady who, that season, ruled the domestic affairs of the White House.

As Mrs. Middleton and Claudia had finished their toilets, to the sticking of the very last pin, before leaving their dressing rooms at home, they had now nothing to do but to give their opera cloaks to a

woman in attendance, and then stand near the door to watch for the appearance of Judge Merlin and Mr. Middleton. They had but a few minutes to wait. The gentlemen soon came and gave their arms to their ladies and led them to join the throng that were slowly making its way through the crowded halls and anterooms towards the audience chamber, where the President received his visitors. It was a severe ordeal, the passage of those halls. Our party, like all their companions were pressed forward in the crowd until they were fairly pushed into the presence chamber, known as the small crimson drawing room, in which the President and his family waited to receive their visitors.

Yes, there he stood, the majestic old man, with his kingly gray head bared, and his stately form clothed in the republican citizen's dress of simple black. There he stood, fresh from the victories of a score of well-fought fields, receiving the meed of honor won by his years, his patriotism, and his courage. A crowd of admirers perpetually passed before him by the orderly arrangement of the ushers they came up on the right-hand side, bowed or courtesied before him, received a cordial shake of the hand, a smile, and a few kind words, and then passed on to the left towards the greet saloon commonly known as the East Room. Perhaps never has any President since Washington made himself so much beloved by the people as did General---- during his short administration. Great love-compelling power had that dignified and benignant old man! Fit to be the chief magistrate of a great, free people he was! At least so thought Judge Merlin's daughter, as she courtesied before him, received the cordial shake of his hand, heard the kind tones of his voice say, "I am very glad to see you, my dear." and passed on with the throng who were proceeding toward the East Room.

Once arrived in that magnificent room, they found space enough even for that vast crowd to move about in. This room is too well known to the public to need any labored description. For the information of those who have never seen it, it is sufficient to say that its dimensions are magnificent, its decorations superb, its furniture luxurious, and its illuminations splendid. Three enormous chandeliers, like constellations, flooded the scene with light, and a fine brass band, somewhere out of sight, filled the air with music. A brilliant company enlivened, but did not crowd, the room. There were assembled beautiful girls, handsome women, and gorgeous old ladies. There were officers of the army and of the navy in their full-dress uniforms, there were diplomatic corps of all foreign nations in the costumes of

their several ranks and countries, there were grave senators and wise judges and holy divines, there were Indian chiefs in their beads and blankets, there were adventurous Poles from Warsaw, exiled Bourbons from Paris, and Comanche braves from the Cordilleras! There was, in fact, such a curious assemblage as can be met nowhere on the face of the earth but in the east drawing room of our President's palace on a great reception evening!

Into this motley but splendid assemblage Judge Merlin led his beautiful daughter. At first their entrance attracted no attention but when one, and then another, noticed the dazzling new star of beauty that had so suddenly risen above their horizon, a whisper arose that soon grew into a general buzz of admiration, that attended Claudia in her progress through the room and heralded her approach to those at the upper end. And --

"Who is she?" "Who can she be?" were the low-toned questions that reached her ear as her father led her to a sofa and rested her upon it. But these questions came only from those who were strangers in Washington. Of course all others knew the person of Judge Merlin, and surmised the young lady on his arm to be his daughter.

Soon after the Judge and his party were seated, his friends began to come forward to pay their respects to him, and to be presented to his beautiful daughter.

Claudia received all these with a self-possession, grace, and fascination peculiarly her own.

There was no doubt about it -- Miss Merlin's first entrance into society had been a great success, she had made a sensation.

Among those presented to Miss Merlin on that occasion was the Honorable---- ----, the British Minister. He was young, handsome, accomplished, and a bachelor. Consequently he was a target for all the shafts of Cupid that ladies' eyes could send.

He offered his arm to Miss Merlin for a promenade through the room. She accepted it, and became as much the envy of every unmarried lady present as if the offer made and accepted had been for a promenade through life.

No such thought, however, was in the young English minister's mind, for after making the circuit of the room two or three times, he brought his companion back, and, with a smile and a bow, left her in the care of her father.

But if people were inclined to feed their envy, they found plenty of food for that appetite. A few minutes after Miss Merlin had resumed

her seat a general buzz of voices announced some new event of interest. It turned out to be the entrance of the President and his family into the East Room.

For some good reason or other, known only to his own friendly heart, the President, sauntering leisurely, dispensing bows, smiles, and kind words as he passed, Went straight up to the sofa whereon his old friend, Judge Merlin, sat, took a seat beside him, and entered into conversation.

Ah! Their talk was not about State affairs, foreign or domestic policy, duties, imports, War, peace -- no! Their talk was of their boyhood's days, spent together, of the holidays they had had, of the orchards they had robbed, of the well-merited thrashings they had got, of the good old schoolmaster, long since dust and ashes, who had lectured and flogged them!

Claudia listened, and loved the old man more, that he could turn from the memory of his bloody victories, the presence of his political cares, and the prospects of a divided cabinet, to refresh himself with the green reminiscences of his boyhood's days. It was impossible for the young girl to feel so much sympathy without betraying it and attracting the attention of the old man. He looked at her, he had shaken hands with her, and said he was glad to see her, when she was presented to him in his presence chamber, but he had not really seen her, she had been only one of the passing crowd of courtesiers for whom he felt a wholesale kindness and expressed a wholesale goodwill, now, however, he looked at her -- now he saw her.

Sixty-five years had whitened the hair of General---, but he was not insensible to the charms of beauty nor unconscious of his own power of conferring honor upon beauty.

Rising, therefore, with all the stately courtesy of the old school gentleman, he offered his arm to Miss Merlin for a promenade through the rooms.

With a sweet smile, Claudia arose, and once more became the cynosure of all eyes and the envy of all hearts. A few turns through the rooms, and the President brought the beauty back, seated her, and took his own seat beside her on the sofa.

But the cup of bitterness for the envious was not yet full. Another hum and buzz went around the room, announcing some new event of great interest, which seemed to be a late arrival of much importance.

Presently the British minister and another gentleman were seen approaching the sofa where sat the President, Judge Merlin, Miss

Merlin and Mr. and Mrs. Middleton. They paused immediately before the President, when the minister said:

“Your Excellency, permit me to present to you the Viscount Vincent, late from London.”

The President arose and heartily shook hands with the young foreigner, cordially saying:

“I am happy to see you, my lord, happy to welcome you to Washington.”

The viscount bowed low before the gray-haired old hero, saying, in a low tone:

“I am glad to see the President of the United States, but I am proud to shake the hand of the conqueror of--of--.”

The viscount paused, his memory suddenly failed him, for the life and soul of him he could not remember the names of the bloody fields where the General had won his laurels.

The President gravely covered the hesitation of the Viscount and evaded the compliment at the same time by turning to the ladies of his party and presenting his guest, saying:

“Mrs. Middleton, Lord Vincent. Miss Merlin, Lord Vincent.”

The viscount bowed low to these ladies, who courtesied in turn and resumed their seats.

“My old friend, Judge Merlin, Lord Vincent.” then said the plain, matter-of-fact old President.

The Judge and the Viscount simultaneously bowed, and then, these formalities being over, seats were found for the two strangers, and the whole group fell into an easy chat -- subject of discussion the old question sure to be argued whenever the old world and the new meet -- the rival merits of monarchies and republics, the discussion grew warm, though the disputants remained courteous. The Viscount grew bored, and gradually dropped out of the argument, leaving the subject in the hands of the President and the minister, who, of course, had taken opposite sides, the minister representing the advantages of a monarchial form of government, and the President contending for a republican one. The viscount noticed that a large portion of the company were promenading in a precession round and round the room to the music of one of Beethoven’s grand marches. It was monotonous enough, but it was better than sitting there and listening to the vexed question whether the “peoples” were capable of governing themselves. So he turned to Miss Merlin with a bow and smile, saying:

“Shall we join the promenade? Will you so far honor me?”

“With pleasure, my lord.” replied Miss. Merlin.

And he rose and gave her his arm, and they walked away. And for the third time that evening Claudia became the target of all sorts of glances -- glances of admiration, glances of hate, she had been led out by the young English minister, then by the old President, and now she was promenading with the lion of the evening, the only titled person at this republican court, the Viscount Vincent. And she a newcomer, a mere girl, not twenty years old! It was intolerable, thought all the ladies, young and old, married or single.

But if the beautiful Claudia was the envy of all the women, the handsome Vincent was not less the envy of all the men present. “Puppy”, “Coxcomb”, “Jackanape”, “Swell”, “Viscount, indeed! More probably some foreign blackleg or barber”, “It is perfectly ridiculous the manner in which American girls throw themselves under the feet of these titled foreign paupers,” were some of the low-breathed blessings bestowed upon young Lord Vincent. And yet these expletives were not intended to be half so malignant as they might have sounded. They were but the impulsive expressions of transient vexation at seeing the very pearl of beauty, on the first evening of her appearance, carried off by an alien.

In truth, the viscount and the heiress were a very handsome couple and notwithstanding all the envy felt for them, all eyes followed them with secret admiration. The beautiful Claudia was a rare type of the young American girl -- tall, slender, graceful, dark-haired, dark-eyed, with a rich, glowing bloom on cheeks and lips. And her snow white dress of misty lace over shining satin, and her gleaming pearls and sparkling diamonds, set off her beauty well. Vincent was a fine specimen of the young English gentleman -- tall, broad-shouldered, deep-chested, with a stately head, a fair, roseate complexion, light-brown, curling hair and beard, and clear, blue eyes. And his simple evening dress of speckless black became him well. His manners were graceful, his voice pleasant, and his conversation brilliant, but, alas, for Claudia the greatest charm he possessed for her was -- his title! Claudia knew another, handsomer, more graceful, more brilliant than this Viscount, but that other was unknown, untitled, and unnamed in the world. The Viscount was so engaged with his beautiful companion that it was some time before he observed that the company was dropping off and the room was half empty. He then led Miss Merlin back to her party, took a slight leave of them all, bowed to the President, and departed.

Judge Merlin, who had only waited for his daughter, now arose to go, his party made their adieus and left the saloon. As so many of the guests had already gone, they found the halls and anterooms comparatively free of crowds, and easily made their way to the gentlemen's cloakroom and the ladies' dressing room, and thence to the entrance hall. Mr. Middleton went out to call the carriage, which was near at hand. And the whole party entered and drove homeward. The sky had not cleared, the drizzle still continued, but the lamps gleamed brightly through the raindrops, and the Avenue was as gay at midnight as it had been at midday. As the carriage rolled along, Judge Merlin and Mr. and Mrs. Middleton discussed the reception, the President, the company, and especially the young English viscount.

"He is the son and heir of the Earl of Hurstmonceux, whose estates lie somewhere in the rich county of Sussex. The title did not come to the present earl in the direct line of descent, the late earl died childless, at a very advanced age, and the title fell to his distant relation, Lord Banff, the father of this young man, whose estates lie away up in the north of Scotland somewhere. Thus the Scottish Lord Banff became Earl of Hurstmonceux and his eldest son, our new acquaintance, took the second title in the family, and became Lord Vincent." said Judge Merlin.

"The English minister gave you this information?" inquired Mr. Middleton.

"Yes, he did, I suppose he thought it but right to put me in possession of all such facts in relation to a young foreigner whom he had been instrumental in introducing to my family. But, by the way, Middleton -- Hurstmonoeux? Was that not the title of the young dowager countess whom Brudenell married, and parted with, years ago?"

"Yes, and I suppose that she was the widow of that very old man, the late Earl of Hurstmonceux, who died childless, in fact, she must have been."

"I wonder whatever became of her."

"I do not know, I know nothing whatever about the last Countess of Hurstmonoeux, but I know very well who has a fair prospect of becoming the next Countess of Hurstmonceux, if she pleases!" replied Mr. Middleton, with a merry glance at his niece.

Claudia, who had been a silent, thoughtful, and attentive listener to their conversation, did not reply, but smothered a sigh and turned to look out or the window. The carriage was just drawing up before their own gate.

The whole face of the house was closed and darkened except one little light that burned in a small front window at the very top of the house.

It was Ishmael's lamp, and, as plainly as if she had been in the room, Claudia in imagination saw the pale young face bent studiously over the volume lying open before him.

With another inward sigh Claudia gave her hand to her Uncle, who left the carriage to help her out. And then the whole party entered the house.

A NEW STAR RISES

Excerpt from "Ishmael" 1864

By E.D.E.N. Southworth

The courtroom was full, but not crowded, nothing short of a murder or a divorce case ever draws a crowd to such a place.

The counsel for the plaintiff was composed of three of the oldest, ablest, and most experienced members of the Washington bar. The first of these, Mr. Wiseman, was distinguished for his profound knowledge of the law, his skill in logic, and his closeness in reasoning, the second, Mr. Berners, was celebrated for his fire and eloquence, and the third, Mr. Vivian, was famous for his wit and sarcasm. Engaged on one side, they were considered invincible. To these three giants, with the law on their side, was opposed young Ishmael, with nothing but justice on his side. Bad look-out for justice! Well, so it was in that great encounter already alluded to between Brian and Ivanhoe.

Mr. Wisemen, for the plaintiff, opened the case. He was a great, big, bald-headed man, who laid down the law as a blacksmith hammers an anvil, in a clear, forcible, resounding manner, leaving the defense -- as everybody declared -- not a leg to stand upon.

"Oh, Mr. Worth! It is all over with me, and I shall die!" whispered Mrs. Walsh, in deadly terror.

"Have patience! His speech does not impress the court as it does you -- they are used to him."

Witnesses were called, to prove as well as they could from a bad set of facts, what an excellent husband and father the plaintiff had been, how affectionate, how anxious, how zealous he was for the

happiness of his Wife and children -- leaving it to be inferred that nothing on earth but her own evil tendencies instigated the wife to withdraw herself and her children from his protection!

"Heaven and earth, Mr. Worth, did you ever hear anything like that. They manage to tell the literal truth, but so pervert it that it is worse than the worse falsehood!" exclaimed Mrs. Walsh, in a low but indignant tone.

"Aye," answered Ishmael, who sat, pencil and tablets in hand, taking notes, "aye! A lie that is half a truth is ever the blackest of lies'. But the court is accustomed to such witnesses, they do not receive so much credit as you or they think."

Ishmael did not cross-examine these Witnesses, the great mass of rebutting testimony that he could bring forward, he knew, must overwhelm them. So when the last witness for the plaintiff had been examined, he whispered a few cheering words to the trembling woman by his side, and rose for the defendant. Now, whenever a new barrister takes the floor for the first time, there is always more or less curiosity and commotion among the old fogies of the forum.

What will he turn out to be? That is the question. All eyes were turned towards him.

They saw a tall, broad-shouldered, full-chested young man, who stood with a certain dignity, looking upon the-notes that he held in his hand, and when he lifted his stately head to address the court they saw that his face was not only beautiful in the noble mold of his features, but almost divine from the inspiring soul within.

Among the eyes that gazed upon him were those of the three giants of the law he had now to oppose. They stared at him mercilessly -- no doubt with the intention of staring him down. But they did not even confuse him, for the simple reason that he did not look towards them. They might stare themselves stone blind, but they would have no magnetic influence upon that strong, concentrated, earnest soul!

Ishmael was not in the least embarrassed in standing up to address the court for the first time, simply because he was not thinking of himself or his audience, but of his client, and her case as he wished to set it forth, and he was not looking at the spectators, but alternately at the court and at the notes in his hand.

He did not make a long opening like the Giant Wiseman had done, for he wished to reserve himself for the closing speech in final reply to the others. He just made a plain statement of his client's case as it is in part known to the reader.

He told the court how, at the age of fifteen, she had been decoyed from her mother's house and married by the plaintiff, a man more than twice her age, how when she had come into her property he had squandered it all by a method that he, the plaintiff, called speculation, but that others called gambling, how he had then left her in poverty and embarrassment and with one child to support, how he remained a way two years, during which time her friends had set his wife up in business in a little fancy store. She was prospering when he came back, took up his abode with her, got into debt which he could not pay, and when all her stock and furniture was seized to satisfy his creditors, he took himself off once more, leaving her with two children. She was worse off than before, her friends grumbled, but once more came to her assistance, set her up a little book and news agency, the stock of which was nearly all purchased on credit, and told her plainly that if she permitted her husband to come and break up her business again they would abandon and leave her to her fate. Notwithstanding this warning, when at the end of seven or eight months he came back again she received him again. He stayed with her thirteen months, leaving her within a few weeks of becoming the mother of a third child. A few days after his disappearance another execution was put into the house to satisfy a debt contracted by him, and everything was sold under the hammer. She was reduced to the last degree of poverty, her friends held themselves aloof, disgusted at what they termed her culpable weakness: she and her children suffered from cold and hunger, and during her subsequent illness she and they must have starved and frozen but for the public charities, that would not let anyone in our midst perish from want of necessary food and fuel. When she recovered from her illness, one relative, a widow now present in court, had from her own narrow means supplied the money to rent and furnish a small schoolroom, and this most hapless of women was once more put in a way to earn daily bread for herself and children. Nine years passed, during which she enjoyed a respite from the persecutions of the plaintiff. In these nine years, by strict attention to business, untiring industry, she not only paid off the debt owed to her aged relative, but she bought a little cottage and garden in a cheap suburb, and furnished the house and stocked the garden. She was now living a laborious but contented life and rearing her children in comfort. But now at the end of nine years comes back the plaintiff. Her husband? No, her enemy! For he comes, not as he pretends, to cherish and protect, but as he ever came before, to lay waste and destroy! How long could it be supposed that

the mother would be able to keep the roof over the heads of her children if the plaintiff were permitted to enter beneath it? If the court did not protect her home against his invasion, he would again bring ruin and desolation within its walls. They would prove by competent witnesses every point in this statement of the defendant's case, and then he would demand-for his client, not only that she should be secured in the undisturbed possession of her children, her property, and her earnings, but that the plaintiff should be required to contribute an annual sum of money to the support of the defendant and her children, and to give security for its payment.

"That's' carrying the war into Africa' with a vengeance." whispered Walsh to his counsel, as Ishmael concluded his address.

He then called the witnesses for the defendant. They were numerous and of the highest respectability. Among them was the pastor of her parish, her family physician, and many of the patrons of her school.

They testified to the facts stated by her attorney.

The three giants did their duty in the cross-examining line of business. Wiseman cross-examined in a stern manner, Berners in an insinuating way, and Vivian in a sarcastic style, but the only effect of their forensic skill was to bring out the truth from the witnesses -- more clearly, strongly, and impressively.

When the last witness for the defendant had been permitted to leave the stand Wiseman arose to address the court on behalf of the plaintiff. He spoke in his own peculiar sledge-hammer style, sonorously striking the anvil and ringing all the changes upon law, custom, and precedent, and so forth that always gave the children to the custody of the father. And he ended by demanding that the children be at once delivered over to his client.

He was followed by Berners, who had charge of the eloquence "business" of that stage, and dealt in pathos, tears, white pocket handkerchiefs, and poetical quotations. He drew a most heart-rending picture of the broken-spirited husband and father, rejected by an unforgiving wife and ill-conditioned children, becoming a friendless and houseless wanderer over the wide world, in danger of being driven, by despair, to madness and suicide! He compared the plaintiff to Byron, whose poetry he liberally quoted. And he concluded by imploring the court, with tears in his eyes, to intervene and save his unhappy client from the gulf of perdition to which his implacable wife would drive him. And he sank down in his seat utterly

overwhelmed by his feelings and holding a drift of white cambric to his face.

“Am I such an out-and-out monster, Mr. Worth?” whispered Mrs. Walsh, in dismay.

Ishmael smiled.

“Everybody knows Berners -- his ‘madness’ and ‘suicide’, his ‘gulf of perdition’ and his white cambric pocket-handkerchiefs are recognized institutions. See! The judge is actually smiling over it.”

Mr. Vivian arose to follow -- he did up the genteel comedy, he kept on hand a supply of “little jokes” gleaned from Joe Miller, current comic literature, dinner tables, clubs, etc. -- “little jokes” of which every point in his discourse continually reminded him, though his hearers could not always perceive the association of ideas. This gentleman was very facetious over family jars, which reminded him of a “little joke”, which he told, he was also very witty upon the subject of matrimonial disputes in particular, which reminded him of another “little joke”, which he also told, but most of all, he was amused at the caprice of womankind, who very often rather liked to be compelled to do as they pleased, which reminded him of a third “little joke”. And if the court should allow the defendant the exclusive possession of her children and a separate maintenance, it was highly probable that she would not thank them for their trouble, but would take the first opportunity of voluntarily reconciling herself to her husband and giving him back herself, her home and her children which would be equal to any “little joke” he had ever heard in his life, etc.etc.etc.

The audience were all in a broud grin. Even Mrs. Welsh, with her lips of “life-long sadness”, smiled.

“You may smile at him,” said Ishmael, “and so will I, since I do not at all doubt the issue of this trial, but for all that, joker as he is, he is the most serious opponent that we have. I would rather encounter a half a dozen each of Wisemans and Berners than on Vivian. Take human nature in general, it can be more easily laughed than reasoned or persuaded in or out of any measure. People would rather laugh than weep or reflect, Wiseman tries to make them reflect, which they won’t do, Berners tries to make them weep, which they can’t do, but Vivian with his jokes, makes then laugh, which they like to do. And so, he has joked himself into a very large practice at the Washington bar.”

But the facetious barrister was bringing his speech to a close, with a brilliant little joke that eclipsed all the preceding ones and set the audience in a roar. And when the laughter had subsided, he finally

ended by expressing a hope that the court would not so seriously disappoint and so cruelly wrong the defendant as by giving a decision in her favor.

Ishmael waited a few minutes for the excitement produced by the last, address to subside -- the last address that in its qualities and effects had resembled champagne -- sparkling but transient, effervescent but evanescent. And when order had been restored Ishmael arose amid a profound silence to make his maiden speech, for the few opening remarks he had made in initiating the defense could scarcely be called a speech. Once more then all eyes were fixed upon him in expectancy. And, as before, he was undisturbed by these regards because he was unconscious of them, and he was calm because he was not thinking of himself or of the figure he was making, but of his client and her cause. He did not care to impress the crowd, he only wished to affect the court, so little did he think of the spectators in the room, that he did not observe that Judge Merlin, Claudia, and Beatrice were among them, seated in a distant corner -- Judge Merlin and Claudia were watching him with curiosity, and Bee with the most affectionate anxiety. His attention was confined to the judges, the counsel, his client, and the memoranda in his hand. He had a strong confidence in the justice of his cause, perfect faith in the providence of God, and sanguine hopes of success.

True, he had arrayed against him an almost overpowering force, the husband of his client, and the three great guns of the bar -- Wiseman, Berners, and Vivian, with law, custom, and precedent. But with him stood the angels of Justice and Mercy, invisible, but mighty, and, over all, the Omnipotent God, unseen, but all seeing!

Ishmael possessed the minor advantages of youth, manly beauty, a commanding presence, a gracious smile, and a sweet, deep, sonorous voice. He was besides a new orator among them, with a fresh original style.

He was no paid attorney, it was not his pocket that was interested, but his sympathies, his whole heart and soul were in the cause that he had embraced, and he brought to bear upon it all the genius of his powerful mind.

I would like to give you the whole of this great speech that woke up the Washington court from its state of semi-somnolency and roused it to the sense of the unjust and cruel things it sometimes did when talking in its sleep. But I have only time and space to glance at some of its points, and if anyone wishes to see more of it, it may be found in the published works of the great jurist and orator.

He began to speak with modest confidence and in clear, concise, and earnest terms. He said that the court had heard from the learned counsel that had preceded him a great deal of law, sentiment, and wit. From him they should now hear of justice, mercy, and truth!

He reverted to the story of the woman's wrongs, sufferings, and struggles, continued through many years, he spoke of her love, patience and forbearance under the severest trials, he dwelt upon the prolonged absence of her husband, prolonged through so many weary years, and the false position of the forsaken wife, a position so much worse than widowhood, in as much as it exposed her not only to all the evils of poverty, but to suspicion, calumny, and insult.

But he bade them note how the woman had passed through the fire unburned, how she had fought the battle of life bravely and come out victoriously, how she had labored on in honorable industry for years until she had secured a home for herself and little girls. He spoke plainly of the arrival of the fugitive husband as the coming of the destroyer who had three times before laid waste her home, he described the terror and distress his very presence in the city had brought to the little home, the flight of the mother with her children, and her agony of anxiety to conceal them, he dwelt upon the cruel position of the woman whose natural protector has become her natural enemy, he reminded the court that it had required the mother to take her trembling little ones from their places of safety and concealment and to bring them forward, and now that they were here he felt a perfect confidence that the court would extend the aegis of its authority over these helpless ones, since that would be the only shield they could have under heaven. He spoke noble words in behalf not only of his client, but of woman -- woman, loving, feeble, and oppressed from the beginning of time -- woman, hardly dealt with by nature in the first place, and by the laws, made by her natural lover and protector, man, in the second place. Perhaps it was because he knew himself to be the son of a woman only, even as his Master had been before him that he poured so much of awakening, convicting, and condemning fire, force, and weight into this part of his discourse. He uttered thoughts and feelings upon this subject, original and startling at that time, but which have since been quoted, both in the Old and New World, and have had power to modify those cruel laws which at that period made woman, despite her understanding intellect, an idiot, and despite her loving heart a chattel -- in the law.

It had been the time-honored prerogative and the invariable custom of the learned judges of this court to go to sleep during the

pleadings of the lawyers, but upon this occasion they did not indulge in an afternoon nap, I assure you!

He next reviewed the testimony of the witnesses of the plaintiff, complimented them on the ingenuity they had displayed in making "The worst appear the better cause.", by telling half the truth and ignoring the other half, but warned the court at the same time "That a lie which is half truth, is ever the blackest of lies, that a lie that is all a lie may be met and fought with outright but a lie which is part a truth, is a harder matter to fight."

Then he reviewed in turn the speeches of the counsel for the plaintiff -- first that of Wiseman, the ponderous law-expounder, which he answered with quite as much law and a great deal more equity, secondly, that of Berners, the tear-pumper, the false sentiment of which he exposed and criticized, and thirdly that of Vivian, the laugh-provoker, with which he dealt most severely of all, saying that one who could turn into jest the most sacred affections and most serious troubles of domestic life, the heart's tragedy, the household wreck before them, could be capable of telling funny stories at his father's funeral, uttering good jokes over his mother's coffin.

He spoke for two hours, warming, glowing, rising with his subject, until his very form seemed to dilate in grandeur, and his face grew radiant as the face of an archangel, and those who heard seemed to think that his lips like those of the prophet of old had been touched with fire from heaven. Under the inspiration of the hour, he spoke truths new and startling then, but which have since resounded through the senate chambers of the world, changing the laws of nations in regard to woman.

Nora, do you see your son? Oh, was it not well worthwhile to have loved, suffered, and died, only to have given him to the world!

It was a complete success. All his long, patient, painful years of struggle were rewarded now. It was one splendid leap from obscurity to fame.

The giants attempted to answer him, but it was of no use. After the freshness, the fire, the force, the heart, soul, and life in Ishmael's utterances, their old, familiar, well-worn styles, in which the same arguments, pathos, wit that had done duty in so many other cases was paraded again, only bored their hearers. In vain Wiseman appealed to reason, Berners to feeling, and Vivian to humor, they would not do, the court had often heard all that before, and grown

heartily tired of it. Wiseman's wisdom was found to be foolishness, Berner's pathos laughable, and Vivian's humor grievous.

The triumvirate of the Washington bar were dethroned, and Prince Ishmael reigned in their stead.

A few hours later the decision of the court was made known. It had granted all that the young advocate had asked for his client -- the exclusive possession of her children, her property, and her earnings, and also alimony from her husband.

THE SHIPWRECK

Excerpt from "Self Raised" 1864

By E.D.E.N. Southworth

In the ladies' cabin there were two social whist parties, formed of the ladies of the Scotch professor's family and the gentlemen of our set.

They were playing with great enjoyment, notwithstanding that little undercurrent of vague uneasiness of which I spoke, when the Scotchman who had been on deck all evening, came down into the cabin, wearing a long face.

But the whist-players were too much interested in their game to notice the lugubrious expression of the old man, until he came to the table, and in a tone of the most alarming gravity exclaimed:

"Don't be frightened!"

Every lady dropped her cards and turned deadly pale with terror, every gentleman looked up inquiringly at this judicious sneaker.

"What is there to be frightened at, sir?" coldly inquired Ishmael.

"Well, you know our situation -- but, ladies, for heaven's sake, be composed. Your sex are noted for heroism in the midst of danger --."

Here, to prove his words good, one of the ladies shrieked, fell back in her chair, and covered her face with her hands.

"These ladies are not aware of any danger, sir, and I think it is quite needless to alarm them." said Ishmael gravely.

"My good young friend, I don't wish to alarm them, I came down here on purpose to exhort them to coolness and self-possession, so necessary in the hour of peril. How, dear ladies, I must beg that you will not suffer yourselves to be agitated."

“There is really, sir, no present cause for agitation, except, if you will pardon me for saying it, your own needlessly alarming words and manner.” said Ishmael cheerfully, to reassure the frightened women, who seemed upon the very verge of hysterics.

“No, no, no, certainly no cause for agitation, ladies -- certainly not. Therefore don’t be agitated, I beg of you. But -- but -- don’t undress and go to bed tonight. Lie down on the outside of your berths just as you are, for, look you -- we may all have to take to the lifeboats at a minute’s warning.” said the doctor, his long, pale face looking longer and paler than ever under his round, black skullcap.

A half-smothered shriek burst simultaneously from all the women present.

“I trust, sir, that your fears are entirely groundless. I have heard no apprehensions expressed in any other quarter.” said Ishmael. And although he never begged the ladies not to be “frightened”, yet every cheerful word he spoke tended to calm their fears.

“What cause have you for such forebodings, doctor?” inquired Mr. Brudenell.

“Oh, none at all, sir. There is no reason to be alarmed. I hope nobody will be alarmed especially the ladies. But you see the captain has not been able to make any observation for the last three days on account of the fog, and it is said that no one accurately knows just where we are, except that we are on the Banks, somewhere, and may strike before we know it. That is all. Now don’t be terrified. And don’t lose your presence of mind. And whatever you do, don’t take off your clothes, for if we strike you mayn’t have time to put them on again, and scanty raiment in an open bout, on a wintry night at sea, wouldn’t be pleasant. Now mind what I tell you. I shall not turn in myself. I am going on deck to Watch.”

And having succeeded in spreading a panic among the women, the old man took himself and his black skullcap out of the cabin. Exclamation of surprise, fear, and horror followed his departure.

There was no more card-playing, they did not even finish their game, they felt it to be sacrilegious to engage in even a ‘ladies’ game of whist, on the eve of possible shipwreck perhaps on the brink of eternity.

Ishmael gathered up and put away the cards and set himself earnestly to calm the fears of his trembling fellow-passengers, but they were not to be soothed. Then he offered to go up on deck and make inquiries as to the situation, course, and prospects of the ship, but they would not consent to his leaving them, they earnestly

besought him to stay, and declared that they found assurance and comfort in his presence.

At length he took the Bible and seated himself at the table, and read to them such portions as were suited to their condition. He read for more than an hour, and then, hoping that this had composed their spirits, he closed the book and counseled them to retire and take some rest, and promised to station himself outside the cabin door and be their vigilant sentinel, to warn them of danger the instant it should become necessary.

But no! They each and all declared sleep to be impossible under the circumstances. And they continued to sit around the table with their arms laid on its top and their heads buried in them, waiting for -- what? Who could tell?

Meanwhile the ship was borne swiftly on by wind and wave -- wither? None of these frightened women knew.

Eight bells struck -- twelve, midnight, and Ishmael renewed his entreaties that they would take some repose. But in vain, for they declared that there could be no repose for their bodies while their minds were suffering such intense anxiety.

One bell struck, and there they sat, two bells, and there they still sat, and there was but little conversation after this. Three bells struck, and they sat on, so motionless that Ishmael hoped they had fallen asleep on their watch and he refrained from addressing them, four bells struck. It was two o'clock in the morning, and dead silence reigned in the ladies cabin. Everyone except Ishmael had gone to sleep.

Suddenly through the stillness a cry rang -- a joyous cry. It was the voice of the man on the lookout, and it shouted forth:

"Land ho!"

"Where away?" called another voice.

"On her lee bow!"

"What do you make of it?"

"Cape Safety lighthouse!"

A shout went up from the passengers on deck. A simultaneous, involuntary, joyous three times three.

"Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!"

A devout thanksgiving ascended from Ishmael's heart.

"Thank God!" he fervently exclaimed.

It was indeed an infinite relief.

Then he turned to wake up his wearied fellow -- passengers who had fallen asleep in such uneasy attitudes -- arms folded on the top of the table and heads fallen on the folded arms.

"Ladies! Dear ladies! Dear Mrs. Kerr! You may retire to rest now. We have made Cape Safety." he said, going from one to another and gently rousing them.

They were a little bewildered at first, and while they were still trying to understand what Ishmael was saying, the Scotch professor burst into the cabin and enlightened them by a coup-de-main.

"You may all undress and go to bed now, and sleep in peace, without the least fear of a shipwreck."

"Eh, pa! Is it so -- are we safe?" cried the elder daughter.

"Safe as St. Paul's. We know where we are now. We have made Cape Safety lighthouse. Go to bed and sleep easy. I'm going now. Come along, Jeanie." said the doctor to his old wife.

"Not until I have shaken hands with this good young gentleman. I don't know what would have become of us, doctor, after you frightened us so badly, if it had not been for him. He stayed with us and kept up our hearts, God Bless, you, young sir!" said Mrs. Dr. Kerr, fervently pressing Ishmael's hands.

Ishmael himself was glad to go to rest, so he only stopped long enough to bid goodnight to Judge Merlin and Mr. Brudenell, who had just awakened to a sense of security, and then he went to his stateroom and turned in.

Thoroughly wearied in mind and body, he had no sooner touched his pillow than he fell into a deep sleep -- a sleep that annihilated several hours of time.

He slept until he was aroused by a tremendous shock -- a shock that threw him, strong, heavy, athletic man as he was, from his stateroom berth to the cabin floor. He was on his feet in a moment, though stunned, confused, and amazed. The poor ship was shuddering throughout her whole frame like a living creature in the agony of death.

Men who had been violently thrown from their berths to the floor were everywhere picking themselves up and trying to collect their scattered sense. Crowds were hurrying from the cabins and saloons to the deck. The voices of the officers were heard in quick, anxious, peremptory orders, and those of the crew in prompt, eager, terrified responses.

And through all came shrieks of terror, anguish, and despair.

“The ship has struck!” “We are lost!” “God have mercy!” were the cries.

Ishmael hurried on his clothes and rushed to the deck, here all was panic, confusion, and unutterable distress. The fog had cleared away, day was dawning, and there was just light enough to show them the utter hopelessness of their position.

The steamer had struck a rock, and with such tremendous force that she was already parting amidships, her bows were already under water and the sea was breaking over her with fearful force.

How had this happened, with the lighthouse ahead? Was it really a lighthouse, or was it a false beacon?

No one could tell no one had time to ask. Everybody was fast crowding to the stern of the ship, the only part of her that was out of water. Some crawled up, half drowned, some dripping wet, some scarcely yet awake, acting upon the blind impulse of self-preservation.

Two of the lifeboats had been forcibly reft away from the side of the ship by the violence of the shock and carried off by the sea. Only two remained, and it was nearly certain that they were not of sufficient capacity to save the crew and passengers.

But the danger was imminent -- a moment's delay might be fatal to all on board the wreck, not an instant was to be lost.

The order was quickly given:

“Get out the lifeboats!”

And the sailors sprang to obey.

At this moment another fatality threatened the doomed crew -- it was what might have been expected, the steerage passengers, mostly a low and brutalized order of men, in whom the mere animal instinct of love of life and fear of death was predominant over every nobler emotion, came rushing in a body up the deck, and crying with one voice:

“To the lifeboats! To the lifeboats! Let us seize the lifeboats and save ourselves!”

Everyone else was panic-stricken. It is in crises like this that the true hero is developed. With the bound of a young Achilles Ishmael seized a heavy iron bar and sprang to the starboard gangway, where the two remaining boats were still suspended, and standing at bay, with limbs apart, and eyes threatening, and his fearful weapon raised in his right hand, he thundered forth:

“Who tries to pass here dies that instant! Stand off!”

Before this young hero the crowd of senseless, rushing brutes recoiled as from a fire.

He pursued and secured his victory with a few nodes:

“Are you men? If so, before all, let helpless childhood, and feeble womanhood, and venerable age be saved, and then you. I demand of you no more than I am willing to do myself. I will be the last to leave the wreck. I will see you all in safety before I attempt to save my own life.

So great is the power of heroism over all, that even these brutal men, so selfish, senseless, and impetuous a moment before, were now subdued, nay, some of them were inspired and raised a Hurrah.

Fear of a possible reaction among the steerage passengers, however, caused old Captain Mounts, Judge Merlin, Hr. Brudenell, Dr. Kerr, Jem Morris, the Jew, and several others to come to the support of Ishmael. Among the rest the captain of the steamer came.

“Young man, you have saved all our lives.” he said.

Ishmael slowly bowed his head.

“I hope God has saved you all.” he answered.

The sailors were now busy getting down the lifeboats. It was but the work of a very few minutes.

“Let the ladies and children be brought forward,” ordered the captain. And the women and children, some screaming, some weeping, and some dumb with terror, were lowered into one of the boats.

“Now the nearest male relatives of these ladies to the same boats.” was the captain’s next order.

And Dr. Kerr and about a dozen other gentlemen presented themselves, and were lowered into the boat, where they were received with-hysterical cries of mingled joy and fear by the women.

And all this time the sea was dashing fearfully over the wreck, and at every interval the planks of the deck upon which they clung was felt to swell and sway as if they were about to part.

“Now the old men!” shouted the captain.

Ishmael took Judge Merlin by the arm, and with gentle coercion passed him on to the sailors, who lowered him into the boat.

Then Captain Mountz and several other old men, and many who were not old, but were willing to appear so “for this occasion only” followed and were passed down to the boat.

Then Ishmael looked around in concern. The professor was lingering in the background.

“Come here, Morris? You certainly fall under the heed of old men.” he said, taking the professor by the elbow and gently pushing him forward.

“No, young Ishmael, no! I cannot go! The boat is as full as can be packed now -- or at least it won't hold more than one more, and you ought to go, and I will not crowd you out.” urged the old man, with passionate earnestness.

And all this time the sea was thundering over the wreck and entirely drenching everybody, and nearly drowning some.

“Morris, I shall not in any case enter the boat, there is no time, when scores of lives are in imminent danger, to argue the point. But -- as you never disobeyed me in your life before, I now lay my commands on you to go into that boat.” said Ishmael, with the tone and manner of a monarch.

With a cry of despair the professor let himself drop into the lifeboat to be saved.

The boat was now really as full as it could possibly be crammed with safety to its passengers. And it was detained only until a cask of fresh water and a keg of biscuit could be thrown into it, and then it gave way for the second lifeboat to come up to the gangway. This second boat was rapidly filled. But when it was crowded quite full there still remained upon the breaking wreck Ishmael and ten of the younger steerage passengers.

“Come! Come!” shouted the captain of the steamer who was in the second boat. “Come, Mr. Worth! There is room for one more! There is always room for one more.”

“If there is room for one more, take one of these young men, my companions.” replied Ishmael gravely.

“No! No! If we cannot take all, why take one of their number instead of taking you. Mr. Worth? Come! Come! Do not keep us here! It is dangerous!” urged the captain.

“Pass on! I remain here!” answered Ishmael steadfastly.

“But that is madness. What good will it do? Come, quick! Climb up on the bulwarks and leap down to the boat! You are young and active, and can do it! Quick!”

“Give way! I shall remain here.” replied Ishmael, folding his arms and planting himself firmly on the quaking deck, over which the sea incessantly thundered.

“Ishmael! Ishmael! My son! My son! For Heavens sake -- for my sake, -- come! Cried Mr. Brudenell, holding out his arms in an agony of prayer.

“Father,” replied the young man, in this supreme moment of fate not refusing him that paternal title, “father,” he repeated, with impassioned fervor, “father, every one of these men has the precedence of me, in the right to be saved. For when I intervened between them and the lifeboats they were shout to seize, I promised then that I would see every one of them to safety before attempting to save myself, I promised them that I would be the very last man to leave the wreck. Father, they confided in me, and I will keep my word with them.”

“But you cannot save their lives!” cried Mr. Brudenell with a gesture of desperation.

“I can keep my word by staying with them.” was the firm reply.

While Ishmael spoke there was a rapid consultation going on among his companions on the wreck. Then one of them spoke for the rest:

“Go and save yourself, young gentleman. We give you back your promise.”

Ishmael turned and smiled on them with benignity, as he replied sweetly:

“I thank you, friends. I thank you earnestly. You are brave and generous men. But from such a pledge as I have given, you have no power to release me.”

“Ishmael! Ishmael, for Bee’s sake!” cried Judge Merlin, stretching his arms imploringly towards the young men. “For Bee’s sake, Ishmael think of Bee!”

“Oh, I do! I do think of her!” said the young man, in a voice of impassioned grief “God bless her! God forever bless her! But not even for her dear sake must I shrink from duty. I honor her too much to live to offer her the dishonored hand of a craven. Tell her this, and tell her that my last earthly thought was hers. We shall nest in eternity.”

“Ishmael, Ishmael!” simultaneously cried Judge Merlin and Mr. Brudenell, as they saw a tremendous sea break in thunder over the wreck, which was instantly whirled violently around as in the vortex of a maelstrom.

“Give way! Give way! Quick! For your lives! The wreck is going and she will draw down the boats!” shouted Ishmael, waving his arm from the whirling deck.

The sailors on board the lifeboats laid themselves vigorously to their oars, and rowed them swiftly away from the whirling eddy around the settling wreck. The passengers on board the boats averted

their heads or veiled their eyes -- they could not look upon the death of Ishmael.

But as the boats bounded away, something leaped from one of them with the heavy plunge of a large dog into the water, and the next instant the old gray head of Jim Morris was seen rising from the foaming waves. He struggled towards the deck, clambered up its sides and sunk at Ishmael's feet, embracing his knees, weeping, and crying:

"Young Ishmael! Master! Master! Oh, let me die with you?"

Speechless from profound emotion, Ishmael stooped and raised the old man and clasped him to his bosom with one arm, while with the other he waved adieu to the rapidly receding lifeboats.

MURDER MISCARRIES

Excerpt from "The Bridal Eve" – serialized as "Rose Elmer" 1881

By E.D.E.N. Southworth

Among the spectators in the courtroom, who had awaited in the greatest anxiety the result of the trial, was the poor little dark-eyed woman, whom we have known as the Widow Russel, but who was, as has been shown, the wife of the miscreant, Thugsen.

She had remained closely veiled, and carefully concealed in an obscure corner of the courtroom, whence, unnoticed, she had watched the progress of the trial. When the verdict of the jury was rendered it was her half-smothered shriek that broke the breathless silence of the room.

After the sentence of death was pronounced, and before the crowd began to disperse, she crept out, in a sort of horror of amazement, and bent her tottering steps toward Giltspur Street, murmuring as she went along:

"Guilty! Death! Oh, Heaven! To suspect what I suspect, nay, to know what I know, and to let him die! To let him die -- so young, so good, so guiltless! To let him die, when a word from me would save him! It would be murder! I should have his death and hers, too, for she would not survive him, on my soul! I, too, should be a murderer -- should become a murderer by merely living with a murderer. Should, I catch blood-guiltiness as one catches the plague, from contamination! It must not be! I cannot rest as the confidante of crime! The innocent life shall not-be sacrificed through me!"

“But, then, the unnatural horror of having to give information against -- oh, my God -- against the husband of my youth -- the father of my children! But there is a law of righteousness above all the laws of nature, and that I must obey!”

“This evening I will tell him all I know, and give him the opportunity of acting right! Then, if he does not, I must deliver him up to justice! I must do it! It will kill me, but I must do it!”

Those who saw her reeling along the street and muttering to herself thought her drunk or mad.

At length, half conscious of the suspicious glances turned toward her, the distracted woman stopped an empty hackney coach that was passing by, and entered it, telling the driver to take her to Berwick Street. It was at some distance from Old Bailey, in the densest, poorest and most crowded portion of London.

She pulled the check-string, and stopped the carriage at the entrance of a street.

She alighted, paid the fare, dismissed the carriage and proceeded on foot up the narrow and over-crowded street, until she paused before a tall, three-storied, red brick house, in rather better preservation than those in its immediate neighborhood. She entered this house with a pass-key, carefully locked the door, and turned to another door on the right of the front passage, that admitted her into a suite of three rooms, the front room being the bedchamber, the middle room the parlor and the back room the kitchen.

She laid off her bonnet and shawl in the front chamber, and went into the parlor, and set the table for dinner, and then proceeded to the kitchen to prepare the meal, for there seemed to be neither servant nor child on those premises. This small, solitary woman appeared to be the only denizen of this great, lonely house. Yet this was really not so, for when an hour had passed there was the sound of a key turning in the lock of the street door, followed by the entrance of a man, who fastened the door after himself, and advanced along the passage into the parlor, where the little woman stood cutting bread at the table.

“Well, Ruth, is dinner ready?” inquired the man, throwing his hat upon a side table and sinking into an armchair.

“No, Robert, the soup will need to simmer half an hour longer.”

“You’ve been out.”

“Yes, Robert, I’ve been at the Old Bailey.”

“And what the demon had you to do at the Old Bailey?” asked the man, losing somewhat of his habitual good temper and courtesy.

"I have been seeing a guiltless man tried for willful murder, I have been hearing an innocent man condemned to die the death of a murderer!" said Ruth, solemnly.

"The duce! The jury were quick about their work! Is he sentenced?"

"He is sentenced to die for a crime of which he is perfectly innocent."

"Innocent! Innocent! What the foul fiend do you mean by harping upon that word? How the demon do you know that he is innocent?" inquired Thugsen, angrily.

"By knowing who is guilty." replied Ruth.

"How! What the d----! Oh, the woman has lost her wits!" exclaimed Thugsen, with a light laugh.

"No, Robert Thugsen, I have not lost my wits! Would to Heaven that I had! I know what I am saying! I know that Cassinove is innocent of the crime for which he is condemned to die, by knowing too well who is guilty." said Ruth, solemnly.

"Who the demon, then, is guilty? Speak, woman -- speak at once!" exclaimed Thugsen, desperately, starting up and confronting her.

She arose from her seat, and stood before him as pale as death, firm as fate, and, placing her hand upon his chest, and looking him full in the face, she said:

"Robert Thugsen, 'thou art the man!"

He started back, appalled as though the angel of destruction had suddenly risen before him.

He gazed upon the accusing spirit, faltering for the words:

"How? What? How the demon could you know that?" Then, suddenly recovering his self-possession, and with it his consummate hypocrisy he burst into a loud laugh. He threw himself into a chair, exclaiming:

"Oh, you are mad! Mad as a March hare! You shall have a strait-jacket and a shower bath."

"Do not mock my words, or your own position." she said, sinking again into her seat. But as he continued laughing and rubbing his hands as in the highest enjoyment of an excellent jest, she resumed, gravely:

"Yes, I feel that you have a right to laugh me to scorn, a reason to despise me thoroughly, for you know that wherever you have been concerned I have been culpably weak, so weak, indeed, as to suffer myself to be drawn-into a labyrinth of deepest guilt, not, indeed, as an active agent, for that never could have been but as an accessory."

“What can the fool mean?” interrupted Thugsen.

“I mean this. After the unnatural and nameless crime that shocked the whole civilized world from its propriety, that made you the outlaw of nature as well as of society, from the charge of which you fled the world for years, giving yourself out as dead, after all this I had the folly to receive you back again, yes, though at first I fled from you, as you had fled from your kind, though I hid my children from you, as I would have hid then from a lion or leper, though fear, and horror, and loathing struggled desperately with the old affection, yet when you sought me I received you back again, and in doing so plunged my soul in the deepest guilt, by loading it with all your subsequent crimes.”

“Crimes, woman!” exclaimed Thugsen, sternly.

“Yes, crimes! You need not glare at me with that ferocious glance. I am not frightened, I am too far gone in wretchedness for that. The stings of conscience that goad me to speak as I do, and to act as I must, hurt me more than all you could say or do.” said Ruth, with the firmness of despair.

“What crimes are there that you dare to impute to me?” demanded Thugsen, in the low, deep, stern tones of concentrated and suppressed passion.

“The assassination of Sir Vincent Lester, the cruel deception of the young Duchess of Beresleigh, the deadly peril of the guiltless Ferdinand Gassinove, about to die for your deed, and the awful sorrow of his innocent young wife. Heavily, heavily press this guilt upon my soul, and, Robert Thugsen, I must cast it off. Justice must be done! The innocent shall be cleared!” said Ruth, solemnly.

While she spoke, his aspect gradually changed. With much effort he restrained his emotions, and assumed a calmness he was far from feeling. When she ceased to speak, he said:

“You have charged me with these crimes. What reason or authority have you for doing so?”

“Your own words.”

“My own words?”

“Your own words.”

“What the fiend do you mean by that?”

“Robert Thugsen, the conscience that sleeps throughout the day, awakes at night. When all your other senses are wrapped in forgetfulness, that sense of guilt remembers and raves.”

“In other words, after a heavy supper, I have had bed dreams, and mutter incoherent words in my sleep.”

“Yes, you talk in your sleep.”

“And upon the ramblings of an uneasy dream you would find a charge of guilt. Have you never dreamed of doing things that you really never could do -- flying for instance?” he inquired, disdainfully.

“Robert, your midnight ravings are not like the innocent fantasies of other dreamers. Now is it only a vague shadow of guilt and scent of blood that shrouds your nightly slumbers. No, each night you rehearse, again and again, all the horrors of that midnight murder!” cried Ruth, shuddering.

Thugsen could control the tones of his voice -- but not the current of his blood, but the deepening twilight of that sombre room concealed the unearthly pallor of his face, or the demonic glare of his eyes, as he inquired, in a tone of assumed calmness:

“So I dream every night that it was I who murdered Sir Vincent Lester? And my dreams seem to be quite dramatic, worthy even of your accurate remembrance. Now I always forget my dreams, so that I should like to hear you relate this very remarkable one.”

“It is too horrible!”

“What, the dream?”

“To hear you trifle so with such tremendous guilt!”

“It was but a dream, you know!”

“Ah!” she exclaimed, shuddering.

“You don’t believe me?”

“No!”

“Tut! Come, draw up the curtain! Let us see what this very dramatic dream is.” he said disdainfully.

“Oh! Do not thus play with your crimes and their consequences. You pretend not to credit me, and you treat my words lightly! But you shall soon know better. You shall hear from my lips the dream in which each night you re-enact the tragedy at Lester House, revealing not only your acts, but your passions and emotions -- your hatreds, fears, hopes, and purpose -- speaking out what then you only thought and felt!”

“Come, this is the prologue! Let us have the play.” said Thugsen ironically.

“Listen, then, Robert Thugsen,” continued Ruth, in the tone and manner of one speaking under a powerful inward impulse, “each night, in dreams, again you lurk around Lester House, hiding in the deepest shadows and from your lair, like some wild beast crouching to spring upon its prey, you watch the watch until it has passed, then swiftly and silently you dart down the basement stairs, you examine all the doors and windows, and find one window carelessly left

unfastened, you raise it and creep into the kitchen, closing it after you, you pause, watching and listening for the slightest sound or movement in that dark, still house, but hearing nothing, and believing all the household to be buried in repose, you draw from your pocket a bunch of well-filed skeleton keys, and creep up the stairs and along the passages, a single bolt or bar shot into its place would have arrested your progress, and saved you from crime and him from death, and you wonder as you steal along on your fatal errand that neither bolt nor bar obstructs your way, you do not know that the butler, whose last duty it is to secure the house, has not yet retired to bed, but is shut up in his office, casting up his accounts, oh, fatal carelessness! And so silently and breathlessly you glide like a serpent from landing to landing, until you reach the fatal chamber door.”

“You pause again, and standing breathless, there you watch and listen, all is dark and still without and within. You insert the key, silently turn the lock, and enter.”

“How still the room -- the only sound the ticking of the ormolu clock upon the mantelpiece. By the dim light of the taper burning on the hearth, you see the closely drawn curtains of your victim’s bed. You creep toward it, and standing beside it, bend your head and listen, by the regular breathing of the sleeper you know that he is sound asleep, you push aside the curtain and look upon his face, it is a face full of care and sorrow even in its repose, he is lying upon his right side, fronting you, his left arm is thrown up over his head, his motion has slightly disordered the bedclothes, so that his left side is entirely exposed, there is nothing to shield his heart from your dagger’s point, if the fiend had prepared his victim for the sacrifice, he could not have been readier for your hand.”

“One blow and all will be over! But one or all will be lost! You clutch your dagger with a firmer grasp, and bend until you can hear the monotonous beating of that heart you mean to stop forever! You direct your dagger’s point -- one firm plunge, and the deed of death is done!”

“But the blow that kills first awakens! The wounded man bounds up! Glares upon you with his dying and affrighted eyes -- shrieks forth that alarm of ‘murder’, that arouses the household! You fly! With the swift silentness of the serpent you slip through the halls, glide down the stairs and so effect your escape. Satan favors you, for as you emerge again from the kitchen window, the watch has just passed, they have not heard that smothered cry of murder, nor through the

thick walls and closed shutters can they hear the hurrying footsteps of the roused household as it pours on toward the chamber of murder!"

"You escape, you think your deed of darkness hid forever from the world, but, Robert Thugsen, I repeat, each night, when sleep has closed your eyes and sealed your senses, conscience awakes and re-enacts every minute scene of that tragedy, speaking out, what then you only thought and felt, as well as what you saw and did!" concluded Ruth, shuddering.

Could she have seen his face as she finished her narrative she had not trusted her own life in his hands for another hour, but the gathering shadows of night concealed it from her, but his tones were light and bantering, as he said:

"A singular psychological phenomenon! What else? That cannot be all upon which you found your opinion of my guilt?"

"It is enough, yet it is not all."

"What more?"

"The dagger!"

"The dagger?"

"Yes, Robert Thugsen, the dagger that was found in Mr. Cassinove's hand, but with which you had done the murder!"

"What the fiend are you driving at now? What about the dagger? Come, what about it?"

"It was produced today in court, I recognized it, it was yours!"

"Upon my word, you are trying to get up quite a case against me. Anything more?"

"Alas, yes!"

"Out with it, then! Let us have the whole at once. 'Never make two bites at a cherry.' You, I think, have made ten at this, and have not finished it yet. Come, what more?"

"The sheath."

"Oh, ha, ha, ha! this woman will certainly be the death of me! Ha, ha, ha. First it was the dagger, now it is the sheath! Ha, ha, ha! Well, what about the sheath?"

"The night upon which you came to me at the cottage in Chelsea you threw off your coat upon the bedroom floor, I took it to hang it --"

"As you would like to hang its owner." interposed Thugsen with a sardonic laugh.

"As I raised it up, something fell from the pocket, I stooped to see what it was, and picked up the empty sheath of your antique Toledo poniard, it was crusted thickly with dried blood---"

“Why the demon did you not speak of it at the time, then?” interrupted Thugsen.

“Horror transfixed me. When I recovered the use of my faculties, fear for you sealed my lips.”

“Fear for me?”

“Yes, fear for you! Laura Elmer, as I told you, was my-guest that night. Her suspicions were already aroused against you, she might have overheard any words that passed between us. So I hid away the tell-tale sheath, and should never have spoken of it again, had not young Cassinove been convicted. Oh, Robert! The guiltless must not die for the guilty!”

“Hush!” exclaimed Thugsen, with difficulty controlling his emotions. “From the accident of the empty dagger’s sheath and a disturbed dream, you think that you have made out a very strong case against me, it is nonsense, but let that pass for the present. You have also charged me with the deception of the young Duchess of Beresleigh, now, what have I to do with the Duchess of Beresleigh, or the Duchess of Beresleigh to do with me?”

“You should have nothing to do with her, more than a spirit of darkness has to do with an angel of light, and yet you have twice cruelly deceived her.”

“Explain yourself, Ruth, by my soul I do not understand you.”

“Thugsen, you have buried me here, in the obscurest part of London. I am as completely isolated in this crowded quarter of the town as though I were in the midst of the deserts of Asia, or the forests of America. I speak to no person -- I see no paper -- and you think that I am, therefore, ignorant of what goes on in the great world, and so I am, to a great extent. But this morning a piece of an old newspaper fell into my hands. It came around a parcel that I had brought from the draper’s. Your name attracted me to a paragraph, and there I read a short account of the charge brought against the young Duchess of Beresleigh.”

She paused, and held her hand to her side, as though in pain.

“Go on.” said Thugsen.

“I discovered by that account that you had cruelly deceived her twice. First when she was a young girl, and you were hiding in her foster-mother’s house, you passed yourself off for a single man, and attempted to consummate a marriage with her, a crime, the completion of which was prevented by the timely arrival of a constable in search, of you. And now, when years have passed, and she is the lawful wife of one of England’s proudest peers, you,

knowing that you have not the smallest shadow of a claim upon her notice, dare to demand her as your wife, and threaten her with criminal prosecution if she repulses you. Of course you are aware that the high-born lady can know nothing of the poor obscure woman, who owns the position into which you would-force her, nor could you suppose that any accident would reveal the wrongs of the Duchess of Beresleigh to me."

Thugsen started, and walked once or twice up and down the floor, then passing before her, and speaking with as much calmness as he could assume, he said:

"To whom have you gossiped of these matters?"

"To no one on earth."

"So help you heaven?"

"So help me heaven, in my dying hour."

"It is Well, I believe you," said Thugsen, taking his seat near her, and continuing "you seem to have taken the demon into your council else I do not see how you ever contrived to amass such an amount of evidence against an innocent man, and that man your husband and now what do you mean to do with it?"

"Nothing, Robert, until you have fled the country."

"And if I do not choose to fly from a false charge?"

"It will not be a false charge."

"But if I do not choose to fly?"

"Then your blood be upon your own head, for whether you fly or not, Robert Thugsen, I must do my duty, It will break my heart, but I must do it."

"What duty? How will you do it?" inquired the man, in a low stifled voice.

"Listen. This is Thursday. Cassinove is ordered for execution on Monday, On Monday, also, the trial of the Duchess of Beresleigh comes on. I will give you until tomorrow evening to make your escape. You will have plenty of time to reach Dover, and take the boat for Calais. Tomorrow evening I will place all the facts with which I am acquainted in the hands of the police."

"Ha, ha, ha! Why, even if the evidence were worth anything, it could not be taken from you. You are my wife."

"I know, and my evidence against you could not be received in court, but I could give what information I possess to the police, and let them follow it up as they please. I must do this, it will kill or craze me, but I must."

"And this is your final resolution?"

"It is, oh, Robert, fly and save yourself! I have still a little money left, you can take it all."

"Come, I have had no dinner to-day, light the lamps and see to the soup."

With a deep sigh at his apparent insensibility, Ruth lighted a lamp and sat it upon the table, and then went out to attend to the dinner.

Thugsen made a turn or two around the room, muttering to himself:

"She knows too much, she knows too much, her own lips have spoken her doom, it can be delayed no longer. Yet, poor Ruth! But she is so very wretched, that it would be a mercy to put her out of her misery, by some quick and easy process, especially as it must be done if I am to have Rose restored to me, yet I would have spared her as -- long as possible, spared her forever, if I could have smuggled her off somewhere. Allons, a willful woman must have her way it is her fault, and not mine."

Here he drew from his pocket a very small vial filled with a grayish white powder, and muttering:

"I have had this quietus about me for the last ten days, without having the courage to administer it to the only one on earth who loves me. But now that very one, besides being the greatest obstacle to my worldly advancement in life, is, also, the most dangerous enemy to my safety. Her life or mine must fall. Hell, self-preservation is the first law of nature. It will soon be over, she will not suffer much, and then-why, then I shall be at peace--." He suddenly ceased muttering, and closed his hand upon the little vial as he heard the approaching footsteps of his doomed wife.

Ruth came in, bearing in each hand a basin of soup. She sat one down beside her own plate at the head of the table and the other beside his, at the foot. Then she returned to the kitchen for something else.

As soon as she had left the room, Thugsen went to the table and poured the contents of the little vial into her basin of soup, saw the powder dissolve, and then immediately went into the adjoining bedroom to destroy the vial. He looked around, and seeing a hole in the plastering, dropped it through, where it fell into some inaccessible depth in the wall.

Meanwhile, he heard Ruth moving about the dining room and arranging the dishes upon the table. He paused a moment to compose himself, and then returned.

"Your dinner is quite ready, Robert." said Ruth, sitting down at the table.

He took his seat and commenced eating his soup. Presently he looked up at Ruth.

Ruth was looking down upon hers, and delicately skimming it, and dropping the scum into a waste plate.

"What is it?" he inquired, uneasily.

"Only a little soot-fallen upon my soup." she replied, beginning to eat.

He was reassured. Soot was black, the powder he had poured into the soup was white, and besides, he had seen it dissolve. He watched her eating. Poor creature! notwithstanding her troubles, she ate rather eagerly, for she was faint and hungry from long fasting.

"She enjoys her last meal without a thought that she partakes of it in her last hours. Well, after all, how much easier her death will be than if she should live to die what is called a natural death -- a long, painful illness, slowly wearing out her life. It will soon be over, I hope, even in that little time, she will not suffer much." thought Thugsen, as he watched her.

"You do not eat your soup, there is no soot fallen into yours?" inquired Ruth.

"No, there is none in mine." replied Thugsen, with a hidden significance, as he felt to and rapidly finished his soup.

Ruth removed the empty basins, and began to carve the roasted fowl that formed the next course. Thugsen watched her for some signs of approaching illness.

There was none as yet. Ruth finished carving, and set his favorite pieces before him.

"Are you not going to take any?" inquired Thugsen.

"No, the soup was quite enough for me, I felt faint and hungry when I set down, but my appetite has gone off with the soup."

"You are not well?" said Thugsen.

"I am as well as I can be, with the anxiety that oppresses my mind, Robert."

"Ah! You are still resolved to inform the police of what you suspect to-morrow?"

"Alas! Yes, Robert! But not until you escape."

"I think you will not." said Thugsen, laughing defiantly, but in the midst of that laugh, his face turned pale, and a shiver passed over his frame.

"What is the matter?" asked Ruth.

"A sudden qualm, you upset me with your diabolical nonsense, it is over now -- bring in the pudding."

Ruth cleared the table, and went out into the kitchen to fetch the pudding.

When she returned she found Thugsen white and convulsed in his chair. She sat down the dish, and ran to him, exclaiming:

"Robert! Robert! What is the matter?"

"Ill, ill, ill to death!" gasped the sufferer, while a cold sweat bathed his palid forehead.

Ruth poured out a glass of brandy, and held it to his lips.

"No! Water! Water! My throat is burning up!" whispered Thugsen, hoarsely.

Ruth hastily poured out a glass of water, and held it to him.

He drank it eagerly, swallowing with difficulty. It seemed to revive him for an instant, he sat up, wiped his brow, stared at Ruth with that confusion of mind that extreme pain and exhaustion produces and exclaimed:

"Woman! What is the meaning of this? You are not ill!"

"No, Robert, only anxious."

"But I am: How is that?"

"I do not know, Robert. You talk, and act, and look so strangely come into your room and lie down, and perhaps you will be better." said Ruth, gently taking his arm to assist him.

But a third, and more violent fit of pain and shivering seized the man, his features were blackened and distorted, his limbs drawn up and convulsed.

Ruth was dreadfully frightened, she supported his heed, and wiped away the icy sweat from his brow. As soon as the fit passed, and he regained the power of utterance, he glared at Ruth, and shrieked:

"You have poisoned me! You have poisoned me! Murderess, you shall swing for it."

"I--I--Robert? I poison you? But you don't know what you are saying -- you are so ill. Come, let me help you to bed, and I will run for the apothecary over the way." exclaimed the terrified wife.

"Traitor! Murderess! You have poisoned me and you know it!"

"Oh, Robert!"

"Answer me, woman! What did you do to the soup while I was in the bedroom?"

"Nothing, on my soul and honor."

"Nothing? Think -- answer, on your life, as you would answer on the last day! What did you do to the soup?"

“Nothing, as I hope for salvation. I changed the basins, but I never did anything to the soup.”

“You changed the basins!” cried Thugsen, in horror.

“Yes, when I came in I noticed, for the first time, that a little soot fell into yours, and knowing you to be very dainty with your eating, I changed the basins -- giving you mine, and taking yours. You saw me afterward, at dinner, taking the soot off.”

While she spoke he sat listening, with a face blanched by bodily pain, horror and despair.

Ruth gazed at him in consternation exclaiming:

“There was no ill in what I did, Robert, was there? I did it for your sake. Oh, Robert, what is the meaning of all this?”

“You have poisoned me! This is it—poi----”

His words, arrested by a spasm, were followed by convulsions so violent that he fell from the chair, and writhed upon the floor.

Ruth dared delay no longer. She rushed from the house, and ran across the way, into the apothecary’s shop, exclaiming:

“Oh, Mr. Jones, for heaven’s sake, come immediately! I do fear my husband is dying in a fit!”

“Your husband? Who is he? Has he been drinking?” inquired the druggist.

“No, no, he fears it is poison! But it cannot be that, and I do not know what it is! Oh, do, pray sir, be quick! It is just over the way.” cried Ruth distractedly.

Mr. Jones took his hat, and immediately attended Ruth.

They found Thugsen extended on the floor, bathed in a cold sweat and nearly speechless through exhaustion.

Mr. Jones knelt down by his side, and began to examine his condition, while Ruth, in an agitated manner, recounted the first symptoms of his attack.

“It seems a case of poisoning by strychnine madam.” said the chemist, rising.

“Yes, yes, it was in the soup, she prepared it.” gasped Thugsen with difficulty.

“I will return again immediately.” said the chemist leaving the room and hurrying over to his shop, whence he dispatched his shop boy to fetch a policeman. Then, calling his assistant to attend him, he returned to the house, bringing with him the most powerful known antidote to strychnine.

With the help of his young man, he undressed Thugsen and put him to bed, when the convulsions returned with accelerated violence.

As soon as these had left, and he was able to swallow, the druggist administered the antidotes, which procured the patient a short respite from acute suffering.

Meanwhile, the shop boy arrived with the policeman.

"Take that woman in charge, and see that she does not make her escape. I suspect her of having poisoned her husband!" said Mr. Jones to the officer.

"Me! Me!" cried Ruth, in dismay.

He charges you, with much apparent reason, madam! You alone prepared the dinner he was taken ill after eating it, and before leaving the table. His illness is the effect of strychnine. You will, therefore see the propriety of your being kept in restraint until the affair can be investigated." said Jones.

"But I am innocent, indeed, I am, sir. If he has taken strychnine, I cannot imagine how it could have got into the soup, unless -- oh! my Lord!" exclaimed Ruth, sinking into her chair and covering her face with her hands, as a suspicion of the truth, for the first time, glanced into her mind.

"Officer, do your duty." said the chemist, coldly.

The policemen advanced toward Ruth.

She held up her hands deprecatingly, saying:

"Oh, do not remove me from this room! I am innocent. He is my husband let me stay to watch him. I will not run away, indeed I will not."

"If you please, sir, I can take the woman into custody and keep her in this room all the same." urged the policeman.

"Very well, see that she does not elude you and make her escape." said Jones.

And the policeman told Ruth that she was his prisoner, and must not leave the room, and then he took up his position at the door.

"He seems easier. Don't you think he may get over it, sir?" said Ruth, wringing her hands.

"Impossible to tell, ma'am. It will be a severe struggle between the powers of life and death. The very antidotes I am obliged to administer are terribly exhausting." said the cautious chemist.

As if to prove his words true, Thugsen was again seized with frightful convulsions. His face was black, and his frame horribly distorted.

"Oh, Heaven, how dreadful! Had you better not send for more advice?" Pleaded Ruth, weeping and wringing her hands.

“I shall, if this continues, to save myself from the burden of a sole responsibility, but it is just as well to tell you that no one can do more for him than I am doing now.” said Mr. Jones, preparing another dose. It was administered, and the patient again sunk into the quietude of exhaustion.

The night was now far advanced. By the orders of Mr. Jones, who took upon himself the direction of affairs, the house was closed up. The chemist’s assistant and the shop boy sat nodding in the adjoining parlor to be ready in case they were wanted. The policeman leaned against the frame of the communicating door, and dozed upon his watch. Mr. Jones and poor Ruth sat the one on the right and the other on the left of the bed.

The quiet of the house was presently interrupted by the wild tossing and groaning of the patient, who presently fell into the most frightful convulsions, turning black in the face, foaming at the mouth, throwing his body into the most horrible contortions, sometimes in his fierce agony nearly throwing himself from the bed, and ever, as the momentary relaxation of the nervous tension permitted him to speak, breaking into the fiercest accusations against Ruth, or the most abject entreaties for mercy or for life.

“Oh, Jones, for the love of Heaven, do what you can to save me. I am not fit to die. Ah, murderess, you shall pay for this! Oh, Heaven, what tortures! Ah, wretch, this is your doing, and you shall not escape!”

Thus he revealed the agony of his body, and the anguish and terror of his soul, until the returning stricture of his throat for a time strangled out both speech and breath.

The poor wife and the apothecary both did all they could to relieve and soothe the suffering man. But these last convulsions were so much more violent and long-continued than any which had preceded them and were followed by a fit of such deep prostration, that Mr. Jones could no longer hesitate to call in additional advice. He went into the adjoining parlor, and woke up his assistant, saying:

“You must go immediately and bring a physician -- Dr. Clark, if possible. And you must also bring a magistrate. I fear very much that we shall have to get the dying deposition of this unfortunate man.”

Young Benson quickly aroused himself and departed on his errand.

Day was dawning as he left the house.

Poor Ruth, forgetting that she was a prisoner got up to open the windows and kindle the kitchen fire to prepare breakfast but the policeman stopped her at the door. And when she explained the

nature of her errand, the chemist told her that he would send his shop boy to the next pastry cook's and have breakfast brought for the watchers.

And Ruth returned to her seat on the right of the bed, where she quietly remained for perhaps an hour, at the end of which time the whole party was disturbed by a loud knocking at the street door.

Mr. Jones answered the knock, and admitted a magistrate, who said he had come in answer to a message left for him an hour ago.

Mr. Jones conducted Mr. Humphreys, the magistrate, into the parlor, and having seen him seated, related the facts of this poisoning as far as they had come to his knowledge.

"The suffering man is now reposing, and I think he had better not be disturbed just now. The suspected woman is also in his room, but in charge of a policeman."

"Send the woman in here. I would like to question her." said the magistrate.

Ruth came in at the summons, and gave exactly the same account of her husband's attack of illness that she had given to the apothecary.

"How long has she been in your custody?" inquired the magistrate of the policeman.

"Since last night, sir."

"Then, if there is a secure room in this house, she had better be confined in it."

Mr. Jones undertook a survey of the upper stories of the house, and reported a comfortable and secure bedroom on the second floor front.

And to this room poor Ruth was conducted and there confined.

Meanwhile the Physician, Dr. Scott, arrived, and was shown into the chamber of death.

The patient was lying extended, in a state of deep prostration, with the cold sweat beaded upon his brow.

Dr. Scott looked into his face, felt his pulse, sighed, and, in answer to the eager, low-toned questions of the bystanders, said:

"He seems to be sinking fast."

Then the doctor wrote a prescription, and dispatched the young chemist's assistant over to the shop to make it up. Then this was brought and administered the suffered seemed to be temporarily revived.

"How are you, sir?" said the magistrute, approaching the bed.

"I do not know! Oh, doctor! Doctor! Am I dying?" exclaimed Thugsen, turning his eyes, wild with excitement, upon the physician.

"Oh, No! Certainly not, far from it." replied Dr. Scott, telling the professional white lie.

"Do you feel equal to giving an account of this attack of illness?" inquired the magistrate.

"Doctor, am I in any danger of death?" said Thugsen, turning again to the physician.

"By no means, my good friend." said the doctor.

"Can you give us any account of your illness?" persisted the magistrate.

"Yes, my wife and I had a quarrel. She prepared the soup, I ate of it, and immediately sickened. She, poor, erring creature, where is she now?"

"Confined in a room upstairs."

"Keep her there, lest she do more mischief." said Thugsen, who hoping for his own life, felt anxious that Ruth should be kept in confinement, lest she should put in execution her resolve to inform against himself.

"Are you willing to make oath to all you have said?" inquired the magistrate.

"Yes, for it is the truth." answered Thugsen, who soon after fell into horrible convulsions that lasted fifteen minutes, and left him lying extended without sense or motion.

"I warn you, Dr. Scott, that if you think this man is in extremis, you should inform him of his condition, that he may know it when called upon to make his deposition." said the magistrate.

"Sir, when the patient is in extremis, I will tell him so, until then, and while there is the slightest possibility of saving life it is my duty to encourage him to the utmost." replied the physician, who was now taxing all his medical skill for the help of the sufferer.

Breakfast for the watchers now arrived from the pastry cook's, and interrupted further conversation. A cup of coffee a muffin and an egg were sent up to Ruth. The policeman took them.

"How is Captain Thugsen now?" inquired Ruth, as he entered the room.

"I am forbidden to hold any conversation with you, mum." replied the policeman, setting down the tray and leaving the room.

And Ruth was abandoned to solitude and intolerable suspense. Troubles seemed gathering thicker and thicker over her head. Her sorrows seemed more than any human creature could bear. She fully

understood now how it was that her husband had taken the poison, which he must have prepared for herself, and awful gratitude to God for her almost miraculous deliverance from the snare struggled in her heart, with grief for the man that she still loved, despite his crimes and cold-blooded villainy, and fear for the consequence to herself and the children, should Thugsen die persisting in his charge against her. And these sorrows and anxieties for herself and her loved ones were mingled with others, no less acute, for Ferdinand Gassinove and his unhappy wife. The hours there were to lead him to the scaffold were swiftly passing away, and she who, possessing the guilty secret, might save him, must not breathe it because it would send her dying husband from his death-bed to a jail, and indeed, could not divulge it because she was confined under lock and key, and prevented from holding conversation with anyone.

“Surely no sorrows were ever equal to my sorrows.” cried Ruth, dropping on her knees beside the bed, burying her face in the coverlet, and praying and sobbing by turns.

Meanwhile, as the day waned, the shadows of death gathered thickly around the wretched Thugsen. Medical aid had been unavailing except to ameliorate his acute suffering. Every succeeding fit of convulsion had been more violent, and followed by deeper prostration. The powerful organization that had held out so long against the action of the poison was beginning to show signs of speedy dissolution. The gray hue of death overspread his countenance, the damp, of death condensed thickly upon his icy brow, yet his brain, like that of one dying under the effects of strychnine, was singularly clear.

From time to time he spoke as follows:

“Where is my guilty wife? Keep her closely confined. Let her talk with none.”

He was always reassured and soothed.

At sunset all hope of his life was abandoned even by the physician, who had “Hoped against hope.” He could no longer, in conscience, withhold from the wretched patient, the knowledge of his true condition. He bent over him, and whispered gently:

“Captain Thugsen --.”

The sufferer flared open his eyes, and glared wildly at the speaker.

“Try to compose yourself, and if you have any worldly affairs to settle --.”

“You think I am dying!” shrieked the unhappy man, starting up and falling back exhausted.

“Life and death are in the hands of God.” said the doctor, gently.

“You said I would not die.”

“Nor would you, if the utmost human skill could avail to save you.”

“Oh, it must -- it must save me! I am not fit to die. Save me, doctor, save me!”

And here followed pleadings of the most abject terror and anguish of a guilty and cowardly soul on the brink of-eternity.

The doctor administered a composing draught, and then said gravely and sweetly:

“Captain Thugsen, the world has reported you, with what justice I know not, a great sinner, but this I would say to you that there is mercy for the greatest. Use the short space that is left you in making restitution, so far as you can, for any wrong you may have committed, and then turn for mercy to Him with whom time and space is as nothing, and sincere repentance the one condition of pardon.”

“I cannot! Oh, I cannot!” exclaimed the wretched man, falling into the most frightful ravings of remorse and despair.

It was long before the united efforts of the physician and the magistrate could soothe his anguish.

“How many hours have I to live?” was then the question of the fast-sinking man.

“You may survive until morning, yet I would advise you to attend at once to any worldly business that you may have at heart, so that your last moments may be entirely given to the care of your soul.” said the physician, solemnly.

“Then let everyone leave the room except the magistrate, who will hear my statement, and the doctor, who will reduce it to writing.” said Thugsen, in a feeble voice.

The chamber was cleared as he desired, a small table was drawn up beside the bed, a lighted lamp, a copy of the Holy Scriptures and writing materials were placed upon it, and the physician and the magistrate seated themselves beside it.

The magistrate duly administered the oath, the doctor prepared his paper and pens, and Roberth Thugsen, in a feeble voice, often sinking into utter faintness, commenced his statement.

A LAMP IS LIGHTED

(Bio of Maria Cummins)

By Andre Norton



Maria Cummins

Of all the Scribbling Women Maria Cummins presents the greatest problem to a modern biographer. Her work is known – “The Lamplighter”, a hundred years after its first appearance is still to be found on library shelves -- but the woman herself remains a mystery. A handful of bare facts constitute the record of her short life.

She was born on April 9, 1827, in Salem, Massachusetts, the daughter of Judge David Cummins and Mehitable (Cane). The Cummins family was one long established in New England. Judge Cummins traced his ancestry directly to Isaac Cummings, of Scottish blood, who held an estate of some value in Ipswich prior to 1658.

And Judge Cummins, himself, had literary leanings. He seems to have early detected in his daughter a talent for writing and eagerly fostered it. Her formal schooling was gained at the fashionable school kept by Mrs. Charles Sedgwick in Lenox.

She was but a little past twenty when she began to write stories and articles which were accepted by the Atlantic Monthly and other serious periodicals. There appears to have been no financial goad, Maria produced fiction because her desire for expression was strong enough to overcome that prejudice against learned ladies which was just beginning to lift.

When she was twenty-seven her masterpiece, "The Lamplighter", was published, It was an instant success, and sections of it could stand in full equality beside the best work of the day. The first few chapters dealing with the slums of Boston can be favorably compared with Dickens' pictures of the London underworld. Forty thousand copies were sold within the first eight weeks of publication. And this first edition, issued by John P. Jewett in Boston, was not unattractive. The fat volume was bound in block cloth, gold-stamped on the back-strip with the title and the picture of the lamplighter, his ladder in his hands, the whole priced at seventy-five cents.

Though the novel may not have suited the tastes of the fastidious critics of the day, (Hawthorne's comment was: "What is the mystery of these innumerable editions of the 'Lamplighter', and other books neither better nor worse? -- Worse they could not be, and better they need not be when they sell by the 100,000?") but the public greeted it eagerly. It had an intricate plot, good descriptions, two pairs of lovers parted for most of the tale but satisfactorily reunited in the end, and a touch of mystery, as well as the required orphan heroine. For background it ranged from the slums of Boston, through the country estates of wealth to the fashionable spa of Saratoga -- all this and sentiment too!

In May 1855 it was parodied in Harpers, the parody probably written by N. P. Willis or one of his New York circle. But this only aided to its fame, not detracted.

Marie Cummins was to write three more novels, "Mabel Vaughan", a story of New York society life, mannered and without much of the melodrama which heightened and speeded the action of "The Lamplighter", (Though the scene of the young "Bloods" of the city racing their fancy sleighs through the first great snowfall of the year lingers in the reader's memory.) interesting because of its careful depiction of social customs of the 1850s, "El Fureidis", a highly imaginative tale of Palestine and Syria, and "Haunted Hearts", a sentimental tale first published anonymously.

The Cummins family moved from Salem to Dorchester where they bought a colonial house on Bowdein Street, set in grounds extensive enough to include both a fish pond and a large orchard. Here Maria lived an extremely quiet and retired life with apparently no contact with her literary contemporaries. Her name is mentioned in no biographical sketch of feminine writers of her day, nor in any accounts of the period. To all evidence her world was bound by the house, the garden, and her church.

Soon after the publication of "Haunted Hearts" in 1864 she became a complete invalid and her painful illness was ended by death, at the age of thirty-nine, on October, first, 1866.

As a novelist she possessed one outstanding gift -- that of characterization. Had not the deadening influence of the "moral" not weighted down all her books she might have occupied a far higher place in literary history. "The Lamplighter" is still readable and as late as 1915 libraries were ordering copies in quantity for circulation.

Her love interest is the most anemic to be found in a so-called "domestic" or "sentimental" novel. In a regular pattern from book to book her hero is briefly introduced near the beginning of the narrative and then whisked away (in "The Lamplighter" he is shipped to India, in "Mabel Vaughan" to the wilds of the Illinois frontier) until very close to the end, when he is as speedily returned for no other reason than to provide the long suffering heroine with the only happy ending possible in a Victorian novel -- marriage. The sterility of the love affairs only underlines the accurate pictures of relationships between two generations -- parents and children -- or between women upon which depend most of the drama of her books.

In "The Lamplighter" Gertie's undercover battle with the selfish daughters of her blind friend's stepmother is acutely and reasonably described to the last detail. In fact Gertie's rise from her sordid beginning to her Sturdy-independence in life is believable and holds interest throughout. One critic says bluntly that: "But if the student of taste wants to know thoughts and feelings of the majority who lived during Franklin Pierce's administration he will find it in 'The Lamplighter' rather than in Walden."

The novels abound in accounts of travel -- was this the wishful thinking of one who was tied to a narrow scene by ill health and perhaps family cares? In "Mabel Vaughan" there is a detailed description of s visit to Niagara Falls and of a-long, tedious journey westward. While characters in "The Lamplighter" spend weeks in New York and at Saratoga.

Social problems are not ignored. The alcoholism of Mabel Vaughan's brother and his slow moral collapse is outlined in a perfectly credible sequence of events. Miss Cummins' heroines are independent to a degree not to be found in many books of the same date. Gertie, the orphan of "The Lamplighter", chooses to alienate her wealthy benefactor on a matter of principle, believing it to be far better to be self supporting in a humble position than to enjoy the pleasures of travel and wealth as a parasite.

Translated into German and French and circulated widely abroad, "The Lamplighter" must have presented a new facet of American life to Europeans. What Susan Warner did for the country districts, Maria Cummins equaled for the urban centers -- portraying contemporary American life in a realistic manner.

CHILD OF THE SLUMS

Excerpt from "The Lamplighter" 1854

By Maria Cummins

It was growing dark in the city. Out in the open country it would be light for half-an-hour or more, but in the streets it was already dusk. Upon the wooden doorstep of a low-roofed, dark, and unwholesome looking house, sat a little girl, earnestly gazing up the street. The house-door behind her was close to the side-walk, and the step on which she sat was so low that her little unshod feet rested on the cold bricks. It was a chilly evening in November, and a light fall of snow had made the narrow streets and dark lanes dirtier and more cheerless than ever.

Many people were passing, but no one noticed the little girl, for no one in the whole world cared for her. She was clad in the poorest of garments, her hair was long, thick, and uncombed, and her complexion was sallow, and her whole appearance was unhealthy. She had fine dark eyes, but so large did they seem, in contrast to her thin, puny face, that they increased its peculiarity without increasing its beauty. Had she had a mother (which, alas! she had not), those friendly eyes would have found something in her to praise. But the poor little thing was told, a dozen times a-day, that she was the worst-looking child in the world, and the worst-behaved. No one loved her, and she loved no one, no one tried to make her happy, or cared whether she was so. She was but eight years old, and alone in the world.

She loved to watch for the coming of the old man who lit the streetlamp on front of the house where she lived, to see his bright torch flicker in the wind, and then when he so quickly ran up his ladder, lit the lamp, and made the place cheerful, a gleam of joy was shed on a little desolate heart, to which gladness was a stranger, and though he had never seemed to see, and had never spoken to her, she felt, as she watched for the old lamplighter, as if he were a friend.

"Gerty," exclaimed a harsh voice within, "have you been for the milk?"

The child made no answer, but gliding off the doorstep, ran quickly round the corner of the house, and hid a little out of sight. "What's become of that child?" said the woman who spoke, and who now showed herself at the door.

A boy who was passing, and had seen Gerty run, and who looked upon her as a spirit of evil, laughed aloud, pointed to the corner which concealed her, and walking off with his head over his shoulder, to see what would happen next, said to himself, "She'll catch it!"

Gerty was dragged from her hiding-place, and with one blow for her ugliness and another for her impudence (for she was making faces at Nan Grant), was dispatched down a neighborhood alley for the milk.

She ran fast, fearing the lamplighter would come and go in her absence, and was rejoiced on her return, to catch a sight of him just going up his ladder. She stood at the foot of it, and was so engaged in watching the bright flame, that she did not observe the descent of the man, and, as she was directly in his way, he struck against her, and she fell upon the pavement. "Hello, my little one!" exclaimed he, "How's this?" as he stooped to lift her up. She was on her feet in an instant, for she was used to hard knocks, and did not mind a few bruises. But the milk was all spilt.

"Well, now, I declare!" said the man, "That's too bad, -- what'll mammy say?" and looking into Gerty's face, he exclaimed, "My, what an odd-face child! -- looks like a witch!" Then seeing that she looked sadly at the spilt milk, he kindly said, "She won't be hard on such a mite as you are, will she? Cheer up, my ducky! Never mind if she does scold you a little, I'll bring you something tomorrow that you'll like, you're such a lonely looking thing. And if the old woman makes a row, tell her I did it -- but didn't I hurt you? What are you doing with my ladder?"

"I was seeing you light the lamp," said Gerty, "and I ain't hurt a bit, but I wish I hadn't spilt the milk."

Just then Nan Grant came to the door, saw what had happened, and pulled the child into the house, amidst blows and profane, brutal language. The lamplighter tried to appease her, but she shut the door in his face. Gerty was scolded, beaten, deprived of her usual crust for her supper, and shut up in her dark attic for the night. Poor little child! Her mother had died in Nan Grant's house five years before, and she had been tolerated there since, not so much because when Ben Grant went to sea he bade his wife to keep the child until his return -- he had been gone so long that no one thought he would ever come back -- but because Nan had reasons of her own for doing so, and, though she considered Gerty a dead weight upon her hands she did not care to excite inquiries by trying to dispose of her elsewhere.

When Gerty found herself looked up for the night in the great dark garret -- Gerty feared and hated the dark -- she stood for a minute perfectly still, then suddenly began to stamp and scream, tried to beat the door open, and shouted, "I hate you, Nan Grant! Old Nan Grant, I hate you!" But nobody came near her, and she grew more quiet, lay down on her miserable bed, covered her face with her little thin hands, and sobbed as if her heart would break. She wept until she was exhausted, and then gradually she became still. By-and-by she took her hands from her face, clasped them together convulsively, and looked up at a little glazed window near the bed. It was but three panes of glass unevenly stuck together. There was no moon, but as Gerty looked up, she saw shining upon her one bright star. She thought she had never seen anything half so beautiful. She had often been out of doors when the sky was full of stars, and had not noticed them much, but this one, all alone, so large, so bright, and yet so soft and-pleasant-looking, seemed to speak to her, to say, "Gerty! Gerty! Poor little Gerty!" She thought it seemed like a kind face, such as she had a long time ago seen, or dreamt about. Suddenly she asked herself, "Who is it? Somebody lit it! Some good person, I know. Oh, how could he get up so high?" And Gerty fell asleep, wondering who lit the star.

Poor little, untaught, benighted soul! Who shall enlighten thee?
Thou art God's child, little one! Christ died for thee. Will he not send
man or angel to light up the darkness within, to kindle a light that
shall never go out, the light that shall shine through all eternity!

Gerty awoke the next morning, not as children wake who are roused by merry voices, or by a parent's kiss, who have kind hands to help them dress, and knowing that a nice breakfast awaits them, but she heard harsh voices below, Nan's son and two or three boarders had come in to breakfast, and Gerty's only chance of obtaining any share of the meal was to be on the spot when they finished, to take that portion of what remained which Nan might shove towards her. So she crept downstairs, waited a little till they had all gone out, and then she slid into the room. She met with a rough greeting from Nan, who told her she had better drop that ugly, sour look, eat some breakfast, if she wanted it, but keep out of her way, and not come near the fire, where she was at work, or she'd get another dressing, worse than she had last night. Gerty had not looked for any other treatment, she was not disappointed, but, glad of the miserable food left for her on the table, she swallowed it eagerly, and she took her

little old hood, threw on a ragged shawl, which had belonged to her mother, and ran out of the house.

Back of Nan Grant's house was a large wood and coal-yard and beyond that a wharf, and the thick, muddy water of a dock. Gerty might have found many playmates in this place. She sometimes did mingle with the boys and girls, ragged like herself, who played in the yard, but not often -- there was a league against her among the children of the place. Poor, ragged, and miserably cared for, as they were, they knew that Gerty was more neglected and abused. They had often seen her beaten, and daily heard her called an ugly, wicked child, told that she belonged to nobody, and had no business in anyone's house. Thus they felt their advantage, and scorned the little outcast. Perhaps this would not have been the case if Gerty mingled freely with them, and tried to be on friendly terms, but, while mother had lived, she did her best to keep her little girl away from the rude herd. Perhaps that habit of avoidance, but still more a something the child's nature, kept her from joining in their rough sports, after mother's death had left her to do as she liked. She seldom had any intercourse with them. Nor did they abuse her except in words, for, singly, they dared not cope with her -- spirited, sudden, and violent, she had made herself feared as well as disliked. Once a band of them had united to vex her, but, Nan Grant, coming up just when one of the girls was throwing the shoes, which she had pulled from Gerty's feet, into the dock, had given girl a sound whipping, and put them all to flight. Gerty had not had a pair of shoes since, but Nan Grant, for once, had done her a good service and the children now left her in peace.

It was a sunshiny, though a cold day, when Gerty sought shelter in wood-yard. There was an immense pile of timber in one corner of the yard, almost out of sight of any of the houses. Of different lengths, the planks formed, on one side, a series of irregular steps. Near the top was a little sheltered recess, overhung by some long planks, and forming a miniature shed, protected by the wood on all sides but one, and from that looking out upon the water.

This was Gerty's haven of rest, and the only place from which she was never expelled. Here, during the long summer days, the little lonesome child sat brooding over her griefs, her wrongs, and her ugliness, sometimes weeping for hours. Now and then she would get a little more cheerful, and enjoy watching the sailors as they laboured on board their vessels, or rowed to and fro in little boats. The warm

sunshine was so pleasant, and the men's voices so lively, that the poor little thing sometimes forgot her woes.

But summer was gone, and the schooner and the sailors were gone too. The weather was cold, and for a few days had been so stormy, that Gerty had to stay in the house. Now, however, she made the best of her way to her little hiding-place, and, to her joy, the sunshine had dried up the boards, so that they felt warm to her bare feet, and was still shining so bright and pleasant, that Gerty forgot Nan Grant, forgot how cold she had been, and how much she dreaded the long winter. Her thoughts rambled about sometimes, but, at last, fixed upon the kind look and voice of the old lamplighter, and then, for the first time since the promise was made, it came into her mind that he had engaged to bring her something the next time he came. She could not believe he would remember it, but still he might -- he seemed to be so sorry for her fall.

What would he bring? Would it be something to eat. Oh, if it were only some shoes! Perhaps he did not notice that she had none.

Gerty resolved to go for her milk in season to be back before it was time to light the lamp, so that nothing should prevent her seeing him. The day seemed very long, but darkness came at last, and with it came True -- or rather Truman Flint, for that was the lamplighter's name, Gerty was on the spot, though she took good care to elude Nan Grant's observation.

True was late about his work that night, and in a great hurry. He had only time to speak a few words to Gerty, but they were words coming straight from a good and honest heart. He put his great, smutty hand on her head in the kindest way, told her how sorry he was that she' got hurt, and said, "It was a plaguy shame she should have been whipped, too, and all for a spill o' milk, that was a misfortin', and no crime."

"But here," added he, diving into one of his huge pockets, "here's the critter I promised you. Take good care on't, don't 'buss it, and I'm thinking if it's like the mother I've got at home, 'twon't be a little ye'll be likin' it, 'fore you're done. Good-bye, my little gal." and he shouldered his ladder and went off, leaving in Gerty's hands a little grey-and-white kitten.

Gerty was so taken by surprise on finding in her arms a live kitten, something so different from what she had anticipated, that she stood irresolute, what to do with it. There were a many cats, of all sizes and colors, inhabitants of the neighboring houses and yards, frightened-looking-creatures, which, like Gerty herself, ran about, and hid

themselves among the wood and coal, seeming to feel, as she did, great doubts about their having a right to be anywhere. Gerty had often felt a sympathy for them, but never thought of trying to catch one, and carry it home, for she knew that food and shelter were grudgingly accorded to herself, and would not be extended to her pets. Her first thought, therefore, was to throw the kitten down, and let it run away. But while she was hesitating, the little animal pleaded for itself in a way she could not resist. Frightened by its long journey in True Flint's pocket, it crept from Gerty's arms up to her neck, clung there, and, with feeble cries, seemed to ask her to take care of it. Its eloquence prevailed over all fear of Nan Grant's anger. She hugged pussy to her bosom, and resolved to love and feed it, and keep it out of Nan's sight.

How much she came in time to love that little kitten no words can tell. Her little, fierce, untamed, impetuous nature had hitherto expressed itself only in angry passion, sullen obstinacy, and hatred. But there were in her soul fountains of warm affection, a depth of tenderness never yet called out, and a warmth and devotion of nature that wanted only an object upon which to expend themselves.

So she poured out such a wealth of love on the poor kitten as only such a desolate little heart had to spare. She loved the kitten all the more for the care she was obliged to take of it, and the trouble it gave her. She kept it, as much as possible, out among the boards, in her favorite haunts. She found an old hat, in which she placed her hood, to make a bed for pussy. She carried it a part of her scanty meals, she braved for it what she would not have done for herself -- for almost every day she abstracted from the kettle, when she returned with the milk for Nan Grant, enough for pussy's supper, at the risk of being discovered and punished, the only risk or harm the poor ignorant child knew or thought of, in connection with the theft, for her ideas of abstract right and wrong were utterly undeveloped. So she would play with her kitten for hours among the boards, talk to it, and tell it how much she loved it. But in the very cold days she was puzzled to know how to keep herself warm out of doors, and the risk of bringing the kitten into the house was great. She would then hide it in her bosom, and run with it into her little garret. Once or twice, when she had been off her guard, her little playful pet had escaped from her, and scampered through the lower rooms and passage. Once Nan drove it out with a broom, but there cats and kittens were not so uncommon as to excite inquiry.

How was it that Gerty had leisure to spend all her time at play? Most children of the poorer class learn to be useful while they are young, Nan Grant had no babies, and being a very active woman, with but a poor opinion of children's services, she never tried to find employment for Gerty, much better satisfied for her to keep out of her sight, so that, except for her daily errand for the milk, Gerty was always idle -- a fruitful source of unhappiness and discontent.

Nan was a Scotchwoman, not young, and with a temper which, never good, became worse as she grew older. She had seen life's roughest side, and had always been a hard-working woman. Her husband was a carpenter, but she made his house so uncomfortable, that for years he had followed the sea. She took in washing, and had a few boarders, by which she earned what might have been an ample support for herself, had it not been for her son, a disorderly young man, spoiled in early life by his mother's management, and who, though a skillful workman, squandered his own and a large part of his mother's earnings. Nan had reason for keeping Gerty, though they were not so strong as to prevent her often being inclined to get rid of the encumbrance.

Gerty had had her kitten about a month, when she took a violent cold from exposure to damp and rain, and Nan, fearing she would have trouble with her, if she became seriously ill, bade her stay in the house and keep in the warm room. Gerty's cough was fearful, and she would have sat by the fire all day, had it not been for her anxiety about the kitten. Toward night the men were heard coming in to supper. Just as they entered the door of the room where Nan and Gerty were, one of them stumbled over the kitten, which had shyly come in with them.

"Cracky? What's this here?" said the man whom they called Jemmy, "A cat, I vow! Why, Nan, I thought you hated cats!"

"Well, 'tan't none o' mine, drive it out." said Nan.

Jemmy tried to do so, but puss, making a circuit round his legs, sprang forward into the arms of Gerty.

"Whose kitten's that, Gerty?" said Nan.

"Mine!" said Gerty, bravely.

"Well, how long have you kept cats?" asked Nan. "Speak! How came you by this?"

Gerty was afraid of the men. She did not like to confess to when she was indebted for the kitten, she knew it would only make matters worse, for Nan had never forgiven True Flint's rough expostulation against her cruelty in beating the child for spilling the milk, and Gerty

could not think of any other source to which she could ascribe the kitten's presence, or she would not have hesitated to tell a falsehood, for her limited education had not taught her a love or habit of truth where a lie would better serve her turn, and save her from punishment. She was silent, and burst into tears.

"Come," said Jemmy, "give us some supper, Nan, and let the gal alone." Nan complied, ominously muttering, however.

The supper just finished, an organ-grinder began to play at the door. The men stepped out to join the crowd, who were watching the motions of the monkey that danced to the music. Gerty ran to the window to look out. Delighted with the gambols of the creature, she gazed until the man and the monkey moved off -- so intently, that she did not miss the kitten which had crept down from her arms, and, springing upon the table, began to devour the remnants of the repast. The organ-grinder was not out of sight when Gerty saw the old lamplighter coming up the street. She resolved to watch him light his lamp, when she was startled by a sharp and angry exclamation from Nan, and turned just in time to see her snatch her darling kitten from the table. Gerty sprang to the rescue, jumped to a chair, and caught Nan by the arm, but she firmly pushed her back, and threw the kitten half across the room. Gerty heard a sudden splash and a piercing cry. Nan had flung the poor creature into a large vessel of steaming hot water. The poor animal writhed an instant, and then died in torture.

Gerty's anger was roused. Without hesitation, she lifted a stick of wood, and violently flung it at Nan, and it struck the woman on the head. The blood started from the wound, but Nan hardly felt the blow, so greatly was she excited against the child. She sprang upon her, caught her by the shoulder, and opening the house-door, thrust her out. "Ye'll never darken my doors again, yer imp of wickedness!" said she, leaving the child alone in the cold night.

When Gerty was angry, she always cried aloud -- uttering a succession of piercing shrieks, until she sometimes quite exhausted her strength. When she found herself in the street she commenced screaming -- not from fear of being turned away from her only home, and left alone at nightfall to wander about the city, and perhaps freeze before morning -- she did not think of herself for a moment. Horror and grief at the dreadful fate of the only thing she loved in the world entirely filled her little soul. So she crouched down against the side of the house, her face hid in her hands, unconscious of the noise she was making. Suddenly she found herself placed on Truemen Flint's ladder, which leaned against the lamp-post, True held her high

enough to bring her face opposite his, and see his old acquaintance and asked her what was the matter.

But Gerty could only gasp and say, "Oh, my kitten! My kitten!"

"What: the kitten I gave you? Wall, have you lost it? Don't cry! There – don't cry!"

"Oh, no! Not lost! Oh, poor kitty!" and Gerty cried louder and coughed so dreadfully, that True was frightened for the child, Making every effort to soothe her, he told her she would catch her death of cold, and she must go in the house.

"Oh, she won't let me in!" said Gerty. "And I wouldn't go if she would."

"Who won't let you in -- your mother?"

"No! Nan Grant."

"who's Nan Grant?"

"She's a horrid, wicked woman, that drowned my kitten in bilin' water."

"But where's your mother?"

"I ha'n't got none."

"Who do you belong to, you poor little thing?"

"Nobody, and I've no business anywhere!"

"With whom do you live, and who takes care of you?"

"Oh, I lived with Nan Grunt, but I hate her. I threw a stick of wood at her head, and I wish I had killed her!"

"Hush! Hush! You mustn't say that! I'll go and speak to her."

True moved to the door, trying to draw Gerty in, but she resisted so forcibly that he left her outside, and walking into the room, where Nan was binding up her head with a handkerchief, told her she had better call her little girl in, for she would freeze to death out there.

"She's no child of mine," said Nan, "she's the worst little creature that ever lived, it's a wonder I have kept her so long, and now I hope I'll never lay eyes on her again -- and what's more I don't mean to. She ought to be hung for breaking my head! I believe she's got an ill spirit in her!"

"But what'll become of her?" said True. "It's a fearful cold night, How'd you feel, marm, if she was found to-morrow morning all friz up on your doorstep?"

"How'd I feel? – That's your business, is it? S'posen you take care on her yourself, Yer make a mighty deal o' fuss about the brat. Carry her home, and try how yer like her. Yer've been here a talkin' to me about her once afore, and I won't hear a word more. Let other folks see to her, I say I've had more'n my share, and as to her freezin', or

dyin' anyhow, I'll risk her. Them children that comes into the world nobody knows how, don't go out of it in a hurry. She's the city's property -- let 'em look out for her, and you'd better go, and not meddle with what don't consarn you."

True did not wait to hear more. He was not used to an angry woman, who was the most formidable thing to him in the world. Nan's flashing eyes and menacing attitude warned him of the coming tempest, and he hastened away. Gerty had ceased crying when he came out, and looked into his face with the greatest interest.

"Well," said he, "she says you shan't come back."

"Oh, I'm so glad!" said Gerty.

"Bot where'll you go to?"

"I don't know! P'raps I'll-go with you, and see you light the lamps."

"But where'll you sleep tonight?"

"I don't know where, I haven't got any home. I'll sleep out where I can see the stars. But it'll be cold, won't it?"

"My goodness! You'll freeze to death, child."

"Well, what'll become of me then?"

"The Lord only knows!"

True looked at Gerty in perfect wonder. He could not leave her there on such a cold night, but he hardly knew what he could do with her at home, for he lived alone, and was poor. But another violent coughing decided him to share with her his shelter, fire, and food, for one night, at least. "Come," said he, "with me." and Gerty ran along by his side, never asking wither.

True had a dozen lamps to light before his round was finished. Gerty watched him light each with as keen an interest as if that were the only object for which she was in his company, and it was only after they had walked on for some distance without stopping, that she inquired where they were going.

"Going home." said True.

"Am I going to your home?" said Gerty.

"Yes," said True, "and here it is."

He opened a little gate leading into a small yard, which stretched along the whole length of a two-storied house. True lived in the back part of it, and both went in. Gerty was trembling with the cold, her little bare feet were quite blue with walking on the pavements. There was a stove in the room, but no fire in it. True immediately disposed of his ladder, torch etc. in an adjoining shed, and bringing in a handful of wood, he lit a fire. Drawing an old wooden settle up to the fire, he threw his great-coat over it, and lifting little Gerty up, he placed her

gently on the seat. He then prepared supper, for True was an old bachelor, and did everything for himself. He made tea, then, mixing a great mugfull for Gerty, with plenty of sugar and all his milk, he brought a loaf of bread, cut her a large slice and pressed her to eat and drink as much as she could, for he concluded from her looks, that she had not been well fed, and so much pleased did he feel in her enjoyment of the best meal she had ever had, that he forgot to partake of it himself, but sat watching her with a tenderness which proved that he was a friend to everybody, even to the most forlorn little girl in the world.

Trueman Flint was born in New Hampshire, but, when fifteen years old, being left an orphan, he had made his way to Boston, where he supported himself by whatever employment he could obtain, having been a newspaper-carrier, a cab-driver, a porter, a wood-cutter, indeed, a jack-at-all-trades, and so honest, capable, and good-tempered had he always shown himself, that he everywhere won a good name, and had sometimes continued for years in the same employ. Previous to his entering upon the service in which we find him, he had been a porter in a large store, owned by a wealthy and generous merchant, being one day engaged in moving some casks, he was severely injured by one of them falling upon his chest. For a long time no hope was entertained of his recovery, and when he began to mend, his health returned so gradually that it was a year before he was able to be at work again. This sickness swallowed up the savings of years, but his late employer never allowed him to want for any comforts, provided an excellent physician, and saw he was well taken care of.

But True had never been the same man since. He rose from his sick-bed, debilitated and apparently ten years older, and his strength so much enfeebled, that he was only fit for some comparatively light employment. It was then that his kind master obtained for him the situation of lamplighter, and he frequently earned considerable sums by sawing wood, shoveling snow, and other jobs. He was now between fifty and sixty year old, a stoutly-built man, with features cut in one of nature's rough molds, but expressive of much good nature. He was naturally reserved, lived much by himself, was little known, and had only one crony, the sexton of a neighboring church.

But we left Gerty finishing her supper, and now she is stretched upon the wide settle, sound asleep, covered up with a warm blanket and her head resting on a pillow. True sits beside her, her little, thin hand lies in his great palm -- occasionally he draws the blanket closer

about her. She breathes hard, suddenly she gives a nervous start, then speaks quickly, her dreams are evidently troubled. True listens intently to her words, as she exclaims eagerly? "Oh, don't! Don't drown my kitty!" and then, again, in a voice of fear, "Oh, she'll catch me! she'll catch me!" once more, and now her tones are touchingly plaintive and earnest --.

"Dear, dear good old maul let me stay with you, do let me stay!"

Tears are in Trueman Flint's eyes, he lays his great head on the pillow and draws Gerty's little face close to his, at the same time smoothing her long uncombed hair with his hand. He, too, is thinking aloud -- what does he say? "Catch you! -- No, she shan't! Stay with me! -- so you shall, I promise you, poor little birdie! All alone in this big world -- and so am I, Please God, we'll bide together."

RIVER STEAMER FIRE

Excerpt from "The Lamplighter" 1854

By Maria Cummins

Several times since they left Albany, had the boat passed and repassed another of similar size, with living freight, and bound in the same direction. Occasionally, during their headlong course, the continuity of the two boats excited serious alarm. They were racing, and racing desperately. Some few, regardless of danger, watched with pleased eagerness the mad career of rival ambition, but by far' the majority of the company, who had reason and sense, looked on in indignation and fear. The usual stopping places on the river were either recklessly passed by, or only paused at, while, with indecent haste, passengers were shuffled backwards and forwards at the risk of life and limb, their baggage (or somebodys' else) unceremoniously flung after them, the panting, snorting engine in the meantime bellowing with rage at the check thus unwillingly imposed upon its freedom.

Gertrude sat with her hand locked in Emily's, anxiously watching every indication of terror, and endeavoring to judge from the countenances and words of her most intelligent-looking fellow-travelers the actual degree of their insecurity. Emily, rendered through her acute hearing, conscious of the prevailing alarm, was calm, though very pale, and from time to time questioned Gertrude

concerning the vicinity of the other boat, a collision with which was the principal cause of fear.

At length their boat for a few moments distanced its competitor, the assurance of perfect safety was impressively assorted, anxiety began to be relieved, and most of the passengers gained their wonted composure. Emily looked palid, and, as Gertrude fancied, a little faint. "Let us go below, Emily," she said, "it appears now to be very quiet and safe."

Gertrude opened her traveling-basket, which contained their luncheon. It consisted merely of such dry morsels as had been hastily collected and put up at their hotel, in Albany, by Dr. Jeremy's direction. Gertrude was hesitating which she could recommend to Emily, when a waiter appeared, bearing a tray of refreshments, which he placed upon the table.

"This is not for us," said Gertrude. "You have made a mistake."

"No mistake," replied the man, "Orders was for de blind lady and hansum young miss. I only 'beys orders. Anything funder, miss?"

Gertrude dismissed the man with the assurance that they wanted nothing more and then, turning to Emily, asked, with an attempt of cheerfulness, what they should do with this Aladdin-like repast.

"Eat it, my dear, if you can," said Emily, "it is no doubt meant for us."

"But to whom are we indebted for it?"

"To my blindness and your beauty, I suppose," said Emily, smiling. "perhaps the chief steward, or master of ceremonies, took pity on our inability to come to dinner, and so sent the dinner to us."

The sable waiter, when he came to remove the dishes, really looked sad to see how little they had eaten. Gertrude drew out her purse, and after bestowing a fee upon the man, inquired whom she should pay for the meal.

"Pay, miss!" said the man, grinning. "Bless my stars! De gentleman pays for all!"

"Who? What gentleman?" asked Gertrude in surprise.

But before he could reply another waiter appeared and beckoned to his fellow-waiter, who snatched up his tray and trotted off, leaving Gertrude and Emily to wonder who the gentleman might be.

"What time is it?" Asked she, on awakening.

"Nearly a quarter-past three." replied Gertrude, glancing at her watch (a beautiful gift from a class of her former pupils.)

Emily started up. "We can't be far from New York," said she, "where are we now?"

"I think we must be near the Palissdes," said Gertrude, "stay here, I will go and see." She passed across the saloon, and was ascending the staircase, when she was alarmed by a rushing sound, mingled with hurried steps. She kept on, however, and had gained the head of the stairway, when a man rushed past gasping for breath, and shrieking, "Fire! Fire!" a scene of dismay and confusion ensued too terrible for description. Shrieks rose upon the air, groans and cries of despair burst from hearts that were breaking with fear for others, or maddened at the certainty of their own destruction. They who had never prayed before poured out their souls in the fervent ejaculation, "Oh, my God!"

Gertrude gazed around upon every side. Towards the center of the boat, where the machinery, heated to the last degree, had fired the vessel, a huge volume of flames was visible, darting out its fiery fangs, and causing the stoutest hearts to shrink and crouch in horror. She gave but one glance then bounded down the stairs to save Emily. But she was arrested at the very onset. One step only had she taken when she was encircled by two powerful arms, and a movement made to rush with her upon the deck, while a familiar voice gasped forth, "Gertrude! My child! My own darling! Be quiet -- Be quiet! -- I will save you!"

She was struggling madly. "No, no!" shouted she, "Emily! Emily! Let me die! But I must find Emily!"

"Where is she?" asked Mr. Phillips, for it was he.

"There, there," pointed Gertrude -- "in the cabin. Let me go! Let me go!"

He cast one look around him, then said, in a firm tone, "Be calm, my child! I can save you both, follow me closely!"

With a leap he cleared the staircase, and rushed into the cabin, in the furthest corner knelt Emily, her hands clasped, and her face like that of an angel.

Gertrude and Mr. Phillips were by her side in an instant. He stooped to lift her in his arms, Gertrude at the same time exclaiming, "Come, Emily, come! He will save us!" But Emily resisted. "Leave me, Gertrude -- leave me, and save yourselves! Oh!" said she, imploringly, "leave me, and save my child." But ere the words had left her lips she was borne half way across the saloon, Gertrude followed closely.

"If we can cross to the bows of the boat we are safe!" Said Mr. Phillips, in a husky voice.

To do so, however, proved impossible. The centre of the boat was now one sheet of flame. "Good Heavens!" exclaimed he, "We are too late! We must go back!"

With much difficulty they regained the saloon. The boat, as soon as the fire was discovered, had been turned towards the shore, struck on the rocks, and parted in the middle. Her bows were brought near to the land, near enough to almost ensure the safety of such persons as were at the top part of the vessel. But, alas for those near the stern!

Mr. Phillips' first thought was to beat down a window-sash, spring upon the guards, and drag Emily and Gertrude after him, Some ropes hung upon the guards, he seized one and made it fast to the boat, then turned to Gertrude, who stood firm by his side. "Gertrude," said he, "I shall swim to the shore with Emily. If the fire comes too near, cling to the guards, as a last chance hold on to the rope. Keep your veil flying I shall return."

"No, no!" cried Emily. "Gertrude, go first."

"Hush, Emily!" exclaimed Gertrude, "We shell both be saved."

"Cling-to my shoulder in the water, Emily." said Mr. Phillips, utterly regardless of her protestations. He took her once more in his arms, there was a splash, and they were gone. At the same instant Gertrude was seized from behind. She turned and found herself grasped by Isabel Clinton, who kneeling upon the platform, and frantic with terror, was clinging so closely to her as utterly to disable them both, she shrieked out, "Oh, Gertrude! Gertrude! Save me!" but Gertrude thus imprisoned, she was powerless to do anything for her own or Isabel's salvation. She looked forth in the direction Mr. Phillips had taken, and, to her joy, she saw him returning. He had deposited Emily on board a boat, and was now approaching to claim another burden, a volume of flame swept so near the spot where the two alarmed girls were stationed that Gertrude felt the scorching heat, and both were almost suffocated with smoke. An heroic resolution was now displayed by Gertrude. One of them could be saved, for Mr. Phillips was within a few rods of the wreck, it should be Isabel! She had called on her for protection, and it should not be denied! Moreover, Willie loved Isabel. Willie would weep for her loss, and that must not be. He would not weep-for Gertrude -- at least, not much. And, if one must die, it should be she. "Isabel," said she -- "Isabel, do you hear me? Stand up on your feet, do as I tell you, and you shall be saved. Do you hear me, Isabel?"

She heard, shuddered, but did not move. Gertrude stooped down, and wrenching apart the hands which were convulsively clenched, said, sternly, "Isabel, if you do as I tell you, you will be on shore in five minutes, safe and well, but if you stay here we shall both be burnt to death. For mercy's sake, get up quickly, and listen to me!" Isabel rose, fixed her eyes upon Gertrude's calm, steadfast face, and said, "What must I do? I will try"

"Do you see that person swimming this way?"

"Yes."

"He will come to this spot, Hold fast to that piece of rope, and I will let you gradually down to the water. But, stay!" -- and snatching the deep blue veil from her head, she tied it round the neck and flung it over the fair hair of Isabel. Mr. Phillips was within a rod or two. "Now, Isabel, now!" exclaimed Gertrude, "Or you will be too late!" Isabel took the rope, but shrunk back, appalled at the sight of the water. One more hot burst of fire gave her renewed courage to brave a mere seeming danger, and, aided by Gertrude, who helped her over the guards, she allowed herself to be let down to the water's edge. Mr. Phillips was just in time to receive her, for she was so utterly exhausted that she could not have clung long to the rope. Gertrude had no opportunity to follow them with her eye, her own situation was now all-engrossing, the flames had reached her. She could hardly breathe. She could hesitate no longer. She seized the piece of rope, and grasping it with all her might, leaped over the side of the vessel. How long her strength would have enabled her thus to cling -- how long the guards as yet unapproached by the fire, would have continued a sure support for the cable -- there was no opportunity to test, for, just as her feet touched the cold surface of the water, which came foaming and dashing up against the boat, and, as it swept away again, bore with it the light form of Gertrude.

WESTWARD JOURNEY

Excerpt from "Mable Vaughan" 1857

By Maria Cummins

The morning of departure came. The landlord of the hotel had been summoned, and on Mabel's expressing her regret that her funds were only sufficient for her present wants, had cordially assured her

of his perfect readiness to wait Mr. Vaughan's convenience for the settlement of his accounts and had himself accompanied her to the steamboat. Mrs. Hope was there with shawls over her arm, and parcels in her hand, Jack was there with a huge basket of cakes and candy, provided by his thoughtful mother, Lydia was there, her eyes red with crying, and her hands busy in giving the finishing touch to Murray's curls, and Owen Dowst was at the further end of the wharf attending to the baggage.

At length they took their places, Mabel and the boys in the centre of the deck, where they were protected by an ample awning, and Owen modestly choosing a seat at the stern of the boat, where, without intrusion, he could keep the little party in sight. The bell rang and they moved off, -- Jack waved his cap, Mrs. Hope cried out "Good-bye," and Lydia timidly threw a kiss, -- not at Mabel, however, or the boys, but in response to one from the stern of the vessel, where Owen stood, leaning over the railing, and looking backward with a tear in his honest eye.

The first day's journey passed without any important incident. The weather, which had promised to be fair, soon became dull, and at length a pouring rain drove the passengers to the cabin, where for many successive hours, they were crowded together, deprived of fresh air, and with no prospect of being able to venture on deck again.

Here all Mabel's powers were called into action, for the diversion and entertainment of Murray, whose restlessness could ill brook the restraint to which he was subjected in the ladies' saloon, and who continually threatened to stray beyond its limits. Fortunately, however, Owen, who had stationed himself in the vicinity of the door, contrived to decoy him to a place on his knee, and amused and entertained him there until the bell-sounded for dinner. While watching the good-natured youth, as he cut an apple into a fanciful shape, or whittled a figure from a bit of wood, the child was completely happy, an Mabel was freed from all anxiety concerning him.

These ingenious and friendly devices, however, though not lost on Alick, had no power to win him from his position beside Mabel, where, with the basket of provisions at his feet, and his arm passed through the handle of the carpet bag, he sat upright and firm as a sentinel at his post. Whether Father Noah's exhortation, to "behave like a little man" still influenced him, or whether he felt a proud and instinctive consciousness of being in some degree his aunt's

protector, he manifested no sign of weariness, and never once during the day uttered a single complaint.

They dined and supped on board the boat, the thoughtful Owen having secured a seat, and recommended them to the care of one of the waiters, whom he chanced to know, and with whom he afterwards took his own repast at the second table.

But although the gentle motion of the boat, the comparative privacy of the ladies' cabin, and the respectful devotion of her attendant, contrived to render the first day's experience satisfactory to Mabel, and soothing to her anxieties, the interval between the arrival of the party in Albany and their departure in the night-train for Buffalo, was replete with those incidents which constitute the trials of the traveler, and render journeying an uncertain and hazardous experiment. The boat was late at the wharf, there was some delay and difficulty in the distribution of baggage, noise and confusion prevailed in every direction, and before Owen could collect his own boxes and Mabel's trunks, the carriages, loaded with passengers for the cars, had all driven off. Among the coaches that remained, all had one or more occupants bound in a different direction, and none of the drivers would agree to reach the station in season for the western train. Mabel's countenance betrayed her agitation and alarm, Alick looked piteously from one rough face to another, and Murray, dimly comprehending that something was the matter, as usual began to cry.

"Look here -- I say," cried Owen, catching a burly, round-faced fellow by the button, and glancing significantly towards Mabel, "do not disappoint that lady, now, -- it's too bad, -- her folks were hurt, -- one on 'em killed by that bad accident last week, -- and she's a goin' out there to her father, -- don't you be the means of her losin' the train."

What a revulsion of feeling such an appeal will oftentimes produce. "Do tell," said the man. "Now that's a case. Hullo, Sam, have those trunks up here, will yer? Give a hand, boy, -- her father" (in his turn nodding at Mabel) "was killed on the cars last week. Look here, you," speaking to a gayly dressed fop inside, who, seeing his valise unceremoniously thrown to the sidewalk, was already preparing to alight, "this gentleman," (waving his hand toward Sam) "will take you up to the hotel, I'm bound to get these 'tother folks down to the Buffalo cars, in with you, Bub," and he lifted Alick, basket, carpet-bag and all, into the carriage, Mabel and Murray followed, Owen sprang up outside and they were off.

There are few things more trying to the patience, and more exciting to the nerves, than driving through the crowded streets of a city, with the apprehension that every minute's delay may be fatal to one's hopes. During the ten minutes that they were hurrying and rattling over the pavements, Mabel endeavored in vain to quiet her disturbed feelings, and strove, with equal want of success, to soothe the weeping Murray, while Alick silently watched his aunt's countenance, as if it were the dial-plate of destiny. They were barely in season after all, there was just time for the luggage to be thrown hastily on board, and the last bell was sounding as Owen entered a car, with Murray in his arms, followed by Mabel and Alick, almost breathless with the haste they had made and carrying between them the basket and traveling bag, which Alick could not transport alone, but which the sturdy boy was unwilling to relinquish.

This little incident served at once to excite Mabel's anxieties for the future, and to impress her with a sense of her dependence on Owen. She felt sick at heart, as imagination conjured up the possible disasters and delays which might ensue before the termination of the journey, and, as the darkness of the night came on, and a thick gloom settled over every object, an undefined dread took possession of her, and when Murray exclaimed with convulsive sobbing, "Auntie, Murray is tired, -- Murray can't ride all night," she was tempted to fold the child to her bosom, and weep with him over their multiplied misfortunes.

Her weakness was rebuked, however, by the confiding tone in which Alick responded to his brother's complaint, -- "I ain't tired, Murray," said he, -- "I wouldn't mind going anywhere with Aunt Mabel."

"I would," said Murray. "I want to go home."

"Let me take him a little while, Miss Vaughan," said Owen, who had observed his fretfulness, "I see he's getting pretty uneasy. Will you come and sit by me, Murray?"

The child hesitated, too thoroughly weary to have any preference.

"I'll coax the little fellow off to sleep," said Owen, lifting him in his strong arms, and bearing him to his own seat at the further end of the car, where, wrapped in a heavy pilot-cloth coat, and with his head resting on Owen's shoulder, he soon fell into a quiet slumber. Two or three hours passed away. Alick, despite his efforts to the contrary, had fallen asleep, though still sitting as upright as a grenadier, and Mabel had once or twice forgotten her anxieties, and enjoyed a moment's repose, when a bright light shone in their faces, and

suddenly awakening, they discovered that the train was stopping at a place of some importance, if one might judge by the bustle which pervaded the platform in front of the station. Murray, also, awakened by the noise and lights, ran to his aunt, rubbing his eyes, and petitioning her for something to eat.

"Milk, too, Auntie -- I must have some milk." he cried, as she proceeded to open the luncheon basket.

"No, Murray, I have no milk for you," was the reply, "a cake will do without milk, won't it?"

"I can get him a glass of milk, or some water, at least, Miss Vaughan" said Owen, who was about to leave the car, and paused to offer his services. "the train stops here five minutes -- plenty of time, Miss. I'll hand it in at the window."

"Take my purse, Owen," said Mabel, "and pay for it, if you please."

The milk was brought to the window in a pitcher. Owen had a tumbler in his hand, and all were by turns refreshed with the sweet wholesome beverage. There was still a moment or two of delay at the station -- ample time for the young man to return, pay for the milk, and take his place in the car. Still, the bell rang, and the train proceeded on its way without his having made his appearance. Mabel looked back with some anxiety, but supposing that he had entered a rear car and would soon make his way to them, she did not feel any positive alarm and was therefore wholly taken by surprise when a few minutes after, the conductor, as he passed with his lantern in hand, held it up to her face and said inquiringly, "Wasn't that young fellow in the pilot-cloth coat with you, ma'am?"

"Yes," answered Mabel. "why?"

"He got left behind at the last station." said the man coolly.

"Got left!" exclaimed Mabel, repeating his words in astonishment and fright, while Alick groaned aloud and Murray set up a shrill and prolonged cry.

"Yes, they took some of his boxes out there by mistake, so the baggage-master says, and he caught sight of 'em and sprung off the platform just as we were starting."

"Couldn't you stop for him?" asked Mabel, in a tone of mingled appeal and reproach.

"Couldn't, nohow," said the man, though speaking in a tone of regret. "we're behind our time now. If there's any mistake it ain't our fault, he couldn't have had his things marked right in Albany, He'll come tomorrow, I reckon."

"To-morrow," thought Mabel, "but where shall we be by that time?" and at the same instant the remembrance flashed upon her that he was in possession of her purse, containing all the money she had in the world.

"What shall I do?" was the involuntary exclamation which burst from her lips as, trembling with agitation, she started up impulsively, then in a despairing manner sank back into her seat.

"Can't we go on without him, Auntie?" asked Alick anxiously, while Murray continued to cry, loudly threatening, amid his sobs, to "beat that old conductor, and make him go back for Owen."

"Oh, I do not know, Alick, what we shall do." said Mabel, the self-command which she had hither-to maintained in the presence of the children forsaking her at this unforeseen crisis.

The interest and compassion of the other passengers were evidently awakened. Many outstretched forms were suddenly raised from recumbent positions, and many sleepy eyes turned in the direction of our little group of travelers, while a murmur of inquiry and response ran through the car. The conductor, however, had passed hastily out with his lantern, and as feeble and expiring light from an ill-trimmed lamp above afforded little satisfaction to curiosity, most of the weary company soon subsided into their former dreamy state of unconsciousness.

"God will take care of us, Auntie," said Alick, in a comforting tone, "that old minister said so, and I believe him."

"So do I." answered Mabel, drawing both children as closely to her as possible, and feeling for the second time, rebuked by Alick's childlike faith -- first in her and now in a higher power.

At the same instant, a voice proceeding from the seat directly behind them, addressed Mabel in a tone of gentle but earnest inquiry. "I have been asleep, my dear, but, if I understand right, your servant has got left at Utica."

"Not my servant, except by free-will, ma'am," answered Mabel, her face as she turned being brought close to that of the person who was leaning forward to speak to her, but whose features were undistinguishable in the dim light.

"Oh, I was mistaken, then," said the lady, apologetically. "I only judged from appearances, when you came into the car at dusk."

"Yes, ma'am, it is not strange," said Mabel, "I don't wonder at it, he was so kind to the boys and so civil to me. He was a good friend, and we depended upon him, and now, -- now --."

Her voice choked, she could not go on.

The old lady -- for the stranger was advanced in years -- quietly rose, to come forward, and taking the seat beside Mabel from which Alick had risen in the moment of excitement, said kindly, "And do you need a friend now, my dear?"

Mabel could not answer except by putting her hand into that of the old lady, who pressed it tenderly.

"Little brothers?" said she, drawing Alick toward her, and gently soothing Murray with the words, "Poor boy! There, don't cry!"

"She's our auntie." said Alick, proudly.

"And where's mama?"

"She's gone to another world." answered Murray, promptly.

"She died last Saturday." whispered Alick.

Their new friend uttered an exclamation of pity, and, grieved at the result of her natural inquiry, forebore all further questioning.

"Poor little fellows! you must both be tired," said she. "Come, I will put you to bed." And rising, she beckoned to a woman just behind them, and with her assistance proceeded to carry her purpose into execution. "Don't stir, we will make them very comfortable," she added as Mabel proposed to assist her. And taking advantage of some vacant seats opposite, she spread upon them her own and the women's surplus supply of shawls, and in a few moments the exhausted children were disposed of for the rest of the night.

"My child, you have seen trouble, I fear." said the benevolent lady, as resuming her seat by Mabel, she passed one arm around the young girl's waist, and drew her head upon her shoulder.

Mabel had in some degree, steeled herself against the hardships and trials which she might encounter, but this unexpected kindness wholly overpowered her, the floodgates of her soul were opened, and her tears poured forth like rain. Her judicious comforter did not attempt to restrain her. She well knew the relief it sometimes is to weep, and without interrupting her by a word, suffered her feelings to have vent.

"Lie still, dear." said she, as Mabel, having at length become more composed, made a movement to sit upright.

"You are very good, but I shall fatigue and distress you."

"Do not disturb yourself on my account," was the reply. "I only require a few hours sleep, and I have had that already. I want to see you take some rest."

"Oh, I cannot sleep," said Mabel, "I am too unhappy."

"Perhaps I can help you," said the old lady. "There are two sides to trouble, -- let us try and look at the bright side."

"I never gave up so before," said Mabel, "and I know ought not to now, but this seemed too much."

"Was this young man so essential to you, then, that you cannot get on without him?"

"He was very considerate and kind," said Mabel. "I shall miss him, and so will the boys, but that is not the worst, -- he has got all my money. I gave him my purse to pay for some milk for the children just before he left the cars."

"Well, that is bad," said the old lady, "but not beyond remedy. How far are you expecting to travel?"

Mabel named the town and county in the eastern part of Illinois, which were her destination.

"And you were to take the steamer at Buffalo?"

"Yes, to-morrow night."

"There is no boat until the night following," said the old lady, confidently. "I have made particular inquiries, as I am to pursue the same route myself. So you see Owen will have to join you, and, meanwhile, you shall be under my care, and afterwards, too," added she, "If you can feel confidence in an old lady who is a stranger to you, but who has seen much of the world, and is an experienced traveler."

Mabel thanked her heartily in her own name and the children's.

"Do not thank me," said her kind friend, "the benefit will be mutual. I am fond of young people, and am glad to be of use in the world. If my three score years and ten can afford you comfort and protection, then I have not grown old in vain."

"Oh, I cannot tell you the relief it will be, if you will only let me keep within sight of you," exclaimed Mabel, eagerly. Then, as she recalled the lady's previous allusion to her being a stranger, she added, with simple candor, at the same time lifting her head, and speaking with great earnestness, "But you are very good, Ma'am, to feel confidence in me. It must seem strange to you, that I should be traveling so far, with the charge of these children, and dependent myself upon a young man who is not of my own station in life."

"Yes, a little singular, perhaps," answered the lady, "but no more so than many things which admit of an easy explanation, or, even if I were still left to wonder at the circumstances, it would not deter me from offering my aid to one who seems to need it."

"May I tell you how it happened?" asked Mabel.

“Certainly, my child, if you please to do so. Tell me anything that you feel willing to confide to one old enough to be a safe, but not too old to be a sympathizing friend.”

Thus encouraged, Mabel suffered her head to drop once more upon the shoulder of the tall and strongly-framed, though venerable lady, and in the darkness of the night and amid the hush which prevailed among the sleepers who were stretched around, she poured into her willing ear, in a low and broken voice, the story of her recent family bereavements, and the sufferings, responsibilities, perplexities, which had ensued. Her bitterest grief and anxieties were such, indeed, as can be breathed only in the ear of Heaven, but the partial revelation which she made was enough and more than enough to excite all the tender compassion of her aged friend, as was evidently from the gentle expressions of condolence which escaped her, and the affectionate solicitude with which she drew a cloak around the, weary girl, and now and then pressed her closer to her side. So sweet, indeed, was this welcome assurance of protection and sympathy, that, at length, the tale being ended, and the aching heart, in some measure, relieved of its burden, tired nature asserted its claims, and a soft and refreshing sleep stole over Mabel’s senses.

It was daylight when she awoke. The sun was streaming through the car most of the passengers were sitting bolt up-right in their seats, their firm attitudes seeming to defy anyone who should accuse them of having slept a wink on the journey, and the whole scene was so different from that which had prevailed a few hours before, that Mabel could not for a moment realize where she was, or whether the events of the previous night had not all been a dream. There could be nothing imaginary, however, in the friendly shoulder on which her head was comfortably pillowed, nor could anything be more kind and cordial than the smile which reassured her, as starting up she suddenly exclaimed, “Why, how long have I lain here! How I must have tired you!”

“No, you have not tired me in the least. I am rejoiced that you have slept so long, how do you feel this morning, my dear?”

But Mabel did not seem to heed the kind inquiry. Her eyes were fixed earnestly on the face of her new friend, while a glow of pleasure radiated her features. There could be no mistaking that benevolent countenance, that dignified form, those silver curls peeping from the snowy fluting of the widow’s cap, above all that cheering and animating smile, and, snatching the hand of the good lady, Mabel

pressed it to her lips, exclaiming, "You are not a stranger after all! I have seen you before, you are Mrs. Abraham Percival!

"Do you know me then?" was the reply, "That is pleasant, I have been studying your face, my dear, and thought it seemed familiar, but you must help my memory a little. I cannot recall the name."

"Mabel Vaughan, but perhaps you have never heard the whole name."

"We shall soon be in Buffalo, my dear." said Madam Percival at length, leaning forward and laying her hand on Mabel's shoulder, to attract her attention.

Mabel, thus suddenly roused from a sad and painful reverie, into which she had fallen, a train of thought superinduced no doubt by the disclosures and coincidences of the morning, started, turned, and said, in an abstracted manner, "Yes, and what shall we do then?"

Whatever you like, my poor, tired child, you need rest and refreshment for body and mind. I was thinking where we could best find it."

"Wherever you please" Said Mabel, "I shall be only too contented and thankful to stay with you."

"Have you ever been to Niagara?"

"Never, ma'am," answered Mabel, with a slight tremulousness in her voice, at the mention of a spot she had once so yearned to visit, but which was now associated with many a bitter memory.

"We shall have twenty-four hours to spare before the steam boat leaves," said Madam Percival, "I have consulted my little friend here (and she tapped with her spectacles the railroad guide which she held in her hand), and find that we can, if we choose, proceed directly to Niagara, and remain there until within a few hours of the boat's sailing, It will be an uncomfortable night in the city, I am well known at the Cataract House, and we shall be sure of every outward comfort, to say nothing of the inexpressible pleasure of having a glimpse at the Falls. Do you like the plan?"

"I do not know," said Mabel, hesitatingly. "I would rather you should decide."

"You can scarcely be expected to have any preference under the circumstances, my dear," said Madam Percival, laying her hand anxiously on Mabel's flushed cheek, "but I am convinced there could be, no better prescription for you than the one I recommend." The boys require rest and fresh cool air to invigorate them after the journey, but you need something more, it is the tired heart and brain

which sends this feverish blood to your cheek, rather than physical fatigue, though you have had your share of that. You are my guests for the present, -- my adopted children I would say, -- -and so I feel myself at liberty to study your wants, and endeavor to supply them. Besides," added she, with a persuasive smile and tone, which made it almost appear that she was begging, instead of conferring a favor, "we old folks, who pride ourselves on our experience, love to try our favorite remedies, so, if you leave the decision to me, we will keep on to Niagara, and risk the additional fatigue in consideration of the benefit we hope to derive from the effort."

Comprehending at once the disinterestedness of the scheme to divert her troubled mind from the contemplation of its sorrows, Mabel hastened to deprecate the idea of her aged friend's incurring any unnecessary fatigue on her account, but Madam Percival assured her that she never suffered from the affects of traveling, and that in the present case, the necessity for one day's delay rendered the temptation to visit the Falls irresistible, apart from the satisfaction it would be to introduce her young friends to one of the grandest wonders of nature, in which, as Americans, they had all a common birthright.

So the excursion was determined on, and night found them established in a comfortable hotel, where, within hearing of the roar of the mighty cataract, they all experienced the welcome refreshment and repose which weary travelers crave.

At an early hour, the next morning, a pleasant voice was heard outside Mabel's door, saying, softly, "Are you awake, my dear?" and was answered by Mabel's presenting herself, already dressed and equipped for going out.

"You are on the alert, I see," said Madam Percival, who also wore her bonnet and shawl, as if prepared for a walk. "I thought I heard your step in the room, or I would not have disturbed you, how have you slept?"

"Very soundly until daylight, but then I awoke, and hearing the noise of the Falls, could not resist going out to see them before breakfast."

"Ah, you are a girl after my own heart," said madam Percival, drawing Mabel's arm through hers. "I have left word with my woman, Mrs. Patten, to go in and attend to the children's wants, whenever they awake, so you need feel no anxiety about them." and the old and the young lady left the hotel together.

"This is the direction leading to the bridge over the rapids," said Madam Percival, when they had gained a side street. "I see an old acquaintance of mine, that Indian woman, just opening her little store of wares over opposite -- she knows me," and Madam Percival bowed in kindly recognition to the dusky squaw, whose face was full of eagerness. "I must go and speak to her. Do not wait for me, I will overtake you." Thus speaking, Madam Percival crossed the road leading to bridge, and Mabel proceeded alone.

How tumultuous and how mingled was the rushing tide of thought which assailed her during that short, lonely walk! The time the place, the solitude -- how suggestive were they all! How many of her childhood's hopes, her girlish anticipations had centered around Niagara! How fondly had she looked forward to this fulfillment of her early dreams! How little had she foreseen the cruel chain of circumstances which had brought her to the spot at last, disappointed, forsaken, and bereaved. A moment more, and, in the stillness of the morning, for the sun had not yet risen, she found herself alone on the bridge, beneath which flowed the angry torrent. Panting from exercise, breathless with her own agitating reflections, and dumb with astonishment and awe, she stood, with parted lips, gazing up that gigantic slope, down which, in wild and frantic speed, the waters were hastening to their fearful plunge. Whence came they and whither did they go -- those mad, triumphant waves -- which, scorning all opposition and beating down all obstacles, seemed like the very messengers of doom! An instinctive dread took possession of Mabel's mind, as, gazing long and fixedly at those witnesses to God's power and majesty, she saw in them types of those recent events which, bearing down like a mighty flood and overwhelming her beneath a torrent of trouble, had left her to struggle helplessly with the current. "All Thy waves and Thy billows have gone over me, Great God," she exclaimed aloud, at length withdrawing her gaze from a scene whose sublime and solemn grandeur was, to the excited girl, almost lost in a nervous sense of terror.

Then, as the roar still continued sounding in her ears, an irresistible impulse seized her to hasten on and witness the end, which, at the present, she could image to herself only as a dire catastrophe, and, as if fearful that, by a moment's delay, she should lose something of the awful spectacle which she half longed, half dreaded to behold, she commenced running, and without pausing to take breath, continued at the same rapid pace until she suddenly gained an elevated point, where, at a glance, she could discern the two rival divisions of the far-

famed cataract. She gazed for an instant only, at the dark and angry waters, on which the sun, now just below the verge of the horizon, had not yet shed his beam, and which, as they plunged down the fearful vortex, seemed to her bewildered senses to utter only a message of stern and angry wrath, then throwing herself on the ground, with her face hid against a huge overhanging rock, she burst into a fit of passionate and uncontrollable weeping. Her excited feelings having thus found vent, however, and her strained nerves being relieved by this free and natural outburst, she soon became more calm, and at length lay quite still, listening, without terror, to the roar of the waters, when, suddenly, she heard, close beside her, in measured and familiar accents, the solemn words, "And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunders, saying Alleluia, for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

There was a pause, then a long-drawn sigh escaped Mabel, and attracted the attention of Madam Percival, who had not until then perceived her.

"What! Are you here before me, and in my favorite spot, my child?" exclaimed she, then seeing the despairing attitude and covered face of Mabel, and at once conjecturing that, in the weak state of her nervous system she had been overcome by the scene, she sat down beside her and said in a self-reproving tone, "Ah, I should not have let you come here alone."

"It frightens me," said Mabel, with a shudder. "I should not have minded the fall so much, -- but those dreadful rapids!" and again a slight shudder passed over her frame. "It seemed as if everything were pouring down at once just as -- just as --"

"Just as trouble comes upon us poor mortals, as you would say, my dear."

"Yes, I could not help thinking of myself."

"I have often had the same thought," said Madam Percival, soothingly, "but I have also found here a lesson of faith and hope, which has fortified me in the hour of trouble, and which I trusted you would have learned here, too. Often we are borne through the rushing waves of anxiety, suspense, and pain, and plunged at last down the gulf of a mighty sorrow, but let us not be faithless or despairing. He who has meted out the bounds of the earth has said to human suffering, as to the mighty torrent, 'Thus far shalt thou go and no farther,' and even amid the shock of a great calamity we know that

the raging torrent of affliction is spanned by the rainbow of his love. Look up, my dear, look up.”

Mabel lifted her head quickly, as her attention was thus earnestly claimed, and above the watery abyss, which a few moments before had been so dark and fearful, a glorious rainbow danced and quivered in the beams of the newly-risen sun, and, as the glittering spray caught and reflected the rays of light in the new forms of radiance, another and another brilliant arch stretched its graceful curve across the foaming flood.

A smile of joy flashed out from Mabel’s face, effecting in it a transformation scarcely less striking than that which had so suddenly been wrought in the face of nature, she clasped her hands, and stood for some moments in a rapt and serene silence.

Madam Percival watched the play of her features with affectionate interest and as the anxious and troubled expression of her countenance was gradually superseded by a glow of a Heavenly peace, she said in a low and fervent tone, “Ah, my child, it is only when the light of the Sun of righteousness comes to illuminate our darkened hearts, that we can comprehend the love of Him who is continually confirming His ancient promise -- It shall come to pass when I bring a cloud over the earth that the bow shall be seen in the cloud.”

“I have realized it many times,” said Mabel, eagerly, “I realize it now.”

“It is shining in your face, my love,” said Madam Percival. “come, let us go back to the hotel, and cheer with it the little orphan hearts which must look to you hence forward to be the sunshine of their lives.”

“Is it not grand? Is it not encouraging and ennobling?” said Madam Percival, when, some hours later they sat together on the flat surface of Table Rock, watching the gigantic waters of the Horse Shoe Falls. “In the course of a long life, I have visited this spot many times, and I have invariably gone away refreshed and strengthened, as if I had been listening to the voice of a sacred oracle. Especially when the chastening of God’s providence was heavy upon me, have I been cheered by this glorious proclamation of the truth that His power goes hand in hand with His love.”

“I cannot thank you enough for bringing me here,” said Mabel -- “it is a remembrance for a life-time.”

“I confess,” said the old lady, “my first thought was merely to divert your mind from dwelling too fixedly on your recent trials. I did

not realize how fully you were open to impressions from nature. Now I cannot be too thankful for the prompting which bade me lead you to the school of high thoughts and noble purpose. God grant, my child, that your young life, sanctified by the divine blessing, may flow on in as strong, deep, and tranquil a current, as that of this noble river, whose strong waters, hence forth forward, with only now and then a temporary interruption, sweep calmly on to the eternal ocean. You, indeed, need moral courage and strength, my child, for it is a noble mission which you have before you."

"You mean the care of the children," said Mabel, observing that Miss Percival's eye was fixed upon the boys, who were playing at a little distance.

"Yes, -- the training of these young minds and hearts is an office of true dignity and greatness, and one in which you have all my sympathy. I, too, have 'educated boys, and my work is not yet finished. If I read those little fellows' characters right, your responsibility is as great as your influence is unbounded. That eldest child loves you with a devotion which I have rarely seen equaled in one of his years. It is through that love that he must learn to cherish those universal sympathies, in which I suspect him to be deficient, and that happy, affectionate, beautiful, spoiled plaything yonder, who is at this moment attracting the attention of strangers will develop impulses and propensities of so wide a range, that all the ardor of his nature must be early taught to concentrate itself on the pure, the elevated, and the good. Remember, my dear that your counsels may rule in many generations of hearts, and if the thought will add sanctity to your office, cherish the belief that the principles you instill, may help to mold the future fortunes of this free republic."

A shade of earnest thought and holy resolution was stamped on Mabel's attentive face, as, with her eyes intently fixed on the children, she listened to the solemn charge of her experienced and venerable friend. It would have been difficult to pronounce which was the nobler countenance of the two, that of the benevolent and Christian matron who uttered the words of warning and of wisdom, or that of the enthusiastic and truth-loving girl, into whose heart they sunk with a deep and lasting power. Madam Percival gazed into the earnest face of Mabel, and her heart warmed anew towards her, as she read in every expressive feature a hopeful prophesy for the future, a prophecy which after years saw gloriously fulfilled.

We pass over the departure from Niagara, after a visit which, though brief, was memorable to at least two of the little company,

between whom there had, then and there, been sealed the compact of a friendship, rendered the more sacred by the wide difference in their years, All were refreshed and strengthened for continuing the journey and the joy of the children, and the relief and satisfaction of Mabel were complete, when, at the steamboat wharf at Buffalo, they met Owen, who, poor fellow, had suffered the most intense anxiety on their account, and who at once became a sharer in their gratitude to Madam Percival, as was evident from his clumsy but honest expression of thanks, and still more from his unwearied and deferential services to her during the remainder of the journey.

“Upon my word, ma’am,” said he, “when I found they were off, and nobody to see to ‘em, I was e’en a’most crazed, and when, to crown the whole, I found Miss Vaughan’s purse in my pocket, I believe I went clean mad. Why, I’d fired one of the engines and come after on my own hook, but t’was no use, I just had to cool down and learn patience by waitin’. But I see, and bless the lord for it, too, the young lady wa’n’t without a protector, nor never will be in this world, I’ve a notion, -- sartin not if she has her deserts, and I make bold to thank you for your goodness on my own account, ma’am, and for the relief it is to my conscience,” and taking off his hat and bowing, as he had been wont to bow to Rosy, he drew back a step and added, “Owen Dowst’s your servant for life, ma’am!” Madam Percival was one who could appreciate the simplicity and worth of Mabel’s humble escort, and before their travels together were at an end, he had learned to look upon this lady, as almost everyone did who came under her influence, as a reliable friend. She talked intelligently with him of farms, stock and crops, gave him much valuable information regarding Western life, and when he finally ventured to consult her with reference to the investment of his little property, she entered into his scheme with as ready an interest as if she had been a professed land-agent and he a wealthy speculator.

Thus all went on happily and harmoniously, and Mabel, with Madam Percival for her counselor and friend, Owen as the devoted attendant of herself and the children, and Mrs. Patton, who shared all the interests of her beloved mistress, to minister to her wants, and relieve her of little cares, found her formidable journey drawing to a safe conclusion, and almost sighed as she thought how soon she must part from these valued and tried friends of her adversity.

The last night of their sojourn in each other’s company was passed on board a canal-boat. The children had gone to sleep in the cabin, Mrs. Patton was watching beside them. Owen, at the stern of the

boat, was giving voluntary aid in the stowing of some freight, and Madam Percival and Mabel were seated on the deck, holding the last of those pleasant and valuable conversations which they had enjoyed together.

"I am glad you like this Western country," said Madam Percival, "and that you do not feel discouraged by its yet rough and undeveloped character. It is a great field, and one in which comparatively little has been accomplished. You will find much that is strange, uncouth, and utterly at variance with all your preconceived ideas, but to a noble mind there is a satisfaction in overcoming difficulties, and every effort is sure to find its reward in a land which makes such a rich return for the labor bestowed on it."

"It excites all my enthusiasm," said Mabel. "I have felt, a hundred times on our journey, as if I would gladly stop short at any given point, and remain a year or more, to watch the progress which could almost be seen in passing, and of which I hear such wonderful accounts on every side."

"Say rather," said Madam Percival, "to take part in that progress, do not consider yourself excluded by your age or sex from exerting an active influence on the growth and true civilization of any spot in which you are either temporarily or permanently a resident. In a country whose physical development is so unexampled as this, too much effort cannot be made to insure a proportionate advance in moral and spiritual growth. It may be that your influence and example must be confined to a narrow circle, but do not forget that, however restricted may be your sphere, it is woman's peculiar privilege and province to exert that softening, elevating, purifying spirit, which sanctifies the ruder labors of life, and sheds abroad in the community a nobler ambition than that of building cities in the wilderness, and subduing the elements to human will. Above all, my dear, do not consider your life in the West a period of exile, This is but a part of your mother country, destined, in time perhaps to become in its influence, what it already is in its locality, -- the centre and heart of the republic."

"I am already accustoming myself," said Mabel, "to look upon it as my future home, for such it may eventually become."

"Make it a home, my dear," said Madam Percival, "for yourself and your family, at least, while you remain in it, give it your affection and your best efforts, -- it is the only way to render it a happy residence or a useful one. I have homes in several parts of our country, and it would be hard for me to say which I love best, it is now fifteen years

since I accompanied my husband into this unsettled region. He was one of the pioneers of civilization, and the affection which I then conceived for this Western valley has continued in full force ever since. It has been with great satisfaction that I have made successive pilgrimages hither, and now that I have come to finish my days, perhaps, in this land of promise, I do not feel willing to consider it the home of my adoption but simply my native soil."

"If you were only to be near me," said Mabel, "it would be such a comfort, your counsel would be so precious."

"Forty miles is not counted a very great distance in this part of the world, my dear, and that, as nearly as I can judge, is the distance between your father's estate and that of my son. My hand, owing to one of the infirmities of age, has recently been disabled from writing, but I shall find a way one of these days, to communicate with my young friend, and shall always be rejoiced to hear from you in return. But, good night, I will not keep you up any longer to listen to an old woman's preaching."

Before morning they had reached the bustling Western city where their united route terminated. Mabel and the children took passage in the clumsy carriage in which they were to commence their last day's journey, Owen set out for another part of the country, and Madam Percival, having seen her adopted charges on their way, proceeded to the house of a friend, where she was to await her son's arrival in the city.

It was a cold, rainy, and uncomfortable evening, when, with the horses weary and steaming, and the children exhausted with cold and fatigue, Mabel, almost hopeless of ever reaching their destination, which had seemed all day to recede as they advanced, at length heard from their driver the joyful words, "That 'er's Mr. Vaughan's house where you see the light over there."

"Don't Cry, we are almost there, Murray!" she exclaimed encouragingly, to the poor weeping child, who, sadly feeling the want of Madam Percival's shawls and Owen's pilot-cloth coat, was shivering with the cold, from which all Mabel's care could ill protect him, and who, hungry, dissatisfied, and out of humor, had complained and cried bitterly for the last half hour. "Look over there, beyond the river -- that is grandpa's house, you will soon see him and Uncle Harry."

"I don't want to see them! I hate this place! I won't stay here!" sobbed Murray.

“It will be better than riding all night, though, Murray, won’t it?” said Alick, in the same patient, philosophical tone which the little man had maintained from the commencement of the journey.

“Ye’ll have to get out here and step up a piece,” said the driver, halting within a few rods of the house, “My road turns off here to the post-office, and these horses are dead beat, that’s a fact.”

Mabel needed no second bidding, she was only too glad to trust to her own feet, to which eagerness lent wings, and in an instant more, with Murray in her arms and Alick close beside her, she hastened in the direction of the light, opened the unlocked door of the house, and entered. She found herself in a dark passage, and was groping for the inner door, when it was suddenly thrown open, and with a cry of joy, she set Murray on the floor, and flung her arms around the neck of her astonished brother.

Had it been the ghost of Mabel instead of Mabel herself, it could have created no greater surprise and consternation. Mr. Vaughan, who was sitting in an arm-chair by the fire, turned his head-as Harry uttered her name, and seeing his daughter before him, became pale, tried twice to rise from his seat, then sank back as if seized by sudden giddiness, while a look of deep distress passed over his haggard features.

“Mabel here!” was his exclamation.

CINDERELLA ALWAYS WINS

(Bio of Mary Jane Holmes)

By Andre Norton

Mary Jane Holmes

Next to Mrs. Southworth the most prolific of the scribbling women, and next to Harriet Beecher Stowe, the best paid of the era's authoresses, was Mary Jane Holmes, who lifted the Cinderella theme to its highest money making point.

She was the fourth daughter and fifth of nine children in a New England farmer's family. The background of the Hawes home was the usual combination of that place and period, hard physical labor and bookishness. But in this environment Mary Jane proved to be a swan among geese. The neighbors at Rice Corners spoke of her as "crazy little Jane" because she was prone to play apart and carry on conversations with the imaginary companions she alone could visualize. Though precocious and solitary in her tastes, she went to the country school at the age of three and studied grammar at six, reading avidly from her earliest years whatever fell into her hands, without supervision or selection. Before she was in her teens she announced with firm decision that she was going to be a writer and told the girls in the school yard long romances of her own devising.

A quick student, far ahead of her years according to the educational standards for country schools in that day, she passed the simple examination to earn a teacher's certificate and began teaching herself when she was only thirteen. The struggles of a child schoolmarm were later to serve her with material for such novels as "Meadow Brook", "Aikenside", and "The English Orphans." Her favorite heroine of the future was to be the poor school teacher or governess.

The first public acknowledgement of her literary aspirations came when she was fifteen and had a poem published in the local newspaper, But a whole new life was about to open for her. Lyman Hawes, an uncle, moved from the narrow New England valley known to the Hayes family since the colonial days, and settled in the then boom territory of western New York State. He sent for Fanny Maria, Mary Jane's elder sister, to teach in the district school there. But in a short time she married a neighboring farmer. Mary Jane, who had profited by a term or two at the Ontario Female Seminary after

following her sister west, then took over Fanny's school. But she was more ambitious than satisfied and she soon changed to the larger school at Allen Hill and then to Bristol Hill, to which position she was followed by her sister Elizabeth.

In 1848 she established her own academy for young ladies in an old stone house at Allen's Hill -- Laurel Hill Seminary. Mary, in order to be near the school, boarded at the tavern kept by Daniel Holmes, and Daniel Holmes, junior, then a student at Yale, began escorting the new headmistress to church and the decorous neighborhood social gatherings. When Mr. Holmes graduated from Yale he was offered a teaching position at a seminary in Versailles, Kentucky. With such an assured future he dared to speak to Mary Jane and on August Ninth 1849, there was a wedding in St. Paul's Episcopal Church at Allen Hill - a church which had been lovingly banked with flowers by the pupils of the seminary and their mothers. The Holmes' wedding tour was the journey to their new home in the south. Together they taught in the seminary for a term or two before they took complete charge of a two room rural school at Glen's Creek and boarded at the home of Dr. Theophilus Steele. This life in Kentucky made a strong impression on Mary. Consciously or unconsciously she was storing up what she saw, heard, and sensed in the scenes about her -- to be put to excellent use later. But the southern years only numbered three. For in 1852 Daniel Holmes was offered a much better position as Latin teacher at the Canandaigua Academy and they returned to New York.

For the first time since 1844 Mary Jane Holmes found herself with free time as here she was not called upon to teach. She began to write short stories at first, which she sold to the Cincinnati Commercial.

But there was one more change for the Holmes family before they settled into the peaceful and prosperous routine which was to occupy the rest of their long lives. Daniel Holmes had been, during a short time in the 1840s, a student of the theological institute at Brockport. Now he determined to return there and study law.

The move was made in 1855 and they found é permanent home at last. Mary Jane Holmes was to be to Brockport what Mrs. Sigourney was to Hartford in earlier days. The whole town knew her, admired her, made her a grand dame, a social arbiter, and a local monument. Daniel Holmes passed his bar examination, held local political offices, and was an official of the Normal School. In 1868 the couple purchased "Brown Cottage", their home for the remainder of their

days. All of her forty novels and volumes of novelettes and short stories were written in Brockport.

The first full length novel to appear was “*Tempest and Sunshine*”, which was published in 1854, in it Mrs. Holmes utilized her memories of Kentucky. Crude as it is compared to her later works, it had several features of plot and characterization which were to become her trademark in the busy years ahead. The double heroines, one good, and one evil, the mislaid or suppressed letters, the handsome southerner who was the reward of the good heroine, all made their bow, along with the mentally deranged character whose confession or history aided in unraveling the misunderstanding between the lovers -- at the last possible moment.

“*Tempest and Sunshine*” was easily overshadowed by the better construction and characterization of her second book, “*English Orphans*”, which is still readable today. Again the double heroine -- or triple ones this time -- the misunderstandings between lovers, and all the other points. But interlarded with these are some shrewd and amusing contrasts between town and country society, a detailed picture of life in the first college for women of pre-Civil War period, Mount Holyoke, and scenes from the daily round of a country school teacher. While her pictures of American rural life and of small towns of the period are much more superficial than those given by Susan Warner, and her characters are exaggerated often to the point of ludicrousness, yet now and again bits of authentic social or educational customs stand out. She was writing, frankly, to amuse and entertain, but the world she described was her own and sometimes its realism broke through the lacy melodrama.

Neither of these first two books were more than average in sales, but with the publication of both “*Lena Rivers*” and “*Meadow Brook*” in 1865 she soared to the top of the best seller list and stayed there. Her first publisher was D. Appleton, and then came Miller, Orton and Company. But with the failure of the latter in the fifties she went over to G. W. Carleton and Company who knew just how to exploit the ever widening market of light fiction which grew up in the sixties and seventies.

Mrs. Holmes wrote steadily and apparently without difficulty, one novel a year. First serial rights went to Street and Smith’s “*New York Weekly*” and paid her about five thousand dollars per book. Eventually each novel in turn appeared on the book shelves, bound in green cloth, title and author stamped in gold—price – one dollar and fifty cents.

A tenth of her income went to St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Brockport, which claimed not only her substantial financial support, but much of her time, as a Sunday school teacher and worker in the Guild. The steady stream of royalties also paid for the Holmes' travels, and they traveled extensively, wintering in the south, visiting Norway, Sweden, Egypt and Russia, preferring the lesser known countries to the ordinary European tours. Mrs. Holmes' travel talks were a bright spot in Brockport society and the money raised by some was used to educate students in both this country and abroad.

By 1880 her standing in the world of best sellers was so assured she could dictate her own terms to publishers. Many public libraries had ten or twenty sets of her books in constant use, beside the numbers of titles sold for family collections. Fifty thousand copies of a new title or edition were usually bound at one time. And the "New York Weekly" admitted that the appearance of "Lena Rivers" as a serial raised the circulation from ten thousand to fifty thousand in three weeks and brought the magazine up to the one hundred thousand level before the end of the story.

Her writing habits were regular. In an upstairs library she spent every morning from nine to twelve at her desk, writing a large, finely formed hand which made her finished manuscripts resemble legal documents. But Mrs. Holmes had her prejudices against certain distractions. She bought up all the roosters in the neighboring chicken yards so that their crowing would be eliminated, an event long recalled by her townspeople.

She was tall, blue-eyed, with brown hair, and spoke with a clear, almost British, accent. Though she abhorred personal publicity she was exceedingly active in town and church affairs. When funds for the establishment of a library and free reading room were needed, it was Mrs. Holmes who headed the committee that planned an entertainment-on the grounds of the normal School. And later a "Dickens Carnival" was given to secure a maintenance fund for the same public project, with Mrs. Holmes again as the chairman; David Holmes played his part in this, appearing as "Smike" in the "Nickolas Nickleby" booth. Again in 1895 she took the leadership of the union Charitable Society. And she not only belonged to but held office in The Women's Christian Temperance Union and the Brockport History Club, as well as St. Luke's Guild, and the local chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution. There are still living those who can remember her dramatic appearance at the D.A.R. balls, gowned in black velvet with an ermine stole, holding court at one end of the

chamber. The thirteen-year-old school mistress had come a long way, Cinderella was now truly queen.

Though she never had any children of her own, families of her sisters and her neighbors were free of her yard and her time. The iron deer in the front of Brown Cottage made an excellent steed and there were plenty of juvenile riders to share its broad back. In turn the young people of the town shared their treats with her. When the first automobile appeared in Brockport, the young man who drove it offered Mrs. Holmes a ride which she accepted at once. Nor was he at all surprised to be instructed from the rear seat, "Go as fast as you like, Milo, I'll hold on to my wig." Mrs. Holmes was the grand dame of Brockport but she was not unapproachable.

She was traveling when death at last stilled her inductive energy. After a summer at Martha's Vineyard the Holmes's were enroute from Worcester to Albany when Mrs. Holmes was taken ill on the train. She rested a while in Albany, but insisted upon completing the journey-home where she died on October Sixth, 1907.

Through the years her writing underwent a complete change in pace and characterization. She was keenly alive to trends in light fiction and her own answer to the riddle of her great success, "I write what people want," was perfectly true. A modern critic has only to compare the stilted, sentimental melodrama of "Tempest and Sunshine" with the terse, true excitement of "Lucy Harding" to see how well she was able to adapt to changing tastes. The critics might dub her the "prolific favorite of the unthinking," but she was not outmoded nor forgotten at the end of her long day in the sun, a changing world had not left her behind.

Though her novels are primarily domestic, with the accent upon the Cinderella motif, she could depart from that mold -- as she did in "Lucy Harding" (an exciting adventure of an American tourist caught up during a Russian visit in an anti-Czarist plot) or in "The Abandoned Farm" (the story of the struggles of a scientific farmer of the new day to rehabilitate land long gone back to the wild) -- and do it well.

Her characters in the earlier novels were types. The concealed daughter and the poor school teacher or governess were her favorite heroines, with always a beautiful, but snobbish and cruel, rich girl to act the "ugly sister". She leaned towards southern heroes but showed little or no interest in the question of slavery and her Negroes were comic rather than pathetic or tragic figures. Death by "decline" or "lung fever" was the best way of disposing of characters to clear the

way for a happy ending. And the vulgar countrywoman gossip was used over and over again.

In her later years she wanted to Write travel books, but by then she was so tied to the treadmill of the yearly "Holmes novel" that there was no escape. In the eighties her novels were issued in ten and twenty-five cent paper editions and hawked on trains. The story of her encounter with the reading public in this respect is well known. She was herself traveling by train and offered her latest novel by a vender. As she refused it the stranger sharing her seat remarked: "Mrs. Holmes is a popular writer, but as for me, I do not think much of her."

But the general public did not agree. From 1854 to 1905 she published forty novels besides articles and short stories. She contributed regularly to the "Ladies' Home Journal", "The Saturday Evening Post", "Woman's Home Companion", "Lippincotts' Magazine", "Demorests Magazine", and "Frank Leslie's Popular Weekly." Six magazines continued to reprint her books even after her death, and serials by her were running as late as 1916.

The domestic melodrama which flowed so evenly from her pen lent itself well to dramatic adaption and some of her stories still appear on the boards, presented by summer stock companies -- "Tempest and Sunshine" and "Lena Rivers" being favorites.

"Lena Rivers" was reprinted as a book as late as 1912 and actually had a best seller reception.

From her contemporaries she won praise for her powers of description her naturalness, her clear concise English, and the faculty to hold reader interest. And the majority of the novels are readable today.

Her accolade came from a mother and it was the perfect one for a writer of the scribbling era:

"I have no fear of letting my daughter read them. Because I know they are pure."

Known Works of Mary Jane Holmes:

Chronological order:

Known Works of Mary Jane Holmes:

Chronological order:

Tempest and Sunshine

English Orphans

Homestead on the Hillside

Lucy Harding

Aikenside

Cousin Hugh

The Scribbling Women

Lena Rivers
Meadow Brook
Dora Deane
Cousin Maude
Marian Gray
Hugh Worthington
Cameron Pride
Rose Mather
Ethelyn's Mistake
Edna Browning
Mildred
Forest House
Daisy Thornton
Queenie Hetherton
Christmas Stories
Bessie's Fortune
Gretchen
Marguerite

Darkness and Daylight
Edith Lyle's Secret
Family Pride
Maggie Miller
Millbank
Miss. McDonald
Rector of St. Marks
Rosemund
Chateau D'Or
West Lawn
Madeline
Mrs. Hallen's Companion
Abandoned Farm
Dr. Hathern's Daughter
Connie's Mistake
Tracy Diamonds
Rena's Experiment
The Comptons

THE INTERRUPTED WEDDING

Excerpt from "Tempest and Sunshine" 1854

By Mary Jane Holmes

Editors Warning: This story has words considered derogatory towards African-Americans - they have not been edited out – so as to maintain the original writings.

Great was Mr. Middleton's surprise when informed by Dr. Lacey of his engagement with Julia. Something in his countenance must have betrayed it, for Dr. Lacey said, "You seem astonished, sir. Are you displeased?"

"Certainly not, I am glad," answered Mr. Middleton. "yes, I confess I was surprised, for I had never thought of such a thing. Once I had hoped you would marry Fanny, but since Frank Cameron has rendered that impossible, you cannot do better than take Julia. She is intelligent, accomplished and handsome, and although she has some faults, your influence over her will lead her to correct them."

Unlike this was the reception which the intelligence met with from Dr. Lacey's Negroes.

"What that ar you sayin'?" asked Aunt Dilsey of Rondeau, who was communicating the important news to Leffie.

"You'd better ask," replied Rondeau. "who do you suppose marster George is goin' to fetch here to crack our heads for us?"

"Dun know -- Miss Mabel, maybe." said Aunt Dilsey.

"No, sir, Miss Mabel is bad enough, but she can't hold a candle to this one." answered Rondeau.

"You don't mean Miss July." shrieked rather than asked Aunt Dilsey.

"I don't mean nobody else, mother Dilsey." said Rondeau.

Up flew Aunt Dilsey's hands in amazement, and up rolled her eyes in dismay. "I 'clar for't," said she, "if Marster George has done made such a fool of himself I hope she'll pull his har a heap worse than she did Jack's."

"No danger but what she will, and yours, too." was Rondeau's consoling reply.

"Lord knows," said Aunt Dilsey, "fust time she sasses me, I'll run away long of Jack and the baby, I'll tie up my new gown and cap in a handkerchief this night."

Leffie now proposed that her mother should defer her intended flight until the arrival of the dreaded Julia, while Rondeau added, "Besides, Dilsey, if you should run away your delicate body couldn't get further than the swamp, where you'd go in up to your neck first lunge, and all marster's horses couldn't draw you out."

This allusion to her size changed the current of Aunt Dilsey's wrath, which now turned and spent itself on Rondeau. Her impression of Julia, however, never changed, although she was not called upon to run away.

Mrs. Lacey, too, received the news of her son's engagement with evident dissatisfaction, but if she thought remonstrance would be useless, she kept silent, secretly praying that Julia might prove better than her fears. In due course of time there came from Kentucky a letter of congratulation from Fanny, but she was so unaccustomed to say or write what she did not feel that the letter, so far as congratulations were concerned, was a total failure. She, however, denied her engagement with Frank, and this, if nothing else was sufficient reason why Julia refused to show it to Dr. Lacey. Julia knew that the chain by which she held him was brittle and might at any time be broken, and it was not-strange that she longed for the last days of October, when with Dr. Lacey she would return to Kentucky.

They came at last, and one bright, cloudless morning Uncle Joshua got out his carriage and proceeded to Frankfort, where, as he had expected, he met Julia and his expected son-in-law, His greeting of the former was kind and fatherly enough, but the minute he saw the latter, he felt, as he afterward said, an almost unconquerable desire to flatten his nose, gouge his eyes, knock out his teeth, and so forth, which operations would doubtless have greatly astonished Dr. Lacey and given him what almost every man has, viz. a most formidable idea of his wife's relation?

He, however, restrained his wrath, and when, at a convenient time, Dr. Lacey, with a few ominous "hems" and made up coughs, indicated his intention of asking for Julia, Uncle Joshua cut him short by saying, "Nevermind, I know what you want. You may have her and welcome. I only wish she would make as good a wife as you will husband. But mind now when you find out what for a fury you've got, don't come whinin' round me, for I give you fair warnin'."

Here Dr. Lacey thought proper to say that possibly Mr. Middleton did not understand his daughter.

“Not understand her?” repeated Mr. Middleton. “What’s to hinder? She’s my own gal, and I like her yell enough, but don’t I know she’s as fiery as a baker’s oven?”

“She is greatly changed,” continued Dr. Lacey. “don’t you give her credit for that?”

“Changed?” repeated Mr. Middleton. “So’s lightnin’ changed! It’s one of her tricks, Depend on it, you’ll find it so.” And Mr. Middleton walked off in search of his promising daughter.

Strange as it may seem, the old man’s remarks had no other affect on Dr, Lacey than to cause him to pity Julia, who he fancied was misunderstood and misused. He believed her reformation to be sincere, and could not help feeling that Mr. Middleton was mistaken in his opinion of both his daughters.

After tramping all over the house, banging doors and shouting at least a dozen times, “Ho, Tempest, whar for gracious sakes are you?” Mr. Middleton at length found his daughter in Mrs. Miller’s room consulting with Kate about her bridal dress. Kate, too, was wholly deceived by Julia’s gentleness and apparent frankness of manner, and readily complied with her request that she should be with her the two days preceding the marriage, for the purpose of assisting in the arrangement of affairs. This being settled, Mr. Middleton and his daughter started for home, which they reached about sunset.

Julia leaped gayly from the carriage, and running into the house, embraced her mother, and received the blacks as affectionately as Fanny herself could have done, then missing her sister, she asked, “Where is Fan? Why does she not come to meet me?”

Mrs. Middleton looked inquiringly at her husband, who replied, “No, I hain’t told her, jest because she didn’t ask me. Sunshine is sick - sick in bed, and has had the pothecary three times.”

“Fanny sick,” said Julia. “where is she? In her room? I will go to her immediately.”

But in going to Fanny, it was necessary to pass the parlor, and Julia could not resist the temptation to look in and see, “If the old man had fixed up any.”

“Oh, how neat, how pleasant!” was her first exclamation, and truly the cheerless old room had undergone a great renovation. It had been thoroughly cleaned and repainted, the walls were hung with bright, cheerful looking paper. A handsome carpet covered the floor, while curtains of corresponding beauty shaded the windows. The furniture, tastefully arranged, was nearly all new, and in the waxen

flowers, which filled the vases on the mantel piece, Julia recognized the handiwork of her sister.

Yes, Fanny's love had wrought this change. At first her father had refused to do anything. "No, I won't," said he. "it's good enough, and if it don't suit Lady Tempest, she can go to the horse barn, that's just fit for 'em."

"Then, father," said Fanny, "do it for my sake. It would please me to have a pleasanter parlor."

This was sufficient. A well-filled purse was placed in Fanny's hands, with liberty to do as she pleased. Then with untiring love, aching heart and throbbing temples, she worked on day after day, until all was completed, parlor, bridal chamber and all. The hangings and drapery of the latter were as white and pure as was she who patiently worked on, while each fresh beauty added to the room pierced her heart with a deeper anguish as she thought what and whom it was for. When her mother remonstrated against such unceasing toil, she would smile a sweet, sad smile and say, "Don't hinder me, dear mother, 'tis all I can do to show my love for Julia, and after I'm gone they will perhaps think more kindly of me, when they know how I worked for them."

At last all was done the finishing stroke was given, and then came a reaction. Fanny took to her bed, and her father, instantly alarmed, called the nearest physician. Dr. Gordon readily saw that Fanny's disease was in her mind, and in reply to Mrs. Middleton's inquiries, he frankly told his opinion, and said "That unless the cause of her melancholy could be removed, the consequence might be fatal."

"Don't tell my husband," said Mrs. Middleton, "his life is bound up in Fanny, and the day that sees her dead will, I fear, also make me a widow." Accordingly Mr. Middleton was deceived into a belief that Fanny's illness was the result of overexertion, and that she would soon recover.

In a day or two she seemed better, but was not able to come downstairs. Instead she had no desire or intention of doing so until after the wedding, for she felt she could not, would not, see Dr. Lacey for the world. Since the receipt of her sister's letter she had been given a holier love, a firmer faith, than aught on earth can bestow, and she was now under the influence of religion, of lasting, true religion. This then was the reason why she welcomed her sister so affectionately, and felt no emotion either of resentment or anger toward those who were thus trampling on the bleeding fibers of her heart.

As Julia kissed the almost transparent brow of her sister, and clasped her thin, white fingers, tears gathered in her eyes, and she thought, "This ruin have I wrought, and for it I must answer." but not long did she ever suffer her conscience to trouble her, and the next hour she was chatting away to Fanny about her preparations for her wedding, which was to take place one week from that day. Fanny listened as one who heard not. She was praying for more grace, more strength to endure yet a little longer.

Slowly to Julia dragged the days of that week, while to Fanny they sped on rapid wing. And now everything within and without the house betokened the coming event. Servants scampered hither and thither, thinking they were doing it all, while in reality they were doing nothing. Mrs. Middleton scolded the blacks, and Uncle Joshua scolded Mrs. Middleton, at the same time walking mechanically from the kitchen to the parlor, from the parlor to Fanny's sick room and from Fanny's sick room back to the kitchen, occasionally kicking from his path some luckless kitten, dog, or black baby, which latter set up the most lusty yells, just to vary the scene.

In the midst of all this Fanny lay calmly and quietly on her low bed, courting each succeeding sun as it rose and set, bringing nearer and nearer a day she so much dreaded. True to her promise, Kate Miller came two days before the wedding. Fanny was asleep when she entered the room to see her, but on the white, wasted face Kate's tears fell as she said, "Poor Fanny! I did not know she was so ill."

Mr. Middleton, who was present, muttered: "Yes, cursed be the one who made her so!" He knew not that he cursed his own child.

The next day Mr. William Middleton arrived, bringing the intelligence that Florence and Mabel had accompanied him, and would next evening be present at the wedding. Slowly the last rays of a bright October sun faded in the west, giving no sign of the stormy day which was to succeed. Long after midnight a lone watcher sat by the window in Fanny's room, gazing at the stars, which looked so quietly on from their distant homes, and praying, not for herself, but for Dr. Lacey, that he might be happy, with her he had chosen. At last, chilled with the night air, she crept shivering to her pillow, nor woke again until aroused by the fierce moaning of the autumn wind, which shook the easement, and by the sound of the driving rain which beat against the pane. Yes, the morning which dawned on Julia's bridal day was wild and stormy, but before noon the clouds cleared away and the afternoon was dry, hot and oppressive, a precursor to the mightier and more wrathful storm which followed.

About five o'clock there was a noise in the yard, and Kate, who was in Fanny's room, arranging her young friend's hair, looked from the window and said, "It is Dr. Lacey. Julia has looked for him for more than three hours."

Quickly Fanny hurried to the window. She could not meet Dr. Lacey face to face, but she wished to look at him once more. She was too late, however, he had entered the house, and soon the sound of his voice reached her ear. He had not been there long ere he asked for Fanny.

On being told she was sick, he seemed rather disturbed. Possibly, however, he felt relieved to know she would not be present when he took upon himself vows which should have been breathed to her. Ashton, Florence, and Mabel now arrived, and soon after came Mr. and Mrs. Stanton, accompanied by Mrs. Carrington, who had been invited because it would not do to slight her, and who came because she had a mind to!

The ceremony was to take place at seven o'clock, and guests each moment arrived, until the parlor seemed almost full. Alone in her chamber sat Fanny, listening to the sounds of mirth, which grated on her ear. Night, dark and stormy, was gathering over the earth but a darker night lay round the heart of the young girl, as she watched from her pillow a dense, black pile of clouds, which had appeared in the west, and now increased until the whole sky was overspread, as with a pall of darkness, while distant peals of muttered thunder announced the coming storm.

And now louder roared the howling wind and brighter the glaring lightning flashed, while fiercer grew the-conflict in Fanny's bosom. Her faith was weak and well nigh blotted with tears of human weakness. But he, whose power could stay the storm without, could also still the agony within, and o'er the troubled waters of that aching heart there fell a peaceful calm.

Suddenly the door opened and a creature of wondrous, dazzling beauty appeared. It was Julia in her bridal robe. She would fain have her sister's blessing ere she descended to the parlor. The struggle was over and the blessing which Fanny gave her sister was sincere, but when Julia asked forgiveness for all the evil she had ever done, the reply was prevented by a crash of thunder so terrific that Julia trembled with terror and hastily left the scene.

In a moment there was a light step upon the stair. Fanny knew that it was Dr. Lacey for he soon returned with Julia, and as they passed her door she heard the merry laugh of Florence who was bridesmaid.

In an instant they were in the parlor, throughout which a general gloom seemed to reign. Perhaps it was owing to the wildness of the storm, which each moment increased in fury. The Bridal party took their places and Uncle Joshua shut his eyes, while the marriage ceremony commenced.

The reader may now accompany me to the border of yonder wood, where stands a low-roofed building, the property of Mrs. Dunn. There in a darkened room lay the widow's only son, raving in the madness of delirium. The fever flame burned in each vein, and as he tossed from side to side he would shriek Out, "Quick, I tell you or you are too late. She must not wed him. Don't you know she's doubly, trebly steeped in guilt? Go quick, I tell you, and stop it."

Mrs. Dunn could only weep, for she knew not, dreamed not, what her son could mean. Soon he grew calm, and fell into a deep sleep. When he awoke Billy Jeffrey, who lived near, was sitting by him. To Mrs. Dunn's delight Joseph was sane, and calling her to him he said, "Isn't Julia Middleton to married tonight?"

"She is." answered his mother.

"At what hour?"

"At seven."

"What time is it now?"

"Half-pest six." replied Mrs. Dunn.

"It must not be," said Joseph, and turning to Bill he added, "listen, William, to what I have to tell, then speed along on the lightning's wing, and tear her from the altar -- take her from his side, I say, and put there the other one, the pale, golden-haired one," then, as he noticed the vacant look on Bill's face, he added, "oh, no, you can't tell. You wouldn't understand it. Mother, bring me a pen and some paper."

The paper was brought, and as soon as possible Joseph-wrote a confession of his own and Julia's guilt. "Now, Bill," said he, "run for your life and give this to Dr. Lacey. Do it for the sake of Fanny."

Bill needed no second bidding. His obtuse intellect had gathered that in some way Fanny was in danger, and away he flew, over bushes, briars, rocks and ditches. But alas! The way was long and dark, and ere he was aware of it he was precipitated into one of the sink holes which are so common in the limestone soil of Kentucky. The fall sprained his ankle, but gathering himself up, he continued on, slowly and painfully.

Meanwhile delirium had again crept over Joseph Dunn, and he forgot that he had sent Billy, but concluded he must go himself. Watching a time when his mother was from the room, he rose, and throwing on his double gown, went forth into the storm, and was soon far on his road toward Mr. Middleton's.

The man of God had scarcely finished the second paragraph of the Episcopal ceremony, beginning with "I require and charge you both." etc. when a shriek, wild and unearthly and horrid, rent the air. It was succeeded by a thunder crash so deafening that the ladies paled with terror. The large maple tree, which stood by the front door, and which Julia called hers, was shivered by lightning, but no one heeded it, for again was heard that fearful maniacal shriek, and this time could be distinguished the sound as if someone struggled with the blacks, who were huddled together in the hall.

"Let me go, I tell you," said the voice. "it shall not go on!"

All eyes turned toward the door, as Joseph Dunn appeared, shouting, "Stop it! Stop it! She forged those letters. She broke her sister's heart. Stop, I say!" Every person in the room seemed terror-stricken at the wild spectacle he presented.

His face, wasted to a mere skeleton, was ghastly white, while his long yellow hair hung in matted locks about his brow, and a look of wild frenzy was in his eye, as darting toward the paralyzed Julia, he seized her as with a lion's grasp and shook her most furiously.

Bill Jeffery was close behind. He had lost his hat and the rain soaked his thick hair until it clung closely to his head, giving him, too, a strange appearance. Mr. William Middleton now came forward to ask an explanation of Joseph, who chancing to see Bill, said, "He's got the letter -- my confession. Read that -- I am too exhausted." and he fell upon the floor.

No one noticed him, for all gazed intently at Bill, who drew from his pocket a paper and presented it to Dr. Lacey. In a calm, clear voice, Dr. Lacey read aloud the confession, in the midst of thunder, lightning, groans, cries and oaths. The latter of which were the spontaneous production of Uncle Joshua, who sat still in his chair until the confession was read through, then with one bound he reached Julia, and raising her from the floor, said, "Speak, Satan, and tell if this is true!"

Julia was overtaken, surrounded on all sides, and there was no way of escape. Mechanically she answered. "I am guilty." while a burst of execration ran round the room. A stifled moan of agony came from Dr. Lacey's parted lips, and he asked in a voice which plainly told his

suffering, "Oh, why was I suffered to go this far? Why, why did no one write?"

"I did." answered Mrs. Miller.

"And I, too," repeated Mrs. Garrington, "but you spurned my letter and treated me with contempt."

"Never, never," scarcely articulated Dr. Lacey. "I never received these, but call Rondeau, he must know something of it."

Rondeau, who has accompanied his master, was called. Explanation followed explanation, testimony crowded upon testimony, and Julia acknowledged all, until at length Dr. Lacey, frantic with the sense of wrong done him, turned to her and said, "Base woman, why have you done this? Your sir has found you out ere it was too late, for, thank God, you are not my wife nor ever will be!"

Julia now lost all command of herself. Tearing the bridal veil from her brow, she rent it in twain, then from her arm she snatched her diamond bracelet and trampled it under her feet, while a stream of blood issued from her mouth and stained her white satin dress. A moment more, and she too was extended on the floor by the side of her ally.

Where during this exciting scene was Fanny? The direful sounds had reached her ear, and now at the head of the stairs she listened to the Babel which reigned in the parlor. High above all other voices she distinguished her father's, who in his uncontrollable fury, was calling to us all the oaths he had ever heard of, besides manufacturing some expressly for the occasion! Then there was a heavy fall, accompanied by a cry from Mrs. Middleton of, "Lift her up -- carry her out. Don't you see she is dying?"

Fanny hesitated no longer, but quickly descending the stairs, she forced her way through the blacks into the parlor, where she stood appalled at the scene before her. On the floor lay Julia, who a few moments before stood there resplendent in beauty. Near her sat the maniac, Joseph Dunn, he had recovered from his fainting fit, and was now crouching over the prostrate form of Julia, laughing in delirious glee, as he wiped from her lips the red drops of blood. In a corner of the room a group had gathered, near an open window, through which they were bearing an inanimate object.

It was Florence, who had fainted, and as it seemed impossible to effect a passage through the hall, so filled was it with terrified servants, they had sought the window as the best means of egress.

Suddenly over that excited assembly there came a deep silence. It was caused by the appearance of Fanny, who, with her loose white muslin wrapper, and long curls, which floated over her shoulders, seemed like some being from another world, come to stay that storm of passion. Mabel, who was occupied with her cousin, looked back as the calm hush fell upon them, and then and there she first saw Fanny Middleton. The scene was too much for Fanny, and she, too, would have fainted had not Dr. Lacey caught her in his arms. Claspng her slight form passionately to his bosom, he exclaimed, "My own, -- my Fanny -- my wife, for such you are, and such you will be!"

Mr. William Middleton and Mr. Miller, who were bearing Julia from the room, now passed them. Dr. Lacey glanced once at the corpse-like face over which the heavy braids of long black hair had fallen. And then with a shudder he again strained Fanny to his heart, saying, "Thank God, thank God, I escaped her in time!" Then turning to the minister, who all this time had stood looking on in mute astonishment, he added, in an authoritative manner, "Go on with the ceremony, sir, and make her my wife." But a new thought entering his mind he released Fanny, and said, "Pardon me, dear Fanny, sorrow has well berift me of my senses. In my first joy in finding you innocent, I forgot that you could not be mine, for you belong to another -- to Mr. Cameron."

"Cameron go to Thunder!" exclaimed Uncle Joshua, who was still standing near. "That's another of Tempest's lies. She was never engaged to him, never loved him, or any other mortal man, save yourself."

Here, Fanny, who, it will be remembered, was all this time ignorant of the truth, asked if someone would not explain what she saw and heard. "I will," said Dr. Lacey, "it is my duty to do so." and he led her to a window, where he hurriedly told her all -- everything which he himself knew, intermingling his words with so many passionate embraces that his sanity was much to be doubted. He had scarcely finished his story when Kate approached him, saying, "For humanity's sake, Dr. Lacey, if you have any skill, exert it in behalf of Julia, who seems to be dying."

Dr. Lacey arose, and winding his arm about Fanny, as if afraid he might lose sight of her, moved toward the room where Julia lay. They had borne her to the bridal chamber, which Fanny had arranged with so much care, and as Dr. Lacey appeared at the door, Uncle Joshua met him and said, "I know she served you mean, but I would not have her die. She is my own child, and you must save her if you can." At the

same moment he pointed to Julia, who lay in the same death like trance, with the blood still issuing slowly from her living lip, all that Dr. Lacey could do, he did, but when Dr. Gordon arrived, he gladly gave up his charge to him. And turned his attention toward Fanny, who, overcome by what she had seen and heard, had fainted, and had been carried to her own room, where she was surrounded by Mrs. Carrington, Florence and Mabel. These ladies ran against each other, upset the camphor bottle, dropped the lamp and spilled half the cologne, in their zealous efforts to take care of their patient!

In the midst of their confusion Dr. Lacey entered, and they immediately gave up to him the task of restoring her. This he soon did, for it would seem that his very voice had a power to recall Fanny's suspended faculties. Slowly her eyes unclosed, then, as if wearied out, she again closed them, and for a time slept, sweetly, calmly, on Dr. Lacey's bosom.

The guests now began to depart, and Bill Jeffery, who had been sent to inform Mrs. Dunn of her son, returned with some of the neighbors, and carried Joseph away. Owing to the darkness of the night, the company from Frankfort remained until morning, but no eyelid closed in sleep. With maternal solicitude, Mrs. Middleton sat by the beside of her daughter Julia, whose eyes opened once, but on seeing Dr. Lacey standing nearby, she closed them again with a shudder, and a faint wail of anguish escaped her. She had ruptured a small blood vessel, but Dr. Gordon said there was no danger if she could be kept quiet for a few days.

Uncle Joshua thus relieved from alarm concerning her, walked back and forth from her room to Fanny's swearing that he "Knew the devil was let loose that night for his special benefit, and that he had come up there to see how much of a row he could get up!"

"He succeeded admirably, I think," said Florence, who, having recovered from her first fright, was now ready to extract whatever fun could be gathered from the surrounding circumstances.

In the kitchen the blacks canvassed the matter after their fashion. Aunt Judy lamented because none of the tempting supper in the dining room was touched, while Bob did not fail to turn his usual round of somersaults, thus evincing his joy that so many good things were left for him to eat, "Cause" said he, "in course we allus has all that comes off the table."

Aunt Katy took occasion to lecture the young black girls on the awful sin of "Conceit," as she called it, pointing them for example to Julia, who she said "Would most likely have to live an old maid all her

days." She couldn't have threatened a worse punishment, for many of the negroes had already their own preferences in favor of certain mulatto boys on the master's plantation and others adjoining.

Rondeau seemed to think his sympathy was only needed by his young master whom he looked upon as a much-abused man. From the first he had felt a great contempt for the old house, its master, servants and all, and had come to the conclusion that "They were of no 'count anyhow." This opinion would doubtless have been reserved for Leffie's ear had not affairs take so unexpected a turn. Now, however, Rondeau felt at liberty to express his mind so freely that Ike considered it his duty to resent the insult.

A regular Negro fight ensued, in which Aunt Katy, who was not very active, was thrown down, and as she loudly protested, "Every atom was kicked out of her."

The big chicken pie was also turned over into Rondeau's new hat, greatly to the satisfaction of Tiger and the other dogs, who had mingled in the fracas! The riot was finally quelled by Mr. William Middleton and Dr. Lacey, Uncle Joshua declaring he "Wouldn't interfere that night if the niggers all fit till they killed themselves."

EDUCATION OF A YOUNG LADY

Excerpt from "The English Orphans" 1855

By Mary Jane Holmes

"Oh, what a forlorn-looking place!" exclaimed Rose Lincoln, as from the windows of the crowded vehicle in which they had come from the cars she first obtained a view of the not very handsome village of South Hadley.

Rose was in the worst of humors, for by some mischance Mary was on the same seat with herself, and consequently she was very distressed and crowded. She, however, felt a little afraid of Aunt Martha, who she saw was inclined to favor the object of her wrath, so she restrained her fault-finding spirit until she arrived at South Hadley, where everything came in for a share of her displeasure.

"That the seminary!" said she, contemptuously, as they drew up before the building. "Why, it isn't half as large or handsome as I supposed. Oh, horror! I know I shan't stay here long."

The furniture of the parlor was also very offensive to the young lady, and when Miss Lyon came in to meet them she, too, was secretly styled "A prim, fussy, slippery-tongued old maid." Jenny, however, who always saw the bright side of everything, was completely charmed with the sweet smile and placid face, so well remembered by all who have seen and known the founder of Mount Holyoke Seminary. After some conversation between Miss Lyon and Aunt Martha it was decided that Rose and Jenny should room together as a matter of course, and that Mary should room with Ida. Rose had fully intended to room with Ida herself, and this decision made her very angry, but there was no hope for it, and she was obliged to submit.

Our readers are probably aware that an examination in certain branches is necessary ere a pupil can be admitted into the school at Mount Holyoke, where the course of instruction embraces three years, and three classes, junior, middle and senior. Rose, who had been much flattered on account of her scholarship, confidently expected to enter the middle class. Jenny, too, had the same desire, though she confessed to some misgivings concerning her knowledge of a goodly number of the necessary branches. Ida was really an excellent scholar, and was prepared to enter the senior class, while Mary aspired to nothing higher than admission to the junior. She was therefore greatly surprised when Aunt Martha, after questioning her as to what she had studied, proposed that she should be examined for the middle class.

"Oh, no," said Mary, quickly, "I should fail, and I wouldn't do that for the world."

"Have you ever studied Latin?" asked Aunt Martha.

Before Mary could reply, Rose exclaimed, "She study Latin! How absurd! Why, she has never been to school in her life."

Aunt Martha silenced her with a peculiar look, while Mary answered that for more than two years she had been reading Latin under Mrs. Magon's instruction.

"And you could not have a better teacher," said Aunt Martha "so try it, by all means."

"Yes, do try." said Ida and Jenny, in the same breath, and after a time Mary rather reluctantly consented.

"I'll warrant she intends to sit by us, so we can tell her every other word." muttered Rose to Jenny, but when the trial came she thought differently.

It would be wearisome to give the examination in detail, so we will only say that at its close Rose Lincoln heard with shame and confusion that she could only be admitted to the junior class, her examination having proved very unsatisfactory one. Poor Jenny, too, who had stumbled over almost everything, shared the same fate, while Mary, expecting nothing, burst into tears when told that she had acquitted herself creditably in all the branches requisite for an admission into the middle class.

“Mrs. Mason will be so glad, and Billy, too.” was her first thought, and then as she saw how disappointed Jenny looked, she seized the first opportunity to throw her arms around her neck, and whisper to her how sorry she was that she had-failed.

Jenny, however, was of too happy a temperament to remain sad for a long time, and before night her loud, merry laugh had more than once rung out in the upper hall, causing even Miss Lyon to listen, it was so clear and joyous. That afternoon Aunt Martha, who was going to call upon Mrs. Mason, started for home, leaving the girls alone among strangers. It was a rainy, dreary day, and the moment her Aunt was gone Ida threw herself upon the bed and burst into tears. Jenny, who occupied the next room, was also low-spirited, for Rose was terribly cross, calling her a “ninny-hammer”, and various other dignified names. Among the four girls Mary was the only cheerful one, and after a time she succeeded in comforting Ida, while Jenny, catching something of her spirit, began to laugh loudly, as she told a group of girls how many ludicrous blunders she had made when they undertook to question her about Euclid, which she had never studied in her life!

And now, in a few days, life at Mount Holyoke commenced in earnest. Although perfectly healthy, Mary looked rather delicate, and it was for this reason, perhaps, that the sweeping and dusting for several rooms was assigned to her, as her portion of the labor. Ida and Rose fared much worse and were greatly shocked when told that they both belonged to the wash circle!

“I declare,” said Rose, “it’s too bad. I’ll walk home before I’ll do it.” and she glanced at her white hands, to make sure they were not already discolored by the dreaded soapsuds!

Jenny was delighted with her allotment, which was dishwashing.

“I’m glad I took that lesson at the poorhouse years ago.” said she one day to Rose, who snappishly replied:

“I’d shut up about the poorhouse, or they’ll think you the pauper instead of madam Howard.”

“Pauper? Who’s a pauper?” asked Lucy Downs, eager to hear so desirable a piece of news.

Ida Sheldon’s large black eyes rested reprovingly upon Rose, who nodded toward Mary, and forthwith Miss Downs departed with the information, which was not long in reaching Mary’s ears.

“Why, Mary, what’s the matter?” asked Ida, when toward the close of the day she found her companion weeping in her room. Without lifting her head Mary replied, “It’s foolish in me to cry, I know, but why need I always be reproached with having been a pauper? I couldn’t help it. I promised mother I would take care of little Allie as long as she lived, and if she went to the poorhouse, I had to go, too.”

“And who was little Allie?” asked Ida, taking Mary’s hot hands between her own.

In a few words Mary related her history, omitting her acquaintance with George Morland, and commencing at the night when her mother died. Ida was warm-hearted and affectionate, and cared but little whether one were rich or poor if she liked them. From the first she had been interested in Mary, and now winding her arms about her neck, and kissing away her tears, she promised to love her, and to be to her as true and faithful a friend as Jenny. This promise, which was never broken, was of great benefit to Mary, drawing to her side many of the best girls in the school, who soon learned to love her for herself, and not because the wealthy Miss Sheldon seemed so fond of her.

Neither Ida nor Rose were as happy in school as Mary and Jenny. Both of them fretted about the rules which they were obliged to observe, and both of them disliked and dreaded their portion of the work. Ida, however, was happier than Rose, for she was fonder of study, and one day, when particularly interested in her lessons, she said to Mary that she believed she should be tolerably contented, were it not for the everlasting washing.

Looking up after a moment, she saw Mary had disappeared. But she soon returned exclaiming, “I’ve fixed it. It’s all right. I told her I was a great deal stronger than you, that I was used to washing, and you are not, and that it made your side ache, so she consented to have us exchange, and after this you are to dust for me, and I am to wash for you.”

Ida disliked washing so much that she raised no very strong objections to Mary’s plan, and then when she found how great a kindness had really been shown her, she tried hard to think of some way in which to repay it. At last George Morland, to whom she had

written upon the subject, suggested something which met her views exactly. Both Ida and her aunt had told George about Mary, and without hinting that he knew her, he immediately commenced making minute inquiries concerning her of Ida, who communicated them to Mary, wondering why she always blushed so deeply, and tried to change the conversation. In reply to the letter in which Ida had told him of Mary's kindness, George wrote, "You say Miss Howard is very fond of music, and that there is no teacher connected with the institution. Now why not give her lessons yourself? You can do it as well as not, and it will be a good way of showing your gratitude."

Without waiting to read further, Ida ran in quest of Mary, to whom she told what George had written. "You don't know," said she, "how much George asks about you. I never saw him so much interested in any one before, and half the girls in Boston are after him, too."

"Poor fellow, I pity him," said Mary, and Ida continued:

"Perhaps it seems foolish in me to say so much about him, but if you only knew him you wouldn't wonder, he's the handsomest young man I ever saw, and then he's so good, so different from the other young men, especially Henry Lincoln."

Here the tea-bell rang, and the conversation was discontinued. When Rose heard that Mary was taking music lessons, she exclaimed to a group of the girls with whom she was talking, "Well, I declare, beggars taking music lessons! I wonder what'll come next? Why, you've no idea how dreadfully poor she is. Our summer residence is near the Alms house, and when she was there I saw a good deal of her. She had scarcely anything fit to wear, and I gave her one of my old bonnets, which I do believe she wore for three or four years."

"Why, Rose Lincoln!" said Jenny, who had overheard all, and now came up to her sister, "How can you tell what you know is not true?"

"Not true?" angrily retorted Rose. "Pray, didn't she have my old bonnet?"

"Yes," answered Jenny, "but I bought it of you and paid you for it with a bracelet Billy Bender gave me -- you know I did."

Rose was cornered, and as she saw no way of extricating herself she turned on her heel and walked away, muttering about the meanness of doing a charitable deed and then boasting of it!

The next day Jenny chanced to go for a moment to Mary's room, as she entered it Mary looked up, saying, "You are just the one I want to see. I've been writing about you to Billy Bender. You can read it if you choose."

When Jenny had finished reading the passage referred to, she said, "Oh, Mary, I didn't suppose you overheard Rose's unkind remarks about that bonnet."

"But I did," answered Mary, "and I am glad, too, for I had always 'supposed myself indebted to her instead of to you. Billy thought so, too, and as you see, I have undeceived him. Did I tell you that he had left Mr. Seldon's employment, and gone into a law office?"

"Oh, good, good, I'm so glad," exclaimed Jenny, dancing about the room, "do you know whose office he is in?"

"Mr. Worthington's." answered Mary, and Jenny continued;

"Why, Henry is studying there, Isn't that funny? But Billy will beat him, I know he will -- he's so smart. How I wish he'd write to me! Wouldn't I feel grand to have a gentleman correspondent?"

"Suppose you write to him," said Mary laughingly. "here's just room enough," pointing to a vacant spot upon the paper. "he's always asking about you, and you can answer his questions yourself."

"I'll do it." said Jenny, and seizing the pen, she thoughtlessly scribbled off a ludicrous account of her failure, and of the blunders she was constantly committing while she spoke of Mary as a pattern for the whole school both in scholarship and behavior.

"There!" said she, wiping her gold pen upon her silk apron (For Jenny still retained some of the habits of her childhood), "I guess he'll think I'm crazy, but I hope he will answer it, anyway."

Mary hoped so, too, and when at last Billy's letter came, containing a neat-written note for Jenny, it was difficult telling which of the two girls was the happier.

Soon after Mary went to Mount Holyoke she had received a letter from Billy, in which he expressed his pleasure that she was at school, but added that the fact of her being there interfered greatly with his plan of educating her himself- "Mother's ill health," said he, "prevented me from doing anything until now, and just as I am in a fair way to accomplish my object, someone else has stepped in before me. But it is all right, and as you do not seem to need my services at present, I shall next week leave Mr. Seldon's employment, and go into Mr. Worthington's law office as clerk, hoping that when the proper time arrives, I shall not be defeated in another plan which was formed in my boyhood, and which has become the great object of my life."

Mary felt perplexed and troubled. Billy's letters of late had been more like those of a lover than a brother, and she could not help guessing the nature of "The plan formed in boyhood." She knew she should never love him except with a sister's love, and though she

could not tell him so, her next letter lacked the tone of affection with which she was accustomed to write, and was on the whole a rather formal affair. Billy, who readily perceived the change, attributed it to the right cause, and from that time his letters became far less cheerful than usual.

Mary usually cried over them, wishing more than once that Billy would transfer his affection from herself to Jenny, and it was for this reason, perhaps, that without stopping to consider the propriety of the matter, she first asked Jenny to write to him, and then encouraged her in answering his notes, which (as her own letters grew shorter) became gradually longer and longer, until at last his letters were addressed to Jenny, while the notes they contained were directed to Mary!

Rapidly the days passed on at Mount Holyoke. Autumn faded into winter whose icy breath floated for a time over the mountain tops, and then melted away at the approach of spring, which, with its swelling buds and early flowers, gave way in its turn to the long bright days of summer. And now only a few weeks remained ere the annual examination at which Ida was to be graduated.

Neither Rose nor Jenny were to return the next year, and nothing but Mr. Lincoln's firmness and good sense had prevented their being sent for when their mother first heard that they had failed to enter the middle class. Mrs. Lincoln's mortification was undoubtedly greatly increased from the fact that the despised Mary had entered in advance of her daughters. "Things are coming to a pretty pass," said she. "yes, a pretty pass, but I might have known better than to send my children to such a school."

Mr. Lincoln could not forbear asking her in a laughing way, "If the schools which she attended were of a higher order than Mount Holyoke."

Bursting into tears, Mrs. Lincoln replied that, "She didn't think she ought to be twitted of her poverty."

"Neither do I," returned her husband. "you were no more to be blamed for working in a factory than Mary is for having been a pauper!"

Mrs. Lincoln was silent, for she did not particularly care to hear about her early days, when she had been an operative in the cotton mills of Southbridge. She had possessed just enough beauty to captivate the son of the proprietor, who was fresh from college, and after a few weeks acquaintance, they were married. Fortunately her husband was a man of good sense, and restrained her from the

commission or many foolish acts. Thus when she insisted upon sending for Rose and Jenny, he promptly replied that they "Should not come home." Still, as Rose seemed discontented, complaining that so much exercise made her side and shoulder ache, and as Jenny did not wish to remain another year unless Mary did, he consented that they should leave school at the close of the term, on the condition that they went somewhere else.

"I shall never make anything of Henry," said he, "but my daughters shall receive every advantage, and perhaps one or the other of them will comfort my old age."

He spoke truly with regard to Henry, who was studying, or pretending to study law in the same office with Billy Bender. But his father heard no favorable account of him, and from time to time large bills were presented for the payment of carriage hire, wine and "drunken sprees", generally, so it has no wonder the disappointed father sighed, and turned to his daughters for the comfort his only son refused to give.

But we have wandered from the examination at Mount Holyoke, for high great preparations were being made. Rose, knowing she was not to return, seemed to think further effort on her part unnecessary, and numerous were the reprimands, to say nothing of black marks, which she received. Jenny, on the contrary, said she wished to retrieve her reputation for laziness, and leave behind a good impression. So, never before in her whole life had she behaved so well, or studied as hard as she did during the last few weeks of her stay at Mount Holyoke. Ida, who was expecting her father, aunt and cousin to be present at the anniversary, was so engrossed with her studies that she did not observe how sad and low-spirited Mary seemed. She had tasted of knowledge and now thirsted for more, but it was not to be, the funds were exhausted and she must leave school, never, perhaps, to return again.

"How much I shall miss my music, and how much I shall miss you." she said one day to Ida, who was giving her a lesson.

"It's too bad you haven't a piano," returned Ida, "you are so fond of it, and improve so fast!" Then after a moment, she added, "I have a plan to propose, and may as well do it now as any time. Next winter you must spend with me in Boston, Aunt Martha and I arranged it the last time I was at home, and we even selected your room, which is next to mine, and opposite to Aunt Martha's. Now, what does your ladyship say to it?"

"She says she can't go." answered Mary.

“Can’t go!” repeated Ida, “Why not? Jenny will be in the city, and you are always happy where she is, besides, you will have a rare chance for taking music lessons of our best teachers, and then, too, you will be in the same house with George, and that alone is worth going to Boston for, I think.”

Ida little suspected that her last argument was the strongest objection to Mary’s going, for as much as she wished to meet George again, she felt that she would not on any account go to his home, lest he should think she came on purpose to see him. There were other reasons, too, why she did not wish to go. Henry and Rose Lincoln would-both be in the city, and she knew that neither of them would scruple to do or say anything which they thought would annoy her. Mrs. Mason, too, missed her, and longed to have her at home, so she resisted all Ida’s entreaties, and the next letter which went to Aunt Martha carried her refusal.

In a day or two Mary received two letters, one from Billy and one from Mrs. Mason, the latter of which contained money for the payment of her bills but on offering it to the principal, how surprised she was to learn that her bills had not only been regularly paid and receipted, but that ample funds were provided for the defraying of her expenses during the coming year. A faint sickness stole over Mary, for she instantly thought of Billy Bender, and the obligation she would now be under to him forever. Then it occurred to her how impossible it was that he should have earned so much in so short a time, and as soon as she could trust her voice to speak, she asked who it was that had thus befriended her.

Miss ---- was not at liberty to tell, and with a secret suspicion of Aunt Martha, who had seemed much interested in her welfare, Mary returned to her room to read the other letter, which was still unopened. It was some time since Billy had written to her, alone, and with more than her usual curiosity, she broke the seal, but her head grew dizzy, and her spirits faint as she read the passionate outpouring of a heart which had cherished her image for years, and which, though fearful of rejection, would still tell her how much she was beloved. “It is no sudden fancy,” said he, “but was conceived years ago, on that dreary afternoon when in your little room at the poorhouse you laid your head in my lap and wept, as you told me how lonely you were. Do you remember it, Mary? I do, and never now does your image come before me, but I think of you as you were then, when the wild wish that you should one day be mine first entered my heart. Morning, noon, and night have I thought of you,

and no plan for the future have I ever formed which had not a direct reference to you. Once, Mary, I believed my affection for you returned, but now you have changed, greatly changed. Your letters are brief and cold, and when I look around for the cause I am led to fear that I was deceived in thinking you ever loved me as I thought you did. If I am mistaken, tell me so, but if I am not, if you can never be my wife, I will school myself to think of you as a brother would think of an only and darling sister."

This letter produced a strange affect on Mary, she thought how much she was indebted to one who had stood so faithfully by her when all the world was dark and dreary. She thought, too, of his kindness to the dead, and that appealed more strongly to her sympathy than aught else he had ever done for her. There was no one to advise her, and acting upon the impulse of the moment, she sat down and commenced a letter, the nature of which she did not understand herself, and which, if sent would have given a different coloring to the whole of her after life. She had written but one page, when the study bell rang, and she was obliged to put her letter by till the morrow. For several days she had not been well, and the excitement produced by Billy's letter tended to increase her illness, so that on the following morning when she attempted to rise, she found herself seriously ill. During the hours in which she was alone that day she had ample time for reflection, and before night she wrote another letter to Billy, in which she told him how impossible it was for her to be the wife of one whom she had always loved as an own and dear brother. This letter caused Mary so much effort, and so many bitter tears, that for several days she continued worse, and at last gave up all hope of being present at the examination.

"Oh, it is too bad," said Ida, "for I do want you to see Cousin George, and I know he'll be disappointed, too, for I never saw anything like the interest he seems to take in you."

A few days later as Mary was lying alone, thinking of Billy, and wondering if she had done right in writing to him as she did, Jenny came rushing in, wild with delight.

Her father was downstairs, together with Ida's father, George, and Aunt Martha. "Most the first thing I did" said she, "was to inquire after Billy Bender! I guess Aunt Martha was shocked, for she looked so queer. George laughed, and Mr. Selden said he was doing well, and was one of the finest young men in Boston. But why don't you ask about George? I heard him talking about you, to Rose, just as I left the parlor."

Mary felt sure that any information of her which Rose might give would not be very complimentary, and she thought right, for when Rose was questioned concerning "Miss Howard" she at first affected her ignorance of such a person and then when George explained himself more definitely, she said, "Oh, that girl! I'm sure I don't know much about her, except that she's a charity scholar, or something of that kind."

At the words "charity scholar", there was a peculiar smile on George's face, but he continued talking, saying, "If that were the case she ought to be very studious, and he presumed she was."

"As nearly as I can judge of her," returned Rose, "she is not remarkable for brilliant talents, but," she added, as she met Ida's eyes, "she has a certain way of showing off, and perhaps I am mistaken with regard to her."

Very different from this was the description given of her by Ida, who now came to her cousin's side, extolling Mary highly, and lamenting the illness which would prevent George from seeing her. Aunt Martha also spoke word in Mary's favor, at the same time endeavoring to stop the unkind remarks of Rose, whom she thoroughly disliked and who she feared was becoming too much of a favorite with George. Rose was not only very handsome but she also possessed a peculiar faculty of making herself agreeable whenever she chose, and in Boston she was quite a favorite with a certain class of young men. It was for George Moreland, however, that her prettiest and most coquettish airs were practiced. He was the object which she would secure, and when she heard Mary Howard so highly commended in his presence, she could not forbear expressing her contempt, fancying that he, with his high English notions, would feel just as she did with regard to poverty and low origin. As for George, it was difficult telling whom he did prefer, though the last time Rose was in Boston rumor had said that he was particularly attentive to her, and Mrs. Lincoln who was very sanguine once hinted to Ida the probability that a relationship would sooner or later exist between the two families.

Rose, too, though careful not to hint at such a thing in Ida's presence, was quite willing that others of her companions at Mount Holyoke should fancy there was an intimacy if not an engagement between herself and Mr. Moreland. Consequently he had not been in South Hadley twenty-four hours ere he was pointed out by some of the villagers as being the future husband of the elder Miss Lincoln, whose haughty, disagreeable manners had become a subject of

general remark. During the whole of George's stay at Mount Holyoke Rose managed to keep him at her side, entertaining him occasionally with unkind remarks concerning Mary, who, she said, was undoubtedly feigning her sickness so as not to appear in her classes where she knew she could do herself no credit. "But," she said, "as soon as the examination is over she will get well fast enough and bother us with her company at Chicopee."

In this Rose was mistaken, for when the exercises closed Mary was still too ill to ride and it was decided that she should remain a few days until Mrs. Mason could come for her. With many tears Ida and Jenny bade their young friend good-bye, but Rose, when asked to go up and see her, turned away disdainfully, amusing herself during their absence by talking and laughing with George Moreland.

The room in which Mary lay commanded a view of the yard and gateway, and after Aunt Martha, Ida and Jenny had left, she arose, and stealing to the window, looked out upon the company as they departed. She could readily divine which was George Moreland, for Rose Lincoln's shawl and satchel were thrown over his arm. While Rose herself walked close to his elbow, apparently engrossing his whole attention. Once he turned around, but fearful of being herself observed, Mary drew back behind the window curtain, and thus lost a view of his face. He, however, caught a glimpse of her, and asked if that was the room in which Miss Howard was sick.

Rose affected not to hear him, and continued enumerating the many trials which she had endured at school, and congratulating herself upon her escape from the "Horrid Place." But for once George was not an attentive listener; notwithstanding his apparent indifference he was greatly disappointed in not seeing Mary. It was for this he had gone to Mount Holyoke and in spite of Rose's endeavors to make him talk, he was unusually silent all the way, and when they at last reached Chicopee, he highly offended the young lady by assisting Jenny to alight instead of herself.

"I should like to know what you are thinking about." she said, rather pettishly, as she took his offered hand to say good-bye.

With a roguish look in his eye, George replied, "I've been thinking of a young lady. Shall I tell you her name?"

Rose blushed, and was looking interestingly embarrassed, answered, that of course 'twas no one she knew.

"Yes, 'tis." returned George, still holding her hand, and as Aunt Martha, who was jealously watching his movements from the

window, just then called out to him "To jump in, or he'd be left." he put his face under Rose's bonnet, and whispered, "Mary Howard!"

"Kissed her, upon my word!" said Aunt Martha, with a groan, which was tendered inaudible to Ida by the louder noise of the engine.

FESTIVITIES IN BOSTON

Excerpt from "The English Orphans" 1855

By Mary Jane Holmes

"Bring me my new dress, Jenny, I want to see if the Honiton lace on the cape is as wide as Ida Selden's."

"What do you mean?" asked Jenny, turning quickly toward her sister, whose white, wasted face looked fitter for a shroud than a gay party dress.

"I mean what I say," returned Rose, "I'm not going to be cooped up here any longer. I'm going to the party tomorrow night, if I never go again!"

"Why, Rose Lincoln, are you crazy?" asked Jenny. "You haven't been in the street yet, and how do you expect to go to-morrow night? Mother wouldn't let you, if she were here."

"Well, thank fortune! She and father are both in Southbridge, and besides that I'm a great deal better, so hand me my dress."

Jenny complied, and reclining on pillows scarcely whiter than herself, Rose Lincoln examined and found fault with a thin gossamer fabric, little suited for anyone to wear on a cold, wintery night, and much less for her.

"There, I knew it wasn't as wide as Ida's to an eighth of an inch," said she, measuring with her finger the expensive lace. "I'll have some new. Come, Jenny, suppose you go down street and get it, for I'm bent upon going." and the thoughtless girl sprang lightly upon the floor, and chased half way across the room to show how well and strong she was.

Jenny knew that further expostulation from her was useless, but she refused to go for the lace, and Sarah, the servant girl, was sent with a note from Rose saying she wanted a nice article, eight or ten dollars per yard.

"I don't believe father would like to have you make such a bill," said Jenny, when Sarah was gone. "mother didn't dare to tell him about your new dress, for he told her she mustn't get anything charged, and he said, too, something about hard times. Perhaps he is going to fail. Wouldn't that be dreadful?"

If Rose heard the last part of this sentence, she did not heed it, for to her the idea of her father's failing was preposterous. When the dinner bell rang she threw on a heavy shawl, and descending to the dining parlor, remained below stairs all the afternoon, forcing back her cough, and chatting merrily with a group of young girls who had called to see her, and congratulate her upon her improved health, for excitement lent a deep glow to her cheek, which would easily deceive the inexperienced. The next day, owing to overexertion, Rose's temples were throbbing with pain, and more than once, she half-determined not to go, but her passion for society was strong, and Mrs. Russell's party had so long been anticipated and talked about that she felt she would not miss it for the world, and, as she had confessed to Jenny, there was also a mean curiosity to see how Mary Howard would appear at a fashionable party.

"Saturate my handkerchief with cologne, and put the vinaigrette where I can reach it while you arrange my hair." she said to Sarah, who at the usual hour came up to dress her young mistress for the evening. "There, be careful and not brush so hard, for that ugly pain isn't quite gone -- now bring me the glass and let me see if I do look like a ghost."

"Pale, delicate folks is always more interesting than red, hearty ones." said the faltering servant, as she obeyed.

"Mercy, how white I am!" exclaimed Rose, glancing at the ashen face reflected by the mirror. "Rub my cheeks with cologne, Sarah, and see if that won't bring some color into them. There, that'll do. Now hand me my dress. Oh, isn't it beautiful?" she continued, as she threw aside the thickly-wedded double gown and assumed a light, thin dress, which fell in fleecy folds around her slight figure.

"Faith, an' ye looks sweet, God Bless you!" said Sarah, as she clasped the diamond bracelets around the snowy arms, and fastened the costly ornaments in the delicate ears.

When her toilet was completed Rose stood up before the long mirror, and a glow of pride came to her cheeks as she saw how lovely she really was.

"You's enough slight handsomer than Miss Jenny." whispered Sarah, as the door opened and Jenny appeared more simply arrayed than her sister, but looking as fresh and blooming as a rosebud.

"How beautiful you are, Rose," said she, "only it makes me shiver to look at your neck and arms. You'll wear your woolen sack, besides your shawl and cloak, won't you?"

"Nonsense, I'm not going to be bundled up this way, for don't you see it musses the lace." said Rose, refusing the warm sack which Jenny had brought her.

A rap at the door and a call from Henry that the carriage was waiting ended the conversation, and throwing on their cloaks and hoods the girls descended to the hall, where with unusual tenderness Henry caught up his invalid sister, and drawing her veil closely over her face, carried her to the covered sleigh, so that her feet might not touch the icy walk.

"What? Rose Lincoln here?" exclaimed half a dozen voices as Rose bounded into the dressing room.

"Yes, Rose Lincoln is here," she replied, gayly, divesting herself of her wrappings. "I'm not going to die just yet, I guess, neither am I going to be housed up all winter. The fresh air has done me good already — see." she pointed to a bright round spot which burned upon her cheek.

A young girl, whose family had one-by one fallen victims to the great New England plague, consumption, shuddered and turned away, for to her eye the glow which Rose called health was but the hello bloom of death.

"How beautiful she is!" said more than one, as with her accustomed grace Rose entered the brilliant drawing-room. And truly Rose was beautiful that night, but like the gorgeous foliage of the fading autumn, 'twas the beauty of decay, for death was written on her blue veined brow, and lurked amid the roses on her cheek. But little thought she of that, as with smiling lip and beaming eye she received the homage of the admiring throng.

"Upon my word, you do look very well." said Henry, coming for a moment to his sister's side. "Why, you'd be the star of the evening, were it not for Ma Belle Ella. See, there she comes." and he pointed to a group just entering the room.

An expression of contempt curled Rose's lip as she glanced at Ella, and thought of being outshone by her dollish figure and face. "I am in no danger, unless a more formidable rival than that silly thing appears." thought she, and she drew up her slender form with a more

queenly grace, and bowed somewhat haughtily to Ella, who came up to greet her, There was a world of affection in Ella's soft hazel eyes as they looked eagerly up to Henry, who for the sake of torturing the young girl, feigned not to see her until she had stood near him some minutes. Then offering her his hand he said, with the utmost nonchalance, "Why, Ella, are you here? I was watching so anxiously for your sister that I did not notice your entrance."

Ella had dressed herself for the party with more than usual care, and as she smoothed down the folds of her delicate pink silk, and shook back her long glossy curls, she thought, "He cannot think Mary handsomer than I am tonight." and now when the first remark he addressed to her was concerning her sister, she replied rather pettishly, "I believe you are always thinking about Mary."

"Now, don't be jealous," returned Henry, "I only wish to see the contrast between you."

Ella fancied that the preference would of course be in her favor, and casting aside all unpleasant feelings she exerted herself to the utmost to keep Henry at her side, asking him numberless questions, and suddenly recollecting something she wished to tell him, if he made a movement toward leaving her.

"Confound it! How tight she sticks to a fellow," thought he, "but I'll get away from her yet."

Just then Ida and Mary were announced. Both Aunt Martha and Ida had taken great pains to have their young friend becomingly dressed, and she looked unusually well in the embroidered muslin skirt, and blonde bertha which Aunt Martha had insisted upon her present. The rich silken braids of her luxuriant hair were back of her finely formed head with a golden arrow, which, exception of a plain band of gold on each wrist was the only ornament she wore. This was her first introduction to the gay world but so keen was her perception of what was polite and proper that none would ever have suspected it, and yet there was about her something so fresh and unstudied, that she had hardly entered the room, ere many were struck with her easy, unaffected manners, so different from the practiced airs of the city belle:

Ella watched her narrowly, whispering aside to Henry how sorry she felt for poor Mary, she was so verdant and really hoped she wouldn't do anything-very awkward, for 'twould mortify to death! "But look," she added, "and see how many people Ida is introducing her to."

"Of course, why shouldn't she?" asked Henry, and Ella replied:

"I don't know -- it seems so funny to see Mary here, don't it?"

Before Henry could answer, a young man of his acquaintance touched his shoulder saying, "Lincoln, who is that splendid-looking girl with Miss Selden? I haven't seen a finer face in Boston for many a'day."

"That? Oh, that's Miss Howard, from Chicopee. An intimate friend of our family. Allow me the pleasure of introducing you." and Henry walked away, leaving Ella to the tender mercies of Rose, who, as one after another quitted her side and went over to the "enemy", grew very angry, wondering if folks were betwixed, and hoping Ida Selden felt better, now that she'd made so many notice her protégé.

Later in the evening, William Bender came, and immediately Jenny began to talk to him of Mary, and the impression she was making. Placing her hand familiarly upon his arm, as though that were its natural resting place, she led him toward a group, of which Mary seemed the center of attraction. Near her stood Henry Lincoln, bending so low as to threaten serious injury to his fashionable pants. And redoubling his flattering compliments in proportion as Mary grew colder and more reserved in her manner toward him. Silly and conceited as he was, he could not help noticing how differently she received William Bender from what she had himself. "But all in good time." thought he, glancing at Ella, to see how she was affected by his desertion of her, and his flirtation with her sister. She was standing a little apart from any one, and with her elbow resting upon a marble stand, her cheeks flushed, and her eyelashes moist with tears she dare not shed, she was watching him with feelings in which more of real pain than jealousy were mingled, for Ella was meek and simple-hearted, and loved Henry Lincoln far better than such as he deserved to be loved.

"Of what are you thinking, Ella?" asked Rose, who, finding herself nearly alone, felt willing to converse with almost anyone.

At the sound of her voice Ella looked up, and coming quickly to her side said, "It's so dull and lonesome here I wish I'd stayed at home."

In her heart Rose wished so, too, but she was too proud to acknowledge it, and feeling unusually kind toward Ella, whose uneasiness she readily understood, she replied, "Oh, I see you are jealous of Henry, but he's only trying to tease you, for he can't be interested in that awkward thing."

"But he is, I almost know he is." returned Ella, with a trembling of the voice she tried in vain to subdue, and then, fearing she could no

longer restrain her emotion, she suddenly broke away from Rose, and ran hastily up to the dressing room.

Nothing of this escaped Henry's quick eye, and as sundry unpaid bills for wine, brandy, oyster suppers and livery came looming up before his mind, he thought proper to make some amends for his neglect. Accordingly when Ella returned to the drawing-room he offered her his arm, asking "What made her eyes so red." and slyly pressing her hand, when she averted her face, saying:

"Nothing -- they weren't red."

Meantime, William Bender, having managed to drop Jenny from his arm, had asked Mary to accompany him to a small conservatory, which was separated from the reception rooms by a long and brilliantly lighted gallery. As they stood together, admiring a rare exotic, William's manner suddenly changed, and drawing Mary closer to his side, he said distinctly, though hurriedly, "I notice, Mary, that you seem embarrassed in my presence, and I have, therefore, sought this opportunity to assure you that I shall not again distress you by a declaration of love, which, if returned, would give me more pain than pleasure, for as I told you at Mr. Selden's, I am changed in more respects than one. It cost me a bitter struggle to give you up, but reason and judgment finally conquered, and now I can calmly think of you as sometime belonging to another, and with all a brother's confidence can tell you that I, too, love another -- not as once I loved you, for that would be impossible, but with a calmer, more rational love."

All this time Mary had not spoken, though the hand which William had taken in his trembled like an imprisoned bird, but when he came to speak of loving another, she involuntarily raised his hand to her lips, exclaiming, "It's Jenny, it's Jenny."

"You have guessed rightly," returned William, smiling at the earnestness of her manner, "it is Jenny, though how such a state of things ever came about is more than I can tell."

Mary thought of the old saying, "Love begets love." but she said nothing, for just then Jenny herself joined them. Looking first at William, then at Mary, and finally passing her arm around the latter, she whispered, "I know he's told you, and I'm glad, for somehow I couldn't tell you myself."

Wisely thinking that his company could be dispensed with, William walked away, leaving the two girls alone. In her usual frank way Jenny rattled on, telling Mary how happy she was, and how funny it seemed

to be engaged, and how frightened sue was when William asked her to marry him.

Fearing-that they might, be missed they at last returned to the parlor, where they found Ella, seated at-the piano, and playing a very spirited polka.

Henry, who boasted that he “could wind her around his little finger” had succeeded in coaxing her into a good humor, but not at all desiring her company for the rest of the evening, he asked her to play as the easiest way to be rid of her. She played unusually well, but when, at the close of the piece, she looked around for commendation from the one for whose ear alone she had played, she saw him across the room so wholly engrossed with her sister that he probably did not even know when the sound of the piano ceased.

Poor Ella! It was with the saddest heartache she had ever known that she returned from a party which had promised her so much pleasure, and which had given her so much pain. Rose, too, was utterly disappointed. One by one her old admirers had left her for the society of the “pauper,” as she secretly styled Mary, and more than once during the evening had she heard the “beauty” and “grace” of her rival extolled by those for whose opinion she cared the most, and when at one o’clock in the morning she threw herself exhausted upon the sofa she declared “‘Twas the last party she’d ever attend.”

Alas, for thee, Rose! That declaration proved too true!

SCHOOLMISTRESS

Excerpt from “Meadow Brook” 1857

By Mary Jane Holmes

Of the many thousand individuals destined to become the purchasers of a copy of this work, the majority have undoubtedly been, or are still teachers, and of these many will remember the time when they fancied that to be invested with the dignity of a teacher was to secure the greatest amount of happiness which earth can bestow; Almost from my earliest remembrance it had been the one great subject which engrossed my thoughts, and frequently, when strolling down the shady hill-side which led to our schoolhouse, have I fancied myself the teacher, thinking that if such were really the case, my first act should be the chastisement of a half a score or more boys,

who were in the daily habit of annoying me in various ways. Every word and action of my teacher, too, was carefully noted and laid away against the time when I should need them, and which came much sooner than I anticipated, for one rainy morning when Lizzie and I were playing in the garret, I overheard my father saying there was a chance for Rosa to teach school.

“What, that child!” was my mother’s exclamation, but ere he could reply, ‘that child’ had bounded down two pairs of stairs, and stood at his elbow, asking, “Who it is? -- Where is it? -- And do you suppose I can get a certificate?”

This last idea damped my ardor somewhat, for horrible visions came up before me, of the “Abbreviations” and “Sounds of the Vowels”, in both of which I was rather deficient.

“You teach school! You look like it!” said my sister Juliet. “Why, in less than three days, you’d be teetering with the girls, if indeed you didn’t climb trees with the boys.”

This climbing was undeniably a failing of mine, there being scarcely a tree on the farm on whose topmost limbs I hadn’t at some time or other been perched, but I was older now. I was thirteen two days before, and so I reminded Juliet at the same time begging of father to tell me all about it. It appeared that he had that day met with a Mr. Randall, the trustee of Pine District, who was in quest of a teacher. After learning that the school was small, father ventured to propose me, who, he said, “Was crazy to keep school.”

“A dollar a week is the most we can give her,” returned Mr. Randall, “and if you’ll take up with that, mebbly we’ll try her. New beginners sometimes do the best.”

So it was arranged that I was to teach fifteen weeks for four dollars per month and board round at that! Boarding round! How many reminiscences do these two words recall to those who, like myself, have tried it, and who know that it has a variety of significations. That sometimes it is only another name for sleeping with every child in the family where your home for one week may chance to be -- for how can you be insensible to the oft-repeated whisper, “I shall sleep with her to-night -- ma said I might,” and of “ma’s” audible answer, “Perhaps, sis, she don’t want you to.” If “sis” is a clean cubby-looking little creature you do want her, but if, as it not infrequently happens, she is just the opposite, -- I draw a blank which almost every country school teacher in the land can fill merely saying that there is no alternative. We have got the district to please and we must do it some way or other.

Again, “boarding round” means a quiet, cozy spot, where everything is so pleasant and cheerful, where the words are so kind and the smile of welcome so sweet, that you feel at once at home, and wish, oh, how you do wish, you could stay there all summer long, but it cannot be; -- the time of your allotted sojourn passes away and then with a sigh, if indeed you can repress a tear, you gather up your combs, brushes, and little piece of embroidery, to which some spiteful woman has said “You devote more time than to your school” and putting them in your satchel, depart for another home, sometimes as pleasant as the one you are leaving, sometimes not.

But of these annoyances I knew nothing, and when Mr. Randall came to see me, calling me Miss Lee, and when I was really engaged, my happiness was complete. In a country neighborhood every item of news, however slight spreads rapidly, and the fact that I was to teach soon became generally known, creating quite a sensation, and operating differently upon different natures. One old gentleman, who, times innumerable, had held me on his knee, feeding my vanity with flattery, and my stomach with sweet-meats, was quite as much delighted as I, declaring, “He always knew I was destined to make something great.”

Dear old man! When the snows of last winter were high piled upon the earth, they dug for him a grave in the frozen ground, and in the world where he now lives, he will not know, perhaps, that I shall never fulfill his prophesy.

Aunt Sally Wright, who, besides managing her own affairs, kept an eye on her neighbors’, and who looked upon me as a “pert, forward piece,” gave her opinion freely.

“What! That young one keep school! Is Deacon Leo crazy? Ain’t Rose stuck up enough now? But never mind. You’ll see who won’t keep out more’n half her time, if she does that.”

Aunt Sally was gifted with the power of telling fortunes by means of tea-grounds, and I have always fancied she read that prediction in the bottom of her big blue cup, for how could she otherwise have known what actually happened! Ere long the news reached Pine District, creating quite an excitement, the older people declaring “They’d never send to a little girl.” While the juvenile portion of the inhabitants gave a contemptuous whistle or so in honor of the school ma’am elect. Mrs. Capt. Thompson, who boasted the biggest house, handsomest carpet and worst boy in Pine Hill, was wholly incredulous, until she one day chanced to meet with Aunt Sally, who not only confirmed it, but also kindly gave her many little items

touching my character as a “Wild, romping minx, who was no more qualified for a teacher than for the Queen of England.” citing as proof of what she said, that only the year before she had seen me “Trying to ride on a cow.”

Mrs. Capt. Thompson, who was blessed with an overwhelming sense of propriety, was greatly shocked, saying “She’d always thought Mr. Randall knew just enough to hire a child”, and consoling herself with the remark that “It was not at all probable? I’d get a certificate.”

On this point I was myself a little fearful. True, I had been “sent away” to school, and had been flattered into the belief that I possessed far more book knowledge than I did, but this, I knew, would avail me nothing with the formidable committee who held my destiny in their hands. They were unbiased in my favor, and had probably never heard of me, as they lived in an adjoining town. But “Where there’s a will, there’s a way.” and determining not to fail, I ransacked the cupboard, where our school books were kept, bringing thence Olney’s Geography, Colburn’s Arithmetic, History of the United States, Grammars, etc., all of which were for days my constant companions, and I even slept with one or more of them under my pillow, so that with the earliest dawn I could study. Whole pages of Geography were committed to memory, all the hardest problems in Colburn were solved, a dozen or more of compound relatives were parsed and disposed of to my satisfaction at least, and I was just beginning to feel strong in my own abilities when one Monday morning news was brought us that at three o’clock that afternoon all who were intending to teach in the town of S----- were to meet at the house of the Rev. Mr. Parks, then and there to be questioned of what they knew and what they didn’t know. This last referred to me, for now that the dreaded day had come, I felt that every idea had suddenly left me, while, to increase my embarrassment, I was further informed that as there had the year previous been some trouble among the School Inspectors, each of whom fancied that the other did not take his share of the work, the town had this year thought to obviate the difficulty by electing nine.

One was bad enough, but at the thought of nine men in spectacles my heart sank within me, and it was some time ere I could be persuaded to make the trial. In the midst of our trouble, Aunt Sally, whose clothes on Monday mornings were always swinging on the line before light, and who usually spent the afternoon of that day in visiting, came in, and after learning what was the cause of my flushed

cheeks said, by way of comforting me, "That she didn't wonder an atom if I felt streaked, for 'twant no ways likely I'd pass!"

This roused my pride, and with the mental comment that "I'd pass for all her." I got myself in readiness, Juliet lending me her green veil and Anna her fine pocket handkerchief, while mother's soft warm shawl was wrapped lovingly about me, and Lizzie slipped into my pocket the Multiplication Table, which she thought I might manage to look at sllily in case of an emergency, on our way father commenced the examination by asking me the length of the Mississippi, but I didn't know as it had a length, and in despair he gave up his questioning.

Oh, how sombre and dreary seemed the little parlor into which we were ushered by the servant, who, on learning our business, looked rather doubtfully at me, as much as to say, "You surely can't be one of them?" In a short time the parlor was filled, the entire nine being there. Not one was absent, and in a row directly opposite, they sat, some tipped back in a lounging attitude, some cutting their finger nails with their pen-knives, while others sat up stiff and stern, the whole presenting a most formidable appearance. There were eight of ten candidates present, and unfortunately for me, I was seated at what I called the foot of the class. It seemed that most of them were acquainted. And as I was almost the only stranger present, it was but natural that they should look at me rather more than I liked. My pantalets evidently attracted their attention, but by dint of drawing up my feet and pushing down my dress I hoped to hide my shortcomings.

When, at last, the examination commenced, I found, to my great delight that Geography was the subject introduced, and my heart beat high, for I thought of the pages I could repeat and ardently longed for a chance to display! Unfortunately for me they merely questioned us from the map, and breathlessly I awaited my turn. At length the young lady who sat next to me was asked "What two rivers unite and form the Ohio?" I looked at her sidewise. The bloom deepened on her cheek, and I was sure she had forgotten. Involuntarily I felt tempted to tell her, but did not, and Mr. Parks, looking inquiringly at me, said, "Perhaps the next one can. Ahem!"

He caught sight of my offending pantalets and thinking me some child who had come with her sister, was about to pass me by. But I was not to be slighted in that way, particularly when I knew the answer, so, with the air of one who, always at the foot, accidentally spells the word right and starts for the head, I spoke out loud and

distinctly, "Allegheny and Monongahela " glancing at my father just in time to catch a nod of encouragement.

"The Nine" were taken by surprise, and instantly three pairs of eyes with glasses and six pairs without glasses were brought to bear upon me. For reasons best known to themselves, they asked me a great variety of question: All of which I answered correctly, I believe, at least they made no comment, and were evidently vastly amused with their new specimen, asking me how old I was, and exchanging smiles at my reply, "Thirteen, four weeks ago to-day," One of my fellow-teachers, who sat near me, whispered to her next-neighbor, "She's older than that, I know." for which remark I've never quite forgiven her. Arithmetic was the last branch introduced, and as mathematics was rather my forte, I had now no fear of failing but I did! A question in Decimals puzzled me, and coloring to my temples, I replied, "I don't know." while two undeniable tears dropped into my lap.

"Never mind, sis," said one of the nine. "You know most everything else and have done bravely."

I was sure of my certificate then as I was fifteen minutes afterwards when a little slip of paper was given me, declaring me competent to teach a common school. I thought it was all over, and was adjusting mother's shaw and tying on Juliet's-veil, when they asked me to write something that they might see a specimen of my penmanship. Taking the pen, I dashed off with a flourish "Rosa Lee," at which I thought they peered more curiously than need be -- and one of them, Dr. Clayton, a young man, and a handsome one, too, said something about its being "very poetical". He hadn't seen the Negro song then.

The shadows of evening had long since fallen when we stopped at out door, where we found mother anxiously waiting for us. Very wistfully she looked in my face ere she asked the important question.

"Yes, I've got one," said I, bounding from the buggy, "and I'd like to be examined every day, it's such fun."

"Didn't you miss a word?" asked Juliet.

"Oh, I'm so glad!" cried Lizzie.

"Feel big, don't you?" suggested Charlie, while Anna inquired "If I'd lost her pocket-handkerchief?"

Ere long, exaggerated rumors reached Meadow Brook of the very creditable manner in which I had acquitted myself at the examination, whereupon Aunt Sally Wright was quite taken back. Soon rallying, however, she had recourse to her second prediction, which was that

“I should not teach more than half the summer out.” Perhaps I wronged the old lady, but I cannot help thinking that the ill-natured stories concerning-myself, which she set afloat at Pine Hill, were in a measure the cause of her prophecy being fulfilled. Never before, to my knowledge, had she visited at Capt. Thompson but now she spent an entire day there, bringing back to us the intelligence that John Thompson, a boy just one year my senior, was going to stay at home that summer, as “Mis’ Cap’n Thompson hadn’t no idee I could teach him.”

Added to this was the comforting assurance, that Cap’n Thompson was hoppin mad because Mr. Randall had hired me in preference to his sister Dell, who had herself applied for the school. This, as I afterwards learned, was the secret of the dislike which, from the first, the Thompsons entertained for me. They had no daughter, but the captain’s half sister Dell had lived with him ever since his marriage, and between her and their hopeful son John, the affections of himself and wife were nearly equally divided.

Dell Thompson was a proud, overbearing girl, about eighteen years of age, who esteemed herself far better than her neighbors, with whom she seldom associated, her acquaintances living mostly at what was called “the Centre” of the town. It seems that she had applied for the summer school, but remembering that she had once called him a “Country clown and his wife ignorant and vulgar.”, Mr. Randall had refused her and accepted me, notwithstanding that the people of Pine Hill generally disliked the Thompson’s, there was among them a feeling of dissatisfaction when it became known that I was preferred to Dell, who, they thought, would have given tone and character to the school, for, “It wasn’t every big bug who would stoop to teach.”

Of this state of affairs I was fortunately ignorant, and never do I remember a happier morning than that on which I first took upon myself the responsibilities of a teacher. By sunrise, the little hair trunk, which grandma lent me, was packed and stood waiting on the door-step, where I had carried it, thinking thus to accelerate the movements of my father, who did not seem to be in any particular hurry, telling me, “He’d no idea that school would be commenced before we got there!” Grandma had suggested the propriety of letting down my dresses, a movement which I warmly seconded, but mother said “No, she did not like to see little girls dressed like grown up women.” so, in my new plaid gingham and white pantalets, I waited impatiently until the clock struck seven, at which time father announced himself ready.

“When will you come home?” asked mother, as she followed me to the gate.

“In three weeks,” was my reply, as I hounded into the buggy, which soon moved away.

Pine Hill is not at all remarkable for its beautiful scenery, and as old Sorrel trotted leisurely along, down one steep hill and up another, through a haunted swamp, where a man had once, to his great terror, seen his departed wife, and over a piece of road, where little grassy ridges said, as plain as grassy ridges could say, that the travelers there were few and far between, my spirits lowered a little. But, anon, the prospect brightened, and in the distance we saw the white wall of Capt. Thompson’s residence gleaming through the mess of evergreens which surrounded it. This, however, soon disappeared, and for a mile or more my eye met with nothing save white birches, gray rocks, green ferns, and blackberry bushes, until suddenly turning a corner, we came to a halt before one of those slanting-roofed houses so common in New England. It was the home of Mr. Randall, and it was there I was to board the first week. In the doorway, eating bread and molasses, were his three children, who, the moment they saw us, set up a shout of “Somebody’s come, I guess it’s the school-ma’am!” and straightway they took to their heels as if fleeing from the presence of a tigress.

After a moment, the largest of them ventured to return, and his example was soon followed by the other two, the younger of whom, after eyeing me askance, lisped out, “Don Thompthon thays he ain’t afraid of you, he can lick you like dunder!”

This was a pleasant commencement, but I smiled down upon the little boy, petting his curly head, while father inquired for Mrs. Randall, who, we learned, was sweeping the school house. Leaving the hair trunk, which was used by the children for a horse ere we left the yard, we again set forward, and soon reached our place of destination, which, without shade-tree or ornament of any kind, stood half-way up a long, sunny hill, commanding a view of nothing save the weathercock of Capt. Thompson’s barn, which was visible across the orchard opposite. We found Mrs. Randall enveloped in a cloud of dust, her sleeves rolled up, and her head covered by a black silk handkerchief.

“The room wasn’t fit for the pigs,” she said, “and ought to have been cleaned, but somehow nobody took any interest in school this summer, and I’d have to make it answer.”

I didn't care particularly for the room, which, in truth, was dirty and disagreeable enough, but the words "nobody took any interest this summer", affected me unpleasantly, for in them I saw a dim foreshadowing of all that ensued. Father, who was in a hurry, soon left me, bidding me "Be a good girl and not to get with the scholars." From the window I watched him until he disappeared over the sandy hill, half wishing, though I would not then confess it, that I and the little trunk were with him. I was roused from my reverie by Mrs. Randall, who, for some time, had been looking inquisitively at me, and who now said, "Ain't you but thirteen?"

"No, Ma'am." I answered.

"Well," she returned, "It beats all how much older you look I should s'pose you was full sixteen, if not more. But it's all in your favor, and I guess you'll be more likely to suit the deestrick though they're afraid you hayen't any government, and they're terribly hard to suit. So, if I's you," she continued, "I'd hold a pretty tight rein at first. I give you full liberty to whip my young ones if they don't behave. They know better than to complain at home."

Involuntarily I glanced at the clump of alders which grew near the house, and if they were somewhat diminished ere my reign was over, the "Deestrick" owed it to Mrs. Randall's suggestion, after sitting awhile, she rose to go, telling me "She would expect me at night," and then I was alone. I looked at my watch it was half-past eight and not a scholar yet. This was widely different from Meadow Brook, where, by seven, the house was generally filled with children, hallooing, quarreling over seats, and watching eagerly for the first sight of "The new schoolma'am." Here the tables were turned, and the "schoolma'am" was watching for the scholars!

Suddenly a large bumble-bee came buzzing in, and alighted on the window opposite. Like Sir Thomas the Good, in the Ingoldsby Legends, I have a passion for capturing insects, especially white-faced bumble-bees, and now I felt strongly inclined to mount the desks in pursuit of the intruder, but the thought "What if the scholars should detect me?" prevented, and to this day, I have never known whether that bumble-bee had a face white or belonged to the class of colored brethren! Ten minutes of nine, and I began to grow fidgety. I should have been more so, had I known how much is sometimes said about teachers not keeping their house. Five minutes of nine, and round the corner at the foot of the hill appeared a group of children, while from another direction came others, shouting for those in advance to "wait" which they did, and the whole entered the house together. A

few of the girls made a slight obeisance, while the boys laughed, and throwing down their books in a very consequential manner, looked distrustfully at me. My age had preceded me, and in many of these childish hearts there was already a spirit of rebellion.

Here I would speak about the impropriety of discussing a teacher's faults in the presence of pupils, who will discover them soon enough, many a teacher starts disadvantageously because of some idle tale, which may or may not be true, but which, borne on the wings of gossip, reaches its place of destination, and is there thoughtlessly canvassed in the hearing of the children, who thus become prejudiced against a person they have never seen, and whom they otherwise might have liked, In my case the fault was my age which had evidently been discussed in the neighborhood, for, on opening my desk, I found inscribed upon the lid, in a bold schoolboy style, "Rosa Lee, aged 13" to which was appended, in a more delicate hand, "Ancient -- very!"

Taking my India-rubber, I erased it while my scholars were settling the matter of seats, which, strange to say, they did without disputing, then there ensued a perfect silence and the eyes of all present turned inquiringly upon me, while, with sundry flourishes with my silver pencil, I proceeded to take down upon a big sheet of foolscap the names, ages, and "What studies do you intend to pursue?" of my pupils. After much talking and arranging the school was organized, but the first morning dragged heavily, and when 12 o'clock came, and I drew from my sachel the nice ginger snaps which mother had made, the sight of them, or the taste or something else, choked me so much that I was obliged to wink hard, and count the rows of trees in the orchard twice, ere I could answer the question addressed to me by one of the little girls.

In the rear of the house was a long strip of dense woods, and wishing to be alone and out of sight of the sports in which I felt I must not join, I took my bonnet and wandered thither. Seating myself upon a mossy log, I tried to fancy that I was at home beneath the dear old grape-vine, the faintest rustle of whose broad green leaves would, at that moment, have been to me like the sweetest music. But it could not be. I was a school mistress -- Miss Lee, they called me, and on my brow the shadows of life were thus early making their impress. Slowly to me dragged the hour which always before had been so short, and when at last I took my way back to the school, it seemed that in that short space I had lived an age. Often since, when I have looked upon young teachers hastening to their task, I've pitied them, for I knew full well how long and wearisome would be their first day's labor.

As I approached the schoolhouse I saw that something was the matter, for the scholars were greatly excited, and with voices raised to the highest pitch, were discussing something of importance. Thinking that my presents would perhaps restrain them from such noisy demonstrations, I hastened forward, but the babel rather increased than diminished, and it was with difficulty that I could learn the cause of all the commotion. George Randall was crying, while a little apart from him stood two boys, one of them apparently fourteen and the other twelve. They were strangers to me and instinctively I felt that they were in some way connected with the disturbance, and that the larger and more important looking was John Thompson a surmise which proved to be correct.

It seemed that Isaac Ross, one of the new comers, had some weeks before selected for himself a corner seat, which, as he was not present in the morning, had been taken by George Randall, who knew nothing of Isaac's intentions, and who now refused to give it up. A fight was the result, most of the scholars taking sides with George, while Isaac was urged on and encouraged by John Thompson, who, though not a pupil, had come up "To see how he like thee schoolma'am." As a matter of course an appeal was made to me, to know "If George hadn't the best right to the seat!"

Perhaps I was wrong, but I decided that he had, at the same time asking Isaac, "If he were coming to school."

"I ain't goin' to anything else." said he, glancing towards John, who with a wicked leer at me, knocked off one of the little boys' hats and then threw it up in air.

What would have ensued next I do not know, for at that moment Captain Thompson rode round the corner and called to his son, who, with mock deference, bowed politely to me and walked away. Disagreeable as Isaac Ross appeared in the presence of John Thompson, I found that when left to himself he was quite a different boy, and though he at first manifested some reluctance to taking another seat, he at last yielded the point, and for the remainder of the day conducted himself with perfect propriety.

On the whole, the afternoon passed away rather pleasantly. And at night, when school was out, I started for my boarding-place quite content with teachers generally, and myself in particular. In passing the different houses which stood upon the road-side, I demeaned myself with the utmost dignity, swinging my short dress from side to side in imitation of a Boston lady who had once taught in our district, and whose manner of walking I greatly admired! From the window of

Captain Thompson's dwelling I caught a glimpse of two faces, which were hastily withdrawn, but I felt sure that from behind the curtains they were scanning my appearance, and I remember lowering my parasol a little, just to tantalize them! But when at last I was over the hill and out of sight, oh, how glad I was to be "Rosa Lee" again, free to pluck the sweet, wild flowers, to watch the little fishes in the running brook, or even to chase a white-faced bumblebee if I liked.

About fifty rods from Mr. Randall's stands one of those old-fashioned, gable-roofed houses, so common in some parts of New England, and here, at this time of which I am speaking, lived Mrs. Ross, the mother of Isaac, or Ike, as he was familiarly called. I had never met the lady, but as I approached the house and saw a tall, square-shouldered woman leaning on the gate, I naturally thought that it might be she, and on this point I was not long left in doubt for the moment I came within speaking distance, she called out, "How dy' do, Miss Lee -- I suppose 'tis? You pretty well? I'm Mis. Ross, Isick's mother. He telled me that he had some fuss about a seat that he picked out more'n a moth ago, and thinks he orto have. I don't never calkerlate to take sides with my children, 'cause I've kept school myself, and I know how bad 'tis, but I do hate to have Isick git a miff again the school ma'am on the first start, and if I's you I'd let him have the seat instead of George Randall, for mebbly folks'll say you're partial to George, bein' that his father's committee-man, and I've kept school enough to know that partiality won't do."

As well as I could, I explained the matter to her, telling her I wished to do right, and meant to as far as I knew how.

"I presume you do," said she, "or I shouldn't a' taken the liberty to speak to you. I know you's young, and I felt afeard you didn't know what an undertakin' it was to teach the young idee how to shute. The schoolma'ams have always thought a sight of me, and generally tell me all their troubles so I know jest how to take their part when the rest of the folks are again 'em. Was Susan Brown to school? But she wasn't-though, I know she wasn't."

I replied that there was a little girl present of that name, and my companion continued: "Now I'll give up, if Miss Brown has come round enough to send, when she was so dreadfully opposed to your teachin', you've heered about it, I s'pose?"

I answered that "I didn't know that any one had opposed me except Mrs. Thompson."

"Oh, yes," said she, assuming an injured look and tone. "everybody knows about that, and there's some sense in their bein' mad, for

‘twas plaguy mortifyin’ to Dell to offer to teach and be rejected by Mr. Randall, a man that none of the Thompsons would wipe their old shoes on, and then, ‘t isn’t every bigbug that will stoop to teach, for you know ‘tain’t considered first cut.”

“No, I didn’t know it.” and so I said, but she assured me of the fact, quoting as authority, both Mrs. Thompson and Dell, who, I found, were her oracles in everything. After a time I brought her back to Mrs. Brown, whose husband, she said, was gone to sea, and who had herself applied for the school.

“But between you and me,” she added, speaking in a whisper, “it’s a mighty good thing that she didn’t get it, for she ain’t the likeliest person that ever was, and nobody under the sun would have sent to her. Isick shouldn’t a gone a single day, for her morals is very bad, she used to belong to the Orthodox Church, but they turned her out for dancin’ at a party, and when she lived in Wooster she jined the ‘Piscopals, who, you know, let their members cut up all sorts -- but, land sakes! how I’m talkin’! You must not breathe a word I say, for I make it a pint not to slander my neighbors, and if everybody minded their own business as well as I do, there wouldn’t be so much back bitin’ as there is. And that makes me think I’ve had a mind to caution you -- but no, I guess I won’t -- mebby you’ll tell on’t.”

Of course my curiosity was aroused, and of course I said I wouldn’t tell, whereupon she proceeded to inform me that Mrs. Randall was a very talkin’ woman, and I must be pretty careful in her presence. “You can tell me anything you wish to,” said she, “for I’m a master hand to keep a secret, but Mis’ Randall is forever in hot water. She and Mis’ Brown are hand in glove and both on ‘en turn up their noses at Mis’ Thompson and Dell, who never pretend to make anything of ‘em. I’m considerable intimate at the Captain’s, and I know all about it. Dell is smart as a steel trap, and it’s a pity she’s took such a dislike to you.”

“I don’t think she ought to blame me,” said I, “for I didn’t know she wanted the school -- .”

“Tain’t that altogether,” resumed Mrs. Rose, again speaking in a whisper, “‘Tain’t that altogether, and if you’ll never lisp a word on’t I’ll tell you the hull story.”

I gave the required promise, and then Mrs. Ross proceeded to inform me that Dell was jealous of me.

“Jealous!” I exclaimed. “How can that be?”

“You remember Dr. Clayton, don’t you?” said she.

“Yes, I remember him, but what has he to do with Mrs. Thompson’s being jealous of me?”

“Why,” returned Mrs. Ross, “Dell’s kinder settin’ her cap for him, and I guess he’s a snickerin’ notion after her. Any way he comes there pretty often. Well, he was there the week after the examination, and told ‘em about you. He said you was as bright as a new guinea, and had better larnin’ than half the teachers, and than you had such a sweet name—Rose -- he like it. You orto have seen how mad Dell was at you after he was gone. I don’t believe she’ll ever git over it.”

Here Ike called out --“the Johnny-cake was burnt’ blacker than his hat,” and forthwith Mrs. Ross started for the house, first bidding me “keep dark“, and telling me she hoped “I wouldn’t be partial to Mr. Randall’s children, for they needed lickin’ if ever young ones did -- they warn’t brought up like Isick, who was governed so well at home that he didn’t need it at school.”

I was learning to read the world’s great book fast -- very fast -- and with a slightly heavy heart I turned away, pausing once when Mrs. Ross, from the door-step, called to me, saying, that “She guessed I’d better’ give Isick the seat to-morrow, seein’ his heart was set on’t.”

I found Mrs. Randall waiting to receive me in a clean gingham dress and apron, with her round, good-humored face shining as if it had been through the same process with the long line of snow-white linen, which was swinging in the clothes-yard. The little hair trunk had been removed to the “best room” which was to be mine. The big rocking-chair was brought out for me, the round tea-table, nicely spread, stood in the centre of the floor, and Mrs. Randall hoped I would make myself at home, and put up with her own rough ways if I could. To be sure she didn’t have things quite as nice as Mrs. Captain Thompson, but she did as well as she knew how, Dear Mrs. Randall! How my heart warmed toward her, and as I took my seat at the table, and she helped me to a larger slice of pure white honeycomb than I have ever before been allowed to eat at one time, I felt that I would not exchange her house -- for a home at Capt. Thompson’s.

Without any intention of revealing what Mrs. Ross had imparted to me, I still felt a great curiosity to know Mrs. Randall’s opinion of her, so, after a time, I ventured to speak of my having seen her, and to ask when and where she taught school. With a merry laugh, Mrs. Randall replied, “I wonder, now, if she’s made your acquaintance so soon, she told you, I suppose, to come to her with all your troubles, for she knew just how to pity you, as she’d been a schoolma’am herself.”

My flushed cheeks betrayed the fact that Mrs. Randall had guessed rightly, and after a moment she continued:

“Her keeping school amounts-to this. When she was a girl, a friend of hers who was teaching wanted to go away for two days, and got Mis’ Ross, then Nancy Smedly, to take her place, and that’s the long and short of her experience. She’s a meddling woman, and makes more trouble in the district than anybody else. She tried to make Mis’ Brown think she was misused, because we wouldn’t hire her instead of you, who applied first, and for a spell, I guess Mis’ Brown was a little sideways, but she’s a sensible woman and had got all over it.”

I was about to tell her of the trouble between George and Ike, when she anticipated me by saying, “George says he and Ike fit about a seat and I’ve hired him to give it up peaceably, for if Mis’ Ross gets miffed in the beginning, there’s no knowing what kind of a row she’ll raise, and you are so young I feel kinder tender of you.”

If there were tears in my eyes they were not tears of grief, and if, I was pleased with Mrs. Randall before, I liked her ten times better now, for I saw in her a genuine sincerity which convinced me she was my friend indeed. To be sure she was rather rough and unrefined, but her heart was right, and in her treatment of me, she was always kind and considerate, making ample allowance for my errors and warmly defending me when she thought I was misused. If in every District there were more like Mrs. Randall, the teacher’s lot would not be one half so hard to bear as oftentimes it is.

When I woke next morning I heard the large raindrops pattering against the window, and pushing aside the curtain, I saw that the dark-heavy clouds betokened a dull rainy day. Involuntarily I thought of the old garret at home, where, on such occasions we always resorted, “Raising Cain generally.” as Sally said, and when, with umbrella, blanket-shawl, and overshoes, I started for school, I looked and felt forlorn indeed. Raining as it was, it did not prevent Mrs. Ross from coming out with the table-spread over her head, to tell me that “Though she never warn’t an atom particular and never meant to interfere with teachers, as she knew just what it was, she did hope I’d give Isick the seat, and not be partial to George Randall.”

I replied that “I’d see to it,” and was hurrying along, when she again stopped me to know “what I’d got in my dinner basket that was good.”

Afterwards I found it to be one of her greatest peculiarities, this desire to know what her neighbors had to eat, and I seldom passed her door that she did not inquire of me concerning the kind of fare I had at the different places where I boarded. When I reached the schoolhouse, I found George Randall transferring his books to another

part of the room, at the same time telling Isaac "He could have the disputed seat if he wanted it."

With the right kind of training and influence Isaac Ross would have been a fine boy, for there were in his disposition many noble traits of character, and when he saw how readily George gave up the seat, he refused to take it, saying, "He didn't care a darn where he sat -- one place was as good as another."

The day was long and dreary enough. Not more than half the children were there, and I found it exceedingly tiresome and monotonous, sitting in that hard, splint-bottomed chair, and telling Emma Fitch and Sophia Brown, for the hundredth time, that the round letter was "O" and the crooked one "S". The scholars, too, began to grow noisy, and to ask me scores of useless questions. Their lessons were half learned, and if I made a suggestion, I was quickly informed that their former teacher, Sally Damm, didn't do so. Even little Emma Fitch, when I bade her keep her eyes on the book instead of letting them wander about the room, lisped out that "Thally Damm let her lookd off." a fact I did not dispute when I found that she had been to school all winter without learning a single letter by sight, though she could repeat the entire alphabet forward and back and be all the while watching a squirrel on the branches of the tree which grew near the window!

Before night a peculiar kind of sickness, never dangerous, but decidedly disagreeable, began to creep over me, and had it not been for the mud, I should probably have footed it to Meadow Brook, where alone could be found the cure for my disease. Just before school was out a little boy cried to go home, and this was the one straw too much. Hastily dismissing the scholars, I turned towards the windows and my tears fell as fast as did the rain in the early morning.

"The sohoolma'am's cryin', -- she is. I saw her.", circulated rapidly among the children, who all rushed back to ascertain the truth for themselves.

"I should think she would cry." said one of the girls-to her brother, "You acted ugly enough to make anybody cry, and if you don't behave better tomorrow, Jim Maxwell, I'll tell mother!"

After the delivery of this speech, the entire group moved away, leaving me alone, and sure am I there was never a more homesick child than was the one, who with her head lying upon the desk, sat there weeping in that low dirty schoolroom, on that dark, rainy afternoon. Where now was all the happiness I had promised myself in teaching? Alas, it was rapidly disappearing, and I was just making up

my mind to brave the ridicule of Meadow Brook, and give up my school at once, when a hand was laid very gently on my shoulder, and a voice partially familiar said, "What's the matter, Rose?"

So absorbed was I in my grief, that I had not heard the sound of footsteps, and with a start of surprise I looked up and met the serene, handsome eyes of Dr. Clayton, who stood by my side. He had been to visit a patient, he said, and was on his way home, when, seeing the door ajar, he had come in, hoping to find me there, "But I did not expect this," he continued, pointing to the tears on my cheek. "What is the matter? Don't the scholars behave well, or are you homesick?"

At this question I began to cry so violently, that the doctor, after exhausting all his powers of persuasion, finally laid his hand soothingly on my rough, tangled curls, ere I could be induced to stop, then, when I told him how disappointed I was, how I wished I had never tried to teach and how I meant to give it up, he talked to me so kindly, so brother like, still keeping his hand on my shoulder, where it had fallen when I lifted up my head, that I grew very calm, thinking I could stay in that gloomy room forever, if he were only there! He was, as I have said before, very handsome, and his manner was so very fascinating, and his treatment of me so much like what I fancied Charlie's would be, were he a grown up man and I a like girl, that I began to like him, very, very much, thinking then that my feeling for him was such as a child would entertain for a father, for I had heard that he was twenty-seven, and between that and thirteen there was, in my estimation, an impassable gulf.

"I wish I had my buggy here," he said at last, after consulting his watch, which pointed to half-past five, "I wish I had my buggy here, for then I could carry you home. You'll wet your feet, and you ought not to walk. Suppose you ride in my lap, but no," he added, quickly, "you'd better not, for Mrs. Thompson and Mother Ross would make it neighborhood talk."

There was a wicked look in his eye as he said this, and I secretly wondered if he entertained the same opinion of Dell, that he evidently did of her sister. At length, shaking my hand, he bade me goodbye, telling me that the Examining Committee had placed me and my school in his charge, and that he would probably visit me officially on Thursday of the following week. Like a very foolish child, I watched him until a turn in the road hid him from view, and then, with a feeling I could not analyze, I started for my boarding place, thinking that if I gave up my school I should wait until after Thursday.

In the doorway, with her sleeves rolled up above her elbows, and her hair, as she said herself, “at sixes and sevens”, was Mrs. Ross, who, after informing me that “It had been a desput rainy day.” asked, “If I knew whether Dr. Clayton had been to Captain Thompson’s?”

There was no reason why I should blush at this question, but I did, though my sun bonnet fortunately concealed the face from my interrogator, who, without waiting for an answer, continued, “He drove past here about fifteen minutes ago, and I guess he’s been sparkin Dell.”

It must have been an evil spirit surely which prompted my reply that “He had been at the schoolhouse with me.”

“How you talk! Isick never said a word about it!” was Mrs. Ross’s exclamation, the blank expression of her face growing still more blank when I told her that he did not come until the scholars were gone.

“You two been there all sole alone since four o’clock, I’ll give up now! I hope Dell Thompson won’t find it out, for she’s awful slandersome, but,” she added, coming to the gate, and speaking in a whisper, “I’m glad on’t, and mebby she’ll draw in her horns, if she finds that some of the under crust, as she calls ‘em, can be noticed by Dr. Clayton as well as herself.”

Equivocal as this compliment was, it gratified me, and from that moment felt a spirit of rivalry towards Dell Thompson. Still, I did not wish her to know of Dr. Clayton’s call, and so I said to Mrs. Ross, who replied, “You needn’t be an atom afeard of my tattlin’. I know too well what ‘tis to be a schoolmarm, and have the hull Deestrick peekin’ at you. Do if you’ve anything you want kept, I’m the one, for I can be still as the grave. Did the doctor say anything about Dell, but he didn’t, I know, and ‘tain’t likely-he said anything about anybody.”

I replied, that he talked with me about my school, and then as I heard the clock strike six, I walked along. Looking back as I entered Mrs. Randall’s gate, I saw Mrs. Rose’s old plaid shawl and brown bonnet disappearing over the hill as fast as her feet could take them, but I had no suspicion that her destination was Captain Thompson’s! I did not know the world then as well as I do now, and when the next morning I met Dell Thompson, who stared at me insolently, while a haughty sneer curled her lip, I had not idea that she was jealous of me, little Rosa Lee, whose heart was lighter, and whose task seemed far easier on account of Dr. Clayton’s past and promised visit.

Saturday night came at last, and very-joyfully I started home-on foot, feeling not at all burdened with the compliments of my patrons or the esteem of my pupils. Oh, what a shout was raised at the

shortness of my three weeks, as I entered our sitting-room! All laughed at me, except my mother. She was not disappointed, and when I drew Carrie's little rocking chair to her side, and told her how hard my head was aching, she laid her soft hand caressingly upon my brow, and gently smoothing my short curls, bathed my forehead in camphor until the pain was gone. Had there been no one present but our own family, I should probably have cried, but owing to some untoward circumstance Aunt Sally Wright was there visiting that afternoon, and as a teacher I felt obliged to maintain my dignity before her prying eyes, Almost her first salutation to me was, "Well, Rosa, so you've grown old since you left home?"

"I do not understand what you mean." I answered.

"Why, I mean," said she, "that somebody told me that Mrs. Green told her, that Major Pond's wife told her, that Mary Down's said, that Nancy Rice heard Mis' Cap'n Thompson say that you told Dr. Clayton you was sixteen!"

I knew that the subject of my age had not come up between me and the doctor, but it was useless to deny a story so well authenticated, so I said nothing, and Aunt Sally continued, "They do say you thrash 'em round about right." while mother asked, "Who Dr. Clayton was?"

"Why, he's a young pill-peddler, who's taken a shine to Rosa, and staid with her alone in the schoolhouse until pitch dark." said Aunt Sally, her little green eyes twinkling with the immense satisfaction she felt.

Greatly I marveled as to the source when she obtained this information which so greatly exceeded the truth, and considering that no one knew of the doctor's call but Mrs. Ross, it really was a wonder! She was proceeding with her remarks, when we were summoned to the supper table, where green tea had so good an effect upon her, that by the time she was blowing her third cup, she began to unbend, repeating to me several complimentary remarks which she said came from Mrs. Ross. By this I knew that she had Pine Hill as well as Meadow Brook on her hands, and, indeed 'twas strange how much Aunt Sally did manage to attend to at once, for, besides keeping her son's wife constantly fretted, and her daughter continually quarreling with her husband by her foolish interference, there was scarcely a thing transpired in the neighborhood in which she did not have a part. Not a marriage was in prospect but she knew something bad of both parties, not a family jar occurred in which she did not have a finger. Not a man owed more than he was worth, but she had foreseen it

from the first in the extravagance of his wife. But everybody in Meadow Brook knew Aunt Sally, and it was a common saying, that "Her tongue was no slander." So I did not feel as much annoyed as I otherwise should at her spiteful remarks, which continued with little intermission until dark, when, gathering up her snuff box, knitting, and workbag, she started for home.

The next day was the Sabbath, and if at church, I did now and then cast a furtive glance at the congregation, to see if they were looking at me because I was a "schoolma'rm," it was a childish vanity, which I have long since forgiven, as I trust my reader will do. Among the audience was our minister's young bride, and when, after church, he introduced her to me, saying to her, "This is Rose, who, I told you, was only thirteen and teaching school." I felt quite reconciled to my lot, and thought that after all, it was an honor to be a teacher.

THE LEARNED MAIDEN

(Bio of Augusta Evans Wilson)

By Andre Norton



Augusta Evans Wilson

The life of Augusta Evans Wilson so closely paralleled in many respect those of her best known heroines (save that she was not an orphan) that much of her novels appear autobiographical, although at least three were written before, Cinderella-like, she achieved her fame, riches, and Prince Charming.

Her father, Matthew Ryan Evans, came from the family plantation in South Carolina to help build the then frontier town of Columbus, Georgia, during the early 1830s. He founded the mercantile firm of M.R. Evans and Company and bought a vast tract of land from the Indians on which to build the estate of his magniloquent dreams. His marriage with Sarah Shrine Howard of a family distinguished in the Revolution linked two very old and aristocratic southern clans.

Every dream seemed about to be realized upon their wedding day in 1834. Matthew Evans had already employed an architect to design the imposing “big” house of his one hundred and forty-three acre plantation the land still covered with virgin forest. There were to be heart-of pine floors, with all the other woodwork mahogany. The hardware on the doors was made of silver plate the mantels and

hearth all of the finest Italian marble. Evans had every confidence in the future and, as for the present, his wife had brought him a dowry of thirty thousand dollars.

Friends and neighbors were hardly as sanguine. Long before the house was finished it was frankly christened "Matt's Folly". And his family was still living in a visitor's cottage on his brother-in-law's plantation of Wildwood when Augusta was born on May Eighth, 1835.

The boom of Columbus' building carried on past 1836, but in 1841 the "Harrison Freshet" began the tragedy of financial depression. Cotton fell to two and half cents a pound, half-the cost of raising it. The golden days were over, and the pinch began. Evans and Company went bankrupt and everything was sold, including the still unfinished Matt's Folly. From those dark days onward Augusta was haunted by a fear of mortgages. When wealth came to her from her writing in after years she resolutely refused to invest in any company which accepted mortgages on private dwellings.

But at the time of the crash and for a few years afterward she fled from the dark days by way of her studies. She was a precocious child, taking eagerly to the lessons her mother set her. She possessed a photographic memory -- in later years when her detractors claimed that she must work with an open encyclopedia beside her, that accusation was indeed a canard, the obscure erudition and apt quotations were produced at will from her amazing memory alone.

The libraries of her well-to-do relatives were open to her browsing but she was self-limited in that she would read no book of which her mother did not approve. Science, philosophical works, poetry, history and geography were her favorite studies. All through the years she paid tribute to her mother's teaching. When it was in her power to do so, she showered gifts upon Sarah Evans, trying to make up for those lean years in which her mother had struggled against sickness and real poverty. Augusta always averred that she owed everything to her mother's guidance,

The years following 1841 were lean indeed. In 1848 the family decided to follow a trail already worn by southern kindred and immigrate to Texas. Their wagons joined a convoy through the Indian infested wilderness and Augusta told younger generations' years later how her mother enlivened the dull hours of that slow progress with stories about the great writers, or with the poetry of Cowper she recited from memory. In spite of the care of five small children she continued to hear her daughter's lessons.

But the atmosphere of frontier San Antonio did not suit the Evans's. The harshness of frontier manners, the Catholic influence of Spanish bred land (of which religion they were intensely suspicious) and the failure of family hopes for a brave new start all added to their depression. They were not the stuff from which pioneers were made. What Augusta and Sarah thought of San Antonio was later written in "Inez", and it was not complimentary.

In 1849 Matthew Evans, accepting the fact that for him Texas was not the promised-land, returned with his family to Mobile. This was now one of those boom towns which always exerted a fatal fascination for the unlucky Mr. Evans. But Sarah welcomed the move, and Augusta began to have dreams of her own. She wanted a literary career, and her mother spoke of the possibility that in Mobile she might be able to receive, in one of the new academies for young ladies, the formal education she craved. Sarah's tutoring had given her an excellent and solid grounding, a deep love of books, and an insatiable intellectual curiosity. But Augusta wanted more than her mother was able or fitted to give her. Sarah could not analyze literary forms, she had neither the time nor maybe the taste for long, exhaustive discussions of the critical articles on aesthetics and metaphysics which appeared in the new English quarterlies Augusta devoured.

So, with a new hope before them, the Evans family rented a modest cottage in the piney woods some distance from the growing city and Matthew Evans found a position as a factor with a cotton merchant. Augusta was able to attend a real school for the first time in her life.

But they were not to escape the misfortune which had companied them for seven years. Augusta's school days were limited by ill health. Late in 1849 a fire burned their rented house and much of their personal property. And in the early fifties Matthew Evans, thoroughly beaten by life began to fall into semi-invalidism. The frequent losses of his small salary were an added anxiety in a boom town where the cost of living climbed steadily. There were eight Evans children now, and Augusta, the eldest, was only fifteen. The humiliation-suffered during these poverty stricken years bit deeply into the adolescent girl. Within a quarter of a century she was to become one of the wealthiest women in Alabama in her own right. But for the rest of her life, in one of her books after another, she pictured with careful detail the hardships facing a woman of good family and no money. Her favorite heroine type, a talented girl of fragile health, was regularly

forced to sacrifice time from writing, or music, or art, in order to support herself and those who had family claims upon her.

Southern social custom and tradition prevented Augusta from seeking work outside her own home, and her lack of a diploma, because of her informal education, kept her from the only possible position that a lady might accept -- that of a teacher. She was an excellent nurse, but of course not for pay. Her experiences in such service during the yellow fever epidemics are mirrored graphically in her second novel, "Beulah."

With only her slave, Minervy, in her confidence, she began to write, late at night and in the early morning when her time might be truly considered her own. Worried over her frail health, Minervy betrayed her secret to Sarah, but the mother agreed to allow her to continue. On Christmas morning, 1854, Augusta presented her father with the carefully copied, manuscript of "Inez". The book was partly drawn from stories of Texas which she had heard during the Evans' residence there from the earlier pioneers. The romance was beyond her powers, and the stilted, self-conscious language crude, the dangers of Catholicism heightened into almost absurd melodrama. Augusta Evans had no sense of humor. There is something in her ponderous seriousness, her complete belief that she was a writer with a "mission", which reminds one unmistakably of George Eliot. And Augusta Evans, at the age of nineteen, believed that she was fully qualified to speak her mind on matters of religious doctrine.

In "Inez" the heroine tackles the most obtuse problems of theology with serene determination -- citing book and passage in her refutations -- and, making all the stock errors and time worn accusations of mid-Victorian Protestants. But this driving necessity to take a firm stand on moral or ethical questions was best seller material in the middle 19th century. She was turning over rich soil without perhaps clearly realizing the popularity of her subject matter.

Although one critic at least stated disgustedly, "There is not a natural character and scarcely a natural phrase in the whole volume," "Inez" did find a few readers, and it was exercise for better to come.

Probably subsidized by her uncle, Augustus Howard, Harpers published "Inez" in 1855 when Augusta was twenty. And, poorly written as it is, it has been reprinted time and time again. Four publishing houses still listed it for sale in 1928.

While searching for refutations of Catholic doctrine, she met Walter Harriss, a young Methodist minister, with some claims to scholarship. He had a great influence over her very emotional

religious life and she wrote him impulsive, fervid letters thick with confessions of doubt about the foundations of Christianity. Not only did she make the Reverend Mr. Harriss her confidant, but she read to her mother for hours from books which multiplied her doubts -- HOURS WITH THE MYSTICS, TEEOLGOIA GERMANICA, Mills' LOGIE. This search for faith was for her a highly emotional process and she came out of it a convert fired with missionary zeal. She considered her art as a method of teaching moral truths and its greatest function was to guide followers into the paths set by the Gospel.

Out of this upheaval came "Beulah", her first successful novel and the one which introduced her to the rank of best sellerdom. The reason for its appeal will still find echoes in the serious thinking of this day as some of us also have recently come to look upon science slightly askance-when destruction uncontrolled sometimes appears to be the natural result of experimentation.

Victorians distrusted the head and favored the heart. They feared the rise of the scientist because they-believed his-objectivity threatened the "truth" upon which the whole of their social and moral beliefs was based. Tradition and emotional feeling were strongly opposed to the intellectual liberalism just coming into flower.

But, although this battle between heart and mind was the foundation of "Beulah", in its plot Augusta Evans made certain innovations. Beulah was an ugly girl -- (shadow of Wilkie Collins' later heroines who combined intelligence and plain faces) -- she had only physiognomic charms to draw masculine notice, and she was no clinging vine. She is put through a long crisis of belief, doubt, wavering, and conversion -- all mental action -- and marries to guide her husband into Heaven. For Augusta did accept that one major premise of the day's fiction -- a woman's code of ethics and morals was on a higher, more angelic plane than a man's, and her duty in this life was to see that her husband and children were safely within the fold of the "saved."

Not only was "Beulah" written for the sole purpose of leading readers from the brink of such doubts as Augusta herself had suffered, but the sacred duties toward the home, toward friends, toward the underprivileged were all underlined in the text for the most lighthearted to read.

The novel was completed as the family moved to Sumerville, a suburb of Mobile, in 1858, and in the summer of 1859, suitably escorted by a cousin, Colonel John W. Jones, Augusta traveled north to see about a publisher.

Appleton's refused her offering without much ado, but it was accepted by Derby, the head of the firm taking a warm interest in the young writer and her work.

However, Augusta Evans was not to be won by Yankee wiles. A fervent Secessionist, she returned home to write unsigned articles for the Daily Advertiser attacking the North in the only way she knew -- via literature. Her arguments were the stock ones of her day and have been echoed faintly down to our own time. Northerners were cold and mercenary, Southerners warm and idealistic, love of money made the North corrupt and impersonal, Southerners preferred refined humanitarian-sentiment to material wealth, literature in the North was viewed objectively as a commercial product (and oh, how good for Miss Evans' pocketbook that it was), Southerners wrote from their hearts with beauty and truth their sole aims, the North would debase literature for political aims, the Southerners cherished non-partisan values (as, of course witness Miss Evans' temperate articles!)

In spite of writing this propaganda the fall of 1859 found Augusta back in the heart of the wicked and commercial North -- New York -- accompanied by her uncle, Augustus Howard, to be the personal guest of the Derbys at Glenwood while she read the proofs for "Beulah". And she stayed with them until after the publication date.

Her most favorable early review was written by James Reed Spaulding, as great an idealist and crusader as Augusta believed herself to be. He was so interested in the book that he made a special effort to meet the author and was able to secure an introduction through the Derbys. They found each other so attractive that before she left New York Augusta had agreed that he might visit her family in the role of favored suitor.

It was a triumphant return to Mobile, a city where socially because of their poverty the Evans family had always been on the outside, for Augusta. She had made prominent new friends, her book had been published, was being favorably reviewed, and was selling (twenty-two thousand copies in the first nine months) and she had acquired a distinguished suitor.

For the first time she had money in her hand to do what She Wanted "Georgia Cottage", where the family had been living, was bought and redecorated. Plants, bulbs and shrubs were set out to make the garden they had dreamed of. Augusta undertook the education of two younger sisters and with a new friend, Rachel Lyons of Columbia, South Carolina, began to plan for a European tour in 1860.

Spauldings' visit was postponed for a space. He was busy realizing his own ambition, the publishing of a newspaper with the policy of asserting Christianity in secular journalism. June Fourteenth, 1860, saw the first edition of his New York World on the streets. But he did come to Mobile later and was warmly welcomed by Augusta's family and friends in spite of his Northern birth and sympathies.

They had much in common. Both were idealists in the most hard-to-live-with form -- combining the zeal of reformers with no patience for compromise. The same factors which drew them together were what eventually and finally drove them apart. Augusta, who all her life firmly believed that conditions did not alter rules, that an "open" mind was downright evil, and that untold danger followed when tradition was flouted in favor of progress, was violently with the South in political beliefs. And when Spaulding backed Lincoln with the support of his paper the engagement was broken. Spaulding returned north, to be stricken with paralysis in the late 1860s and died 1872. They never met or corresponded again.

In February, 1861, Augusta attended the momentous session of the legislature when Jefferson Davis was forming the new government. She found in the war the cause she wanted, a more intense and personal one than had been offered with the Theological upheaval which had brought forth "Beulah". New her growing fame also brought what she deemed responsibilities. There were the "Beulah Guards" which she addressed personally before they left for the front. And there was the camp hospital she organized and nursed in-established a vacant house near her home -- Camp Beulah.

Every bit of her driving energy went into aiding the cause she believed in as devotedly as she believed in her Bible. Making herself a studious critic of public affairs, she corresponded with the new political and military leaders. And many of her suggestions proved so intelligent that Henry Hilliard, Benjamin Hill, General Beauregard and Robert Toombs listened closely to her advice. A steady flow of her unsigned Contributions appeared in newspapers, and she and her mother made dramatic visits to the battlefields in search of the Alabama regiment to which her brothers, Howard and Vivian, belonged. There is a vivid report of her singing the stirring "Maryland, My Maryland" to Southern troops just before the battle of Chickamauga.

So imbued was she with the belief that she must aid the cause, that from June, 1862, to March, 1865, she worked every spare moment on a novel she hoped and intended would bring glory to the

Confederacy and lift the morale of her readers. Some of it was scrawled hurriedly on scraps of paper as she was on duty beside hospital cots at Camp Beulah. She -- and Southern critics -- considered that in writing "Macaria" she was engaged in a truly sacred work.

Beauregarde sent her his own reports of the early battles in Virginia for source material and later dispatched, with a written commendation a diamond studded pen, in recognition of her wide services to the cause.

"Macaria" was published by West and Johnson at Richmond, Virginia, in 1865. Printed on crude wrapping paper, the boards used in binding covers with wallpaper, this edition is now an exceedingly rare collector's item.

Copies found by federal officers in Kentucky and Tennessee were destroyed by the order of the general commanding there. But one copy, sent by blockade runner to Cuba, eventually found its way to her northern publishers. A minor printer-publisher had a 5000 copy pirated edition on the market, refusing to pay royalty to a "Rebel", when Derby and Lippincott descended upon him and forced him to put the disputed sum in trust. Even the cold, grasping, money-mad, Northerners knew what was due a lady, rebel or not.

The book had her usual faults of pedantic and heavy-footed style and was out-and-out propaganda. But even in war days it sold among her enemies -- a fact for which Augusta had reason to rejoice later.

The downfall of the Southern cause was a crushing blow. But she was still an unreconstructed rebel, giving refuge to Robert Toombs before with a price on his head he managed to slip away to Cuba. He told her much of the secret history of their downfall and she began to gather material for an authoritative history of the Confederacy.

But the war had ruined the Evans family along with the rest of their defeated nation. Matthew's health was very bad. The older boys had all been in the army and were left without a trade or means of earning a living. Their savings had been invested patriotically in Confederate bonds, now worthless, their slaves were gone. There had been no money from the southern sales of "Macaria."

Howard, Augusta's favorite brother, returned from the Battle of Atlanta badly wounded his arm and shoulder paralyzed. And a bout of typhoid fever had left his memory impaired. He would be an anxious care for the family for some time to come Augusta decided to take him north for the medical attention the south could not now give. She sailed for New York late in the summer of 1855, and Derby gives us an account of the young woman, clad in garments so far out of style as

to make her conspicuous, turning up in his office, unsure of her reception, her brother in his threadbare grey uniform resting on the steps outside. But this was the lowest point in the Evans' fortunes. Augusta was overwhelmed to discover that the impounded royalties were in trust for her -- that she had enough money coming from the northern sales of "Macaria" to put them all on their feet again. And the doctor to whom Derby sent them was able to help Howard.

Restored and able to see a better future, she began writing "St. Elmo" in 1866. The book was almost instantly popular and remains the most readable of her novels and the one always associated with her name. Two weeks after it was put on sale the publishers had to beg the patience of the public, saying that it was physically impossible for them to keep up with orders. Four months after publication they boasted that at least a million people had read it. And in 1949 four different reprint editions were still on sale.

There is little or no realism in the novel. And yet it fitted in perfectly with the taste of the time. Those who read it eagerly, mistaking the pedantic erudition for culture, were perfectly happy.

The hero and heroine were idealized out of all reasonable human semblances. But, in order to make her hero a sinner dark enough to arouse the missionary instincts of the Christian heroine, Augusta painted for generation of feminine readers a very satisfying and fascinating rake. Perhaps it was because the Victorian woman knew of so many things which "could not be discussed" that even veiled references to sinning brought in a wave of readers.

Not that Augusta understood what she had created in St. Elmo Murray. Lacking a sense of humor, she thought she was only presenting the facts of a pure and noble conversion to her bemused public. No other of the "Scribbling Women" save Susan Warner took herself more seriously. She totally lacked the more rational attitude toward her own work possessed by Mrs. Southworth and Mary J. Holmes. Augusta Evans did not write to amuse!

Because she was sure that she had written more than just a work of fiction, Augusta would not yield to the pressure of playwright and allow any of her novels to be dramatized. Even "St. Elmo" was not produced in play form until 1907, but from 1909 to 1915 it was a popular success upon the boards.

In it she created a South which had never really existed but which added to a legend that is still green and flourishing today. Her rakish hero lived in opulent luxury which even the very wealthy below the Mason Dixon line had never known, but which the South came readily

to accept as a picture of the Eden from which the Civil War had expelled its sons.

Her popular success was accepted somewhat complacently by Augusta as a deserved public tribute, something never to be questioned. She took her place with a single lady-like stride as the "Queen Regnant" of Southern letters and she had no reason, nor could ever see one, to question the opinion of those who had so fulsomely crowned her.

Some slight clipping of her wings came from family troubles. Howard remained permanently crippled in one arm from his wound and her father's critical illness in 1867 prevented her from taking the European tour she had so long desired.

In 1868, when she was thirty-two, she became engaged to a man four months older than her father. Colonel Lorenzo Madison Wilson was sixty at the time. Her father protested against the match and they obediently postponed the wedding. That summer Augusta and her mother took Mr. Evans north to consult a specialist, but the trip was unsuccessful and Matthew Evans, who had had such high dreams in his youth and was so futilely denied all realization of them, died on the train back to Mobile.

On the second of December that same year Augusta married Colonel Wilson in a quiet family ceremony at Georgia Cottage. Her husband was a man of wealth and property, a leader in the business world of Mobile. Investments made outside the South in the years before the war had preserved his fortune when others had been ruined.

By her marriage Augusta also acquired four step-children. Tom and Mary were already married and Albert, the second son, was also, at the age of nineteen, to take a bride only a month after his father's second marriage. Fannie, the thirteen-year-old second daughter, became a close friend and loved companion of the new mother only ten years older than her sister, Mary. Augusta was living one of her own novels, the poor but proud heroine was established at Ashland, a real life approach to the grandiose mansions to be found between the covers of her books.

Ashland was a true "show place", from the alley of live oaks which walled the carriage drive to the surrounding gardens. The house had been built in 1844 for Colonel Wilson's first wife and was of the "raised cottage" design with the main entrances on the second floor and the ground floor used for kitchen and storage purposes. The wide hall which connected front and back entrances was the coolest place

in the house and it was in an improvised study there that the bride began work on "Vashti."

She budgeted her time strictly. Colonel Wilson and the home he had given her must not suffer from her preoccupation with an author's employment. So the schedule she established for the household became so regimented that neighbors told the time of day accurately from the duties which engaged the Wilson, servants at that particular moment. And in spite of her strictness and what we would think today almost harshness with her servants, they were devoted to her and remained in her employ for forty and fifty years.

Although churchgoing and a firm belief in orthodox religious tenants governing her life, she was also interested in the theater. When John McCullough, the famed Shakespearian actor, was in Mobile she received him at Ashland and, on the night he played "Virginis", an imposing floral tribute from the gardens and greenhouses of the estate was presented to him on the stage. And her liberal views on acting led her to direct a performance of "Lalla Rook" for the benefit of the Protestants Orphan Asylum.

But she was bitterly opposed to suffrage and all her life refused to speak before women's clubs, of which she completely disapproved.

Busy as her day was, she allowed nothing to interfere with the four hours of work at her desk. All rights to "Vashti" were sold for the sum of fifteen thousand dollars, paid in advance of publication, which she gave to her mother. In the South of the reconstruction period this sum was quadruple in purchasing power over what it would be today. But the profit from the published novel proved to be so high that her publisher, G. W. Carleton, tore up the contract and returned the copyright to the author, such treatment of one of his prize authors paid off some years later when a rival sent an agent to Augusta offering twenty-five thousand to issue cheap editions of her works. She refused at once, and she never granted serial rights to magazines. Colonel Wilson was so proud of the "Vashti" sale that he carried the check about to show his friends and, when it was finally cashed, had a facsimile of it made.

The "cause" in "Vashti" was the evils of divorce. Augusta's theme being firmly stated in her usual ponderous style. "Human legislation is impotent to cancel the statutes of Almighty God, which declare that only death can free what Jehovah has joined together."

And with the cause she continued to display the width of her reading, and the vividness of her memory, with allusions and

quotations far beyond the grasp of most of her readers. But that was what made Augusta so wonderful -- she educated while she elevated!

Critics who made statements such as: "'Vashti' may therefore be safely pronounced a case of affectation run mad, in which the dictionary has been ruthlessly plundered of its unused treasures in order to astound the public." Were lone and unheard voices lost in an unhearing, willfully deaf wilderness.

Her answer to such carpings -- which she never believed came in the preface to "Infelice" (1875) with a quotation from Disraeli's "Lothair" -- "Tomorrow the critics will commence. You know who the critics are? The men who have failed in literature and art."

After all the public agreed with her. Between 1870 and 1900, although she published only two new novels in that period, she averaged ten thousand a year in royalties.

In 1870 her health began to suffer and Colonel Wilson, proud as he was of her 'success, took a firm stand. She must spend less time writing and studying. A born nurse, she had devoted hours of this kind of duty to any sufferers in her wide circle of relatives and friends -- this too must stop. But her interest in nursing turned in another direction, the recruiting of girls to make it their life work. And a few years later she was one of the founders of the Nonsectarian Infirmary in Mobile.

Her own physical ills were those which are now recognized as having psychosomatic base, insomnia and hay fever. With Colonel Wilson she began traveling, in hope of finding a better climate. But seasons spent away from Ashland brought her no relief.

At home there was the press of social duties. She was now one of the "monuments" of Mobile, and outstanding visitors were taken to Ashland as a matter of course. The one time on record when she refused to play this allotted role was when she decided not to receive Oscar Wilde.

"Infelice" went to Carleton in the spring of 1875. Maddie, the daughter of her widowed sister, Virginia, was the model for Regina. Both Maddie and her mother lived at Ashland and much of the routine of the household has been -noted in Maddie's childhood diary.

Sarah Evans' death in 1878 was a blow to such a devoted daughter. But after that life flowed very evenly until 1891. The twelve year gap between her sixth and seventh novels was entirely due to her restless quest for health

But "At the Mercy of Tiberius" appeared at last in the summer of 1887. This showed a change in pace. The story had, for Augusta, an unusual amount of realism -- the conversation was more natural, and there were folk customs, superstitions, and pictures of daily life closer to the actual. Mrs. E. W. Bellamy, a noted writer of short stories in Negro dialect, helped her with the sections dealing with the customs and speech of that race. The story might have been really great had it not suffered from her usual fault of pedantic exposition for it was a murder mystery, cleverly plotted, and also hovered on the verge of being an exposure of the judicial ills of circumstantial evidence and bad penal practices. She often called this her favorite work. Certainly it was the most markedly regional of all her novels.

The death of Colonel Wilson in the fall of 1891 was a stunning stroke which blasted forever her happy world. She took a dislike to Ashland and determined to leave the place where she had been blissfully content. By her desire he had left the estate to his children and grandchildren by his first marriage. Her own earnings, which his shrewd business investments had increased, made her, by the standards of the day, independently wealthy.

For the next few years she moved restlessly about, living with a close friend, a sister, in a home of her own, until she purchased a second home within walking distance of her relatives. Here the remaining fifteen years of her life were spent.

She continued to dwell upon the dislocating loss of Colonel Wilson with the morbidness of the widowed Queen who had given her name to the period. For years after his death she used heavy black borders on her letter paper and spoke of life as not worth living. Her ill health continued and she became blind in one eye from neuritis. Her brother, Howard, who now lived with her, and her niece, Lily Bragg, read aloud from her favorite quarterlies and magazines. She wanted to keep life static, and was afraid of changes, retaining the gas lighting of her young womanhood in preference to electricity. And she would not allow a telephone in the house until Mrs. Bragg came to live with her. All her debts were paid from a large store of cash she carried in the pocket of her woolen wrap.

But whether she wrote or not the royalties continued to roll in. During 1890s her books brought her about seven thousand a year until she sold all rights to her publisher. Her turning to the past, her morbid grief, and failing health, led her relatives to believe that she had ended her active career. But, as secretly as she had produced "Inez", she set to writing again. Only Howard and the servants knew

that she was back at work—the publication of “The Speckled Bird” in 1905 came as a complete surprise to the rest of her world. And the name of Augusta Evans Wilson on the jacket had not lost its charm. The first edition of thirty-five thousand sold in advance of publication and within four weeks after that date it was in its third edition.

This time she was aligned against organized labor. Her heroine mingles with unholy socialistic and anarchist movements, becomes a “de-sexed” feminist and accepts the leadership of labor agitators. From that a lady could fall no lower. The hard practices of a business world destroyed all the superior moral fibers of feminine character. Augusta’s world was changing but she was being left behind, faced by forces she could not understand and which the beliefs of a lifetime branded as utterly evil.

She had one more story to write, but it was a short one. “Devote” was completed when she was seventy. Her publisher begged to issue it in books form in spite of its length, and it appeared in large type with ornamental margins. In 1916 it was re-issued as a memorial to her with the addition of a short reminiscence commissioned from Thomas Cooper DeLeon.

Howard’s death in June of 1908 was, she believed, also hers. The months which dragged afterwards were only a quiet and patient waiting. And on the day after her seventy-fourth birthday in 1909 she suffered a heart attack and died at once. Her funeral, said to be the largest ever seen in Mobile brought her to rest beside Howard.

Her contemporaries believed that her influence on American character and morals was so great that she was assured of a high place in literary history. A whole generation showered her with letters, made pilgrimages to tell how some word of hers had changed their lives for the better.

Her heroes and Heroines were idealized, her lovingly detailed descriptions of luxurious and exotic mansions and gardens were lush, the stately and dignified language gave the illusion of “culture”, and the stern punishments meted out to the vicious and hypocritical were entirely to the taste of the period.

She pictured a South that never was, an ideal of beauty, chivalry, romance, and luxury. To Southerners it was a reminder of a cherished and lost past to Northerners an accepted picture of a destroyed world.

Her popularity was based on Victorian points: the virtuous feeling gained by the reader who was instructed while he was entertained,

the moral and religious teachings, and the excitement of the discreetly sensational incident.

Hers were the success stories of the downtrodden, almost always orphaned maidens who played preceptresses of morals and manners through long continued love affairs. The sins of the rich were assailed and the simple home and its life extolled (although the heroine always wed wealthy in the end). What more could any reader of her era desire.

YELLOW FEVER NURSE

Excerpt from "Beulah" 1859

By Augusa Evans Wilson

"Do you know that the yellow fever has broke out here?"

"Oh, you are mistaken, It can't be possible!" cried Clara, turning pale.

"I tell you, it is a fact. There are six cases now at the hospital, Hal was there this morning. I have lived here a good many years, and, from the signs, I think we are going to have dreadfully sickly times. You young ladies had better keep out of the sun, first thing you know, you will have it."

"Who told you there was yellow fever at the hospital?"

"Dr. Asbury said so, and, what is more, Hal has had it himself, and nursed people who had it, and he says it is the worst sort of yellow fever."

"I am not afraid of it." said Beulah, looking up for the first time.

"I am dreadfully afraid of it." answered Clara, with a nervous shudder.

"Then you had better leave town as quick as possible, for folks who are easily scared always catch it soonest."

"Nonsense!" cried Beulah, noting the deepening pallor of Clara's face.

"Oh, I will warrant, if everybody else -- every man, woman, and child in the city -- takes it, you won't! Miss Beulah, I should like to know what you are afraid of?" muttered Harriet, scanning the orphan's countenance, and adding, in a louder tone: "Have you heard anything from master?"

"No." Beulah bit her lip to conceal her emotion.

"Hal hears from him. He was in New York when he wrote the last letter." She took a malicious pleasure in thus torturing her visitor, and, determined not to gratify her by any manifestation of interest or curiosity, Beulah took up a couple of volumes and turned to the door, saying;

"Come, Clara, you must each have a bouquet, Harriet, where are the flower scissors? Dr. Hartwell, never objected to my carefully cutting even his choicest flowers. There! Clara, listen to the cool rippling of the fountain. How I have longed to hear its silvery murmur once more!"

They went out into the front yard, Clara wandered about the flower beds gathering blossoms which were scattered in lavish profusion on all sides, and, leaning over the marble basin, Beulah bathed her brow in the crystal waters. There were bewitching beauty and serenity in the scene before her, and as Charon nestled his great head against her hand, she found it very difficult to realize the fact that she had left this lovely retreat for the small room at Mrs. Hoyt's boarding house. It was not her habit, however, to indulge in repinings, and, though her ardent appreciation of beauty rendered the place incalculably dear to her, she resolutely gathered a cluster of flowers, bade adieu to Harriet, and descended the avenue. Charon walked soberly beside her, now and then looking up, as if to inquire the meaning of her long absence and wonder at her sudden departure. At the gate she patted him affectionately on the head and passed out, he made no attempt to follow her, but barked violently, and then lay down at the gate, whining mournfully.

"Poor Charon, I wish I might have him." said she sadly.

"I dare say the doctor would give him to you." answered Clara very simply.

"I would just as soon think of asking him for his own head." replied Beulah.

"It is a mystery to me, Beulah, how you can feel so coldly toward Dr. Hartwell."

"I should very much like to know what you mean by that?" said Beulah, involuntarily crushing the flowers she held.

"Why, you speak of him just as you would of anybody else."

"Well?"

"You seem to be afraid of him."

"To a certain extent, I am, and so is everybody else who knows him intimately."

"This fear is unjust to him."

"How so, pray?"

"Because he is too noble to do aught to inspire it."

"Certainly he is feared, nevertheless, by all who know him well."

"It seems to me that, situated as you have been, you would almost worship him!"

"I am not addicted to worshipping anything but God!" answered Beulah shortly.

"You are an odd compound, Beulah. Sometimes I think you must be utterly heartless."

"Thank you!"

“Don’t be hurt. But you are so cold, so freezing, you chill me.”

“Do I? Dr. Hartwell, (your Delphic oracle, it seems) says I’m as fierce as a tropical tornado.”

“I do not understand how you can bear to give up such an enchanting home, and go to hard work, as if you were driven to it from necessity.”

“Do not go over all that beaten track again, if you please. It is not my home! I can be just as happy, nay, happier, in my little room.”

“I doubt it.” said Clara pertinaciously.

Stopping suddenly, and fixing her eyes steadily on her companion, Beulah hastily asked:

“Clara Sanders, why should you care if my guardian and I are separated?”

A burning blush dyed cheek and brow, as Clara drooped her head, and answered:

“Because he is my friend also, and I know that your departure will grieve him.”

“You overestimate my worth and his interest. He is a man who lives in a world of his own and needs no society, save such as is afforded him in his tasteful and elegant home. He loves books, flowers, music, paintings, and his dog! He is a stern man, and shares his griefs and joys with no one. All this I have told you before.”

There was a long silence, broken at last by an exclamation from Beulah:

“Oh, how beautiful! How silent! How solemn -- look down the long dim aisles. It is an oratory where my soul comes to worship! Presently the breeze will rush up from the gulf, and sweep the green organ, and a melancholy chant will swell through these dusky arches. Oh, what are Gothic Cathedrals and Gilded Shrines in comparison with these grand forest temples, where the dome is a bending vault of God’s blue, and the columns are these everlasting pines!” She pointed to a thick clump of pines sloping down to a ravine.

The setting sun threw long quivering rays through the clustering boughs, and the broken beams, piercing the gloom beyond, showed the long aisles as in a “Cathedral light”.

As Clara looked down the dim glade, and then watched Beulah’s parted lips and sparkling eyes, as she stood bending forward with rapturous delight written on every feature, she thought that she had indeed misjudged her in using the epithets “freezing and heartless”.

“You are enthusiastic.” said she gently.

“How can I help it? I love the grand and beautiful too well to offer a tribute of silent admiration. Oh, my homage is that of a whole heart!”

They reached home in the gloaming, and each retired to her own room. For a mere trifle Beulah had procured the use of a melodeon, and now, after placing the drooping flowers in water, she sat down before the instrument and poured out the joy of her soul in song. Sad memories no longer floated like corpses on the sea of the past, grim forebodings crouched among the mist of the future, and she sang song after song, exulting in the gladness of her heart. An analysis of these occasional hours of delight was as impossible as their creation. Sometimes she was conscious of their approach, while gazing up at the-starry islets in the boundless lake of azure sky, or when a gorgeous sunset pageant was passing away, sometimes from hearing a solemn chant in church, or a witching strain from a favorite opera. Sometimes from viewing dim old pictures, sometimes from reading a sublime passage in some old English or German author. It was a serene elevation of feeling, an unbounded peace, and a chastened joyousness, which she was rarely able to analyze, but which isolated her for a time from all surrounding circumstances. How long she sang on the present occasion she knew not, and only paused on hearing a heavy sob behind her. Turning round, she saw Clara sitting near, with her face in her hands. Kneeling beside her, Beulah wound her arms around her, and asked earnestly:

“What troubles you, my friend? May I not know?”

Clara dropped her head on Beulah’s shoulder, and answered hesitatingly:

“The tones of your voice always sadden me. They are like organ notes solemn and awful! Yes, awful, and yet very sweet -- sweeter than any music I ever heard. Your singing fascinates me, yet, strange as it may seem, it very often makes me weep. There is an unearthliness, a spirituality that affects me singularly.”

“I am glad that is all. I was afraid you were distressed about something. Here, take my rocking chair, I am going to road, and if you like, you may have the benefit of my book.”

“Beulah, do put away your books for one night, and let us have a quiet time. Don’t study now. Come, sit here, and talk to me.”

“Flatterer, do you pretend that you prefer my chattering to the wonderful words of a man who ‘talked like an angel’? You must listen to the tale of that ‘Ancient Mariner with glittering eye’.”

“Spare me that horrible ghostly story of vessels freighted with staring corpses. Ugh! It curdled the blood in my veins once, and I shut the book in disgust, don’t begin it now, for Heaven’s sake!”

“Why Clara! It is the most thrilling poem in the English language. Each re-perusal fascinates me more and more. It requires a dozen readings to initiate you fully into its weird, supernatural realms.”

“Yes, and it is precisely for that reason that I don’t choose to hear it. There is quite enough of the grim and hideous reality without hunting it up in pages of fiction. When I read I desire to relax my mind, not put it on the rack, as your favorite books invariably do. Absolutely, Beulah, after listening to some of your pet authors, I feel as if I had been standing on my head. You need not look so coolly incredulous, it is a positive fact. As for that ‘Ancient Mariner’ you are so fond of, I am disposed to take the author’s own opinion of it, as expressed in those lines addressed to himself.”

“I suppose, then, you fancy ‘Christable’ as little as the others seeing that it is a tale of witchcraft. How would you relish that grand anthem to nature’s God, written in the Vale of Chamouni?”

“I have never read it.” answered Clara very quietly.

“What? Never read ‘Sibylline Leaves’? Why, I will wager my head that you have parsed from them a thousand times! Never read that magnificent hymn before sunrise, in the midst of glaciers and snow-crowned, cloud-piercing peaks? Listen, then, and if you don’t feel like falling on your knees, you have not a spark of poetry in your soul!”

She drew the lamp close to her, and read aloud. Her finely modulated voice was peculiarly adapted to the task, and her expressive countenance faithfully depicted the contending emotions which filled her mind as she read. Clara listened with pleased interest, and, when the short poem was concluded, said:

“Thank you, it is beautiful. I have often seen extracts from it. Still, there is a description of Mont Blanc in ‘Manfred’ which I believe I like quite as well.”

“What? That witch fragment?”

“Yes.”

“I don’t understand ‘Manfred’. Here and there are passages in cipher.”

I read and catch a glimpse of hidden meaning, I read again, and it vanishes in mists. It seems to me a poem of symbols, dimly adumbrating truths, which my clouded intellect clutches at in vain. I have a sort of shadowy belief that ‘Astarte’, as in its ancient mythological significance, symbolizes nature. There is a dusky vein of

mystery surrounding her, which favors my idea of her as representing the universe. Manfred, with daring hand, tore away that 'Veil of Isis' which no mortal had ever pierced before, and, maddened by the mockery of the stony features, paid the penalty of his sacrilegious rashness, and fled from the temple, striving to shake off the curse. My guardian has a curious print of 'Astarte', taken from some European Byronic gallery. I have studied it until almost it seems to move and speak to me. She is clad in the ghostly drapery of the tomb, just as invoked by Nemesis, with trailing tresses, closed eyes, and folded hands. The features are dim, spectral, yet marvelously beautiful. Almost one might think the eyelids quivered; there is such an air of waking dreaminess. That this is a false and inadequate conception of Byron's 'Astarte' I feel assured, and trust that I shall yet find the key to this enigma. It interests me greatly, and by some inexplicable process, whenever I sit pondering the mystery of 'Astarte', that wonderful creation in 'Shirley' presents itself. Astarte becomes in a trice that 'Woman-Titan' nature, kneeling before the red hills of the west, at her evening prayers. I see her prostrate in the great steps of her altar, praying for a fair night, for mariners at sea, for lambs in moors, and unfledged birds in woods. Her robe of blue air spreads to the outskirts of the heath. A veil, white as an avalanche, sweeps from her head to her feet, and arabesques of lightning flame on its borders. I see her zone, purple, like the horizon, through its blush-shines the star of evening. Her forehead has the expanse of a cloud, and is paler than the early moon, risen long before dark gathers. She reclines on the ridge of Still-Moor, her mighty hands are joined beneath it. So kneeling, face to face, 'Nature speaks with God.' Oh! I would give twenty years of my life to have painted that Titan's portrait. I would rather have been the author of this than have wielded the scepter of Zenobia, in the palmiest days of Palmyra!"

She spoke rapidly, and with white lips that quivered. Clara looked at her wonderingly, and said hesitatingly:

"I don't understand the half of what you have been saying. It sounds to me very much as if you had stumbled into a lumber room of queer ideas, snatched up a handful, all on different subjects, and woven them into a speech as incongruous as Joseph's variegated coat." There was no reply. Beulah's hands were clasped on the table before her, and she leaned forward with eyes steadily fixed on the floor. Clara waited a moment, and then continued:

"I never notice any of the mysteries of 'Manfred' that seem to trouble you so much. I enjoy the fine passages, and never think of the

hidden meanings, as you call them, whereas it seems you are always plunging about in the dark, hunting you know not what. I am content to glide on the surface, and --."

"And live in the midst of foam and bubbles!" cried Beulah, with a gesture of impatience.

"Better than grope among subterranean caverns, black and icy, as you are forever doing. You are even getting a weird, unearthly look. Sometimes, when I come in and find you, book in hand, with that far-off expression in your eyes, I really dislike to speak to you. There is no more color in your face and hands than in that wall yonder. You will dig your grave among books, if you don't take care. There is such a thing as studying too much. Your mind is perpetually at work, all day you are thinking, thinking, thinking, and at night, since the warm weather has made me open the door between our rooms, I hear you talking earnestly and rapidly in your sleep, Last week I came in on tiptoe, and stood a few minutes beside your bed. The moon shone in through the window, and though you were fast asleep, I saw that you tossed your hands restlessly, while I stood you spoke aloud, in an incoherent manner, of the 'Dream Fugue' and 'Vision of Sudden Death', and now and then you frowned, and sighed heavily, as if you were in pain. Music is a relaxation to most people, but it seems to put your thoughts on the rack. You will wear yourself out prematurely if you don't quit this constant studying."

She rose to go, and, glancing up at her, Beulah answered, musingly:

"We are very unlike. The things I love you shrink from as dull and tiresome. I live in a different world. Books are to me what family, and friends and society are to other people. It may be that the isolation of my life necessitates this. Doubtless, you often find me abstracted. Are you going so soon? I had hoped we should spend a profitable evening, but it has slipped away, and I have done-nothing. Good-night." She rose and gave the customary good-night kiss, and, as Clara retired to her own room, Beulah turned up the wick of her lamp and resumed her book. The gorgeous mazes of Coleridge no longer imprisoned her fancy, it wandered mid the silence, and desolation and the sand riverlets of the Thebian desert, through the date groves of the lonely Laura, through the museums of Alexandria. Over the cool crystal depths of "Hypatia" her thirsty spirit hung eagerly. In Philammon's intellectual nature she found a startling resemblance to her own. Like him, she had entered a forbidden temple, and learned to question, and the same "insatiable craving to know the mysteries of learning" was impelling her, with irresistible force, out into the world of

philosophic inquiry. Hours fled on unnoted; with nervous haste the leaves were turned. The town clock cried three. As she finished the book and laid it on the table she bowed her head upon her hands. She was bewildered. Was Kingsley his own Raphael-Aben-Ezra? Or did he heartily believe in the Christianity of which he had given so hideous a portraiture? Her brain whirled yet there was a great dissatisfaction. She could not contentedly go back to the Laura with Philammon, "Hypatia" was not sufficiently explicit. She was dissatisfied, there was more than this Alexandrian ecstasy to which "Hypatia" was driven, but where, and how should she find it? Who would guide her? Was not her guardian, in many respects, as skeptical as Raphael himself? Dare she enter, alone and unaided, this Cretan maze of investigation, where all the wonderful lore of the gifted "Hypatia" had availed nothing? What was her intellect given her for, if not to be thus employed? Her head ached with the intensity of thought, and, as she laid it on her pillow and closed her eyes, day looked out over the eastern sky.

The ensuing week was one of anxious apprehension to all within the city. Harriet's words seemed prophetic; there was every intimation of a sickly season. Yellow fever had made its appearance in several sections of the town in its most malignant type. The board of health devised various schemes for arresting the advancing evil. The streets were powdered with lime and huge fires of tar kept constantly burning, yet daily, hourly, the fatality increased, and, as colossal ruin strode on, the terrified citizens fled in all directions. In ten days the epidemic began to make fearful havoc, all classes and ages were assailed indiscriminately. Whole families were stricken down in a day, and not one member spared to aid the others. The exodus was only limited by impossibility, all who could abandon their homes and sought safety in flight. These were the fortunate minority, and, as if resolved to wreak its fury on the remainder, the contagion spread into every quarter of the city. Not even physicians were spared and those who escaped trembled in anticipation of the fell stroke. Many doubted that it was yellow fever, and conjectured that the veritable plague had crossed the ocean. Of all Mrs. Hoyt's boarders, but half a dozen determined to hazard remaining in the infected region. There were Beulah, Clara and four gentlemen. Gladly would Clara have fled to a place of safety, had it been in her power, but there was no one to accompany or watch over her, and as she was forced to witness the horrors of the season a sort of despair seemed to nerve her trembling frame. Mrs. Watson had been among the first to leave the city.

Madam St. Cymon had disbanded her school, and, as only her three daughters continued to take music lessons, Beulah had ample leisure to contemplate the distressing scenes which surrounded her. At noon, one September day, she stood at the open window of her room. The air was intensely hot, the drooping leaves of the China trees were motionless, there was not a breath of wind stirring, and the sable plumes of the hearses were still as their burdens. The brazen, glittering sky seemed a huge glowing furnace, breathing out only scorching heat. Beulah leaned out of the window and, wiping away the heavy drops that stood on her brow, looked down the almost deserted street. Many of the stores were closed, while busy haunts were silent, and very few persons were visible, save the drivers of two hearses and of a cart filled with coffins. The church bells tolled unceasingly, and the desolation, the horror, were indescribable, as the sable wings of the Destroyer hung over the doomed city. Out of her ten fellow-graduates four slept in the cemetery. The night before she had watched beside another and at dawn saw the limbs stiffen and the eyes grow sightless. Among her former schoolmates the contagion had been particularly fatal, and, fearless of danger, she had nursed two of them. As she stood fanning herself, Clara entered hurriedly, and, sinking into a chair, exclaimed, in accents of terror:

“It has come! As I knew it would! Two of Mrs. Hoyt’s children have been taken, and, I believe, one of the waiters also! Merciful God! What will become of me?” Her teeth chattered, and she trembled from head to foot.

“Don’t be alarmed, Clara! Your excessive terror is your greatest danger. If you would escape you must keep as quiet as possible.”

She poured out a glass of water and made her drink, then asked:

“Can Mrs. Hoyt get medical aid?”

“No, she has sent for every doctor in town, and not one has come.”

“Then I will go down and assist her.” Beulah turned toward the door but Clara caught her dress, and said hoarsely:

“Are you mad, thus continually to put your life in jeopardy? Are you shod with immortality, that you thrust yourself into the very pit of destruction?”

“I am not afraid of the fever and therefore think I shall not take it. And as long as I am able to be up I shall do all that I can to relieve the sick. Remember, Clara, nurses are not to be had now for any sum.” She glided down the steps, and found the terrified mother wringing her hands helplessly over the stricken ones. The children were crying on the bed, and with the energy which the danger demanded, Beulah

speedily ordered the mustard baths, and administered the remedies she has seen prescribed on previous occasions. The fever rose rapidly, and, undaunted by thoughts of personal danger, she took her place beside the bed, It was past midnight when Dr. Asbury came, exhausted and haggard from unremitting toil and vigils, he looked several years older than when she had last seen him. He started on perceiving her perilous post, and said anxiously:

“Oh, you are rash! Very rash! What would Hartwell say? What will he think when he comes?”

“Comes! Surely you have not urged him to come back now.” said she, grasping his arm convulsively.

“Certainly. I telegraphed to him to come home by express. You need not look so troubled, he has had this Egyptian plague, will run no risk, and, even if he should, will return as soon as possible.”

“Are you sure he has had the fever?”

“Yes, sure. I nursed him myself, the summer after he came from Europe and thought he would die. That was the last sickly season we have had for years, but this caps the climax of all I ever saw or heard of in America. Thank God, my wife and children are far away, and free from apprehension on their account, I can do my duty.”

All this was said in an undertone, and, after advising everything that could possibly be done, he left the room, beckoning Beulah after him. She followed, and he said earnestly:

“Child, I tremble for you. Why did you leave Hartwell’s house and insure all this peril? Beulah, though it is nobly unselfish of you to devote yourself to the sick, as you are doing, it may cost you your life -- nay, most probably will.”

“I have thought of it all, sir, and am determined to do my duty.”

“The God preserve you. Those children have been taken violently, watch them closely, good nursing is worth all the apothecary shops. You need not send for me anymore, I am out constantly, whenever I can I will come, meantime, depend only on the nursing. Should you be taken yourself. Let me know at once, do not fail. A word more -- keep yourself well stimulated.”

He hurried away, and she returned to the sickroom, to speculate on the probability of soon meeting her guardian. Who can tell how dreary were the nights that followed? Mrs. Hoyt took the fever, and mother and children moaned together. On the morning of the fourth day the eldest child, a girl of eight years, died, with Beulah’s hand grasped in hers. Happily, the mother was unconscious, and the little corpse was borne into an adjoining room. Beulah shrank from the

task which she felt for the first time in life called upon to perform. She could nurse the living, but dreaded the thought of shrouding the dead. Still, there was no one else to do it, and she bravely conquered her repugnance, and clad the young sleeper for the tomb. The gentlemen boarders, who had luckily escaped, arranged the mournful particulars of the burial, and, after severing a sunny lock of hair for the mother, should she live, Beulah saw the cold form borne out to its last resting place. Another gloomy day passed slowly, and she was rewarded by the convalescence of the remaining sick child. Mrs. Hoyt still hung upon the confines of eternity and Beulah, who had not closed her eyes for many nights' was leaning over the bed counting the racing pulse, when a rapid step caused her to look up, and, falling forward in her arms, Clara cried:

“Save me! Save me! The chill is on me now!”

It was too true, and as Beulah assisted her to her room and carefully bathed her feet, her heart was heavy with dire dread lest Clara's horror of the disease augment its ravages. Dr. Asbury was summoned with all haste, but, as usual, seemed an age coming, and when at last he came could only prescribe what had already been done. It was pitiable to watch the agonized expression of Clara's sweet face, as she looked from the countenance of the physician to that of her friend, striving to discover their opinion of her case.

“Doctor, you must send Hal to me. He can nurse Mrs. Hoyt and little Willie while I watch Clara. I can't possibly take care of all three, though little Willie is a great deal better now. Can you send him at once? He is a good nurse.”

“Yes, he has been nursing poor Tom Hamil, but he died about an hour ago, and Hal is released. I look for Hartwell hourly, you do keep up amazingly! Bless you, Beulah!” Wringing her hand, he descended the stairs.

Re-entering the room Beulah sat down beside Clara, and taking one burning hand in her cool palms, pressed it softly, shying in an encouraging tone:

“I feel so much relieved about Willie, he is a great deal better, and I think Mrs. Hoyt's fever is abating. You were not taken so severely as Willie, and if you will go to sleep quietly I believe you will only have a light attack.”

“Did those downstairs have black vomit?” asked Clara shuddering.

“Lizzie had it, the others did not. Try not to think about it. Go to sleep.”

“That was what the doctor said about Dr. Hartwell? I could not hear very well, you talked so low. Ah, tell me, Beulah.”

“Only that he is coming home soon -- that was all. Don’t talk anymore.”

Clara closed her eyes, but tears stole from beneath the lashes and coursed rapidly down her glowing cheeks. The lips moved in prayer and her fingers closed tightly over those of her companion. Beulah felt that her continued vigils and exertions were exhausting her. Her limbs trembled when she walked, and there was a dull pain in her head which she could not banish. Her appetite had long since forsaken her, and it was only by the exertion of a determined will that she forced herself to eat. She was warmly attached to Clara, and the dread of losing this friend caused her to suffer keenly. Occasionally she stole away to see the other sufferers, fearing that when Mrs. Hoyt discovered Lizzie’s death the painful intelligence would seal her own fate. It was late at night. She had just returned from one of the hasty visits, and, finding that Hal was as attentive as anyone could be, she threw herself, weary and anxious, into an armchair beside Clara’s bed. The crimson face was turned toward her, the parched lips parted, the panting breath labored and irregular. The victim was delirious, the hazel eyes, inflamed and vacant, rested on Beulah’s countenance, and she murmured:

“He will never know! Oh, no! How should he? The grave will soon shut me in, and I shall see him no more -- no more!” She shuddered and turned away, Beulah leaned her head against the bed, and, as a tear slid down her hand, she thought and said with bitter sorrow:

“I would rather see her the victim of death than have her drag out an aimless, cheerless existence, rendered joyless by this hopeless attachment.”

She wondered whether Dr. Hartwell suspected this love. He was remarkably quick-sighted, and men, as well as women, were very vain and wont to give even undue weight to every circumstance which flattered their self-love. She had long seen this partiality, would not the object of it be quite as penetrating? Clara was very pretty, nay, at times she was beautiful. If conscious of her attachment, could he ever suffer himself to be influenced by it? No, Impossible! There were utter antagonisms of taste and temperament which rendered it very certain that she would not suit him for a companion. Yet she was very lovable. Beulah walked softly across the room and leaned out of the window. An awful silence brooded over the city.

“The moving moon went up the sky,

And nowhere did abide:
Softly she was going up,
And a star or two beside.”

The soft beams struggled to pierce the murky air, dense with smoke from the burning pitch. There was no tread on the pavement -- all was solemn as Death, who held such mad revel in the crowded graveyards. Through the shroud of smoke she could see the rippling waters of the bay, as the faint southern breeze swept its surface. It was a desolation realizing all the horrors of the “Masque of the Red Death”, and as she thought of the mourning hearts in that silent city, of Clara’s danger and her own, Beulah repeated sadly those solemn lines:

“Like clouds that rake the mountain summit,
Or waves that own’ no curbing hand,
Hew fast has brother followed brother,
From sunshine to the sunless land?”

Clasping her hands she added earnestly;
“I thank thee, my Father that the Atlantic rolls between Eugene
and this bosom of destruction’.”

A touch on her shoulder caused her to look around, and her eyes rested upon her guardian. She started, but did not speak, and held out her hand. He looked at her long and searchingly, his lips trembled, and, instead of taking her offered hand, he passed his arm around her and drew her to his bosom. She looked up, with surprise, and, bending his haughty head, he kissed her pale brow for the first time. She felt then that she would like to throw her arms around his neck and tell him how very glad she was to see him again -- how unhappy his sudden departure had made her, but a feeling she could not pause to analyze prevented her from following the dictates of her heart, and, holding her off, so as to scan her countenance, Dr. Hartwell said;

“How worn and haggard you look! Oh, child! Your rash obstinacy has tortured me beyond expression.”

“I have but done my duty, It has been a horrible time, I am glad you have come. You will not let Clara die.”

“Sit down, child, you are trembling from exhaustion.”

He drew up a chair for her, and, taking her wrist in his hand, said, as he examined the slow pulses.

“Was Clara taken violently? How is she?”

“She is delirious, and so much alarmed at her danger that I feel very uneasy about her. Come and see her, perhaps she will know you.” She led the way to the bedside, but there was no recognition in the wild, restless eyes, and as she tossed from side to side, her incoherent muttering made Beulah dread lest she should discover to its object the adoring love which filled her pure heart. She told her guardian what had been prescribed. He offered no suggestion as to the treatment, but gave a potion which she informed him was due. As Clara swallowed the draught, she looked at him, and said eagerly;

“Has he come? Did he say he would see me and save me? Did Dr, Hartwell send me this?”

“She raves.” said Beulah hastily.

A shadow fell upon his face, and, stooping over the pillow, he answered very gently;

“Yes, he has come to save you. He is here.”

She smiled and seemed satisfied for a moment, then moaned and muttered on indistinctly.

“He knows it all? Oh, poor, poor Clara!” thought Beulah, shading her face to prevent his reading what passed in her mind.

“How long have you been sitting up, Beulah?”

She told him.

“It is no wonder you look as if years had suddenly passed over your head! You have a room here, I believe. Go to it, and go to sleep, I will not leave Clara.”

It was astonishing how his presence removed the dread weight of responsibility from her heart. Not until this moment had she felt as if she could possibly sleep.

“I will sleep now, so as to be refreshed for to-morrow and to-morrow night. Here is a couch, I will sleep here, and if Clara grows worse you must wake me.” She crossed the room, threw herself on the couch, and laid her aching head on her arm. Dr. Hartwell placed a pillow under the head, once more his fingers sought her wrist, once more his lips touched her forehead, and as he returned to watch beside Clara and listen to her ravings, Beulah sank into a heavy, dreamless sleep of exhaustion.

She was awakened by the cool pattering of raindrops, which beat through the shutters and fell upon her face. She sprang up with a thrill of delight and looked out. A leaden sky lowered over the city, and as the torrents came down in whitening sheets, the thunder rolled continuously overhead, and trailing wreaths of smoke from the dying fires dropped like banners over the roofs of the houses. Not the

shower which gathered and fell around Seagirt Carmel was more gratefully received.

"Thank God, it rains!" cried Beulah, and, turning toward Clara, she saw with pain that the sufferer was all unconscious of the tardy blessing. She kissed the hot, dry brow, but no token or recognition greeted her anxious gaze. The fever was at its height, the delicate features were strangely sharpened and distorted. Save the sound of her labored breathing, the room was silent, and sinking on her knees, Beulah prayed earnestly that the gentle sufferer might be spared. As she rose her guardian entered, and she started at the haggard, wasted, harassed look of the noble face, which she had not observed before. He bent down and coaxed Clara to take a spoonful of medicine and Beulah, asked earnestly:

"Have you been ill, sir?"

"No."

He did not even glance at her. The affectionate cordiality of the hour of meeting had utterly vanished. He looked as cold, stern, and impenetrable as some half-buried sphinx of the desert.

"Have you seen the others this morning?" said she, making a strong effort to conceal the chagrin this revulsion of feeling occasioned.

"Yes, Mrs. Hoyt will get well."

"Does she know of her child's death?"

"Yes."

"You are not going, surely." she continued, as he took his hat and glanced at his watch.

"I am needed elsewhere. Only nursing can new avail here. You know very well what is requisite. Either Dr. Asbury or I will be here again to-night to sit up with this gentle girl."

"You need neither of you come to sit up with her. I will do that myself I shall not sleep another moment until I know she is better."

"Very well." He left the room immediately.

"How he cases his volcanic nature in ice!" thought Beulah, sinking into the armchair. "Last night he seemed so kind, so cordial, so much my friend and guardian! Today there is a mighty barrier, as though he stood on some towering crag and talked to me across an infinite gulf! Well, well, even an Arctic night passes away, and I can afford to wait until his humor changes."

For many hours the rain fell unceasingly, but toward sunset the pall of clouds was scourged on by a brisk western breeze, and the clear canopy of heaven, not fiery as for days past, but cool and blue, bent

serenely over the wet earth. The slanting rays of the swiftly sinking sun flashed through dripping boughs, creating myriads of diamond sprays, and over the sparkling waters of the bay sprang a brilliant bow, arching superbly along the eastern horizon, where a bank of clouds still lay. Verily, it seemed a new covenant that the destroying demon should no longer desolate the beautiful city, and to many an anxious, foreboding heart that glorious rainbow gave back hope and faith. A cool, quiet twilight followed. Beulah knew that hearses still bore the dead to their silent chambers, she could hear the rumbling, the melancholy solemn sound of the wheels, but firm trust reigned in her heart and with Clara's hand in hers, she felt an intuitive assurance that the loved one would not yet be summoned from her earthly field of action. The sick in the other part of the house were much better, and, though one of the gentleman boarders had been taken since morning, she lighted the lamp and stole about the room with a calmer, happier spirit than she had known for many days. She fancied that her charge breathed more easily, and the wild stare of the inflamed eyes was concealed under the long lashes which lay on the cheeks. The sufferer slept, and the watcher augured favorably. About nine o'clock she heard steps on the stairs and soon after Drs. Asbury and Hartwell entered together. There was little to be told, and less to be advised, and while the latter attentively examined the pulse and looked down at the altered countenance, stamped with the signet of the dread disease, the former took Beulah's hand in both his, and said kindly:

"How do you do, my little heroine? By Nebros! You are worth your weight in medical treatises. How are you, little one?"

"Quite well, thank you, sir, and I dare say I am much more able to sit up with the sick than you, who have had no respite whatever. Don't stand up when you must be so weary, take this easy-chair." Holding his hand firmly, she drew him down to it. There had always been a fatherly tenderness in his manner toward her, which visiting at her guardian's, and she regarded him with reverence and affection. Though often blunt, he never chilled nor repelled her, as his partner so often did, and now she stood beside him, still holding one of his hands. He smoothed back the gray hair from his furrowed brow and with a twinkle in his blue eye, said:

"How much will you take for your services? I want to engage you to teach my madcap daughters a little quiet bravery and uncomplaining endurance."

“I have none of the Shylock in my composition, only give me a few kind words and I shall be satisfied. Now, once for all, Dr. Asbury, if you treat me to any more barefaced flattery of this sort, I nurse no more of your patients.”

Dr. Hartwell here directed his partner’s attention to Clara, and, thoroughly provoked at the pertinacity with which he avoided noticing her, she seized the brief opportunity to visit Mrs. Hoyt and little Willie. The mother welcomed her with a silent grasp of the hand and a gush of tears. But this was no time for acknowledgements, and Beulah strove, by a few encouraging remarks, to cheer the bereaved parent and interest Willie, who, like all other children under such circumstances, had grown fretful. She shook up their pillows, iced a fresh pitcher of water for them, and, promising to run down and see them often, now that Hal was forced to give his attention to the last victim, she noiselessly stole back to Clara’s room. Dr. Hartwell was walking up and down the floor, and his companion sat just where she had left him. He rose as she entered, and, putting on his hat, said kindly:

“Are you able to sit up with Miss Sanders to-night? If not, say so candidly.”

“I am able and determined to do so.”

“Very well. After to-morrow it will not be needed.”

“What do you mean?” cried Beulah, clutching his arm.

“Don’t look so savage, child. She will either be convalescent or beyond all aid. I hope and believe the former. Watch her closely until I see you again, Good-night, dear child.” He stepped to the door, and, with a slight inclination of his head, Dr. Hartwell followed him.

It was a vigil Beulah never forgot. The night seemed interminable, as if the car of time were driven backwards, and she longed inexpressibly for the dawning of day. Four o’clock came at last, silence brooded over the town. The western breeze had sung itself to rest, and there was a solemn hush, as though all nature stood still to watch the struggle between dusky Azrael and a human soul. Clara slept. The distant stars looked down encouragingly from their homes of blue, and once more the lonely orphan beat her knee in supplication before the throne of Jehovah. But a cloud seemed hovering between her heart and the presence-chamber of Deity. In vain she prayed, and tried to believe that life would be spared in answer to her petitions. Faith died in her soul, and she sat with her eyes riveted upon the face of her friend. The flush of consuming fever paled, the pulse was slow and feeble, and by the gray light of day Beulah saw that the face was

strangely changed. For several hours longer she maintained her watch, still the doctors did not come, and while she sat with Clara's fingers clasped in hers, the brown eyes opened, and looked dreamily at her. She leaned over and, kissing the wan cheek, asked eagerly:

"How do you feel, darling?"

"Perfectly weak and helpless. How long have I been sick?"

"Only a few days. You are a great deal better now." She tenderly smoothed the silky hair that clustered in disorder round the face. Clara seemed perplexed, she thought for a moment, and said feebly;

"Have I been very ill?"

"Well -- yes. You have been right sick. Had some fever, but it has left you."

Clara mused again. Memory came back slowly, and at length she asked:

"Did they all die?"

"Did who die?"

"All those downstairs." She shuddered violently.

"Oh, No! Mrs. Hoyt and Willie are almost well. Try to go to sleep again Clara."

Several minutes glided by, the eyes closed, and, clasping Beulah's fingers tightly, she asked again:

"Have I had any physician?"

"Yes. I thought it would do no harm to have Dr. Asbury see you." answered Beulah carelessly. She saw an expression of disappointment pass sadly over the girl's countenance, and thinking it might be as well to satisfy her at once, she continued, as if speaking on indifferent topics:

"Dr. Hartwell came home since you were taken sick, and called to see you two or three time."

A faint glow tinged the sallow cheek, and while a tremor crept over her lips she said almost inaudibly:

"When will he come again?"

"Before long, I dare say. Indeed, there is his step now. Dr. Asbury is with him."

She had not time to say more, for they came in immediately, and, with a species of pity she noted the smile of pleasure which curved Clara's mouth as her guardian bent down and spoke to her. While he took her thin hand and fixed his eyes on her face, Dr. Asbury looked over his shoulder, and said bluntly:

“Hurrah for you! All right again, as I thought you would be! Does your head ache at all this morning? Feel like eating half a dozen partridges?”

“She is not deaf.” said Dr. Hartwell rather shortly.

“I am not sure of that, she has been to all my questions lately. I must see about Carter, below. Beulah, child, you look the worse for your apprenticeship to our profession.”

“So do you, sir.” said she, smiling as her eyes wandered over his grim visage.

“You may well say that, child, I snatched about two hours’ sleep this morning, and when I awoke I felt very much like Coleridge’s unlucky sailor:

“‘I moved, and could not feel my limbs,
I was so light -- almost,
I thought that I had died in sleep,
And was a blessed ghost.’”

He hurried away to another part of the house, and Beulah went into her own apartment to arrange her hair, which she felt must need attention sadly.

Looking into the glass she could not forbear smiling at the face which looked back at her, it was so thin and ghastly, even the lips were colorless and the large eyes sunken. She unbound her hair, and had only shaken it fully out, when a knock at her door called her from the glass. She tossed her hair all back, and it hung like an inky veil almost to the floor, as she opened the door and confronted her guardian.

“Here is some medicine which must be mixed in a tumbler of water. I want a tablespoonful given every hour, unless Clara is asleep. Keep everything quiet.”

“Is that all?” said Beulah coolly.

“That is all.” He walked off, and she brushed and twisted up her hair, wondering how long he meant to keep up that freezing manner. It accorded very well with his treatment before his departure for the North, and she sighed as she recalled the brief hour of cordiality which followed his return. She began to perceive that this was the way they were to meet in the future, she had displeased him, and he intended that she should feel it. Tears gathered in her eyes, and she drove them scornfully back, and exclaimed indignantly:

“He wants to rule me with a rod of iron, because I am indebted to him for an education and support for several years. As I hope for a

peaceful rest hereafter, I will repay him every cent he has expended for music, drawing and clothing! I will economize until every picayune is returned."

The purse had not been touched, and, hastily counting the contents to see that all the bills were there, she relocked the drawer and returned to the sickroom with anything but a calm face. Clara seemed to be asleep, and, picking up a book, Beulah began to read. A sickroom is always monotonous and dreary, and long confinement had rendered Beulah restless and uncomfortable. Her limbs ached -- so did her head, and continued loss of sleep made her nervous to an unusual degree. She longed to open her melodeon and play; this would have quieted her, but of course was not to be thought of, with four invalids in the house and death on almost every square in the city. She was no longer unhappy about Clara, for there was little doubt that, with care, she would soon be well, and thus drearily the hours wore on. Finally Clara evinced a disposition to talk. Her nurse discouraged it, with exceedingly brief replies, intimating that she would improve her condition by going to sleep. Toward evening Clara seemed much refreshed by a long nap, and took some food which had been prepared for her.

"The sickness is abating, is it not, Beulah?"

"Yes, very perceptibly; but more from lack of fresh victims than anything else. I hope we shall have a white frost soon."

"It has been very horrible! I shudder when I think of it." said Clara.

"Then don't think of it." answered her companion.

"Oh, how can I help it? I did not expect to live through it. I was sure I should die when that chill came on. You have saved me, dear Beulah!" Tears glistened in her soft eyes.

"No, God saved you."

"Through your instrumentality." replied Clara, raising her friend's hand to her lips.

"Don't talk any more, the doctor expressly enjoined quiet for you."

"I am glad to owe my recovery to him also. How noble and good he is -- how superior to everybody else!" murmured the sick girl.

Beulah's lips became singularly compact, but she offered no comment. She walked up and down the room, although so worn out that she could scarcely keep herself erect. When the doctor came she escaped unobserved to her room, hastily put on her bonnet, and ran down the steps for a short walk. It was perfect Elysium to get out once more under the pure sky and breathe the air, as it swept over the bay, cool, sweet, and invigorating. The streets were still quiet, but

hearses and carts, filled with coffins, no longer greeted her on every side, and she walked for several squares. The sun went down and, too weary to extend her ramble, she slowly retraced her steps. The buggy no longer stood at the door, and after seeing Mrs. Hoyt and trying to chat pleasantly, she crept back to Clara.

“Where have you been?” asked the latter.

“To get a breath of fresh air and see the sun set.”

“Dr. Hartwell asked for you. I did not know what had become of you.”

“How do you feel tonight?” said Beulah, laying her hand softly on Clara’s forehead.

“Better, but very weak. You have no idea how feeble I am. Beulah, I want to know whether --.”

“You were told to keep quiet, so don’t ask any questions, for I will not answer one.”

“You are not to sit up tonight, the doctor said I-would not require it.

“Let the doctor go back to the North and theorize in his medical conventions! I shall sleep here by your bed, on this couch. If you feel worse, call me. Now, good-night, and don’t open your lips again.” she drew the couch close to the bed, and, shading the lamp, threw her weary frame down to rest, ere long she slept. The pestilential storm had spent its fury, daily the number of deaths diminished, gradually the pall of silence and desolation which had hung over the city vanished. The streets resumed their usual busy aspect, and the hum of life went forward once more. At length fugitive families ventured home again, and though bands of crape, grim badges of bereavement, met the eye on all sides, all rejoiced that Death had removed his court that his hideous carnival was over. Clara regained her strength very slowly, and when well enough to quit her room, walked with the slow, uncertain steps of feebleness.

ST. ELMO MURRAY PROPOSES MARRIAGE

Excerpt from “St. Elmo” 1867

By Augusta Evans Wilson

The church was remarkably handsome and tasteful, and certainly justified the pride with which the villagers exhibited it to all strangers.

The massive mahogany pew-doors were elaborately carved and surmounted by small crosses, the tall, arched windows were of superb stained glass, representing the twelve apostles, the floor and balustrade of the altar, and the grand, Gothic pillared pulpit, were all of the purest white marble, and the capitals, of the airy, elegant columns of the same material, that supported the organ gallery, were ornamented with a rich grape-leaf molding, while the large window behind a above the pulpit contained a figure of Christ bearing his cross -- a noble copy of the great painting of Solario at Berlin.

As the afternoon sun shone on the glass, a floor of ruby light fell from the garments of Jesus upon the glittering marble beneath, and the nimbus that radiated around the crown of thorns caught a glory that was dazzling.

With a feeling of adoration that no language could adequately express, Edna had watched and studied this costly painted window for five long years, and found a marvelous fascination in the pallid face stained with purplish blood drops, in the parted lips quivering with human pain and anguish of spirit, in the unfathomably divine eyes that pierced the veil and rested upon the Father's face. Not all the sermons of Bossuet, or Chalmers, or Jeremy Taylor, or Melville, had power to stir the great deeps of her soul like one glance at that pale, thorn-crowned Christ, who looked in voiceless woe and sublime resignation over the world he was dying to redeem!

To-day she gazed up at the picture of Emmanuel, till her eyes grew dim with tears, and she leaned her head against the mahogany railing and murmured sadly:

"And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me! Strengthen me, O my Saviour! So that I neither faint nor stagger under mine!"

The echo of her words died away among the arches of the roof, and all was still in the sanctuary. The swayings of the trees outside of the windows threw now a golden shimmer, then a violet shadow over the gleaming altar pavement, and the sun sank lower, and the nimbus faded, and the wan Christ looked ghastly and toil-spent.

"Edna! My darling! My darling!"

The pleading cry, the tremulous, tender voice so full of pathos, rang startlingly through the silent church, and the orphan sprang up and saw Mr. Murray standing at her side, with his arms extended toward her, and a glow on his face, and a look in his eyes which she had never seen there before.

She drew back a few steps and gazed wonderingly at him, but he followed, threw his arm about her, and, despite her resistance, strained her to his heart.

“Did you believe that I would let you go? Did you dream that I would see my darling leave me, and go out into the world to be buffeted and sorely tried, to struggle with poverty -- an to suffer alone? O silly child! I would part with my own life sooner than give you up! Of what value would it be without you, my pearl, my sole hope, my only love, my own pure Edna --.”

“Such language you have no right to utter, and I none to hear! It is dishonorable in you and insulting to me. Gertrude’s lover cannot, and shall not, address such words to me. Unwind your arms instantly! Let me go!”

She struggled hard to free herself, but his clasp tightened, and as he pressed her face against his bosom, he threw his head back and laughed:

“‘Gertrude’s lover!’ knowing my history, how could you believe that possible? Am I, think you, so meek and forgiving a spirit as to turn and kiss the hand that smote me? Gertrude’s lover! Ha! Ha! Your jealousy blinds you, my --.”

“I know nothing of your history, I have never asked, I have never been told one word! But I am not blind, I know that you love her, and I know too, that she fully reciprocates your affection. If you do not wish me to despise you utterly, leave me at once.”

He laughed again, and put his lips to her ear, saying softly, tenderly—ah! How tenderly;

“Upon my honor as a gentleman, I solemnly swear that I love but one woman, that I love her as no other woman ever was loved, with a love that passes all language, a love that is the only light and hope of a wrecked, cursed, unutterably miserable life, and that idol which I have set up in the lonely gray ruins of my heart is Edna Earl!”

“I do-not believe you! You have no honor! With the touch of Gertrude’s lips and arms still on yours, you come to me and dare to perjure yourself! O Mr. Murray! Mr. Murray! I did not believe you capable of such despicable dissimulation! In the catalogue of your sins, I never counted deceit. I thought you too proud to play the hypocrite. If you could realize how I loathe and abhor you, you would get out of my sight! You would not waste time in words that sink you deeper and deeper in shameful duplicity. Poor Gertrude, How entirely you mistake your lover’s character! How your love will change to scorn and detestation!”

In vain she endeavored to wrench away his arm, a band of steel would have been as flexible, but St. Elmo's voice hardened, and Edna felt his heart throb fiercely against her cheek as he answered:

"When you are my wife you will repent your rash words, and blush at the remembrance of having told your husband that he was devoid of honor. You are piqued and jealous, just as I intended you should be, but, darling, I am not a patient man, and it frets me to feel you struggling so desperately in the arms that henceforth will always enfold you. Be quiet and hear me, for I have much to tell you. Don't turn your face away from mine your lips belong to me. I never kissed Gertrude in my life, and so help me God, I never Will! Hear --."

"No! I will hear nothing! Your touch is profanation. I would sooner go down to my grave, out there in the church-yard, under the granite slabs, than to become the wife of a man so unprincipled. I am neither piqued nor jealous, for your affairs cannot affect my life, I am only astonished and mortified and grieved. I would sooner feel the coil of a serpent around my waist than your arms."

Instantly they fell away. He crossed them on his chest, and his voice sank to a husky whisper, as the wind hushes itself just before the storm breaks.

"Edna, God is my witness that I am not deceiving you, that my words come from the great troubled depths of a wretched heart. You said you know nothing of my history. I find it more difficult to believe you than you to credit my declaration. Answer one question, has not your pastor taught you to distrust me? Can it be possible that no hint of the past has fallen from his lips?"

"Not one unkind word, not one syllable of your history has he uttered. I know no more of your past than if it were buried in mid-ocean."

Mr. Murray placed her in one of the cushioned chairs designed for the use of the choir and leaning back against the railing of the gallery, fixed 'his eyes on Edna's face.

"Then it is not surprising that you distrust me, for you know not my provocation. Edna, will you be patient? Will you go back with me over the scorched and blackened track of an accursed and sinful life? Ha! It is a hideous waste I am inviting you to traverse! Will you?"

"I will hear you, Mr. Murray, but nothing you can say will exculpate your duplicity to Gertrude, and --."

"D--n Gertrude! I ask you to listen, and suspend your judgment till you know the circumstances."

He covered his eyes with his hand, and in the brief silence she heard the ticking of his watch.

“Edna, I roll away the stone from the charnel-house of the past, and call forth the Lazarus of my buried youth, my hopes, my faith in God, my trust in human nature, my charity, my slaughtered manhood! My Lazarus has tenanted the grave for almost twenty years, and comes forth, at my bidding, a grinning skeleton. You may or may not know that my father Paul Murray, died when I was an infant, leaving my mother the sole guardian of my property and person. I grew up at La Bocage under the training of Mr. Hammond, my tutor, and my only associate, my companion from earliest recollection, was his son Murray, who was two years my senior, and named for my father. The hold which that boy took upon my affection was wonderful, inexplicable! He wound me around his finger as you wind the silken threads with which you embroider. We studied, read, played together; I was never contented out of his sight, never satisfied until I saw him liberally supplied with everything that gave me pleasure. I believe I was very precocious, and made extraordinary strides in the path of learning, at all events, at sixteen, I was considered a remarkable boy. Mr. Hammond had six children and as his salary was, rather meager, I insisted on paying his son’s expenses as well as my own when I went to Yale. I could not bear that my Damon, my Jonathan, should be out of my sight; I must have my idol always with me. His father was educating him for the ministry, and he had already commenced the study of theology, but, No! I must have him with me at Yale, and so to Yale we went. I had fancied myself a Christian, had joined church, was zealous and faithful in all my religious duties. In a fit of pious enthusiasm I planned this church -- - ordered it built. The cost was enormous, and my mother objected, but I intended it as a shrine for the ‘apple of my eye’, and where he was concerned, what mattered the expenditure of thousands? Was not my fortune just as much at his disposal as at mine? I looked forward with fond pride to the time when I should see my idol -- Murray Hammond -- standing in yonder shining pulpit, Ha: at this instant it is filled with a hideous spectral I see him there! His form and features mocking me, daring me to forget! Handsome as Apollo! Treacherous as Apollyon!”

He paused, pointing to-the pure marble pile where a violet flame seemed flickering, and then with a groan bowed his head upon the railing. When, he spoke again, his face wore an ashy hue, and his stern mouth was unsteady.

“Hallowed days of my blessed boyhood! Ah! They rise before me now, like holy burning stars, breaking out in a stormy howling night, making the blackness blacker still! My short happy springtime of life! So full of noble aspirations, of glowing hopes, of philanthropic schemes, of all charitable, projects, I would do so much with my money! My heart was brimming with generous impulses, with warm sympathy and care for my fellow-creatures. Every needy sufferer should find relief at my hands, as long as I possessed a dollar or a crust! As I look back now at that dead self, and remember all that I was, all the purity of my life, the nobility of my character, the tenderness of my heart -- I do not wonder that people who knew me then, predicted that I would prove an honor, a blessing to my race! Mark you: That was St. Elmo Murray -- as nature fashioned him, before man spoiled God's handiwork, Back! Back to your shroud and sepulchre, O Lazarus of my youth, and when I am called to the final judgment, rise for me, stand in my place, and confront those who slaughtered you! ----- My affection for my chum, Murray, increased as I grew up to manhood, and there was not a dream of my brain, a hope of my heart which was not confided to him. I revered, I trusted, I almost -- nay I quite worshipped him! When I was only eighteen, I began to love his cousin, whose father was pastor of a church in New-Haven, and whose mother was Mr. Hammond's sister. You have seen her. She is beautiful even now, and you can imagine how lovely Agnes Hunt was in her girlhood. She was the belle the pet of the students, and before I had known her a month, I was her accepted lover, I loved her with all the devotion of my chivalric, ardent, boyish nature, and for me she professed the most profound attachment. Her parents favored our wishes for an early marriage, but my mother refused to sanction such an idea until I completed my education, and visited the old world. I was an obedient, affectionate son then, and yielded respectfully, but as the vacation approached, I prepared to come home, hoping to prevail on mother to consent to my being married just before we sailed for Europe the ensuing year after I graduated. Murray was my confidant and adviser. In his sympathizing ears I poured all my fond hopes and he insisted that I ought to take my lovely bride with me, it would be cruel to leave her so long, and besides, he was so impatient for the happy day when he should call me cousin. He declined coming home, on the plea of desiring to prosecute his theological studies with his uncle, Mr. Hunt. Well do I recollect the parting between us. I had left Agnes in tears -- inconsolable because of my departure, and I flew to Murray for words

of consolation. When I bade him good-bye my eyes were full of tears, and as he passed his arm around my shoulders, I whispered."

"Murray, take care of my angel. Agnes for me! Watch over and comfort her while I am away!" Alas! as I stand here to-day, I hear again ringing over the ruins of the past twenty years, his sweet loving musical tones answering:

"My dear boy, trust her to my care. St. Elmo, for your dear sake I will steal time from my books to cheer her while you are absent. But hurry back, for you know I find black-letter more attractive than blue eyes. God bless you my precious friend. Write to me constantly."

"Since then, I always shudder involuntarily when I hear parting friends bless each other -- for well; well do I know the stinging curse coiled up in those smooth liquid words! I came home and busied myself in the erection of this church, in plans for Murray's advancement in life, as well as my own. My importunity prevailed over my mother's sensible objections, and she finally consented that I should take my bride to Europe, while I informed Mr. Hammond that I wished Murray to accompany us, that I would gladly pay his traveling expenses -- I was so anxious for him to see the East, especially Palestine. Full of happy hopes, I hurried back earlier than I had intended, and reached new Haven very unexpectedly. The night was bright with-moonshine, my heart was bright with hope, and too eager to see Agnes, whose letters had breathed the most tender solicitude and attachment, I rushed up the steps, and was told that she was walking about the flower-garden. Down the path I hurried, and stopped as I heard her silvery laugh blended with Murray's, then my name was pronounced in tones that almost petrified me. Under a large apple tree in the parsonage-garden they sat on a wooden bench, and only the tendrils and branches of an Isabella grape-vine divided us. I stood there, grasping the vine -- looking through the leaves at the two whom I had so idolized, and saw her beautiful golden head flashing in the moonlight as she rested it on her cousin's breast, heard and saw their kisses, heard -- what wrecked, blasted me! I heard myself ridiculed -- sneered at -- maligned, heard that I was to be a mere puppet -- a cat's paw, that I was a doting, silly fool easily hoodwinked, that she found it difficult, almost impossible, to endure my caresses that she shuddered in my arms, and flew for happiness to his! I heard that from the beginning I had been duped, that they had always loved each other -- always would, but that poverty stubbornly barred their marriage -- and she must be sacrificed to secure my princely fortune for the use of both! All that

was uttered I cannot now recapitulate, but it is carefully embalmed, and lies in the little Taj Mahal, among other cherished souvenirs of my precious friendships! While I stood there, I was transformed, the soul of St. Elmo seemed to pass away -- a fiend took possession of me, love died, hope with it and an insatiable thirst for vengeance set my blood on fire. During those ten minutes my whole nature was warped, distorted, my life blasted -- mutilated -- deformed. The loss of Agnes' love I could have borne, nay -- fool that I was -- I think my quondam generous affection for Murray would have made me relinquish her almost resignedly, if his happiness had demanded the sacrifice on my part. If he had come to me frankly and acknowledged all, my insane idolatry would have made me place her hand in his, and remove the barrier of poverty, and the assurance that I had secured his life-long happiness would have sufficed for mine. Oh! The height and depth and marvelous strength of my love for that man passes comprehension! But their scorn, their sneers at my weak credulity, their bitter ridicule of my awkward, overgrown boyishness, stung me to desperation. I wondered if I were insane, or dreaming, or the victim of some horrible delusion. My veins ran fire as I listened to the tangling of her silvery voice with the rich melody of his, and I turned and left the garden, and walked back toward the town, the moon was full, but I staggered and groped my way like one blind to the college building I knew where a pair of pistols was kept by one of the students, and possessing myself of them, I wandered out on the road leading to the parsonage. I was aware that Murray intended coming into the town, and at last I reeled into a shaded spot near the road, and waited for him. Oh! The mocking glory of that cloudless night! To this day, I hate the cold glitter of the stars, and the golden sheen of midnight moons! For the first time in my life, I cursed the world and all it held, cursed the contented cricket singing in the grass at my feet, cursed the blood in my arteries that beat so thick and fast, I could not listen for the footsteps I was waiting for. At last I heard him whistling a favorite tune, which all our lives we have whistled together, as we hunted through the woods around Le Bocage, and, as the familiar sound of 'The Braes of Balquither' drew nearer and nearer, I sprang up with a cry that must have rung on the night air like the yell of some beast of prey. Of all that passed I only know that I cursed and insulted and maddened him till he accepted the pistol, which I thrust into his hand. We moved ten paces apart -- and a couple of students who happened, accidentally, to pass along the road and heard our altercation, stopped at our request, gave the word of command, and

we fired simultaneously. The ball entered Murray's heart, and he fell dead without a word. I was severely wounded in the chest, and now I wear the here in my side. Ah! A precious in memoriam of murdered confidence!"

Until now Edna had listened breathlessly, with her eyes upon his, but herd a groan escaped her, and she shuddered violently, and hid her face in her hands.

Mr. Murray came nearer, stood close to her, and hurried on.

"My last memory of my old idol is as he lay with his handsome, treacherous face turned up to the moon, and the hair which Agnes had been fingering dabbled with dew, and the blood that oozed down his side. When I-recovered my consciousness Murray Hammond had been three weeks in his grave. As soon as I was able to travel, my mother took me to Europe, and for five years we lived in Paris, Naples, or wandered to and fro. Then she came home, and I plunged into the heart of Asia. After two years I returned to Paris, and gave myself up to every species of dissipation. I drank, gambled, and my midnight carousals would sicken your soul, were I to paint all their hideousness's. You read in the Scriptures of persons possessed of devils? A savage, mocking, tearing devil held me in bondage. I sold myself to my Mephistopheles, on condition that my revenge might be complete. I hated the whole world with an intolerable murderous hate, and to mock and make my race suffer was the only real pleasure I found, the very name, the bare mention of religion maddened me. A minister's daughter, a minister's son, a minister himself, had withered my young life, and I blasphemously derided all holy things. O Edna, my darling! It is impossible to paint all the awful wretchedness of that period, when I walked in the world seeking victims and finding many. Verily;"

'There's not a crime

But takes its proper change out still in crime,

If once rung on the counter of this world,

Let sinners look to it.'

"Ah! Upon how many lovely women have I visited Agnes' sin of hypocrisy! Into how many ears have I poured tender words, until fair hands were as good as offered to em, and I turned their love to mockery! I hated and despised all womanhood, and even in Paris I became celebrated as a heartless trifler with the affections I won and trampled under my feet, whenever a brilliant and beautiful woman crossed my path, I attached myself to her train of admirers, until I

made her acknowledge my power and give public and unmistakable manifestation of her preference for me: then I left her -- a target for the laughter of her circle. It was not vanity, oh! No, no! That springs from self-love, and I had none. It was hate of everything human, especially of everything feminine. One of the fairest faces that ever brightened the haunts of fashion -- a queenly, elegant girl -- the pet of her family and of society, now wears serge garments and a black veil, and is immured in an Italian convent, because I entirely won her heart, and when she waited for me to declare my affection and ask her to become my wife, I quitted her side for that of another belle, and never visited her again. On the day when she bid adieu to the world, I was among the spectators, and as her mournful but lovely eyes sought mine, I laughed, and gloried in the desolation I had wrought. Sick of. Europe, I came home.....”

“And to a part I come where no light shines.”

“My tempting fiend pointed to one whose suffering would atone for much of my misery. Edna, I withhold nothing, there is much I might conceal, but I scorn to do so. During one terrible fatal winter, scarlet-fever had deprived Mr. Hammond of four children, leaving him an only daughter -- Annie -- the image of her brother Murray. Her health was feeble, consumption was stretching its skeleton hands toward her, and her father watched her as a gardener tends his pet -- choice -- delicate exotic. She was about sixteen, very pretty, very attractive. After Murray’s death, I never spoke to Mr. Hammond, never crossed his path, but I met his daughter without his knowledge, and finally I made her confess her love for me. I offered her my hand, she accepted it. A day was appointed for an elopement and marriage, the hour came, she left the parsonage, but I did not meet her here on the steps of this church as I had promised, and she received a note, full of scorn and derision, explaining the revengeful motives that had actuated me. Two hours later, her father found her insensible on the steps, and the marble was dripping with a hemorrhage of blood from her lungs. The dark stain is still there, you must have noticed it. I never saw her again. She kept to her room from that day, and died three months after. When on her death-bed she sent for me, but I refused to obey that summons. As I stand here, I see through the window the gray, granite vault overgrown with ivy, and the marble slab where sleep in untimely death Murray and Annie Hammond, the victims of my insatiable revenge. Do you wonder that I doubted you when you said that afflicted father, Allan Hammond, had never uttered one unkind word about me?”

Mr. Murray pointed to a quiet corner of the church-yard but Edna did not lift her face, and he heard the half-smothered, shuddering moan that struggled up as she listened to him.

He put his hand on hers, but she shivered and shrunk away from him.

“Years passed, I grew more and more savage, the very power of love seems to have died out in my nature. My mother endeavored to drag me into society, but I was surfeited, sick of the world -- sick of my own excesses, and gradually I became a recluse, a surly misanthrope. How often have I laughed bitterly over these words of Mill’s: ‘yet nothing is more certain than that improvement in human affairs is wholly the work of uncontented characters!’ My indescribable, my tormenting discontent, daily belied his aphorism. My mother is a woman of stern character and sincerity of purpose, but she is worldly and ambitious and inordinately proud, and for her religion I had lost all respect. Again I went abroad, solely to kill time, was absent two years and came back. I had ransacked the world, and was disgusted, hopeless, prematurely old. A week after my return I was attacked ‘by a very malignant fever, and my life was despaired of, but I exulted in the thought that at last I should find oblivion. I refused all remedies and set at defiance all medical advice, hoping to hasten the end, but death cheated me. I rose from my bed of sickness, cursing the mockery, realizing that indeed:

.....The good die first,
And they whose hearts-are dry as summer dust
burn to the socket.’

“Some months after my recovery, while I was out on a camp-hunt, you were brought to Le Bocage, and the sight of you made me more vindictive than ever I believed you selfishly designing, and I could not bear that you should remain under the same roof with me. I hated children as I hated men and women. But that day when you defied me in the park, and told me that I was sinful and cruel, I began to notice you closely. I weighed your words, watched you when you little dreamed I was present, and often concealed myself in order to listen to your conversation. I saw in your character traits that annoyed me, because they were noble, and unlike what I had believed all womanhood or girlhood to be. I was aware that you dreaded and disliked me, I saw that very clearly, every time I had occasion to speak to you. How it all came to pass I cannot tell -- I know not -- and it has always been a mystery even to me, but Edna, after the long lapse of

years of sin and reckless dissipation, my heart stirred and turned to you, child though you were, and a strange, strange, invincible love for you sprang from the bitter ashes of a dead affection for Agnes Hunt. I wondered at myself, I sneered at my idiotcy, I cursed my mad folly, and tried to believe you as unprincipled as I had found others, but the singular fascination strengthened day by day. Finally I determined to tempt you, hoping your duplicity and deceit would wake me from the second dream into which I feared there was danger of my falling. Thinking that at your age curiosity was the strongest emotion, I carefully arranged the interior of the Taj Mahal, so that it would be impossible for you to open it without being discovered, and putting the key in your hands, I went abroad. I wanted to satisfy myself that you were unworthy and believed that you would betray the trust. For four years I wandered, restless, impatient, scorning myself more and more because I could not forget your sweet, pure, haunting face, because, despite my jeers, I knew that I loved you. At last I wrote to my mother from Egypt that I would go to Central Persia, and so I intended. But one night as I sat alone, smoking amid the ruins of the Propylon at Philae, a vision of Le Bocage rose before me, and your dear face looked at me from the lotus-crowned columns of the ancient temple. I forgot the hate I bore all mankind, I forgot everything but you, your pure, calm, magnificent eyes, and the longing to see you, my darling -- the yearning to look into your-eyes once more, took possession of me, I sat there till the great, golden dawn of the desert fell upon, and but far down in the abysses of my distorted nature hope had kindled a little feeble, flickering ray. I tried to smother it, but its flame clung to some crevice in my heart, and would not be crushed. While I debated, a pigeon that dwelt somewhere in the crumbling temple fluttered down at my feet, cooed softly, looked in my face, then perched on a mutilated, red granite sphinx immediately in front of me, and after a moment rose, circled above me in the pure, rainless air and flew westward. I accepted it as an omen, and started to America instead of to Persia. On the night of the Tenth of December, four years after I bade you good-by at the park gate, I was again at Le Bocage -- Silently and undiscovered I stole into my own house, and secreted myself behind the curtains in the library. I had been there one hour before you and Gordon Leigh came in to examine the Targum. O Edna! how little you dreamed of the eager, hungry eyes that watched you, during that hour that you two sat there bending over the same book I became thoroughly convinced that while I loved you as I never expected to love any one, Gordon

loved you also, and intended if possible to make you his wife. I contrasted my worn, haggard face and grayish locks with his, so full of manly hope and youthful beauty, and I could not doubt that any girl would prefer him to me. Edna, my retribution began then. I felt that my devil was mocking me, as I had long mocked others, and made me love you when it was impossible to win you. Then and there I was tempted to spring upon and throttle you both before he triumphantly called you his. At last Leigh left, and I escaped to my own rooms. I was pacing the floor when I heard you cross the rotunda, and saw the glimmer of the light you carried. Hoping to see you open that little Taj, I crawled behind the sarcophagus that holds my two mummies, crouched close to the floor, and peeped at you across the gilded byssus that covered them. My eyes, I have often been told, possess magnetic or mesmeric power. At all events, you felt my eager gaze, you were restless, and searched the room to discover whence that feeling of a human presence came. Darling, were you superstitious, that you avoided looking into the dark corner where the mummies lay? Presently you stopped in front of the little tomb, and swept away the spider web, and took the key from your pocket, and as you put it into the lock I almost shouted aloud in my savage triumph! I absolutely panted to find Leigh's future wife as unworthy of confidence as I believed the remainder of her sex. But you did not open it. You merely drove away the spider and rubbed the marble clean with your handkerchief, and held the key between your fingers. Then my heart seemed to stand still, as I watched the light streaming over your beautiful, holy face and warm crimson dress, and when you put the key in your pocket and turned away, my groan almost betrayed me. I had taken out my watch to see the hour, and in my suspense I clutched it so tightly that the gold case and the crystal within all crushed in my hand. You heard the tinkling sound and wondered whence it came, and when you had locked the door and gone, I raised one of the windows and swung myself down to the terrace do you remember that night?"

"Yes, Mr. Murray."

Her voice was tremulous and almost inaudible.

"I had business in Tennessee, no matter now, what, or where, and I went on that night. After a week I returned, that afternoon when I found you reading in my sitting-room. Still I was skeptical, and not until I opened the tomb, was I convinced that you had not betrayed the trust which you supposed I placed in you. Then as you stood beside me, in all your noble purity and touching girlish beauty -- as

you looked up half reproachfully, half defiantly at me -- it cost me a terrible effort to master myself -- to abstain from clasping you to my heart, and telling you all that you were to me. Oh! How I longed to take you in my arms, and feed my poor famished heart with one touch of your lips! I dared not look at you, lest I should lose my self control. The belief that Gordon was a successful rival sealed my lips on that occasion, and the dreary wretchedness of the days of suspense that followed. I was a starving beggar who stood before what I coveted above everything else on earth, and saw it labeled with another man's name and beyond my reach. The daily sight of that emerald ring on your finger maddened me, and you can form no adequate idea of the bitterness of feeling with which I noted my mother's earnest efforts and maneuvers to secure for Gordon Leigh -- to sell to him the little hand which her own son would have given worlds to claim in the sight of God and man! Continually I watched you when you least suspected me, I strewed infidel books where I knew you must see them, I tempted you more than you dreamed of teased and tormented and wounded you whenever an opportunity offered, for I hoped to find some flaw in your character, some defect in your temper, some inconsistency between your professions and your practices. I knew Leigh was not your equal, and I said bitterly, 'She is poor and unknown, and will surely marry him for his money, for his position -- as Agnes would have married me...' But you did not! And when I knew that you had positively refused his fortune, I felt a great dazzling light had broken suddenly upon my darkened life, and, for the first time, since I parted with Murray Hammond, tears of joy filled my eyes. I ceased to struggle against my love -- I gave myself up to it, and only asked how can I overcome her aversion to me? You were the only tie that linked me with my race, and for your sake I almost felt as if I could forget my hate. But you shrank more and more from me, and my punishment overtook me when I saw how you hated Clinton Allston's blood-smearred hands, and with what unfeigned horror you regarded his career. When you declared so vehemently that his fingers should never touch yours -- Oh! It was fearful apprehension of losing you that made me catch your dear hands and press them to my aching heart. I was stretched upon a rook that taught me the full import of Isaac Taylor's grim words, 'remorse is a man's dread prerogative!' Believing that you knew all my history and that your aversion was based upon it, I was too proud to show you my affection. Douglass Manning was as much my friend as I permitted any man to be, we had travelled together through

Arabia, and with his hand writing I was familiar. Suspecting your literary schemes, and dreading a rival in your ambition, I wrote to him on the subject, discovered all I wished to ascertain, and requested him, for my sake to reconsider, and examine your MS. He did so to oblige me, and I insisted that he should treat your letters and your MS. with such severity as to utterly crush your literary aspirations. O child! Do you see how entirely you fill my mind and heart? How I scrutinize your words and actions? O my darling --."

He paused and leaned over her, putting his hand on her head, but she shook off his touch and exclaimed:

"But Gertrude! Gertrude!"

"Be patient, and you shall know all, for as God reigns above us, there is no recess of my heart into which you shall not look. It is, perhaps, needless to tell you that Estelle came here to marry me for my fortune. It is not agreeable to say such things of one's own cousin, but to-day I deal only in truths and facts sustain me. She professes to love me! Had absolutely avowed it more than once in days gone by. Whether she really loves anything but wealth and luxury, I have never troubled myself to find out, but my mother fancies that if Estelle were my wife, I might be less cynical. Once or twice I tried to be affectionate toward her, solely to see what effect it would have upon you, but I discovered that you could not be easily deceived in that direction -- the mask was too transparent, and besides, the game disgusted me. I have no respect for Estelle, but I have a shadowy traditional reverence for the blood in her veins, which forbids my flirting with her as she deserves. The very devil himself brought Agnes here. She had married a rich old banker only a few months after Murray's death, and lived in ease and splendor until a short time since, when her husband failed and died, leaving her without a cent. She knew how utterly she had blasted my life, and imagined that I had never married because I still loved her! With unparalleled effrontery she came here, and trusting to her wonderfully preserved beauty, threw herself and her daughter in my way. When I heard she was at the parsonage, all the old burning hate leaped up strong as ever. I fancied that she was the real cause of your dislike to me, and that night, when the game of billiards ended, I went to the parsonage for the first time since Murray's death. Oh! The ghostly thronging memories that met me at the gate, trooped after me up the walk, and hovered like vultures as I stood in the shadow of the trees, where my idol and I had chatted and romped and shouted and whistled in the far past, in the sinless bygone! Unobserved I stood there, and looked

once more, after the lapse of twenty years, on the face that had caused my crime and ruin. I listened to her clear laugh, silvery as when I heard it chiming with Murray's under the apple-tree on the night that had branded me, and drove me forth to wander like Cain, and I resolved, if she really loved her daughter, to make her suffer for all that she had inflicted on me. The first time I met Gertrude I could have sworn my boyhood's love was restored to me, she is so entirely the image of what Agnes was. To possess themselves of my home and property is all that brought them here, and whether as my wife or as my mother-in-law I think Agnes cares little. The first she sees is impracticable, and now to make me wed Gertrude is her aim. Like mother, like daughter!"

"Oh! No, no! Visit not her mother's sins on her innocent head! Gertrude is true and affectionate, and she loves you dearly."

Edna spoke with a great effort, and the strange tones of her own voice frightened her.

"Loves me? Ha, ha! Just about as tenderly as her mother did before her! That they do both 'dearly love' -- my heavy purse, I grant you, hear me but. Agnes threw the girl constantly and adroitly in my way, the demon here in my heart prompted revenge, and, above all, I resolved to find out whether you were indeed as utterly indifferent to me as you seemed. I know that jealousy will make a woman betray her affection sooner than any other cause, and I deliberately set myself to work to make you believe that I loved that pretty cheat over yonder at the parsonage -- that frolicsome wax-doll, who would rather play with a kitten than talk to Cicero, who intercepts me almost daily, to favor me with manifestations of devotion and shows me continually that I have only to put out my hand and take her to rule over my house, and trample my heart under her pretty feet? When you gave me that note of hers a week ago, and looked so calmly, coolly in my face, I felt as if all hope were dying in my heart, for I could not believe that, if you had one atom of affection for me, you could be so generous, so unselfish, toward one whom you considered your rival. That night I did not close my eyes, and had almost decided to revisit South America, but the next morning my mother told me you were going to New York -- that all entreaties had failed to shake your resolution. Then once more a hope cheered me, and I believe that I understood why you had determined to leave those whom I know you love tenderly -- to quit the home my mother offered you and struggle among strangers. Yesterday they told me you would leave on Monday, and I went out to seek you, but you were with Mr.

Hammond, and instead of you I met -- that curse of my life—Agnes! Face to face, at last, with my red-lipped Lamia! Oh! It was a scene that made jubilee down in Pandemonium! She plead for her child's happiness -- ha, ha, ha! -- Implored me most pathetically to love her Gertrude as well as Gertrude loved me, and that my happiness would make me forget the unfortunate past! She would willingly give me her daughter, for did she not know how deep, how lasting, how deathless was my affection? I had Gertrude's whole heart, and I was too generous to trifle with her tender love! Edna, darling, I will not tell you all she said -- you would blush for your sister-hood. But my vengeance was complete when I declined the honor she, was so eager to force upon me, when I overwhelmed her with my scorn, and told her that there was only one woman whom I respected or trusted, only one woman upon the broad earth whom I loved, only one woman who could ever be my wife, and her name was -- Edna Earl!"

His voice died away, and all was still as the dead in their grassy graves.

The orphan's face was concealed, and after a moment St. Elmo Murray opened his arms, and said in that low winning tone which so many women had found it impossible to resist: "Come to me now, my pure, noble Edna. You whom I love, as only such a man as I have shown myself to be can love."

"No, Mr. Murray, Gertrude stands between us."

"Gertrude! Do not make me swear here, in your presence -- do not madden me by repeating her name! I tell you she is a silly child, who cares no more for me than her mother did before her. Nothing shall stand between us, I love you, the God above us is my witness that I love you as I never loved any human being, and I will not -- I swear I will not live without you, you are mine, and all the legions in hell shall not part us!"

He stooped and snatched her from the chair as if she had been an infant, and folded her in his strong arms.

"Mr. Murray, I know she loves you. My poor little trusting friend! You trifled with her warm heart, as you hope to trifle with mine, but I know you, you have shown me how utterly heartless, remorseless, unprincipled you are, you had no right to punish Gertrude for her mother's sins, and if you had one spark of honor in your nature, you would marry her, and try to atone for the injury you have already done."

“By pretending to give her a heart which belongs entirely to you? If I wished to deceive you now, think you I would have told all the hideous past, which you cannot abhor one half as much as I do?”

“Your heart is not mine! It belongs to sin, or you could not have so maliciously deceived poor Gertrude. You love nothing but your ignoble revenge and the gratification of your self-love! You --.”

“Take care, do not rouse me. Be reasonable, little darling. You doubt my love? Well, I ought not to wonder at your skepticism. After all you have heard. But you can feel how my heart throbs against your cheek, and if you will look into my eyes, you will be convinced that I am fearfully in earnest, when I beg you to be my wife to-morrow -- to-day -- now! If you will only let me send for a minister or a magistrate! You are ----.”

“You asked Annie to be your wife, and --.”

“Hush! Hush! Look at me, Edna, raise your head and look at me.”

She tried to break away, and finding it impossible, pressed both hands over her face and hid it against his shoulder.

He laughed and whispered:

“My darling, I know what that means. You dare not look up because you cannot trust your own eyes! Because you dread for me to see something there, which you want to hide, which you think it your duty to conceal.”

He felt a long shudder creep over her, and she answered resolutely:

“Do you think, sir, that I could love a murdered? A man whose hands are red with the blood of the son of my best friend?”

“Look at me then.”

He raised her head, drew down her hands, took them firmly in one of, his and placing the other under chin, lifted the burning face close to his own.

She dreaded the power of his lustrous, mesmeric eyes, and instantly her long silky lashes swept her flushed cheeks.

“Ah! You dare not! You cannot look me steadily in the eye and say, St. Elmo, I never have loved -- do not -- and never can love you! You are too truthful, your lips can not dissemble. I know you do not want to love me, your reason, your conscience forbid it, you are struggling to crush your heart, you think it your duty to despise and hate me. But, my own Edna -- My darling! My darling! You do love me! You know you do love me, though you will not confess it! My proud darling!”

He drew the face tenderly to his own, and kissed her quivering lips repeatedly and at last a moan of anguish told how she was wrestling with her heart.

“Do you think you can hide your love from my eager eyes? I know that I am unworthy of you! I feel it more and more every day, every hour. It is because you seem so noble -- so holy -- to my eyes; that I reverence while I love you. You are so far above all other women -- so glorified in your pure consistent piety -- that you only have the power to make my future life -- redeem the wretched and sinful past. I tempted and tried you, and when you proved so true and honest and womanly, you kindled a faint beam of hope that, after all, there might be truth and saving, purifying power in religion. Do you know that since this church was finished I have never entered it until a month ago, when I followed you here, and crouched downstairs -- yonder behind one of the pillars, and heard your sacred songs, your hymns so full of grandeur, so full of pathos, that I could not keep back my tears while I listened? Since then I have come every Saturday afternoon, and during the hour spent here my unholy nature was touched and softened as no sermon ever touched it. Oh, you wield a power over me -- over all my future, which ought to make you tremble! The first generous impulse that has stirred my callous bitter soul since I was a boy, I owe to you. I went first to see poor Reed, in order to discover what took you so often to that cheerless place, and my interest in little Hildah arose from the fact that you loved the child; O my darling! I know I have been Sinful and cruel and blasphemous, but it is not too late for me to atone! It is not too late for me to do some good in the world, and if you will only love me, and trust me, and help me -- --.”

His voice faltered, his tears fell upon her forehead, and stooping he kissed her lips softly, reverently, as if he realized the presence of something sacred.

“My precious Edna, no oath shall ever soil my lips again, the touch of yours has purified them. I have been mad -- I think, for many, many year, and loathe my past life, but remember how sorely I was tried, and be merciful when you judge me. With your dear little hand in mine to lead me, I will make amends for the ruin and suffering I have wrought, and my Edna -- my own wife shall save me!”

Before the orphan's mental vision rose the picture of Gertrude, the trembling coral mouth, the-childish wistful eyes, the lovely head nestled down so often and so lovingly on her shoulder, and she saw too the bent figure and white locks of her beloved pastor, as he sat in

his old age, in his childless desolate home, facing the graves of his murdered children.

“O Mr. Murray! You cannot atone! You cannot call your victims from their tombs. You cannot undo what you have done! What amends can you make to Mr. Hammond, and to my poor little confiding Gertrude? I cannot help you! I cannot save you!”

“Hush! You can, you shall! Do you think I will ever give you up? Have mercy on my lonely life! My wretched darkened soul. Lean your dear head her on my heart, and say ‘St. Elmo, what a wife can do to save her erring, sinful husband, I will do for you.’ If I am ever to be saved, you, you only can effect my redemption, for I trust, I reverence you. Edna as you value my soul, my eternal welfare, give yourself to me! Give me your pure aimless life to purify mine.”

With a sudden bound she sprang from his embrace, and lifted her arms toward the Christ, who seemed to shudder as the flickering light of fading day fell through wavering foliage upon it.

“Look yonder to Jesus, weeping, bleeding! Only his blood and tears can wash away your guilt. Mr. Murray, I can never be your wife, I have no confidence in you. Knowing how systematically you have deceived others, how devoid of conscientious scruples you are, I should never be sure that I too was not the victim of your heartless machinations. Beside, I ----.”

“Hush! hush! To your keeping I commit my conscience and my heart.”

“No! No! I am not vicegerent of an outraged and insulted God! I put no faith in any man, whose conscience another keeps. From the species of fascination which you exert, I shrink with unconquerable dread and aversion, and would almost as soon entertain the thought of marrying Lucifer himself. Oh! Your perverted nature shocks, repels, astonishes, grieves me. I can neither respect nor trust you. Mr. Murray, have mercy upon yourself! Go yonder to Jesus, he only can save and purify you.”

“Edna, you do not, you can not intend to leave me! Darling----.”

He held out his arms and moved toward her, but she sprang past him, down the steps of the gallery, out of the church, and paused only at the sight of the dark, dull spot on the white steps, where Annie Hammond had lain insensible.

THE FORSAKEN WIFE'S REVENGE

Excerpt from "Infelice" 1875

By Augusta Evans Wilson

By the aid of photographs procured in America, and by dint of personal supervision and suggestions, Mrs. Orme had successfully arranged the exact reproduction of certain localities, the college, the campus, the humble cottage of old Mrs. Chesley with its peculiar porch, whose column caps were carved to represent dogs' heads, -- the interior of a hospital, -- of an orphan asylum, -- and of the library of the Parsonage.

Leaning far back, in his chair, -- a prey to gloomy and indescribably bitter reflections, as he accustomed himself to the contemplation of the fact that the beautiful woman in whom his own fickle wayward heart had become earnestly interested -- would sell herself to the grey-bearded man beside him. Cuthbert gnawed his silky mustache, while his father watched with feverish impatience for the opening of the play, and the sight of his enchantress.

The curtain arose upon a group sitting upon the sward, before the cottage door. Minnie Merle in the costume of a very young girl, with her golden hair all hidden under a thick wig of dark curling locks, that straggled in childish disorder around her neck and shoulders, while her sun-bonnet, the veritable green and white gingham of other days, lay at her feet. Beside her a tall youth -- who represented Peleg Peterson, in the garb of a carpenter, with a tool-box on the ground, and in his hands a wooden doll, which he was carving for the child.

In the door of the cottage sat the grandmother knitting and nodding, with white hair shining under her snowy cap-border, and while the carpenter carved, and whistled an old-fashioned ditty, "Meet me by the moonlight alone" the girl in a quavering voice attempted to accompany him.

Minnie sat with her countenance turned fully to the audience, and when Cuthbert Laurence's eyes fell upon the cottage front, -- and upon the face under that cloud of dark, elfish looks, -- he caught his breath, and his eyes seemed almost starting from their sockets. His hand fell heavily on his father's knee, and he groaned audibly.

Gen. Laurence turned and whispered:

"For God's sake -- what is the matter? Are you ill?"

There was no answer from the son, who tightened his clutch upon the old man's knee, and watched breathlessly what was passing on the stage.

The scene was shifted, and now the whole facade of the college rose before him, with a pretty picture in the foreground, a tall handsome student, leaning against the trunk of an ancient elm, and talking to the girl who sat on the turf, with a basket of fresh-ironed shirts resting on the grass beside her. The identical straw hat which Cuthbert had left behind him when summoned home, was upon the student's head, and as the timid shrinking girl glanced up shyly at her companion, Cuthbert Laurance almost hissed in his father's ear.

"Great God! It is Minnie herself!"

General Laurence loosened the curtain next the audience, and as the folds swept down, concealing somewhat the figure of his son, he whispered:

"What do you mean? Are you drunk or mad?"

Cuthbert grasped his father's hand, and murmured:

"Don't you know the college? That is Minnie yonder!"

"Minnie? My son what ails you? Go home, you are ill."

"I tell you that is Minnie Merle, so surely as there is a God above us. Mrs. Orme -- is Minnie -- my Minnie! My wife! She had dramatized her own life!"

"Impossible, Cuthbert! You are delirious -- insane. You are." ---

"That woman yonder is my wife! Now I understand why such strange sweet memories thrilled me when I saw her first in 'Amy Robsart'. The golden hair disguised her. Oh father! ----."

The blank dismay in General Laurance's countenance, was succeeded by an expression of dread, and as he looked from his son's blanched convulsed face to that of the actress under the arching elms of the campus, the horrible truth flashed upon him, like a lurid glimpse of Hades. He struck his hand against his forehead, and his grizzled head sank on his bosom. All that had formerly perplexed him was hideously apparent, startlingly clear, and he saw the, abyss to which she had lured him, -- and understood the motives that had prompted her.

After some moments, he pushed his seat back beyond the range of observation from the audience, and beckoned his son to follow his example, but Cuthbert stood, leaning upon the back of his chair, with eyes riveted on the play.

The courtship, the clandestine meetings, the interview in which Peleg intruded upon the lovers, -- the revelation to the grandmother,

were accurately delineated, and in each scene the girl grew taller, by some arrangement of the skirts, which were at first very short, while she appeared in a sitting posture.

When the secret marriage was decided upon, and the party left the cottage by night, Cuthbert turned, rested one hand on his father's shoulder, and as the scene changed to the quiet Parsonage, he pressed heavily, -- and muttered:

"Even the very dress she wore that day! And -- here is the black agate! On her hand -- where I put it! Don't you know it? How she turns it -- I --."

In the tableau of the marriage ceremony, she had taken her position with reference to the locality of the box, and as near it as possible, and in the glare of the footlights, the ring was clearly revealed.

Lifting, his lorgnette Gen. Laurance inspected the white hand he had once kissed so rapturously, and by the aid of the lenses, he recognized the costly ring, the valued heirloom for the recovery of which he had offered five hundred dollars. Had he still cherished a shadowy hope that Cuthbert was suffering from some fearful delusion, the sight of that singular and fatal ring, utterly overthrew the last lingering vestige of doubt. Stunned, miserable, dimly foreboding some overwhelming denouement, he sat in stony silence, knowing that this was but the prelude to some dire catastrophe.

When the telegram arrived and the young husband took his bride in his arms, the girlish face was lifted, and the passionate gleam of the dilating brown eyes sent a strange-thrill to the hearts of both father and son. Vowing to return very soon and claim her, the husband tore himself away, and as he vanished through a side door near the box, Minnie followed, stretched out her arms, -- and looking up full at its two tenants, -- she breathed her wild passionate prayer which rang with indescribable pathos through that vast building:

"My husband! My husband -- do not forsake me!"

Cuthbert put his hand over his eyes, and but for the voices on the stage, his shuddering groan would have been heard outside the box. In the scene where Peleg's advances were indignantly repulsed, -- and his threats to unleash the bloodhounds of slander, hunting her to infamy, were fully developed, Cuthbert seemed to rouse himself from his stupor and a different expression crossed his face.

Skillfully the part played by Gen. Laurance in bribing Peleg and returning the letters of the wretched wife, -- the disgraceful threats,

the offers to buy up and cancel her conjugal claims were all presented.

When the grandmother departed, and the child-wife secretly made her way, to New York, seeking service that would secure her bread, and still hopeful of her husband's return, Cuthbert grasped his father's arm and hissed in his ear:

"You deceived me! You told me she went with that villain to California, to hide her disgrace!"

Cowed and powerless, the old man sat, recognizing the faithful portraiture of his own dark schemes in those early days of the trouble and growing numb with a vague prophetic dread that the foundations of the world were crumbling away.

His son suddenly drew his chair a little forward and sat down, his elbow on his knee, his head on his hand: his gaze fixed on the woman, who had contrived to reproduce even the fall, that caused her removal to the hospital.

The ensuing scene represented the young mother, sitting on a cot in the hospital, with a babe lying across her knees, -- and the storm of horror, hate, and defiance with which she spurned Peleg from her, -- calling on heaven to defend her and her baby, -- and denouncing the treachery of Gen. Laurence who had bribed Peterson to insult and defame her.

As he was dragged from the apartment, vowing that neither she nor her child would be permitted to enjoy the name to which they were entitled, -- the feeble woman, shorn of her brown locks, and wearing a close cap, lifted her infant and with streaming eyes implored heaven to defend it and its hapless mother from cruel persecution.

In the wonderful power with which she proclaimed her deathless loyalty to the husband of her love, and her conviction that God would interpose to shield his helpless child, -- the audience recognized the fervor and pathos of the rendition, and the applause that greeted her, as she bowed sobbing over her baby, -- told how the hearts of the hearers thrilled.

The curtain fell, and Cuthbert's eyes-gleaming like steel, turned to his father's countenance.

"Is that true? Dare you deny it?"

The old man only stared blankly at the carpet on the floor, and his son's fingers closed like a vise around his arm.

"You have practiced an infernal imposture upon me! You told me that she followed him, and that the child was his."

“He said so.”

Gen. Laurance’s voice was husky, -- and a gray hue had settled upon his features.

“You paid him to proclaim that base -- falsehood! You whom I trusted, -- so fully. Father -- where is my child?”

No answer, and the curtain rose on the fair young mother, who came forward with her own golden hair in full splendor.

Involuntarily the audience testified their recognition of the beautiful actress who now appeared for the first time, looking as when she made her debut, long ago in Paris. She was at the asylum, with a young child clinging to her finger, tottering at, her side, and as she guided its steps, and hushed it in her arms, many mothers among the spectators felt the tears rush to their eyes.

Walking with the infant cradled on her bosom, she passed twice across the stage, and then paused beneath the box, and murmured:

“Papa’s baby -- Papa’s own precious baby!” and her splendid eyes humid with tears, looked -- full, straight -- into those of her husband.

It was the first time they had met during the evening, and something she saw in that quivering face -- made her heart ache with the old numbing agony. Cuthbert could scarcely restrain himself from leaping down upon the stage, and clasping her in his arms, -- but she moved away, and the sorely smitten husband bowed his face in his hand, luckily shielded from public view by the position in which he sat.

The dinner scene ensued and the abrupt announcement of the second marriage. The anguish and despair of the repudiated wife were portrayed with a vividness, a marvelous eloquence and passionate fervor that surpassed all former exhibitions of her genius, and the people rose, and applauded, as audiences sometimes do, when a magnetic wave rolls from the heart and brain on the stage to those of the men and women who watch and listen, -- completely en rapport.

The life of the actress began, the struggle to provide for her child, - the constant care to elude discovery, the application for legal advice, the statement of her helplessness, the attempt to secure the license, all were represented, and at last the meeting with her husband in the theatre.

Gradually the pathos melted away, she was the stern relentless outraged wife, intent only upon revenge. She spared not even the interview in which the faithless husband sought her presence, and as

Cuthbert watched her, repeating the sentences that had so galled his pride, he asked himself how he had failed to recognize his own wife?

In the meeting with the child of the second marriage, her wild exultation, her impassioned invocation of Nemesis, was one of the most effective passages of the drama, and it caused a shiver to creep like a serpent over the body of the father, who pitied so tenderly his afflicted Maud.

As the scheme of saving her own daughter, by sacrificing herself in a nominal marriage with the man whom she hated and loathed so intensely, developed itself, a perceptible chill fell upon the audience, the unnaturalness of the crime asserted itself.

While she rendered almost literally, the interviews at Pozzuoli, and at Naples, Cuthbert glanced at his father, and saw a purplish flush steal from neck to forehead, but the old man's eyes never quitted the floor. He seemed incapable of moving, gorgonized by the beautiful Medusa whose invectives against him were scathing, terrible.

As the play approached its close and the preparation for the marriage, even the details of the settlement were narrated, suspense reached its acme. Then came the letters of reprieve, the deliverance from the bondage of Peterson's vindictive malice, the power of establishing her claim, and when she wept her thanksgiving for salvation, many wept in sympathy, while Regina, borne away in breathless admiration of her mother's wonderful genius, sobbed unrestrainedly.

When the letters of Peterson, and of the lawyer were read, mapping the line of prosecution for the recovery of the wife's rights, the father slowly raised his eyes, and looking drearily at his son, muttered:

"It is all over with us Cuthbert. She has won, -- we are ruined. Let us go home."

He attempted to rise, but with a glare of mingled wrath and scorn, his son, held him back.

The last scene was reached, the triumphant vindication of wife and child the condemnation of the two who had conspired to fraud them, the foreclosure of the mortgages, the penury of the proud aristocrats, and the disgrace that overwhelmed them.

Finally the second wife and the afflicted child came to crave leniency and the husband and father pleaded for pardon, but with a malediction upon the house that had caused her wretchedness, the broken-hearted woman retreated to the palatial home she had at last secured, and under its upas shadow died in the arms of her daughter.

Her play contained many passages which afforded her scope for the manifestation of her extraordinary power, and at its close the people would not depart until she had appeared in acknowledgment of their plaudits.

Brilliantly beautiful she looked, with the glittering light of triumph in her large mesmeric eyes, a rich glow mantling her cheeks, and rouging her lips, while in heavy folds the black velvet robe swept around her queenly figure. How stately, elegant, unapproachable she seemed, to the man who leaned forward, gazing with all his heart in his eyes, upon the wife of his youth, the only woman he had ever really loved, now his most implacable foe.

The audience dispersed, and Cuthbert and his father sat like those old Roman Senators, awaiting the breaking of the wave of savage vengeance that was rolling in upon them.

At length Gen. Laurence struggled to his feet, and mechanically quitted the theater, followed by his son. Reaching the carriage they entered and Cuthbert ordered the coachman to drive to Mrs. Orme's hotel.

"Not now! For god's sake -- not to-night." groaned the old man.

"To-night -- before another hour, -- this awful imposture must be confessed, -- and reparation offered. I sinned against Minnie, abut not premeditatedly. You deceived me. You made me believe her, the foul guilty thing you wished her. You intercepted her letters, -- you never let me know that I had a child neglected and forsaken -- and father, God may forgive you, but I never can. My proud, lovely Minnie! My own wife!"

Cuthbert buried his face in his hands, and his strong frame shook as he pictured what might have been, contrasting it with the hideous reality of his loveless and miserable marriage, with the banker's daughter, who threatened him with social disgrace.

During that drive Gen. Laurence felt that he was approaching some offended and avenging Fury, -- that he was drifting down to ruin, powerless to life his hand mid stay even for an instant the fatal descent, -- that he was gradually petrifying, -- and things seemed vague and intangible.

When they reached the hotel, they were ushered into the salon already brilliantly lighted as if in expectation of their arrival. Cuthbert paced the floor; his father sank into a chair, resting his hands on the top of his cane.

After a little while, a silk curtain at the lower end of the room was lifted, and Mrs. Orme came slowly forward. How her lustrous eyes

gleamed as she stood in the centre of the apartment, scorn, triumph, hate, all struggling for mastery in her lovely face.

“Gentlemen, you have read the handwriting on the wall. Do you come for defiance, or capitulation?”

Gen. Laurence lifted, his head, but instantly dropped it on his bosom, he seemed to have aged suddenly, prematurely. Cuthbert advanced, stood close beside the woman whose gaze intensified as he drew near her, and said brokenly.

“Minnie I come, merely to exonerate myself before God and man. Heaven is my witness, that I never knew I had a child in America, until to-night, -- that until to-night I believed you were in California living as the wife of that base villain Peterson, who wrote, announcing himself your accepted lover. From the day I kissed you good-bye -- at the cottage, I never received a line, a word, a message from you. When I doubted my father’s and Peterson’s statements concerning you, and wrote two letters, one to the President of the College, one to a resident professor, seeking some information of your whereabouts, in order at least to visit you once more, when I became twenty-one, -- both answered me that you had forfeited your fair name, had been forsaken by your-grandmother, and had gone away from the village accompanied by Peterson, who was regarded as your favored lover. I ceased to doubt, I believed you false. I knew no better until to-night. Father my honor demands that the truth be spoken. Will you corroborate my statement?”

Pale and proud, he stood erect, and she saw that a consciousness of rectitude at least in purpose, sustained him.

“Mrs. Orme,” -- began Gen. Laurence.

“Away with such shams and masks! Mrs. Orme died on the theatrical board to-night, and henceforth the world knows me as Minnie Laurance! Ah! By the grace of God! Minnie Laurance!”

She laughed derisively, and held up her fair slender hand, exhibiting the black agate with its grinning skull lighted by the glow of the large radiant diamonds.

“Minnie, I never dreamed you were his wife, -- oh? My God! How horrible it all is.”

He seemed bewildered, and his son exclaimed:

“Who is responsible for the separation from my wife? You father, or I.”

I did it, my son. I meant it for the best. I naturally believed you had been entrapped into a shameful alliance, -- and as any other father would have done, I was ready to credit the unfavorable estimate

derived from the man Peterson. He told me that Minnie had belonged to him until she and her grandmother conceived the scheme of inveigling you into a secret marriage, and afterwards he-informed me of the birth of his child. I did not pay him to claim it, but when he pronounced it his; I gave him money to pay the expenses of the two whom he claimed, to California, and I supposed until to-night, that both had accompanied him. I did not manufacture statements, I only gladly credited them, and believing all that man told me, I felt justified in intercepting letters addressed to you, by the woman he claimed as the mother of his child. Madam do not blame Cuthbert, I did it all."

The abject wretchedness of his mien disconcerted her, robbed her of half her anticipated triumph. How could she exult in trampling upon a bruised worm which made no attempt to crawl from beneath her heel? He sat, the image of hopeless dejection, his hands crossed on the gold head of his cane.

Mrs. Orme walked to the end of the room, lifted the curtain, and at a signal Regina joined her. clasping the girl's fingers firmly she led her forward, and when in front of the old man, she exclaimed:

"Rene Laurance -- blood triumphs over malice, perjury, and bribery, whose is this child? Is she Merle, Peterson, or Laurance?"

Standing before them, in a dress of some soft snowy shining fabric, neither silk nor crape, with white starry jasmines in her raven hair, and up upon her bosom, Regina seemed some angelic visitant -- sent to still the strain of human passions, so lovely and pure was her colorless face, and as Gen. Laurance looked up at her, he rose suddenly.

"Pauline Laurance, my sister, the exact, the wonderful image! Laurance all Laurance, from head to foot."

He dropped back into the chair, and smiled vacantly.

Cuthbert sprang forward, his face all aglow, his eyes radiant, and eloquent.

"Minnie, is this indeed our child? Your daughter -- and mine?"

He extended his arms, but she waved him back.

"Do not touch her! How dare you? This is my baby, my darling, my treasure. This is the hapless little one, whose wails echoed in a hospital ward, -- who came into the world cursed with the likeness of her father. This is the child you disowned, persecuted, this the baby God gave to you and to me, -- but you forfeited your claim long years ago, and she has no father, only his name henceforth. She is wholly, entirely her mother's blue-eyed baby. You have your Maud." As she

spoke, a wealth of proud tenderness shone in her eyes, which rested on the lily face of her child, and at that moment how she gloried in her perfect loveliness.

Her husband groaned, and clasped his hand over his face to conceal the agony that was intolerable, and in an instant, ere the mother could suspect or frustrate her design, the girl broke from her hand, sprang forward and threw herself on Cuthbert's bosom, clasping her arms around his neck, and sobbing:

"My father! Take me just once to your heart! Call me daughter, let me once in my life hear the blessed words from my own father's lips!"

He strained her to his bosom, and kissed the pure face, while tears trickled over his cheeks, and dripped down on hers. Her mother made a step forward to snatch her back, but at the sight of his tears, of the close embrace in which he held her, the wife, turned away, unable to look upon the spectacle and preserve her composure.

A heavy fall startled all present, and a glance showed them Gen. Laurance lying insensible on the carpet.

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