


SWEETHEARTS AND WIVES

Or, *Before* and *After* Marriage

by Timothy Shay Arthur

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CHAPTER 1.

"I was introduced to her last evening, Williams! What do you think of that?" said a young man named Lewis Milnor to his friend, evincing, as he spoke, a state of mind which the word "ecstatic," more nearly than any other, would express.

"Introduced to whom?"

"To the loveliest girl in Westbrook. I need not mention her name."

"To Julia Lawson?"

"Julia Lawson! No!" with a slight gesture of impatience.

"There is not a *lovelier* girl in Westbrook."

"Nonsense! But she's *your* sweetheart — and love, they say, is blind."

"So I would think, if you have discovered a *sweeter* girl than Julia Lawson. But, trifling aside, who is this *queen of all perfections* in your eyes? She seems to have taken captive your head as well as your heart."

"*Grace Harvey*, of course! Had not your eyes been in a mist, I need not have been compelled to mention her name."

"Grace Harvey! Nonsense! You certainly don't call *her* the loveliest girl in Westbrook?"

"But I do, though. I never saw a maiden who so won upon my admiration as she has done. The first time my eyes rested upon her, I was struck with her peculiar beauty; the second time, my heart fluttered in my bosom; the third time made me desperately in love with her; and the fourth time blessed me with an introduction and an hour's delightful conversation. I found her *mind* as lovely as her *person*. Without doubt, she is the sweetest maiden who ever graced our village with her presence."

"Truly, all this is astonishing! A quiet, sensible fellow, like my friend Lewis Milnor, who has never been known to exhibit a particle of enthusiasm where a lady was concerned, thus to go into heroics about a pretty-looking miss, a stranger in Westbrook of three or four weeks' standing — is passing strange indeed! Please, what is there about her so wonderful? I have met her, perhaps, half a dozen times, but detected nothing that was very remarkable."

"Everything about her is wonderful to me. I never saw a face with just the expression of hers."

"Nor anyone else. No two faces are alike in their expression, any more than two minds are alike."

"Yes, but hers are peculiarities of a high order"

"You *think* so."

"I *know* so."

"And you intend wooing her?"

"Of course I do. If I can win her, I shall be the happiest fellow in the world."

"And the most miserable if you do not?"

"You say truly."

"You have a rival, and one to be feared."

"Armstrong?"

"Yes, Harry Armstrong; a young man whom few girls would refuse."

"How do you know that he is inclined towards Miss Harvey?" asked Milnor, with a slight expression of concern.

"It is so reported."

"Well, I don't fear him. He is not the man to wear well with one like Grace Harvey."

"Why do you think so?"

"She is a girl of a naturally strong intellect, which has been highly cultivated. Her judgment is sound, and her mind clear. Armstrong is opinionated upon most subjects, and likes his own views and his own ways. They will soon cross swords, depend upon it, and thus become opponents instead of lovers."

"Well! go on."

"On the contrary, I allow everyone who chooses differ from me, without evincing very strong opposition, or dragging him into argument. And, now that I am apprized of a *rival* in Armstrong, I shall

be especially careful not to do or say anything which will have a tendency to ruffle or jar the feelings of Miss Harvey. This will lead her to draw, involuntarily, contrasts between us — contrasts which will produce impressions in my favor.”

“That is,” said the friend, gravely, “you will flow in with, and flatter her self-love, in order to blind her judgment?”

“That’s your inference.”

“But I leave it to you, if it is not a fair inference?”

“No, it is not. I don’t believe it is either necessary or right, always to be so full of your own opinions as to give no importance to the opinions of others. It is possible for a woman, as well as a man, to have rational views of things. And that Grace Harvey has a sound mind, and takes as sensible views of all questions of importance as anyone that I have met, two hours of social fellowship has fully satisfied me. Such being the case, what end could I have in view in opposing her? And, besides, in a wife I want agreement, not differences; and if I truly desire to win her for my wife, I ought to make the grounds of agreement as broad, and the grounds of disagreement as narrow as possible. Is not that a true principle from which to act?”

“Any rule of action,” replied Williams, “which another lays down for his own government, must be judged of by his *motives* — as far as it is possible to know them from the general tenor of what he says. This being the case, I am not prepared to say that your principle of action is altogether right.”

“And why not?”

“It is all right, so far as the choosing of a wife is concerned, to look for good qualities and points of agreement. But it is not equally right to keep all bad qualities and points of disagreement entirely out of sight. These, it is as essential to know as it is to know the good qualities; for, unless we know them, we cannot be sure that seeds may not exist which will germinate and produce a fruitful harvest, from painful discord and heart-searching afflictions.”

“But how are we to know these? Surely we are not to enter into wanton and unprovoked oppositions. I am no believer in lovers’ quarrels. I do not think I could ever marry a woman with whom I had quarreled. I would be afraid to do so.”

“Like you, I am no believer in discords; but I would much rather discover a ground of disagreement *before*, than *after* marriage. Would not you?”

“Yes, I suppose I would. But it is one thing to find this ground of discord, and another to make it. We are as much bound to shun such evils in ourselves, as to look for them in those we address with intentions of marriage.”

“Very true. And I fully agree with you, that we ought not to endeavor to *excite* opposition in the maiden we love. All I contend for is, that we ought not to agree steadily and from design with all her prejudices and peculiarities, whether we approve them or not — and thus encourage her to adhere to things really censured by us, because we are afraid that open-hearted frankness, going sometimes into opposition, would jeopardize our interest with her.”

“Oh, as to that, I have no idea that I shall have anything to oppose in Grace Harvey; I think her as near perfection as any woman I ever saw. I am only fearful that she will not entertain quite so good an opinion of my humble self.”

“*No one is perfect*, Lewis. Don’t forget that self-evident axiom. We are born into *direful hereditary evils*, which are ever seeking to gain dominion over us, and drag us down into all evil excesses. No matter how beautiful the *exterior form*, or how lovely the intellectual and moral qualities of the gentle being who has won our admiration and our love — still it is a painful and solemn truth, that *even her mind is cursed with hereditary forms of evil* — that even she needs to be regenerated — that even she is required to shun temptations to evil, as sins against the Lord.”

“How can you talk of *temptations to evil*, in one possessed of the lovely moral and intellectual qualities you have supposed?”

“I need not call your attention to the fact, that everyone now born into the world, is *born with a certain tendency to evil*; that this tendency remains somewhat quiescent during the period of childhood, in which, by parents and teachers, good principles are stored up in the mind, at the same time that good affections

are awakened which likewise impress the memory; for there is a memory of affections as well as of thoughts; and also, that when anyone arrives to a state of rationality, he is permitted to come into a consciousness of his real hereditary evil qualities, to the end that, by the power of the good and true principles he had learned in childhood and youth — he may oppose them and put them away, and not confirm and make them his own. Now, all are included in this condition, the innocent-minded maiden — just as well as the bold transgressor; and the maiden will feel and be influenced by her evils, and be overcome by them — if she does not vigorously oppose and fight against them, as well as you or I — Grace Harvey as well as Lewis Milnor — Julia Lawson as well as Henry Williams!”

“All that is *abstractly true* enough,” rejoined Milnor. “But you are aware that none are alike evil. Some minds are in an orderly state, while others are sadly in disorder. Some, too, from peculiar care during childhood, have a larger store of good and true principles laid up against the day of temptation, and thus are enabled, in a manner comparatively easy, to overcome temptation. This you know.”

“Yes, very well.”

“Is it not possible for Grace to be in this state?”

“Certainly it is.”

“I believe her to be in this state.”

“From a single interview with her! Your own reason must tell you that such a judgment cannot possibly be a true one. Lewis, your feelings are *blinding* you!”

“Even that need not be a matter of wonder, when my feelings are all taken captive by a being like Grace Harvey.”

“But it should cause you to suspect the *genuineness* of your supposed affection. True regard between the sexes must be based upon *known moral qualities* — and these do not become at once apparent. They are often seen under circumstances of *trials*, when a decision between right and wrong has to be made almost instinctively, and while there exists a temptation to do the wrong. Have you ever seen Miss Harvey thus? Of course not. Have you ever seen her at all in a situation to *test* her? No, for you have met her but once. Have you heard of her tried qualities of mind? No, for she was an entire stranger in Westbrook, until within a few weeks. Trust me, my friend, you are off of your guard!”

“I’m not afraid. A believer in the *truth of first impressions*, I am satisfied to trust to them now. Time will prove to you, if I can only win her, that I am right.”

“Sincerely do I hope that the *result* may prove your *position* to be true. Still, let me urge you to *open your eyes* — and *keep* them open. You may see by accident, if not by design, something much better seen *before*, than after marriage.”

“I’m not at all apprehensive of making any very serious discoveries. She’s *far too good for me* — if there is anything in the way.”

Grace Harvey, the subject of this conversation, was truly, as Milnor had said, a lovely girl both in mind and body. She had, however, as who has not — *faults of character*, which it would have been much better for Milnor, while entertaining serious thoughts of addressing her, to be willing to see. These were, mainly, *pride*, *self-confidence*, and a most *indomitable will*. At the age of six years, she had been so unfortunate as to lose her mother. Her father, Silas Harvey, a merchant of some wealth of Boston, never married again, and the consequence was, that his only child was placed under the care of servants, who had no authority to govern her. Her *will* had, therefore, never been subdued by *authority*. Of an active mind, as she grew up and came into contact with other girls of her own age, she gained confidence by the natural contrasts that were all the while occurring between her abilities and the mental qualities of those around her. Her *teachers*, gratified at her proficiency, as it reflected credit upon themselves — flattered her vanity, and encouraged a tendency in her mind that it would have been well if someone with influence over her, had judiciously endeavored to correct. Engaged in active business, her father found but little time to devote to the *moral culture* of his child. That, he was too content to leave to her teachers.

Notwithstanding these unfavorable circumstances, Grace advanced towards womanhood, *beloved* by nearly all who knew her. And yet she had no *end* in life, beyond *pleasure* of some kind. The one great object in life, that for which man was created, she had been taught, was the *attainment of individual happiness*. Kind-hearted and sympathizing, she had, notwithstanding these teachings — often found the

greatest delight in making others happy. Still, her pursuits, after leaving school, mainly regarded *pleasure to herself* of some kind.

She was only sixteen when her father, to whom she was devotedly attached, was taken from her by death. This grief softened her character, and greatly subdued her feelings. It was a year before her young and active mind could arise with any degree of buoyancy, above so deep an affliction. After the decease of her father, she became an inmate of the family of a *widowed aunt named Ellis*, residing in the vicinity of Boston. Four years subsequent to the death of Mr. Harvey, Mrs. Ellis re-located to Westbrook, accompanied by her beautiful, intelligent, and accomplished niece.

CHAPTER 2.

Soon after Milnor's introduction to Grace Harvey, he became a regular visitor at the house of her aunt, and by no means an unacceptable one. Mrs. Ellis was especially pleased with him, at least for a time — he was so frank, so kind, so courteous and gentlemanly in his whole deportment; he was likewise so *amiable* in his disposition — not thinking it worth while to be always making points of difference, and thus causing argument and arousing opposition.

Besides Milnor, there was another regular visitor, a young man named *Armstrong*, before alluded to. This Armstrong possessed stronger points of character than Milnor. He was more thoroughly independent and truth-loving. Anything which he held to be true, especially if it affected the actions directly — he declared freely, no matter how much it opposed another's opinions, even if that other one were his nearest and dearest friend; and, indeed, the more he esteemed or loved a friend — the more perseveringly would he oppose his errors. While *Milnor* was looked upon as a pleasant companion — *Armstrong* was too often considered harsh and opinionated. Armstrong had not so many friends as Milnor, but the few that he had, were like himself — lovers of truth for its own sake, and deeply attached to him, because he loved the truth too purely ever to betray it.

The vigor and independence of Grace Harvey's mind first won his admiration, and he became a visitor, not from any affection for her *moral qualities*, for of them he could not form any immediate judgment — but from the intellectual delight he experienced in her society. Gradually, however, this admiration warmed into a deeper sentiment. The forms of thought which came forth from her mind, no longer charmed by their external beauty alone; in each sentiment that was uttered, he soon learned to perceive the presence of a genuine affection; truth was not only seen, but it was loved. She had *faults of character*, and these were perceived by him as quickly as were their opposites; but, when seen, he did not close his eyes to them, nor coolly resolve not to touch them with the *hand of correction*, lest their subject should be offended. He knew too well that *errors of opinion* were the false forms into which corresponding evils would flow; that selfish affections would soon make to themselves *thoughts* — and thoughts produce actions, and that these actions would be evil, and that their effects upon herself and those she loved, would be painful. All this he saw too clearly to permit him to hesitate a moment in regard to his duty, when anything not true and good became apparent either in word or act.

The *manliness* of Armstrong's character, united with his highly-informed mind and broad and true principles, soon won upon Grace, and began early to inspire her with a sentiment of affection. Still, she rarely spent an hour in his company that did not leave her with a feeling of dissatisfaction. Why this was so, she could not for some time make out. But the truth gradually dawned upon her mind. She saw that it arose from the fact that Armstrong, so far from deeming her perfect — did not hesitate often to *correct her opinions*, and sometimes to *condemn an action*. This *wounded her pride*, and *offended her self-love*. Something of *indignation* was consequently aroused, in which state she sought for faults of character in *him* — instead of endeavoring to correct those in *herself* which he had brought to light.

Milnor, who was likewise a regular visitor at her aunt's, saw all this clearly, and did not fail to *take advantage* of it.

"I have faults enough of my own to look after. Let him enjoy the thankless and unprofitable office of pointing out other people's faults," he inwardly remarked, with a feeling of self-satisfaction, as he saw the effect of Armstrong's course upon the mind of Grace. He did not fail to perceive that, whenever she conversed with his rival — she was on her guard, and apparently under restraint; but while alone with him — she was as frank, and free, and happy as a child. He never *opposed* her in anything. If he differed from her in opinion, he either said nothing, or assumed that she might, after all, be correct. In regard to her actions, he left her free. In fact, he never opposed her in anything, but let her pleasure in all things become his. The *effect* of all this will be seen.

"You don't seem happy, dear," said Mrs. Ellis to Grace, one evening, after she had been riding out with Armstrong. "What is the matter?"

"I never feel happy after I have been with Mr Armstrong," was the *half-petulant* reply.

"Never feel happy after being with Mr. Armstrong! That is strange, my love! Why does he make you unhappy?"

Instead of letting Grace answer for herself, we will go back a little, and make the reader acquainted with the exact nature of the interview which had disturbed the usually quiet surface of the maiden's feelings. During the afternoon's ride to which reference has just been made, various subjects of conversation were introduced — nearly all of which led to the expression of sentiments on both sides, and some to the *collision of opinions*. It so happened, among other things, that Grace, in speaking of a certain action, remarked that it was right enough in itself, but that she usually refrained from doing it under certain circumstances, out of respect for the prejudices of people who were present.

"But is that a *right motive*?" asked Armstrong.

"Certainly," was the quick reply of Grace. "Can there be a higher motive than such a generous regard to the honest prejudices of conscientious people?"

"Yes, a much higher motive."

"What is that, please?"

"The consciousness that an action is wrong."

"But the action I speak of was right in itself; and I practiced self-denial for the sake of not disturbing the feelings of another."

"Thus leading another to form a *false estimate of your character*. Was that right? Was that honest?"

"I cannot see how a lack of honesty can be predicated of such an action. I had no wish to *deceive* — only not to *offend*."

"I will make it clear to you. Suppose this individual, whose honest prejudices you were so careful not to wound, had under her care a young friend, whom she was exceedingly anxious to protect from the influence of just such pleasures as you deemed innocent, but which you refrained from entering into on account of her prejudices; would there not be danger of her forming a *false estimate of your character*, and, therefore, of exposing her charge to an influence which she was exceedingly anxious to guard against? Thus you see, that this is a practical principle, and that it was really not *honest* for you to appear in an *assumed* character."

"I can't say that I feel the force of your argument on the score of honesty," Grace replied, with some warmth. "You will not pretend to say that *dancing*, to which we have been alluding, is in itself wrong?"

"Of course not. Dancing has its uses, as have all other innocent amusements."

"And would be as useful to Mrs. Putnam's young friend, assuming that she had one, or to her daughter, a more positive case, as it is to me."

"I am not exactly prepared to agree with you there, as the pleasure to her would be a forbidden one. Still, that point may readily be assumed."

"Well, assuming the point, which I believe to be a true one, would it not be perfectly right in me to endeavor to make Mary Putnam sensible of the *benefits* of dancing, an opportunity to do which I might never have, if I danced before her puritanical mother?"

"I will answer your question by asking you one or two in return. Imagine yourself a mother, with two or three children verging on the period of rationality. You have been educated in a firm belief of the doctrines taught in the Protestant Episcopal Church."

"Yes."

"And, under the circumstances I have supposed — would be anxious to have your children educated in a like faith?"

"Certainly."

"Why would you be thus anxious?"

"Because I feel well assured that the doctrines taught in our Church are true. Believing this, I would be recreant to the trust reposed in me, did I not teach my children the same."

"And you would be as anxious to guard your children from the persuasions of other sects, as to teach them your own doctrines?"

"Certainly."

“In order to do this, you would, no doubt, be mindful in regard to their associates, taking care that they had as little fellowship as possible with people of the *other sects* who would be likely to influence them in regard to doctrine?”

“Of course.”

“Now suppose, in your social fellowship, you fell in with an interesting stranger — one who was intelligent in conversation and excellent in disposition — just such a one, in fact, as you would like to be the companion of your children. And suppose that the subject of religious differences came up, and she, knowing that you were strongly prejudiced against the peculiar tenets that she held, in order that she might the more certainly have power to *insinuate her doctrines* into the minds of your children, were to conceal her views, and lead you to believe that she agreed with you, and thus led you to put your children in her way, when she poisoned their minds against the Episcopal Church, and induced them to believe opposite doctrines from those you held. Would this, let me ask you, be right? would it be honest?”

“But mere dancing, Mr. Armstrong, is a very different matter from religious doctrines.”

Mrs. Putnam considers it sinful to dance, does she not?”

“Yes, I believe she does.”

“Then is not a religious principle involved in her prejudice against dancing? And is she not as much bound to guard her children against it as against any evil?”

“Under that view, I suppose she is.”

“You can then see, I have no doubt, that it would be wrong for you to make the smallest effort towards dissipating *Mary Putnam’s* prejudice against dancing?”

“Upon *that* principle, then, it is wrong to make any effort towards teaching truths to those whom we know, or believe to be in false doctrines?”

“Oh no. There is a very wide difference between those who have arrived at the age of rationality, and thence are accountable for their actions — and those who are still in their minority. The latter, not being able to judge for themselves, are under guardianship and instruction. It is the duty of their guardians and instructors to teach them those things which they believe to be good and true — and he who interferes with and opposes them in this work, is guilty of a serious wrong. But as soon as anyone has arrived at a rational age, when his own perceptions of truth must be his guide, then it is orderly and right for any person who thinks him in error, to present the truth, with reasons to convince his judgment. The two cases are widely different.”

Grace remained silent after her companion had ceased speaking. He had clearly shown her an *error* — and this *wounded her pride*, and made her feel unhappy. He did not, however, perceive that this was her state. He was beginning really to love her, and the warmer the interest he felt in her — the more anxious was he to see her mind freed from all wrong opinions. And such was the respect he entertained for her judgment, that he believed it only necessary for him to *present the truth* — for it to be *eagerly received*. This being his state of mind, the silence which followed his last remark gave his thoughts an opportunity to revert to the original subject of conversation, and he was thence led to say,

“The true principle upon which to found our actions is the question of *right*. ‘Is it right?’ should be the only question. Not, ‘How will it strike people?’ ‘Whose prejudices will it offend?’ What will people say?’ Had the great reformers, in all ages of the world, been swerved from their purposes by such questions — what would have been our condition now? Depend upon it, Miss Harvey, to be true to ourselves and the world — we must take this elevated position, and let this *law of right* determine all our conduct. If it is right to *dance* — then will I dance in spite of the prejudices of all the world; and upon the same principle do any other clearly right action. Shall a *right principle* give place to a *wrong prejudice*? No! How is the world to get rid of error and prejudice — if *truth* and *right* do not oppose them? But I need not multiply words on this subject; I am sure you can see it clearly.”

And so Grace did see it — but her *pride* was touched, and she would not make the *acknowledgment*. She was not used to having young men oppose her in that *dogmatic way*, as she was pleased inwardly to term Armstrong’s animated manner of argumentation. Heretofore, her companions of the other gender had treated her opinions as well as her person, with the greatest *deference*. She was listened to with pleased politeness, and every sentiment cordially approved. This was *smooth and pleasant sailing*. But

now a man, towards whom her tenderest feelings were beginning to be awakened — a man whose strong, independent mind had won her admiration — was assuming an air of *dictation* and *controversy* towards her, which was felt to be insufferable. Something of *indignation*, mingled with her *wounded self-love* — and both combined to darken the flame that was just kindling upon her heart's pure altar.

The remainder of their ride was passed in commonplace observations, Grace purposely avoiding any expression of opinion. When they parted, she was, as has been said, much disturbed in mind.

CHAPTER 3.

He is always finding some fault with me, was the reply of Grace to her aunt, who had asked her the reason of her never feeling happy after being in Armstrong's company.

"That is not very pleasant, certainly," Mrs. Ellis said. "Still, the friend who tells us our *faults*, may be far more sincerely attached to us — than the one who is ever agreeing with all we say, regardless whether we are right or wrong. The true question for you to ask yourself is, whether Mr. Armstrong is *right* when he differs from you."

"He is sometimes right and sometimes wrong; but then I don't like his *manner* of opposing me. It is *dogmatic*; and, besides, it is a breach of courtesy for a young man to be *forever differing* in opinion from a woman."

"In what did he differ from you today?"

Grace hesitated for a few moments, and then said,

"A few evenings ago, as you remember, I was at Mrs. Speare's. Mrs. Putnam was there, whom we all know to be strongly opposed to *dancing*. Mary Speare wanted to have a cotillion, and had the set made up, all except one. Knowing Mrs. Putnam's prejudice against this innocent and healthy amusement, I declined dancing, simply out of respect to her feelings; and so the cotillion could not be formed. I had occasion to mention this today, and Mr. Armstrong at once declared that I acted wrong. It is too bad to have even our *innocent acts*, and those, too, in which we practice self-denial — condemned, and that, too, as if they were heinous offences!"

"Upon what *ground* did he condemn the act?"

"Upon the ground that it is wrong to refrain from doing a thing *right* in itself — because it may offend another's prejudices."

"Well, did he not *prove* his position to be true?"

"I can't say that he altogether convinced my reason. To me it seems that polite and courteous fellowship with society, will always lead us to respect the prejudices of those we meet. Why should we needlessly offend them?"

"We should not do so *needlessly*, Grace; but when an act, innocent in itself, is to be done, then no considerations of *respect for weak prejudices* should be allowed to influence us, as in the case to which you have alluded. Dancing has its uses. It is the ultimate activity of certain innocent and joyful feelings, which, unless they found their true expression, would be choked up in the mind, and perhaps perish. These innocent affections were stirring within the minds of your young friends at Mrs. Speare's, and seeking their corresponding external expression, when you, out of a *blind respect to a frigid, puritanical prejudice*, perverted their happy expression. Was that right or wrong, Grace? I am sure your own good sense will at once decide the question. If it is right thus to check innocent amusements, so necessary and so useful to the young, out of respect to a single individual — then how much more binding is the duty of respecting the general prejudices of a large class in society, and out of regard to these — never to dance at all, and never to take any kind of bodily or mental recreation? Establish this principle in regard to dancing — and the reasons for it will hold good in hundreds of other instances of prejudice. If it is right in the least things to regard prejudices — and from them to refrain from doing things innocent in themselves — then it is right in complex things. Depend upon it, my child, Mr. Armstrong is right."

"But why need he feel himself under such pressing obligations to *correct every little error* into which I may happen to fall, and that, too, as if it was some very serious matter? It is not pleasant, by any means."

"It arises, no doubt, from *his strong love of the truth*, united, perhaps, with a reluctance to see one for whom he has a respect, adopting opinions which he clearly sees to be wrong."

"I feel that he is influenced by some different impulse. A man who really respects a woman, will not be always seeking to reveal her errors and weaknesses. For my part, Mr. Armstrong's manner towards me constantly offends me. I hardly ever spend an hour with him, that I am not made to feel a sense of *inferiority*. It is not so with other men. There is Mr. Milnor, for instance. I see that he is as sound as Mr.

Armstrong, and yet he reproves me up in the way that the other does. If he does not agree with me, he never seems to feel the *necessity* to say so.”

“That is, Mr. Armstrong honors your judgment by presenting reasons for changing your views — while Mr. Milnor *flatters your pride of opinion* by not opposing you, even when he sees you to be wrong. Is not this so?”

“I cannot see that it is, Aunt Mary. The one I believe to be governed by the rules of polite and gentlemanly fellowship with ladies — while the other is influenced by the *pride of self-intelligence*, and a *love of being thought superior* to everyone else.”

While this conversation was going on — Milnor, now a very frequent visitor, came in. He perceived, instantly, two things: that Grace was unpleasantly excited about something, and that his entrance gave her a particular pleasure. He knew that she had been riding out with Armstrong, and guessed pretty nearly the cause of the apparent disturbance. Dexterously he managed to induce her to speak of it, and then turned the whole thing to his own advantage.

“I never think it necessary to be *always differing* from people,” he found the opportunity of saying. “*Opinions* are of no great consequence, after all, and break no heads. It never seems to me to be either *polite* or *necessary* — to be ever advancing our notions in opposition to what others may think to be true. In nine cases out of ten — we are as likely to be in error as they are. Let us be *tolerant* of each other. All will come out right in the end. As for opposition and conflict, they often confirm others in, instead of leading them out of error. This has long been my opinion, and is one from which I uniformly act; and, especially in my fellowship with ladies, do I avoid, particularly, the *fault of argument* and the *introduction of differences*.”

“But would you not, Mr. Milnor,” asked Mrs. Ellis, who was present, “if you heard a lady-friend advance erroneous *opinions*, and saw that she was *acting* from them, and thus doing harm in her social fellowship — endeavor to lead her to see her error?”

“Most certainly,” was the prompt reply; “but, in doing so, I would act with delicacy and prudence, and would endeavor to lead her rather to see in the light of her own mind, that she was wrong — than to convince her by *direct opposition* in the form of argument.”

“And in pursuing that course, you would be successful in nine cases out of ten — while in the other, you would fail as often,” remarked Grace, in an approving tone, and with an approving expression.

Milnor felt that he was winning his way into the maiden’s heart.

“Let him,” he said to himself, with a feeling of satisfaction, “go on as he has begun, and I am safe. She is a lovely, intelligent girl, and where she can once be made to love — will love with a strength and depth of passion which nothing can move. She has her faults, though they are of little consequence, and can be easily looked over. No one is *faultless*.”

From that time, Milnor was more than ever careful not to offend *the good opinion of herself* that Grace entertained. He even went so far as to insinuate, at times, a little well-directed *flattery*, which was very pleasant to her ear.

As for Armstrong, he was too firm a lover of *honesty* and *truth* to modify, in any degree, his manner towards the maiden. He soon perceived that the gentle warmth that he had felt breathing out towards him — was withdrawing itself, and that Grace did not receive him as cordially as before, and seemed far less interested in his company. He guessed the reason, from indications not to be mistaken, but could not gain his own consent to act differently. If the maiden he wished to choose out from the rest of womankind as a companion through life, could not bear the *touchstone of truth* — he did not desire a union with her. If she would not permit him to point out an error *before* marriage, what guarantee had he who she would allow him to do so *after* marriage? Under the influence of such thoughts, he gradually permitted his affections to subside into an ordinary, polite, but rather reserved manner, thus leaving to Milnor a clear field.

Warned against the *rock* upon which Armstrong had been cast away, he took especial care in no instance to *oppose* the wishes or opinions of Grace. Besides this negative position towards her — he spared no thought nor pains in seeking out the means of giving her pleasure, no matter how great the inconvenience to himself. Things that had before been to him altogether undelightful, as soon as he found

that they gave her pleasure, were proposed and entered into with the liveliest enjoyment. If she expressed a wish to ride — he never thought of asking a postponement on account of pressing duties. Even engagements with others would be broken without a moment's hesitation, in order to meet the smallest of her expressed wishes.

Thus, instead of her being led to feel that, in the anticipated marriage relation — for Milnor had offered her his hand — there were reciprocal considerations, and even *sacrifices* — her mind was flattered into the impression that she would be the passive recipient of all kinds of attentions; that *her will* would, in all subsequent relations, be his pleasure. In all this, there was in her mind, no consciousness of *duties* to be performed; or, if a consciousness of duty, it was exceedingly vague in its character.

A short time before her marriage with Milnor, which took place about a year after her relocation to Westbrook, in a conversation with her lover, she was led to remark that some married women seemed as full of care and trouble as if they had the duties of a whole nation to perform. To which Milnor replied,

"I have often noticed as much myself, and it has always appeared to me a most repulsive feature in marriage, as we perceive it around us."

"And so it is. I can't see how a man can love a woman whose soul is *narrowed down* to the limits of a cook book, or whose activities never go beyond the little circle of her own family."

"Nor can I," was the response. "In marriage, as I view it, are centered the purest joys; and those who are married, if united, as they should be, upon a just appreciation of moral qualities, come into a state of greater happiness than they have ever yet experienced. But, if we were to judge from the habits, appearance, and countenances of the great body of wives — we would be led to the inevitable conclusion that the married life was, to women at least — a condition of *slavery* and *unhappiness*. Surely this need not be! And I am also sure that men do not wish it to be so. They certainly would much rather find a *cheerful* wife at home, than one pressed down with a thousand household cares!"

"So I would think. Strange that so many married women fall into this unamiable habit of shutting themselves up from society, putting on long faces, and *burying* themselves amid the thousand and one *domestic duties* pertaining to a family — which had far better be committed to the supervision of someone more capable, and to *employ* whom would be a real charity. But the word *domestic* seems to fill every wife's head with the notion that she ought to become little more than a *mere slave*."

"A very just remark. To me, there has never been that charm about the word *domestic* which there has seemed to be in it for most people's ears," Milnor replied, scarcely reflecting upon what he was saying. Grace had expressed a sentiment — and he, as a matter of course, *passively assented* to it.

"If I had said as much as this to *Mr. Armstrong* — I would have been compelled to listen to a *sermon on domestic virtues*," Grace said, laughing.

"Oh, as to Armstrong, he is more petty than wise sometimes," returned Milnor, joining in the laugh. "He would have everyone walk by his line and rule."

"If he had me for a wife, he would have a hard subject in his hands, I can tell him. I am as much for line and rule as he is — but it is *my own* line and rule. I flatter myself that I have wit enough to keep out of the *fire*."

"I would be sorry if you had not; but some people are always concerned about others, and seem to imagine that none but *themselves* have any true perception of life and its duties."

"And that is precisely Mr. Armstrong's character! Why, I would be the unhappiest creature in the world, were I wedded to a man who had no confidence in my judgment, and who would be forever looking out for *little indiscretions or wrong views* — that he might hold them out and magnify them."

"A most unhappy state, I would think, for any woman to be placed in."

"Unhappy, indeed! In a husband, a woman wants a companion and an *equal* — not a *mentor*. And any man who assumes the mentorial air towards a woman, as Mr. Armstrong did towards me — shows that he has no true respect for her judgment. So I felt at the time. Why, towards the close of his visits to our house, his company became absolutely intolerable to me!"

"And yet," remarked Milnor, whose real respect for Mr. Armstrong's good sense, and strong, honest love of truth for its own sake — would not permit him to hear him condemned too entirely, "he is honest and sincere; and it is for these qualities that he is led to speak plainly to everyone."

“Well, it is not in *good taste*, to be ever *intruding his censorious remarks* upon those who are willing to hear them,” Grace responded, with some warmth.

“Very true,” was the quiet acquiescence of her devoted lover.

CHAPTER 4.

A week before the day that was to unite Lewis Milnor and Grace Harvey in the holy bonds of wedlock, Grace sat alone in earnest conversation with her aunt, who was a woman of much practical good sense. Indeed, anyone who has lived to the age of forty or fifty, must have lived to little purpose indeed, if some portion of that essential quality of mind has not been acquired.

"How thankful I sometimes feel," Grace remarked, her eyes filling with tears as she spoke, "that I perceived Mr. Armstrong's *dictatorial manner* before my heart had become so much interested in him as to have caused me *blindly* to overlook so serious a fault! In other respects, he is a man calculated to captivate a woman's affections; but this alone would have, in the end, rendered my union with him a miserable one. How beautiful the *contrast* between him and Mr. Milnor! About the latter there is no *harshness* — no *dictation* — no *pride of opinion* — causing everything to bend before it, and even making love its sacrifice. No, no, none of these. And yet he has manliness, strength of character, and a mind as clear and active as the other. Happy was the day when I *wisely* chose between them!"

"Happy may it indeed be!" Mrs. Ellis said, in a voice that trembled from upswelling tenderness. "And yet, my child, you will not find your path all strewn with flowers, nor your skies always bright."

"I am well aware of that, aunt," Grace said, endeavoring, by an effort to smile, to force back the tears that were ready to gush forth freely. "Life has its *clouds* — as well as its *sunshine*; its paths through barren wastelands and dark forests — as well as through pleasant valleys and over smiling meadows; but, cheered by a husband's tender love, strengthened by his arm, and protected by his manly form — who would not calmly bear all these, and even while the *storm* breaks in the sky, feel her lot to be indeed blessed?"

"To a wife who truly loves her husband, and is truly loved in return, even the darkest Providence will have its pure consolations — yes, even its unspeakable joys. But few, my child, and this is a solemn and painful truth — do *truly* love each other. And the most painful of all is, that the wife, too often, is ever pouring out the treasures of a fond, confiding heart — for which she receives but a poor return."

"But that will never be *my* case, Aunt Mary."

"I hope not, Grace."

"I *know* it will not. If ever a woman was deeply loved — I am; and deeply do I love in return. Come what will, nothing can take from me the tender devotion of the man to whom I have yielded up my whole heart."

To this, Mrs. Ellis did not reply for some moments, during which time she sat in deep thought. At length she said,

"Grace, I would not be true to you, if I did not, at this important period of your life, speak to you *frankly* and *plainly*. You love your intended husband with a true and earnest love, I know; and I am sure that he loves you just as truly and earnestly. All now is perfect love and perfect harmony between you. Thus far, not a chord has *jarred* — not a *cloud*, even as small as a human hand, crossed your sky; but, in the very nature of things, this cannot always *remain* so. Both you and he have your *weaknesses of character*, and your *hereditary evils* to fight against. There will come times when these latter will act freely, and for a time so obscure your minds as to prevent your seeing each other as you now do. In these states, each will make the *painful discovery that the other is not perfect*; that, in fact, *each is primarily a lover of self*, and a lover of the *other* only secondarily."

"Aunt Mary, how can you speak so?" Grace replied, in a quick, rebuking voice. "I know that Lewis Milnor loves me as he loves his own life."

"Don't deceive yourself, my child. Men do not ordinarily love *anything* above their lives."

"But he does me, I know."

"How do you know?"

"He has *told* me so," replied, with some hesitation, the blushing maiden.

"And no doubt *believed* what he said, Grace. But, like most ardent lovers — Mr. Milnor *does not really know himself*. In the first warm impulses of affection, all selfish feelings disappear from the

consciousness of the lover, and it seems to him as if he had suddenly been inspired from Heaven with a love that utterly annihilates every selfish feeling. And yet that very love, is a desire to possess its object, to the end that it may be rendered happy in such possession. And if he thinks that he loves that object as his life, it is because he feels that its possession is absolutely necessary to *his happiness*; that if he were to lose it, he would be, of all men, the most miserable.”

Grace sat silent after her aunt had uttered the last sentence. Mrs. Ellis resumed, but, as she perceived that her words were touching her niece too deeply, in a less serious tone.

“A *sweetheart* and a *wife*, Grace, are looked upon, let me tell you, with different eyes. And you may as well know this before as after marriage.”

“I suppose they are. But you do not mean with less affection?”

“No, I did not mean to convey that idea. But a husband will see *faults* which, when he was but a sweetheart, were not apparent to his eyes — and exhibit them too. And a wife will do the same.”

“I am sure I do not understand how that can be.”

“It is plain enough, Grace. During the pleasant season of *courtship*, each is *acting*, to a certain degree, a *part*. All *good points* are allowed to appear — and *foibles* and *weaknesses* are kept out of sight. From this cause, each is led to *form too high an opinion* of the other. Both are too apt to imagine a *perfection and congeniality of character* which the subsequent marriage relationship discovers not to exist.”

“I cannot believe that this is true in *our* case. I am not conscious of having acted a part, and I am sure Mr. Milnor has not been guilty of such *hypocrisy* towards me.”

“Not *designedly*, I am well convinced. But that he has not acted towards you with the *honesty* he should have done — with something of the honesty which influenced Mr. Armstrong in his fellowship with you, I am well satisfied.”

“You are certainly right there, aunt,” Grace said. “He has not been quite so *honest* as Mr. Armstrong, and I never would have *tolerated* him, if he had. Mr. Armstrong *made* faults, or picked up little inadvertencies of expression, and *magnified* them into dangerous principles! But Lewis *understood* me better.”

“He no doubt understood better *how to secure your good opinion*, and call out your affections. But his actions towards you have not been in all things, such as I could approve.”

“In what has he acted wrong?”

“In consulting so constantly as he has done — your tastes, preferences, peculiarities, and prejudices. From the beginning — he has deferred everything to your wishes. He has not seemed to have a *will* of his own. Wherever a question involving a mutual action has been concerned — *your opinion or desire* has been adopted without a word. To *know* your pleasure, and to *do* it — has seemed the very delight of his life.

“Now this is not as it *will be after* your marriage. It is not as it *ought* to be. The wife should most frequently be led by her husband’s reason for doing a thing, and be always desirous of knowing this reason, that she may compare it with her own perceptive desires. He is more in the *rational* principle of the mind — and she more in the *intuitive*; and it is by the union of these two into one mind, that the husband and the wife make one. Now cannot you see that it will not be an orderly state after marriage, for your husband to yield up *all* to your inclinations — as he has done before your marriage? And can you not also see that, in just the degree that you have received pleasure from this *constant deference to your wishes* — will be the pain you will experience when such a deference is withheld, as it must and will be?”

“Mr. Milnor has fallen sadly into the fault of nearly all young men during courtship. They come soliciting the hand of her they love, and, anxious to secure that hand, they *conceal all harsh points in their character*; and really, or apparently, take no delight in anything except in *rendering the object of their preference happy*. In doing this, no sacrifice is thought too great, and even serious inconveniences on other occasions become really pleasures.

“As I have said before, this will not long survive the marriage union. Man is *naturally a lover of self* — and this must come out. Instead of feeling called upon to do everything for the happiness of his wife — he will soon begin to think, and very justly, too — that she ought to try and make him happy also. From the hour when that thought crosses his mind, may be dated the commencement of *domestic*

uneasiness, if not *unhappiness*, which will continue until both perceive more truly than before, their just relation to each other — and not only *perceive*, but become willing to *act* from such a perception. Happy are they, my dear niece, who early learn wisdom; who, *foreseeing the evil*, hide themselves away in a right understanding of their duty, united with a willingness to perform it!”

“But you surely do not wish to make it appear that a woman occupies a *lower place* than a man, and must ever look up to and consider him? That she must ever bow in humble deference to his judgment?”

“No, Grace; nor can you draw so *strange an inference*, justly, from what I have said. I have been condemning the opposite, where the man defers everything to the woman, and have endeavored to show you that this was not only not right — but a relation that *ought* not, *could* not, and *will* not exist after marriage; and that, unless you could see this *now*, and are willing to act from it — you would experience a degree of unhappiness after marriage which would try severely the foundation of your affection.

“Intimately connected with this, is another subject that I feel bound to allude to, though reluctantly. Thus far, you have felt that Mr. Milnor was *almost faultless*. From this *dream* you will have to awaken!”

“Aunt Mary! what are you thinking about?” ejaculated Grace, in fresh surprise.

“About *your happiness*, my dear child,” replied Mrs. Ellis, calmly. “The most common error into which young lovers fall, is the notion that the object of their affection is *more perfect* than the rest of human kind. Think but for a moment calmly, and you cannot but see that this can be no more true in *your* case, than in another’s. You perceived glaring faults in Mr. Armstrong. There is a most estimable girl, as you know, Ellen Fairchild, who thinks him about the nearest to perfection of any man living. In her case you can readily admit that *love is blind*, but not so easily in your *own* case. Still, it is, possibly, as blind in *your* instance as in hers. It is from this *blindness*, that you are unable to *see* Mr. Milnor as he *really* is — with faults and evils imbedded in the very warp and woof of his character.”

A gush of tears from Grace caused Mrs. Ellis to pause. But she felt so anxious to remove the *scales* from the eyes of her niece, that she resumed as soon as the latter had been restored to a degree of calmness.

“Grace,” she asked, in doing so, “are *you* not conscious of having faults?”

“Oh yes, aunt — a great many.”

“Are you not conscious, also, that in the very constitution of your mind, exists evils?”

“I do not know that I clearly understand your question so as to answer it as I should.”

“Have you never felt *tempted* to do wrong?”

“Often.”

“Whence came that temptation?”

“I do not know, unless from evil spirits.”

“Flowing, with allurements to evil indulgences, into a form of natural innocence?”

“I cannot say that, aunt. There must be something that corresponds to a principle — a form receptive of it — or the principle, be it good or evil, cannot flow in.”

“Justly reasoned. Then, if you are tempted to do wrong, is it not clear that there is within you some *hereditary form of evil* which can be tempted — something for evil spirits to flow into with their direful suggestions?”

“Yes, I suppose there must be.”

“It is certainly true. All are born with a *tendency to commit sin*. But some are more deeply depraved than others, and some are more perfectly skilled in the art of *concealing* their worst faults than others. Too many of us study rather to *hide* — than *subdue* these faults — and therefore *appear* to be really better than we are. As, for instance, you are, as you know — of a somewhat *hasty temper*. Of course, that is an evil. Now, under what circumstances would you most struggle to conceal that fault? Under circumstances where it would, if it broke forth, be inevitably exposed to your intended husband, would you not?”

“I suppose I would.”

“And it would be quite *natural* for you to do so. And no doubt such has been the *guard* you have kept upon yourself in this respect, that Mr. Milnor has not the most distant idea that you have this hasty temper.”

“And never shall know it, aunt. If I can keep a guard over it successfully *before* marriage — then I can do so *afterward*. The same motive for doing so will exist.”

“You will perhaps discover your mistake in this matter, before you are married a year,” was Mrs. Ellis’ quiet answer; “and if so, your husband will find out one instance, at least, in which he has been *deceived* in his estimation of your character. But there is another fault, all undiscovered by Mr. Milnor, I presume, which will more intimately affect your future happiness; I mean your *impatience under opposition*, and, I might almost call it, your *blind determination to have your own way*, if you think that way *right*.”

“But ought I to yield a point, when I *know* I am right, Aunt Mary.”

“Suppose your husband were to differ from you in opinion?”

“Well?”

“And he were as certain that *he* was right — as you were that you were right?”

“Well?”

“Who should *first* give way?”

Grace was silent at this question.

“Do you think that *you* would be willing to yield the point — if you believed yourself right?”

“I hardly think I would.”

“Ought your husband to yield — if he believed himself right?”

“But we could not *both* be right.”

“Of course not; and would not *you* be as likely to be *wrong* as your husband?”

“Perhaps so; but you need have no fears on that score, aunt. We have not differed thus far, and I don’t believe ever will differ.”

“A prudent man foresees the evil, and hides himself.”

“But the foolish pass on and are punished,” Grace rejoined, laughing merrily, for she suddenly recovered her spirits, and then glided from the room, glad to *escape* the discussion of a subject by no means *agreeable* to her, and thus prevented her aunt from freely discharging the duty, which she felt to be required of her.

CHAPTER 5.

About the same hour that Grace Harvey was in earnest conversation with her aunt about the future, as has been seen in the last chapter — a fair-haired girl, with a light complexion, and soft, yet expressive blue eyes, sat by the window of a sweet cottage in Westbrook, over which climbed the honeysuckle and the vine, the one rich with its fragrant blossoms, and the other laden with pendant clusters. The maiden held in her hand a small volume, over which she half bent in a graceful attitude, and seemed altogether occupied with its contents. But in a little while she raised her head, with a quiet air, as a footstep caught her ear. How quickly did her soft cheek warm, and her mild eye brighten, as a well-known form entered, a moment after, her mother's beautiful cottage, and she arose to meet *Henry Williams*, her betrothed!

"I have just had a piece of news," he said, saluting *Julia Lawson*, for that was the name of the maiden, "and have made it an excuse to drop in for the second time today."

"Have you, indeed? Well, what is it?"

"Milnor is to be married to Grace Harvey on the same day we have chosen for our wedding."

"They are really engaged, then?"

"Oh yes; I thought I had mentioned this before."

"No; but I had suspected as much."

"He thinks her an *angel*."

"Does he, indeed?" Julia said, with a smile.

"Oh yes. I never saw a lover quite so bewitched. His eyes have become so dazzled by looking at her, that a dark spot seems to obscure the loveliness of every other maiden he gazes upon."

"He never dreams, of course," returned Julia, pleasantly, "that the obscurity is occasioned by his own imperfect vision?"

"Oh no, of course not."

"Grace is certainly a lovely girl, so far as *appearances* and *manners* are concerned. Never having met her intimately, I have not been able to make up my mind in regard to the loveliness of her *disposition*, though of that I have heard good report. She never seemed drawn towards me, and as she has moved in a circle somewhat above mine, and is an heiress into the bargain, I have felt a very natural delicacy about pressing forward to make her acquaintance. I have met her in company with Mr. Milnor several times, and observed that he was a most assiduous lover."

"He is truly so. I believe her very *footprints* are dear to him. But I am afraid he has neither been just to her, nor to himself in this matter."

"How so?"

"He has fallen into the too common fault of us tender fellows, of making her believe that *she is everything* — and he nothing; that her will and her pleasures are laws for his government, as immutable as the laws of the Medes and Persians."

"A fault of which you, no doubt, feel deeply guilty?" Julia said, with an arch smile.

"I have, no doubt, sins to answer for on that head as well as he."

"As, for instance, in the case of fixing our wedding-day three months earlier than I stipulated for," returned, the maiden, laughing, while her cheek deepened in color, and the moisture stood in her eyes.

"That was only to prepare you for the full assumption of *my prerogative to rule*. I did not wish to reverse the order too suddenly, when I came to lay aside the character of *sweetheart* — and assume that of *husband*," was Wilson's pleasant reply to this sally.

"And so you think, I suppose, that when your friend Milnor comes to reverse this order, Grace will not take it quite so kindly as it is presumed I will?"

"Yes, that is just what I think; and I have my doubts, also, in regard to your *immediate quiet submission*," he added, gayly. "It is, doubtless, so pleasant a thing to *rule* a lover, that to resign the *scepter* into the hands of the husband, and *sink into a passive state of obedience* — must be attended with much natural reluctance. But we shall see."

"Oh yes! we shall see," returned Julia, blushing at her lover's *pleasant trifling*. "Then you do not seem very well satisfied with the prospects of Mr. Milnor?" she said, after pausing thoughtfully for a few moments.

"I am not very seriously concerned about him, but still I have had occasional misgivings. I am afraid of *her strong self-will*, especially as *Milnor* is by no means deficient in the same quality of mind — though he has chosen to let it remain passive during his interactions with Miss Harvey. *Armstrong* was not quite so willing to *assume a character*. He was too manly, and too honest to himself and others; and, therefore, he soon lost the favor which he at first won."

"I have always admired the manner of his fellowship with ladies. He *never flatters* them, nor treats them like *spoiled children*," Julia said.

"I wish all men were as *honest* as he in this respect."

"Miss Grace Harvey is said to be very rich. Is rumor true in this instance?"

"I believe it is."

"What is the extent of her fortune?"

"Some say a hundred thousand dollars."

"Indeed! So much as that?"

"Half of the sum will doubtless cover all that she is worth."

"Even *that*, is quite a temptation for a young man."

"To far too many young men, it is."

"How do you think Mr. Milnor feels on this head?"

"I suppose he feels not the slightest objection to the fortune; though I will do him the justice to say that I am very certain he loves Grace Harvey for *herself* alone. But, be that as it may, he will stand the chance of having the true foundation of his attachment, well-ried."

"How so, Henry?"

"In two ways, I am inclined to think. First, from the error he has too evidently committed, in allowing both himself and Grace to occupy, during courtship, *false positions*, and from the loss of anticipated wealth."

"How do you mean the loss of anticipated wealth?"

"No doubt nearly the whole of Miss Harvey's money lies invested in stocks, or some such securities. To the few far-seeing and clear-headed ones, it has become fully apparent that the present system of excessive trading and excessive banking must soon burst, like an *over-inflated* balloon. When this takes place, as I am sadly afraid that it soon will, thousands and hundreds of thousands of people in the United States will be involved in ruin. So fully do I apprehend the danger, from the clear exposition I have heard upon the subject, that I have already sold out the few shares of bank-stock I held, and invested the proceeds in a way to be least affected by these reverses, should they, unfortunately, come upon us."

"Why, then, do you not open Mr. Milnor's eyes to this fact?"

"So I intend on doing, as soon after his marriage as it will be prudent to allude to the subject. At present, it could only disturb his mind, while a feeling of delicacy would prevent his saying anything either to Grace or her guardian on the subject."

"Very true; but I sincerely hope that no such *catastrophe* as that of which you speak, is near at hand."

"Some think it very near. There is more than one bank in Boston towards which suspicion has been excited, and particularly a bank in the direction of which the father of Grace was at one time prominent. My supposition is, that in the stock of this bank, the fortune left to his child has been mainly invested. Until very recently, it has been thought among the most substantial institutions in the country, and no doubt was when Mr Harvey was connected with it; but the knowing ones are beginning quietly to sell out their stock. Already shares have fallen one or two percent."

"If such an event as that you seem to have such good ground for fearing should take place, it will *severely try* both Mr. Milnor and his bride. He does not possess property sufficient to maintain the style of living to which she has been used."

"No, that is certain; but we must hope for the best, both for others and ourselves. Perhaps we shall have our *own trials* in this respect, though not on so large a scale. With all my prudence and forethought,

I may not be able to retain even the small patrimony to which I have trusted, for many of life's blessings, in asking you to share with me in this world's *weal or woe*."

"That trial, whenever it comes, will only, like the *darkness* of night — reveal *stars* in our firmament of whose existence we would otherwise have had no knowledge," the maiden said, with a trembling voice and a dimming eye.

Williams responded only by a tender salutation as he drew his arm around Julia's waist and pressed her to his side. He felt doubly blessed under the consciousness that life's changes, be they even attended with *clouds* and *storms* — would only unite them more closely.

The short intervening space of time soon passed, bringing the day that was to unite the two couples in wedlock's sacred bonds. At the house of Mrs. Ellis, a large and mirthful company was assembled to witness the nuptial rites, comprising the wealthiest and most fashionable people of Westbrook. While these were gathering below, *Grace* sat, all attired for the ceremony, her lover by her side, with a heart too full of joyful feelings, and thoughts too full of pleasant images, to permit her to converse farther than to make replies to the few remarks that were addressed to her. Before her, the whole world seemed as bright as the unclouded sky, and her *path* through it soft with thickly-strewn flowers, which loaded the air with their balmy fragrance.

A few dwellings removed from that of Mrs. Ellis, a similar scene was passing, but in a far quieter way. Julia Lawson, with three or four intimate friends, was in her chamber, and awaiting, like Grace Harvey, the moment when she should be called upon to *pledge eternal fidelity* to one whose *virtues* had won her heart. Below were assembled a few friends, but each one loved the gentle girl whose marriage they had come to celebrate as a daughter or a sister. In her own circle, she ever diffused around her, the fragrance of a sweet spirit — which sought only to make others happy; and this, whenever the thought of her was awakened, touched the inward sense with a peculiar delight. Her image, therefore, was never present to any, without a feeling of *affection*. It was this feeling which had drawn together the little company who had assembled to give her joy upon her wedding day.

Hearty congratulations mingled with warm kisses, and a mirthful scene of confusion, that reigned for full half an hour, followed the union of *Grace Harvey* with *Lewis Milnor*. All were delightful, and everyone happy — the lovely bride the happiest of all. And yet there was much around her that was bright only on the *glittering surface*. Kind words were spoken, and kind wishes offered, to be quickly forgotten, or only remembered at intervals which would become more and more distant from each other, as days, and weeks, and months went steadily by.

There is something in a mirthful wedding-party, made up of the young and beautiful, who are just entering life — and of the middle-aged and aged who have tried and proved many of its *sober realities*, which awakens a feeling of peculiar interest. How naturally recur *our thoughts* to other days — to a similar scene that passed long, long ago, to the promise of that happy hour — to the *real life* which has taken the place of *dreamy anticipations* of the future, so full of a deluding romance. And then we look at the new-made bride, and the young circle around her, and half sigh as we think of that *uncertain future* — of the many who have tried it, like them, with an eager confidence — and been painfully disappointed.

There were those present when Grace Harvey responded to the vows of her betrothed who *felt* thus and who *thought* thus; and there were those, also, who could never look upon a happy bride without an involuntary sigh — a sigh for *themselves*, springing from the remembrance of past times of trial, misunderstandings, and, perchance, open bickerings — which had *poisoned the fountains* from which flowed all that made life truly desirable. Like her, they had perceived no *cloud* above the bright horizon — had dreamed of none — far less imagined that from their own spirits would go up the vapors which would at last become thick and lowering, and from which would finally burst a *devastating storm* — whose *marks* and *scars* could never be effaced.

But there were few, if any, who thought thus in the select company that gathered around *Julia Lawson*, and listened to her vows which were meekly uttered. They were of those who, like her, had early learned to know themselves — had early practiced the *higher precepts of truth*, which teach this most important lesson: that man's *unhappiness* springs from his *blind love of self* — and that *true happiness* can only

spring from a self-sacrificing spirit, a spirit which seeks to bless others. In that humble spirit, resides the *secret of true happiness* on earth.

A spectator, all unacquainted with the characters, history, and prospects of the two maidens, might have concluded that *Grace* was far the *happiest* bride; that there was something far too serious, even sad, he might think, in the thoughtful countenance of *Julia*. But he would have judged *erroneously*. The rays which glitter and sparkle upon the *rippling surface* — descend not into the *hidden waters*. It is the *placid lake* which receives, even into its depths, the blessed sunshine, with its light and warmth.

CHAPTER 6.

“Your *bark* is now fairly upon the waters, my children,” Mrs. Ellis said to the happy young couple a few days after their marriage, “and the sea appears *calm* and *pleasant* before you. I desire that it would remain thus calm and pleasant — unto the end of your voyage. But it will not remain with a surface all unruffled, nor will a sky unobscured by clouds, bend always smilingly over you as now. The *face of nature* is a true representative of life: *Today* the leaves are bright, the air mild and balmy, and the earth rejoicing in sweet blossoms and fruits, with rich foliage gently undulating in the summer breezes. *Tomorrow* all is changed. Thick *clouds* have obscured the sun, and a *tempest* has burst from the very sky, which but yesterday was all bright and serene. In a little while, this passes away, and all looks calm and beautiful as before — except here and there some token of the storm: a broken branch, a riven tree-trunk, or some beautiful garden with its mirthful blossoms all marred by the wind and rain.

“Thus, my dear children, will your life be *checkered* by sunshine and storm. Pray to God, that the *tempest-marks* are not too deep!”

“You are in a soberer mood than usual this morning, aunt.” Grace said, half laughing, half serious.

“I rarely see anyone for whom I feel a strong regard, entering upon life as you are now, without feeling sober. That you will be happy in each other, and continue to love each other with increasing affection, I am sure. But I am also sure that you will be *tried in the fire*, as all are in this life — ‘*Your dross to consume, and your gold to refine.*’ Without being thus tried, you cannot possibly so know *yourselves*, and so understand *life’s truest and best ends*, as to be really happy.”

“I don’t wish to be any happier than I now am!” Grace replied to this, looking up into her husband’s face with a glance of fond confidence. “I am *perfectly* happy.”

“No doubt of it, my child,” Mrs. Ellis said; “but *life* is not all a *honeymoon*. The *blossom*, with its beauty and fragrance — both so delightful to the sense — sports only for a brief season in the breeze and sunshine, and then gives place to the hardier and externally less attractive *fruit*; and this, warmed by the *sun*, matured and strengthened by the *storm* — swells into delicious maturity.

“In which state, do you suppose — is the tree endowed with consciousness like you, would it be most truly happy: in the gentle spring-time, when each bough put forth a hundred sweet blossoms, and loaded the breeze with rich fragrances — or in sober autumn, when every branch was bending with golden fruit? Surely it would be happier far when the *end* for which it had put forth its blossoms, was gained. The tree would not delight in its *blossoms* because they were beautiful and fragrant alone — but because they were a sweet promise of *fruit*, the *end* of its existence. So should it be with you, my children. You are now in the *springtime* of life, your young minds blossoming with a like rich promise of fruit. Do not, then, rest in the mere delight you now feel. Think of the *true end of your existence*.”

“What is that true end?” asked the husband of Grace.

“To bring into *active use*, all the gifts which have been freely given to you — even as the tree does, for the good of all.”

“We are not, then, to live for ourselves?”

“Certainly not! Does the tree produce fruit for itself? Is all the delight we have imagined it to feel in the production of this fruit, in consequence of a *selfish* anticipation? No! it is a happy laborer for the good of others, and thankfully receives its own portion in due season from the bountiful storehouse of nature.”

“But we are not *trees*,” Grace said, smiling.

“Nor *angels* either, my dear; and yet the same principle of *delight in living for others*, and not for ourselves — appertains to the angels. If *primarily to regard others* is a true principle in Heaven — ought it not to be true also on earth? Can any principle opposite to a heavenly principle, be other than evil? Surely it cannot require more than a single abstract thought, to make you conscious that to *regard only your own happiness* is wrong. In everything we see from the hand of a wise Creator, that has not been perverted by evil, is apparent this regard to use.

“Look, first, at the *mineral* kingdom. What is the effort there? Is it to sustain itself merely — or is it not to sustain the vegetable kingdom? Again, see how, in the *vegetable* kingdom — the end is to sustain

the animal kingdom; and in all three of these kingdoms — the end is to sustain man. How beautifully apparent is this to the most thoughtless observer!

“Look, also, to the human body. The arm does not labor for itself, the eye see for itself, nor the ear hear for itself. Is it to sustain its own life, that the heart toils on with unremitting energy, or that the lungs perform, whether we sleep or wake, their allotted duty? No! Each organ and member of the body labors for the good of the whole, and receives its sustenance from the whole. And thus would it be in *human society*, which is truly a man, only in a larger form than the individual, because a complex of individuals — were each one governed by true principles. Each one must have a broad and generous regard for the whole, instead of *selfishly* struggling to appropriate all the good things of life to himself.

“As I have just remarked,” continued Mrs. Ellis, “you are both now in the *spring-time* of fragrant blossoms, and you are happy in the beauty and sweetness which surrounds you; but do not commit the *fatal error* of resting contented with the *blossoms*; hail them rather as the *precursors of fruit*, that when they have lived their brief day, and fallen to the ground — you may be blessed in the consciousness that each has left a seed which will grow into ripe and delicious fruit, freely to be given for the good of all.

“Believe me, my children, that in now setting out in life, you cannot commit an error which will be more fatal to your *happiness* — than the error of believing that you are primarily to consider yourselves, instead of others. This may sound strange to you, and it would have sounded strange to me, had anyone thus spoken to me when at your age. Nevertheless, it is a truth, and one which I never cease to regret that I had not known and believed, in years long since passed into oblivion. The *desire of being useful to others* is the only thing that can truly conjoin you as one. It is the *end* which unites. If your end is a generous regard to the good of society as one man — then nothing can come in to disturb the unity with which you seek that end. But if happiness to yourselves is the end — then you become separated into individuals, each of whom has a distinct regard to the means of attaining happiness, and must, sooner or later, interfere with each other. This is inevitable.

“If two, in the effort to act as one, make happiness an end, they will find *opposing principles* existing in themselves, which will create mutual unhappiness. Just so of a society, which unites to secure benefit to itself, regarding itself above the common good. Internal discords will be generated, for each individual who unites under such a principle, will regard *his own good* more than he does the good of his society, and, therefore, will be watchful and suspicious in regard to every act, lest it affect *him* personally. The same holds good in regard to political parties, which I need not tell you, Lewis, are ever and always rent in sunder by internal divisions. The causes of these, are fully apparent from what I have said.

“Study, then, to put away a merely selfish regard for your own happiness, and endeavor to think of others, and to make *good to the whole* an end. If you do this, then a regard for each other will come naturally, as an end superior to a *regard for self*; and then you will be truly happy in your wedded life, no matter whether there are clouds or sunlight in your sky!”

“I believe yours is the true philosophy,” Milnor said, with a thoughtful air, as Mrs. Ellis ceased speaking, “but I do not know *who* can fully adopt it. For my part, I feel that I am too *selfish* to devote myself to the well-being of others; nor do I see, in the present state of the world, that any such devotion would result in good.”

“It would not, if you neglected your ordinary duties, to run about, Quixotically, to redress wrong and relieve the needy.”

“But my ordinary duties regard my *own interests*. I follow my profession as a lawyer from *personal* ends.”

“Could you not follow it as energetically as you now do, if you mainly regarded *justice to the whole community*?”

“Perhaps I might, though I doubtless would be prevented from undertaking prosecutions for the sake of heavy fees, that I knew could not be successful without doing violence to justice.”

“And in not undertaking such prosecutions, you would be governed by a regard to the public good?”

“Certainly — and that would be right.”

“Can a *truly honest man* act in any other way?”

“You probe closely, Aunt Mary; but I suppose I must answer you in the negative.”

“Now, is it not possible for every man, no matter what orderly occupation he may follow, to be governed in every transaction by a regard to the good of his neighbor — and yet not suffer in his individual interests?”

“I suppose it is.”

“As, for instance, may not the soldier fight from a love of country just as faithfully, and even far more so — than from the merely selfish love of pay, or a reputation for courage? And may not the magistrate dispense justice as truly when governed by considerations of equity — as when governed by some end to his own interests? And so of the physician, the merchant, the artisan, the tiller of the ground, and others? And further, will not the soldier stand as good a chance of honor and advancement, the magistrate of retention in his office, the physician, the merchant, the artisan, and others — of the just reward of their toil, as if they were governed solely by personal ends?”

“Assuredly they will.”

“Then you see, that for anyone to act from an end of good to the whole, is not to injure himself. Is it not possible for you to plead the cause of *innocence* — as faithfully with justice as the leading end in your mind, as you could were a *fee* the governing impulse?”

“Yes, and perhaps far more so.”

“You say right. The higher, and purer, and therefore the less *selfish* the *end* from which a man acts — the clearer will be his mind, and the more powerful his demonstrations of truth.”

“Doubtless, an immutable truth. My own experience in my profession corroborates it. The best effort I ever made was one in which I became voluntarily the counsel of a poor, but injured man.”

“The *pure love of justice* which you then felt — opened your mind to an influx of light from above, from whence all that is good and true flows down to us.”

“And therefore the purer, and, consequently, higher our ends of action — the more are our minds opened to the reception of light from above.”

“Yes, and as all true wisdom and power are from above, only those who by pure ends connect themselves, as it were, with Heaven, can have true power.”

“But, Aunt Mary, I know men of impure minds, and evil ends of life — who yet have vigorous intellects, and who sway the multitude at will.”

“Theirs is the power of *darkness*, and by it they move men by what is *evil* in them.”

“But have we not men in high and important stations, who are known to have sought those stations merely for the sake of power and emolument, who yet discharge the duties of their offices with justice and judgment?”

“We have.”

“Does not this destroy your position?”

“No; there is power in order, and, therefore, in orderly official stations. In other words, there is a *power in office* that is independent of the incumbent’s individual character. Place any man in office, and while in it — he is a different man from what he is when out of it, and acts from a different influx of light into his mind. The end of the office being good to the whole, the man who fills the office, although he may be a very selfish man, and cares nothing for the office except for the sake of what it gives him — will, in all his official acts, have more or less regard to the general good. Still, it often happens that a man becomes so thoroughly depraved in mind, that he will pervert his office for selfish ends. These instances, however, are not glaring.”

“To act from a general regard to the good of the whole as a *principle of life*, now that you have presented it to my mind clearly — seems very beautiful,” Milnor said, speaking in an earnest voice.

“A very beautiful *theory*, truly,” added Grace.

“A thoroughly practical *principle*, I am satisfied,” remarked Milnor, with emphasis.

“It is, my dear children,” resumed Mrs. Ellis, “eminently practical, and involves, as I have before said — your best interests in life.”

“I feel deeply conscious that it does,” Milnor returned. “I never saw the *whole subject of life* as I now see it; I never felt that so much hung upon our *ends* of action. Now I see that upon them, everything depends. Life is a matter of serious consideration.”

“So I would think by your countenance,” Grace said, laughing. “I never saw you look so solemn in my life!”

This playful sally turned the subject into a less absorbing and more cheerful current.

CHAPTER 7.

“Dear me!” ejaculated Mr. Milnor, one morning, about two weeks after his marriage, lifting his eyes from a newspaper which he held in his hand, and looking into the face of his wife with an expression of *alarm* on his countenance.

“What is it? What is the matter?” asked Grace, eagerly, her face reflecting the alarm visible upon that of her husband’s.

“The Bank in Boston has failed!”

“Failed!” exclaimed Grace, starting to her feet, and becoming deadly pale.

“It is too true; and it is stated, besides, that not even the bills will be paid, leaving the *stock* a total loss. How much had you in that stock?”

“A large amount. Some thirty or forty thousand dollars, I believe.”

“And the balance of your fortune is in bank-stock likewise?”

“Yes; the entire balance, whatever it is, is in the stock of the Bank.”

“The Bank! Let me see!” and Milnor again referred to the newspaper. In a few moments he read aloud,

“Great excitement has existed throughout the city, and several of our institutions have been run upon; among them the Bank, from which nearly one hundred thousand dollars have been drawn. Few expect its doors to be opened tomorrow morning; but we shall see.”

“Too bad! too bad!” were the bitterly-uttered words of Lewis Milnor, as he dropped the paper, and commenced pacing the room backward and forward, his lips tightly compressed, and a dark frown upon his brow. He seemed for the moment to forget his young bride — to forget everything but the fact that a handsome fortune, made his own in a moment — had, in as brief a space, passed beyond his grasp forever! He had flattered himself that the *wealth* which would go with the hand of the lovely girl made no part of the inducement which had led him to win her young heart. It had only been for *herself*, that he had loved her. Now the nature of his love was suddenly and severely tried — and the dross exposed not only to himself, but, saddest of all, to Grace, who saw, too plainly, that she had not been loved for herself *alone*. For one like her to make such a discovery, and at such a time, was a terrible trial — a trial that seemed too great for endurance. For a moment she seemed driven almost to the verge of madness; but she rallied with a vigorous effort, and was just passing from the room, when her husband, fully restored to consciousness, and painfully aware that he had betrayed his real feelings far too openly, caught her arm, and said,

“Grace! only for your sake, does this heavy reverse pain me.”

But she had seen his *true* state written upon his countenance too plainly. No words could falsify it. She stood still, and, looking him steadily in the face, said calmly, but with marked emphasis,

“I only wish that it had occurred one week earlier.”

“Why do you say that, Grace?”

“Then you would have been — ”

“In the name of Heaven, what has happened?” exclaimed Mrs. Ellis, who came into the room at the moment, and was instantly struck with alarm at the changed aspect and manner of the young couple. Her interrogation prevented Grace from finishing her sentence, who, disengaging herself from the hand of her husband, glided away, leaving him to make to her aunt, the sad communication of her changed lot.

“Tell me, Lewis, what has happened!” Mrs. Ellis said, as soon as Grace had left the room.

“The Bank has failed, and the Bank has been run upon; and it was not supposed last night, that its doors would be opened this morning,” Milnor replied, in a calm voice.

“Merciful Heaven! then are we indeed all *beggars*!” was Mrs. Ellis’ instant exclamation, pressing her hands to her forehead, and sinking back upon a chair.

“*Your* money is not also in those institutions?” Milnor said, in a sympathizing voice.

“Yes, it is all there — and all doubtless gone!”

“Perhaps not. I will go instantly to Boston, and learn the whole truth. But be of good courage; let what will, come, I have something to fall back upon — not much, it is true. But, to make up for all deficiencies,

I have a willing heart and ready hands. The *cloud* has gathered quickly, indeed, over our sky; let us not yield to the *tempest*, but rather meet the storm with calm brows and trusting hearts."

"My heart blesses you for such words, Lewis! They call my thoughts back to submission," Mrs. Ellis said, in a voice that had regained its firmness. "Go at once, as you propose, to Boston. Make all requisite investigations, and advise with my agent, and the guardian of Grace — as to the wisest course to be pursued. In the mean time, we will wait here as patiently as possible, and endeavor to be prepared for the worst."

Without pausing for farther conference, Milnor turned from Mrs. Ellis, and sought Grace in her chamber. There he found her, seated by a table, with her face buried in her hands, and her whole appearance indicative of a strong mental conflict. "Grace," he said tenderly, laying his hand upon her, "Aunt Mary thinks I had better go immediately to Boston."

No reply was made to this, nor the slightest indication given that Grace was aware of her husband's presence.

"Do you not think that I had better go?" he asked, after pausing for a few minutes.

"You can do just as you please," Grace replied to this, in a cold, indifferent tone, and without lifting her head.

Stung more by her *manner* and *tone*, than by her words, Milnor turned instantly away and left the room, though his heart reproved him as he did so; but his *pride* was deeply wounded. A weakness — nay, a *mercenary spirit* had betrayed itself, and had even been discovered by her from whom, above all the world, he would most have desired to *conceal* it; and she had felt its existence in him, and it had filled her heart — so he supposed — with an emotion of contempt, and had caused her, under this feeling, to repulse him.

It was some time before, under the conflicting *thoughts* and *feelings* which ruled alternately, he could again bring up his mind to the determination to repair to Boston, and make an effort to secure at least a portion of his wife's suddenly-wrecked fortune. Had it not been that Mrs. Ellis' interests were deeply at stake, as well as his own — it is more than probable that he would not have left Westbrook that day, and perhaps not at all, for the purpose of taking steps to secure a dollar of his wife's property. Conscious that his heart, all unknown to himself, had rested, with no small share of affection, upon the handsome fortune that was to go with the hand of Grace Harvey — and angry with himself for having been governed in any degree by so base a motive, it was trying him too severely to have added thereto the heart-sickening knowledge, that this had been discovered and resented by his wife before the first month of their married life had passed away. The richest dowry in the world seemed now like unattractive earth — compared to the confidence and love of his bride. To win back these, he would have thrown a dozen fortunes like that she had lost, to the wind, nor given a sigh for the vanishing treasures.

But, as whatever was to be done had to be done quickly, Milnor held another brief interview with Mrs. Ellis in regard to her own affairs, and then, without again seeing Grace, started for Boston. A ride of four hours gave him time for much reflection and close self-examination — not unmingled with troubled thoughts for the future. That he had calculated much, though before all unacknowledged to himself, upon the standing, and power to follow out some fondly-cherished schemes which the *wealth of Grace* would give him — was now too apparent to his mind; and, try all he could, he found it impossible not to feel disappointed, on his own account, at the threatened loss of every dollar of this wealth. His *conscious selfishness* chafed him exceedingly, and was ten times more galling from the fact that he had, in a moment of weakness, betrayed it to his wife. So strongly was he affected by this, that, before his arrival in Boston, he had pretty well made up his mind, not to see the guardian of Grace at all. The motive for this was twofold: primarily, to let his wife feel that he was indifferent whether he received any property by her or not, and, therefore, that in her judgment of him as *mercenary* — she had done him a wrong; and, secondarily, as a kind of punishment for this very mercenary feeling, which he was so anxious to make Grace believe, he had never experienced.

Mrs. Ellis did not see Grace from the time when she had learned from Milnor the fact of the failure in Boston, until after he had departed for the city. She then sought her in her chamber, and found her seated

by a table, her face hidden in her hands, very much in the same position that her husband had left her in so suddenly, a short time before.

"My dear Grace!" she said, tenderly, as she seated herself by the side of her niece, and drew an arm around her, "do not weakly give way under this sudden loss of mere external things. I, too, will doubtless lose all, and be left, in the decline of life, without the *support* which *you* can lean upon — a husband's devoted affection."

A free gush of tears was the only indication that Grace heard the words of her aunt, who, after a pause, went on:

"It may not, however, be as bad as would at first appear. Perhaps we shall save a portion of our property — enough to keep us above poverty."

"Heaven grant that it may be so!" sobbed out Grace. "I would rather die, than be dependant upon my husband for a support."

"That, my child, is a wrong feeling. Upon whom, if not on him, can you have any claim?"

"I would rather die than be dependant upon him!" was the young wife's only reply, made with something of *indignation* in her voice.

"Grace! this must not be. Such a feeling is *unworthy* of your own heart, and *unjust* to a husband whose love a change like this, can only increase, not diminish. It is, doubtless, a source of pain, and even mortification, to find that, instead of rewarding him with a rich dowry of external blessings, as well as the blessing of a true heart, you will, in all probability, be able only to give him the latter. Still, do not *wound* him, do not *insult* him by an intimation that you suspect him to have been influenced by a regard for your *fortune*, more than by a love for *yourself*."

"I only wish it had happened a week ago — then he would have been free!" Grace returned, with warmth.

"If it had, it would not have retarded your marriage a day."

"It would have put it off forever!" bitterly responded the young wife, her tears flowing freely.

"Are you mad, Grace!" exclaimed Mrs. Ellis at this, in a voice of mingled astonishment and rebuke. "Have you really had so little true confidence in the man you were willing to marry, as all this indicates? Shame on you for the *base suspicion* against a true heart, which you have suffered yourself to entertain! I know Lewis Milnor better!"

But to all this, Grace remained silent. Gladly would she have believed that her aunt's rebuke was just — that her husband had loved her for *herself* alone. But she could not. She had seen a different sentiment in his face. Too vividly had the keen disappointment he felt at the sudden loss of her property, been pictured there — and too correctly had she read the blasting record. At first, this had made her feel indignant; but too truly and too deeply had she loved him, to suffer such an emotion to remain long predominant. It gradually gave place to a most heart-sickening state of mind — one in which a consciousness of having poured out her *heart's best treasures* upon one who had loved her mainly from *selfish ends* — crushed down her feelings, and made her almost wish to die.

It was all in vain that her aunt talked to her, and represented the wicked injustice of the suspicion which it was evident to her had been awakened in the mind of Grace. Had Mrs. Ellis known the *cause* of Grace's convictions — her better knowledge of human nature, with its infirmities, and its struggles against conscious evils — it might have been in her power to have given Grace some thoughts which would have elevated her into a truer appreciation of Milnor's character and state of mind. But, altogether ignorant in this respect, she could not truly meet the mentally-diseased state of her niece, whom she was at last compelled to leave to her own bitter thoughts.

CHAPTER 8.

It was nearly dark when Milnor arrived in Boston, his mind still in a state of confusion and excitement. Long before he had reached the city, he had learned that the Bank had, as it had been thought would be the case on the day previous, closed its doors. His first step was to call on Mrs. Ellis' agent, a plain, common-sense-looking merchant, whose age was about sixty. From him, he learned that the amount of stock held by his wife's aunt in the two banks, and which had constituted the whole of her little fortune, had been thirty thousand dollars; that immediately on the failure of these institutions, the stock fell to sixty cents in the dollar, at which rates he had sold, securing eighteen thousand dollars. He was engaged in writing to Mrs. Ellis a statement of these facts, when Milnor called upon him.

"Do you know what steps the guardian of her niece has taken in respect to her interests, Mr. Goodlow?" asked Milnor, in a tone of affected indifference.

"None at all. In fact, he left here for the South a week ago, and I very much fear that by the time the news reaches him, and he returns, the stock will be down to ten cents. My own impression now is, that things have been very badly managed in both of these institutions, and that, in fact, not a dollar of the capital stock will be paid."

"There is great danger, then, of her loss being a *total* one?"

"There is great danger. She was married but a few days ago?"

"Yes."

"And you are her husband, I presume?"

"I am," was Milnor's calm reply.

"You seem to take the matter quite coolly?"

"There is no use in being excited about it. Still, I feel deeply interested; and this I trust, more on my wife's account than my own, as it will not be in my power to retain for her those *elegances of life* to which she has been so long used."

"These she would have to give up, even if she were not married."

"Very true. Still, she cannot give them up without pain."

"*Beneficial* pain, perhaps," replied the old man, bluntly — "a little of which such a very useful commodity, does us no great harm."

"Pretty cool philosophy that," Milnor returned, with equal bluntness, "and much more easily applied to *others* than ourselves."

"No doubt of it in the world; but it is true, nevertheless. As I had it on my mind to say, I will add, that to you this event may not be unattended with benefit."

"In what way?"

"You will not, I presume, as I judge you to be a young man of candor, deny that the very pretty fortune of Grace Harvey had some *influence* over your very decided preference for her?" The calm, steady, penetrating, yet benevolent eye of the merchant, as it rested upon the face of Milnor, prevented any equivocation in his reply.

"It has, doubtless, had its influence; but I must be allowed to say that I was far from being *conscious* of that influence. I believe, if I know myself, that I would have loved her with equal ardency, had she not possessed a single dollar."

"You must not be offended if I *question* that. You do not know yourself, young man. If you were drawn towards her in any degree by the attraction of wealth, then, if there had been no wealth, the attraction could not have been so strong. Is not that logically true?"

"Perhaps it is; still, I must repeat that I was totally unconscious of that attraction."

"Very well. This sudden disaster has, no doubt, made you conscious of it?"

"It has, to a certain extent; but who would not have felt a similar weakness?"

"Perhaps no one. Few, probably, in so slight a degree as yourself. Still, its existence at all is an *alloy* which should never adulterate wedded love; and the circumstance, no matter how painful, that reveals its existence, is a blessing."

"I am not so certain of that," Milnor said, after a deeply-thoughtful pause; "at least, not in my own case. Happy would it have been, if that secret bias had never come to the light, and exhibited its blasting deformity!"

"Now you show *painful* feelings. Why is this, Mr. Milnor?"

Another and longer pause ensued, during which time the young man's eyes rested abstractedly upon the floor. At length he raised them, and looked the merchant steadily in the face for some moments. The calm, truly benevolent expression of the old man's countenance inspired him with confidence, and he said,

"The reason is soon told. When it did become apparent, brought to the light of day by the intelligence that my wife's wealth had taken to itself wings — the eyes of Grace saw it as well as my own. To me, the discovery produced shame and regret — to her, it proved like the touch of a crude hand to the flower's shrinking petals. Sadly do I fear that the *sun*, which rose so brightly above our horizon — will never again smile from beneath the black clouds which envelop it."

Milnor's voice trembled, and he exhibited strong emotion.

"She thought you *perfect*, no doubt," the old man remarked, calmly, after Milnor had regained, in a measure, his self-possession.

"Perhaps that may have been her error."

"And no doubt was, as well as your own in regard to her. It is the *common error of lovers*, and one the awaking from which, always brings pain. Had not Grace made the discovery *now* — she would have made it *soon*. What is *in* us, will, some time or other, in an unguarded moment — come out. This is an invariable law. Before you had been married a month, something would have occurred to awaken you from your *delusive dream* — to the painful consciousness that each of you had *overrated* the other; that in the very bosom where you had fondly dreamed there resided all human perfection — were self-will, pride, suspicion, a predominating love of self, with other evils, in forms too varied and numerous to be known at a single glance."

"You draw a *dark* and *exaggerated* picture, I am sure," Milnor replied to this.

"No doubt it so *appears* to you — yet the picture is a true one. You and Grace, as well as every other man and woman born into the world, were born into *hereditary evils*. That you, of course know?"

"Yes."

"And do you not also know, that, until a man or a woman arrives at the age of rationality — that these hereditary evils cannot be put away?"

"I am also aware of that fact."

"And, also, that these cannot be put away, except by a resistance of them when they become *active*?"

"Yes, I know that also."

"Very well. What, then, do you suppose to be the most universal and deeply-seated evils in the human mind?"

"*Self-love*, with its kindred evils."

"And these, then, exist both in your mind, and in the mind of Grace, by transmission?"

"Yes, I suppose so, though weakened in the *degree*, that, since we both came to the age of rationality, we have struggled against them."

"Precisely in that *degree*. Now, is it reasonable to suppose that one so young as Grace, and surrounded as she has been by everything to minister to her pleasures, could have made much progress in the work of *resisting evils*?"

"Perhaps not."

"Have *you* made much progress?"

"Not much."

"Then you have come together, each under the vain idea that the other was free from human imperfections. Is it any wonder that the *first dark cloud* which shadowed your path — the first *shock* that disturbed you, has revealed some of the *lurking enemies* which lay hidden in your bosoms? No, certainly not! To Grace, the discovery which you say she has made, that you really entertained an affection for her money, as well as for herself — is no doubt a deeply painful one. But if she loves you truly, as I doubt

not, that genuine affection, especially if you let her see that you have not loved her for her money alone — that you do really love her, and tenderly will bring back her heart with her confidence to bless you.

“Fear not that the *cloud* which now darkens your sky, will ever remain there. Clouds are not *permanent* things. But, in order to their rapid dispersion, and in order to prevent their frequent return — be willing to see *your faults of character*, and to deal honestly with them. Be *tender* of the weaknesses and faults of your wife — and *severe* with your own. Nevertheless, ever be in the effort to *lead your wife out of her faults and weaknesses* — but do it with kindness, forbearance, and gentleness, though with wisdom and firmness.”

“Such a duty would require more wisdom, prudence, and forbearance than I probably possess.”

“Then you have already receded from your notion of her being an *angel* — and become impressed with the idea that she is full of faults?”

“Oh no. no! You are running far ahead of me. I am not at all conscious of her being *full of faults*. Indeed, I am satisfied that she does not possess half so many as I do.”

“Very well. If she only has half as many as yourself, you will readily admit that she has half of a pretty good number,” Mr. Goodlow said, smiling.

“I suppose I shall have to admit that,” Milnor replied, smiling in return.

“Then to these, whenever they become apparent, exercise kindness and forbearance; and yet be wise in all you say or do, lest your actions towards her have the effect to confirm her in her faults — instead of leading her out of them. This talking about your own faults of character and those of your wife, no doubt grates upon your ears a little harshly, coming as it does so soon after your marriage; but it may prove to you a far kinder act, than if I were to pass only compliments, and wish you a thousand years of happiness. I would not, however, have forced these unwelcome words upon you, had not circumstances occurred to make them timely, and, I trust, beneficial. Pardon my freedom; though until now a *stranger* to you, I may in the end prove a *real friend*.”

Milnor thanked the old gentleman warmly, and then the subject passed to one involving business.

“It is your impression, then,” the young man said, during the subsequent conversation, “that my wife’s property will be totally lost?”

“I fear so. Before her guardian can return, or send on power to dispose of her stock, it will be down very low, and the price only nominal at that. This, at least, is my impression, and founded, I am satisfied, upon good reasons.”

The long silence which followed this was broken by Mr. Goodlow, who asked abruptly,

“Under all the circumstances, what course do you think of pursuing, Mr. Milnor?”

“I intend acting as if my wife had never been possessed of a dollar,” was the firm reply.

“How is that?”

“I intend devoting myself to my profession with untiring industry.”

“The law?”

“Yes, I have some practice already. Not enough to support my wife in a very handsome style, it is true, or, indeed, in any style at all, were it not that I have a little income of five or six hundred dollars a year. With this, however, and what I can make at law, I hope to be able to render her *tolerably comfortable*. Time will increase my ability. I shall therefore cherish the hope of lifting her once more to the position which she now occupies.”

“Some would call all this very laudable and very praiseworthy; but I do not,” Mr. Goodlow said, gravely.

“You are a strange man! Wherein is it wrong? Ought I not thus to devote myself to my profession?”

“Certainly.”

“And for the sake of my family?”

“Certainly. He who provides not for his own household, is worse than an infidel.”

“Then what do you mean?”

“I mean that to do all this simply with the end of elevating your wife to the *same style of living* that she has been used to, is wrong.”

“It does not seem so to me.”

“Perhaps not. And yet, if you could examine yourself closely enough, you would doubtless find that a feeling of *pride* was really more active, than a desire to see your wife, for her own sake, surrounded by everything she could think desirable.”

“You probe closely,” Milnor said, after a thoughtful pause.

“I design to do so. If we begin life aright — that is, with the *right ends* — we shall have less to unlearn, and fewer painful awakenings from error.”

“No doubt of that.”

“It is for this reason that I wish to show you, that to make the end of simply elevating your wife to the style of living that she has been used to heretofore — would be a wrong end. Such a condition in life, may be the *worst* for her — and He who rules all things from infinite love and wisdom, seeing this, may have caused this change to take place, and may so overrule every future event, that, in spite of all your efforts, you will not be able to accomplish your dearly-cherished wishes. Your *end of life* being thus defeated — your happiness, as well as that of your wife, would be destroyed.”

“What *end*, then, should I have in view?”

“The end of faithfully *discharging your duty*, while you left the *result* to the disposal of a wise and good Providence.”

“That is not so easily done.”

“I know it well, Mr. Milnor; but is the end *right*? Is confidence in divine Providence right?”

“Doubtless.”

“Then should we not strive for that end, and also strive to put away all distrust in that Divine Goodness and Wisdom, which will inevitably, whether we confide or not, work out for us a far better and happier result than we could possibly work out for ourselves?”

“I feel that we should; but ‘duty’ is a hard word, Mr. Goodlow.”

“It has that sound to many ears, I know. It has sounded harshly to my own ears, and often does even now; but I have lived long enough to prove this truth, that only in the *path of duty* is to be found *true delight*; that all other paths lead *away* from real happiness. Now, in consequence of the loss of your wife’s property, new duties have devolved upon you. It is now necessary that you should devote yourself with more earnest application to the duties of your profession, in order to provide things *comfortable* for your family. But do not let your mind be disturbed while thus engaged, because you cannot provide, at first, the *elegances*, as well as the *comforts* of life. Your wife is to be the *sharer* of your *sorrows* — as well as your *joys*. If there are not true reciprocity in the one, there cannot be in the other. If she is to be the *royally-attended queen*, and you the *laboring serf*, and minister to all this state — how can there be any mutual love? You have not squandered her property; she has, therefore, no claim upon you for a condition in life above your own, and must come down to your condition. And if she loves you truly — she will come down without a sigh.

“Resolve, then, before you take the first step, to *begin* right; to enter upon your duties with a firm determination to prosecute them vigorously, with an end to your mutual well-being; and in the prosecution of them, to keep in view, in every transaction, the just rights of *all* around you. A *right end* never desires *wrong means*. This is not so with a wrong end. An eager and all-engrossing desire to place your wife in a high style of living, simply to *gratify her pride* — for no other motive could she have that would permit her to see you *toil* early and late to accomplish such an end — would bring you into many temptations. High fees would be almost irresistible inducements, for you to undertake causes against the oppressed and innocent, and to use in these cases, sophistical reasonings, and unfair means to confuse witnesses. But higher ends would protect you against such *allurements*.

“Be wise, then, young man! Now is the most critical period in your life. A *false step* now, a *wrong end* now — may involve you in years of unhappiness; while truth, firmness, and decision as governing principles, will certainly elevate you into a serene, sun-bright atmosphere — an atmosphere in which your wife will breathe as freely as yourself; and, like yourself, feel a happy pulse bounding healthily through every vein.”

“You are doubtless right, Mr. Goodlow,” Milnor said, as soon as the merchant had ceased speaking. “The effort to act as you direct, will cost me a severe trial. It will require a struggle to keep down *pride*, and to *strengthen weak points in my character* — but I must make the effort.”

“Do so, and success will crown your effort.” Then, after a pause, “You will not, I suppose, think of remaining in Westbrook?”

“I have not thought much about that; but I suppose it will be better for me, in the end, to re-locate to Boston, as a wider field of operations.”

“If you possess talents, a fair knowledge of your profession, and habits of industry — Boston will be your best place. But, in the event of the disastrous results that I now apprehend in regard to your wife’s property — you will have to live very plainly and frugally. This will *try* you both, but it will do you good.”

“I hope so,” replied Milnor, somewhat gloomily; and then rising, bade the merchant good-evening, and withdrew.

CHAPTER 9.

The mail on the next morning brought two letters for Mrs. Ellis, one from her agent, and one from Milnor. Grace also received a letter from her husband. Mr. Goodlow's letter was brief, explaining the condition of the banks as developed at their failure, the immediate disposal of her stocks, and the prices he had obtained for them. It was perfectly satisfactory to her mind as regarded the just action of her agent, and gave her much relief, as it contained the gratifying intelligence that she was not left *penniless*. Her letter from Milnor was mainly as follows:

"Mr. Goodlow has written the exact condition of your property. It is bad enough, but I am thankful that it is no worse! As far as Grace is concerned, there is a prospect of her interests being totally wrecked. Her guardian left for the South a week ago, and Mr. Goodlow seriously apprehends that, by the time he can return, or send a person to dispose of the stock, it will have fallen to eight or ten cents in the dollar; perhaps to nothing. For her sake, I deeply regret this; for my own, I care little. I possess health, education, talents, energy, and a thorough knowledge of my profession; and by these I can rise — and I will rise. While she had wealth, circumstances might have occurred to make her think that I had loved her for her gold; now it will be in my power to make her conscious that I have loved her for herself alone.

"As Westbrook is but a narrow sphere for action, I am strongly inclined to think that I ought to re-locate to Boston. What do you think? But I shall be home tomorrow afternoon, and then we will talk the matter over freely. I write to Grace by the same mail which takes this letter."

When Grace received her letter, she retired to her own room with a fluttering heart. It was the first she had ever received from Milnor, and it had come under trying and peculiar circumstances. A night, passed alone and almost sleeplessly, and crowded with far too many troubled thoughts, had caused the genuine affection which she entertained for her husband, to go out towards him with yearning tenderness. She even began to question the justice of her inference in regard to his love of her money, and had gone so far as to blame herself severely for her ungenerous *suspicions*, and still more ungenerous *conduct* towards him. In this state of mind, she broke the seal of her letter.

"My dear Grace." How refreshing to her spirit was the sight of these words, which she seemed to hear uttered in his own peculiar tones, and with touching pathos!

"My dear Grace," it began. "My letter to your aunt will explain the present state of her own, as well as your affairs. Half of her property has been saved; yours will probably be nearly all lost, on account of the absence of your guardian. To you, this cannot but be painful intelligence; to me, it is only painful on your account. I trust the effect will be to draw us closer, and unite us more firmly. It will cause you, I hope, to lean more confidently upon me, and me to regard and cherish you with a tenderer interest. *Externally*, things will have to be changed. We shall have to sink into comparative obscurity, instead of moving in the highest circle. This may bring to you its trials, but the change will, in the end, be blessed, I am sure. It will bring to view, both in you and in myself, the very foundation of our characters. It will show us what we really are, and give us the power of struggling against all that may not be good and true.

"Since I left you this morning, I have thought much in regard to the future. I have confidence in myself, and feel that I possess the internal power, with the knowledge of my profession, to enable me to rise into eminence in a few years. But Westbrook is not the place for this. My true sphere is *Boston*; this I feel. When I return, which will be tomorrow afternoon, I will converse with you more freely upon this subject. I am sure you will see with me, and fully approve of our re-locating here at once, and this without regard to what may be the result of your guardian's action, when the news of these disastrous failures reaches him. But keep a cheerful heart. All will yet be well."

"Go to Boston to live!" exclaimed Grace, as she tossed the letter upon a table with a gesture of *impatience*. "Never! at least under circumstances as they now exist! I have lived in Boston as the daughter of Silas Harvey; I shall not go back there again as the obscure wife of a poor, fortune-seeking attorney!"

As she said this, she arose, much agitated, and commenced walking the floor uneasily. While thus engaged, her aunt opened her chamber door quietly, and came in.

“My dear child! what has Lewis written to agitate you so greatly?” she said, as soon as she observed the state of her niece.

“Did he write anything to you about re-locating to Boston?” asked Grace, looking steadily in her aunt’s face.

“He did.”

“Well, I will never go there! He may depend upon that! At least, not if I am reduced to beggary!”

“Do not talk so, Grace. If, upon mature deliberation, your husband thinks it best to re-locate to Boston, you ought to acquiesce cheerfully.”

“I will *not* go there, aunt, if I am to go merely as the obscure wife of a humble attorney!” Grace replied, firmly. “What! go to Boston, where I have lived nearly all my life, and mingled with the best society there, and sink down into obscurity? Be passed with a toss of the head, a cold bow, or utter unconsciousness by my former associates? No! no! I have a little too much *pride* left for that, Aunt Mary! If I am to be cast down, let it be here, or in some Southern city where I am not known by anyone. But go to Boston — Never!”

“You have not truly loved your husband,” Mrs. Ellis said, compressing her lips, and fixing her eyes upon Grace.

“If to love my husband, truly is to give up all natural feelings, and submit my will passively to his — then you are right, aunt. But no such *sacrifice* is required of *any* woman.”

“But it is required that she should have such a confidence in her husband’s judgment as to believe him right, even if his opinions are against her feelings; otherwise she ought not to have married him. No woman is justified in marrying a man, in the soundness of whose judgment in leading matters of life, she has not the fullest confidence.”

“And then, if he tells her to walk through the fire barefoot with him, while he has heavy boots on — she must obey without a word of reluctance?”

“I did not say so, Grace.”

“But my *inference* is just. Lewis can go to Boston, and live as humbly there as he chooses, without an unpleasant emotion. But not I! Would not such an existence in Boston, be to me a *living death*!”

“It need not be, Grace. It ought not to be.”

“But it will be, if I go there. How would I feel, do you think, to meet Sarah Mitchell, or Mrs. Bannister, or Jane Palumbo, or a dozen or two others I could name?”

“It might not be pleasant, my child; but still, the dread of meeting them, and of having your changed condition exposed to them — would not be an evil half so great as your refusing to go there, when your husband clearly saw it right for him to establish himself in that city.”

“I can’t help it, Aunt Mary. To Boston I am *resolved* not to go, and I wish you would save me the pain of telling Lewis so plainly and distinctly.”

“But, Grace — ”

“Do not, let me beg of you, aunt, say one word more to me on the subject. I am satisfied in this pleasant little village. I will be content here with a little. To force me into Boston, then, would be an act of *cruelty*. If I am to be poor, obscure and rejected — let it be here.”

“But it is with the end of elevating, ultimately, your condition, that Lewis wishes to go to Boston. He seeks a broader plane of operation for his talents.”

“I do not wish any elevation — if it is to be attended with such sacrifices,” Grace replied. “No matter how high I might afterward rise, I could never feel the same if I came in contact with old friends, and be shunned by them.”

“There is nothing womanly in all this, Grace; nothing of the loving, self-renouncing wife; but much of the *weakness of a child*,” Mrs. Ellis said, in a reproving voice. “Your *conduct* pains me far more deeply than does the sudden *reverses* which have overtaken us.”

“I am sorry for it, aunt, as far as your feelings are concerned, but no farther. I do not think that Lewis ought to have entertained the thought for a moment, of taking me to Boston. His own sense of justice to me, should have made him reject the idea the moment it came into his mind. If he cannot see this, and,

therefore, will not permit himself to be governed by a consideration for *my feelings* — then I must protect myself. He will not find me a *passive slave!*”

The last two sentences were uttered with a degree of warmth that really startled Mrs. Ellis, and made her conscious that to oppose Grace in her present mood, would only be to confirm her state of mind, instead of bringing her out of it. She therefore gradually soothed down her chafed feelings, and then drew her off into some other subject.

On the morning after his first interview with Mr. Goodlow, Milnor called upon him again, and held a long conversation with him in regard to Boston as a suitable place to settle down in as a lawyer. Mr. Goodlow, who had taken a fancy to the young man from the first, said a good deal in favor of the measure, and held out, besides several fair inducements in regard to business which he could throw in his way, and that he could make for him with a number of men who were constantly requiring legal aid in some form or other. All this strengthened in the mind of Milnor, the much more than half-formed resolution to re-locate immediately to Boston. That Grace would have any very decided objection to going — he never for a moment supposed. Why would she? She had lived nearly her whole life in Boston, and would, no doubt, be well pleased to return — so he *thought*.

That afternoon he started for Westbrook, his mind more occupied during his ride home with the prospect of going to Boston, than with the condition of his wife’s property. It was just dark when he came to his own door, eager to meet Grace, from whom he had parted on the previous day, with feelings of acute pain. The long hours that had passed since his separation from her, had made him conscious how deeply he loved her, and how necessary her presence and her smiles were to his happiness. Aunt Mary met him at the door. With her, he only passed a few words of greeting, and then hurried up to the chamber of his wife.

She heard his rapidly-ascending footsteps, and, rising from her chair, advanced to the middle of the room to meet him on his entrance. In the next moment, the door was swung widely open, and Milnor bounded into the room, drew his arm around Grace, and kissed her over and over again with the most earnest tenderness.

“Dear, dear Grace!” he murmured in her ear, “it has seemed almost a month since we parted. How slowly the time has passed!”

Grace did not reply, but, leaning her head against his bosom, gave way to a gush of tears.

For a few moments Milnor stood perplexed in thought, yet deeply sympathizing with his wife; for he understood, or thought that he understood, why her pleasure at meeting him was mingled with tears. At last he drew her towards a chair, and, seating himself by her side, said,

“Dear Grace! do not let any event in life, which leaves us each other, have power to make you unhappy. Only be cheerful, and I will ask of you no more. That cheerfulness will be strength to me in every undertaking, and will be my guarantee for success. I can and I will rise in the world. Give me only a few years, and I will bring you back the wealth that has so suddenly taken to itself wings and flown away.”

There was a generous warmth in the heart of her husband, perceived so distinctly by his wife, that for a little while her own bosom felt the genial excitement, mingled with pride for the manly tone of her husband’s mind; but *self-love*, and a *weak, vain pride* were active within her, and soon threw to the circumference these better feelings, and she checked the fervent response that was on her tongue.

“I have had a good deal of conversation with old Mr. Goodlow, Aunt Mary’s agent, and he strongly advises me to re-locate to Boston. He says that he will — ”

“Don’t talk of *Boston*, Lewis! I never can go there,” Grace said, with warmth.

“Why not? I thought you had a very decided preference for that city, as a place of residence?”

“Whatever I may have had — no such preference exists now. I would rather, a thousand times, remain here!”

There was an exhibition of such feeling, decision, and earnestness in the manner of Grace as she uttered this, that Milnor was too much surprised, and really confused in his thoughts, to be able to reply for some moments. Then he said, in a kind, persuasive tone,

“But if it is most for *our* interest to go there, as I seriously believe that it is, you will not certainly object?”

“Yes, positively! On that subject my mind is made up. I cannot go to Boston under present circumstances. I have lived there once, and have still a large circle of fashionable acquaintances. I cannot live there again, unless in the *same style* I lived in then.”

“But, as circumstances have changed, no one would expect you to live in the same style.”

“Though enough there would be, who would not expect to know me at all under these changed circumstances; or, if they did know me, it would only be to *insult* me with their coldness or their pity.”

This was said with *exceeding bitterness*. Milnor was altogether surprised. He could scarcely believe that it was really Grace who was sitting by his side.

“Is not all that but a *weakness* on your part?” he said, with an earnest frankness that it would have been much better for both of them, if he had used long before their marriage. “What people may *say* or *think* of us, or even *do* to us — should never cause us to refrain from a *right action*.”

Grace had already been chafed by her aunt’s opposition in this very matter, and now she had but little control over herself. Her reply was brief, but to the point, and given with marked emphasis.

“Be that as it may, Lewis, you must say no more to me about Boston, for I will *not* go there!”

Never was Milnor more confounded by any declaration in his life. He did not know what reply to make. Wisely, however, he refrained from saying anything more upon the subject then. But he was as troubled, as he had never before been troubled in his life. The whole surface of his feelings was not thrown into agitation, as when he betrayed his disappointment at the loss of her property, to Grace — but there was a deep, depressing consciousness that he had deceived himself in regard to the *true character of his wife*. His conversations with his friend Williams came fresh to his recollection, as light to make more vividly apparent a *defect* that, had he acted with even a small share of wisdom, must have shown itself before.

Up to this time, he had never *opposed* her in anything, or ventured to have any preferences which were not hers. *Her will*, he had weakly and foolishly made *his law* in everything. It was only for her to express a wish or a preference — for him to feel a real pleasure in acquiescence. In minor things, this might all have been well enough, but not as a *universal law governing* between them; and this presented itself distinctly to his mind. There was also a perception that he could not now give up his judgment to his wife in matters of *importance*, unless she could meet him with sound reasons. To *weaknesses* and mere *prejudices* — he felt that it would be unjust both to himself and to her, for him to yield the sober convictions of his own mind.

But the error had been committed. He had *flattered a weakness* and *encouraged a fault* in Grace; and now that *weakness* and that *fault of character* had come into sudden activity, threatening to destroy the fair promise of his bridal morning.

He had discovered, far too soon, that the lovely being, whom he had fondly deemed as near *perfection* as possible, had *serious defects of character*, and such as impinged at once upon his own weaknesses, and at once aroused his own evils into far too active a state. A double trial, he would therefore have to endure. While patience and forbearance would have to be exercised towards his wife — he would have to be in vigorous contention with active evils in his own bosom, aroused by the very state of mind towards which forbearance had to be shown. This, and much more, passed in his thoughts during the night which followed his return from Boston, as he lay unable to sleep from the *troubled restlessness of his mind*.

CHAPTER 10.

The result proved the truth of Mr. Goodlow's fears. By the time Grace's guardian returned to Boston, which he did immediately upon learning the failure of the two banks — the stock had fallen to a rate which offered no inducement whatever to sell. All concerned felt much more disposed to let the whole matter rest where it was, and trust to a final apportionment — than sell at rates which would yield but a mere *trifle* compared to the whole amount involved.

A long conference with Mrs. Ellis on the day following Milnor's return from Boston had prevented any farther reference to the subject of re-locating there. Still, the idea was fully entertained, and the hope cherished, that the strong objections made by Grace would be laid aside. In this, however, Milnor found, by distant allusions to the subject, after the lapse of five or six weeks, that he was in error. Since the day on which news had been received of the loss of her property, she had become *altogether changed*. The mirthful, happy-hearted girl — had sunk into a gloomy, tearful state, from which no effort of either her husband or aunt could arouse her. To Mrs. Ellis, this was inexplicable. Not so, however, at least not altogether so, was it to Milnor. He remembered too well the secret feeling he had betrayed, and its instant effect upon the mind of his young wife; and he doubted not for a moment that her deep depression of spirits, arose mainly from the belief that he had not loved her and sought her for *herself* alone. In this idea he was not altogether wrong.

A suspicion of the genuineness of her husband's affection once aroused, and under circumstances which necessarily changed the tone of his thoughts from cheerful pleasure taking, to reflections of a very serious character, gained almost daily strength. Every act, and look, and tone, if not every word of her husband, strengthened this idea. She did not think to ask herself how far her own state of mind might affect his, or how far the change in external circumstances, necessarily requiring him to turn his mind to serious considerations of duty, might give him a soberer cast of thought. She only considered the fact that she had lost her property — and suddenly her kind, agreeable, devoted lover — had become the silent, gloomy, morose (so she imagined), *dictatorial* husband. She had seen his disappointment, and now she felt the coldness, indifference, and gloom arising from that disappointment.

The lack of habitual self-control in Milnor tended only to depress the spirits of his wife more and more. And her manner chafed him exceedingly. After stifling his own feelings with an effort, and assuming towards her a cheerful, affectionate manner, as he would often do in the effort to chase from her brow, the shadows which too constantly hung upon it — he would grow impatient, and indulge inwardly a chiding spirit if she did not meet him with a like effort to be cheerful. Had he maintained uniformly towards her, a calm, even, affectionate manner — he would soon have expelled from her mind, the cruel doubt that oppressed it. But this he could not do; his own feelings were too acute. After making a sincere effort to win her from her reserve and gloom, but without any visible effect — he would, in turn, become cold and reserved; and this *she* would attribute to feelings of indifference which he entertained towards her. She reasoned that her *wealth* was gone — and what did he care for *her*?

Thus matters had continued for several months; not, however, without intervals during which the young wife and husband had genuine feelings of affection towards each other; happy intervals, brief though they were, in which each felt the power, the warmth, the sweetness of pure, unselfish love, going out with an earnest desire to bless its object. But for these, their state would have been intolerable.

A more than usually earnest devotion of himself to the business of his profession during this period, tended only the more to strengthen Milnor's convictions that, if he remained in Westbrook, he never would be able to elevate himself. He could gain there a tolerable support, but neither his *love of eminence*, nor his strong desire to place his wife in her old position, as it regarded wealth, could be gratified. If he remained in Westbrook, he must live and die in obscurity. Such a thought he could not bear. While in this state of mind, he received a letter from old Mr. Goodlow, who had been made fully acquainted with the causes that kept him from re-locating to Boston, informing him that he had a very important suit which he wished prosecuted immediately, and that he wished him to come down at once and attend to it. The letter closed by saying, "I shall expect you in two or three days at the farthest."

With this letter in his pocket, Milnor returned home, and met his wife alone. He found her in a much more cheerful frame of mind than she had been for some time. As yet, no very apparent change had taken place in their *external circumstances*. Mrs. Ellis owned the beautiful dwelling in which they lived, and therefore, on their income being reduced, it was only necessary to make more economical internal arrangements — while externally things remained pretty much as before. The almost total loss which had been sustained by Grace was not, therefore, known in its full extent, as no one in the family chose to allude to it. Little change had, therefore, taken place in the associates of the young wife, and from these she drew a portion of cheerfulness. Two or three of these young friends had been with her during the morning, and she felt in a lighter mood than usual when her husband came in. The tender kiss which he gave her, as he drew her to his side, made her heart leap with pleasure, and glow with a pure affection.

"I shall have to leave you for a little while, Grace," he said, after he had sat for some minutes with her head leaning against him, and her small white hand in his.

"Oh no! Why should you go away, Lewis?" she replied, instantly rising up, and looking into his face with a troubled expression, a *suspicion* instantly crossing her mind that his declaration had something to do with her too long-continued coldness and real unkind manner towards him, of which her aunt had but the day before succeeded in making her sensible, as well as of the consequences, in a loss of his affection, which might result. She felt that she had been unjust to him.

"Business, Grace," returned her husband. "I have just received a letter requiring my immediate presence at Boston professionally."

"Boston! Business at Boston! What have *you* to do with business there?" Grace said, her face growing pale.

"Mr. Goodlow has written me that he has a very important suit just pending, which he wishes me to appear in."

"But there are plenty of attorneys in Boston. Why send for you?"

"I know nothing of his reasons, Grace. I only know that he offers the case to me, and that it is my duty to attend to it."

"Even if *I* do not wish you to go there?" Grace said, looking him steadily in the face.

"I have not dreamed of *opposition* from you, Grace, in any matter of mere business," Milnor replied, seriously. "A wife should have sufficient *confidence* in her husband to be willing to rest all matters of this kind with him."

"Grant all that," Grace said, while an expression of impatience flashed over her countenance. "But should not a husband have some regard to the feelings and wishes of his wife, even in matters of business?"

"Certainly he should — all *reasonable* regard. Now, if you will give me one sound reason why I ought not to go to Boston and attend to this suit for Mr. Goodlow — I will not go there."

"Sound reasons to your mind are very different now, I find, from what they were a few months ago. A *sweetheart* and a *husband* are two different things!" This was said with a good deal of *bitterness*, and then followed a gush of *tears*.

Milnor was deeply disturbed by this unkind allusion, and yet one so full of truth. As a *sweetheart* — all had been smooth sailing upon a summer sea. But as a *husband* — he found himself upon troubled waters, and amid difficult and dangerous straits. Before, too, he had been culpably indifferent as to the course their bark might take — content to leave the helm in the fairy hand of the maiden, whose slightest wish, he had made a law. But now, his own strong arm and clear intelligence were required for safety, and he dared not weakly yield the *rudder*.

A young wife's tears, when they flow from a husband's opposition to her wishes, are powerful arguments, and it requires great firmness to withstand them. But even these arguments in time lose their force, more especially if they come too often in the place of justly-spoken words. For this reason, they did not weigh heavily with Milnor. But he soothed Grace as best he could with tender acts and words of affection. When she had become once more calm, he said to her, in a very serious tone,

"Grace, to prevent all misconception and misunderstanding, I shall, for once, speak to you very *plainly*. I hope you will bear with me patiently, and believe that I have loved you, and still love you, truly.

Notwithstanding, I cannot see it right to act in everything according to *your wishes*; and remember, that it is not usually an enemy who *opposes our faults* — but our best friend. Before our marriage, I did, as you have alleged, act differently from the manner in which I have acted in some cases since. This, I am satisfied, you have been led to think, is because I have been disappointed in not having received wealth at your hands; for which, and not for yourself, I was led to address you. In this you do me *great injustice*. It is an unkind suspicion, and no wonder that it has produced its legitimate fruits — unhappiness for us both. The cause, believe me, and I say it in all sincerity, does not lie there. I was to blame in deceiving you before marriage, into the vain idea that a man has no will of his own; that a *wife's wishes and preferences* — will always be the wishes and preferences of her husband. In the very nature of things, this cannot be so.

“Too often the very opposite takes place, and the wife sinks into perfect *subordination*, having her will almost entirely passive — except in such matters as create no concern in the husband's mind. But this is an *extreme* as well as the other, and both *disorderly*. The true relation is, that in those matters peculiarly adapted to man's province, such as the business of providing for a family, his judgment as to right courses of action should have great weight with the wife, who should endeavor to see the force of his reasons, rather than *oppose* him from mere *weak preference* for another way more agreeable to her feelings. This, I think, ought to be your course. *Before* our marriage, there existed hardly anything about which we could differ. Pleased to see you pleased — I was ever ready to minister to your gratification. I thought not of myself. I even *neglected duties* to fulfill a wish on your part. If you expressed a sentiment that differed from my own, I let it pass, because I could not bear to oppose you. But *since* our marriage, followed so soon by the loss of your property, a circumstance that of itself has greatly disturbed you — I found myself in a new relation towards you. In the first place, I saw that I was suspected of having been governed by *mercenary* feelings in addressing you. And, in the second place, as new obligations devolved upon me by this very loss, obligations to the performance of which I was urged by the very strength of my love for you — I found myself *opposed* where an imperative sense of *duty* urged me to action.

“I allude now to my wish to re-locate to Boston. In this opposition I saw nothing but *pride* and *weakness* on your part. And yet to these, my rational convictions have thus far been compelled to yield. Is this right? My reason tells me that it is not. And now, when business calls me temporarily away, and I see clearly that I ought to go — you oppose me, without rational argument, and then refer to the difference of my conduct towards you, as a *sweetheart* and as a *husband*. Might I not retort upon you with justice? But I will not, Grace!

I have spoken now with great *plainness*, not in anger, not with a wish to chide — but moved by the deep affection which I bear to you, to speak the truth, because it seems to me that I ought so to speak. Throw off this state of *weak deference* to what anyone may say or think! Be a true woman! Stand firmly by your husband, and sustain him in his struggle for eminence, and you shall share his reward. Strengthen my hands — and I will press onward with pride, and obtain a high place; oppose me — and I may sink into obscurity.”

Milnor spoke with deep pathos, looking his wife steadily in the face, and marking the effect of every word. But her mind was too much disturbed, and her *pride* too deeply wounded by what he said, to feel the force of any of that strong enthusiasm his closing sentences were intended to awaken.

“What would you have me do?” she asked, after he had ceased speaking, her eye stern and bright, and her lips firmly compressed.

“I would have you reconsider your objections to re-locating to Boston, and bring some juster argument against going there than any you have yet advanced.”

This was too much for Grace. To her mind it indicated a *total indifference to her feelings*. He would *drag* her to Boston, and expose her to *mortification* and *insult* — merely because he had taken a fancy to the place.

“*I will never go there!*” she replied, with strong emphasis, while her cheek glowed with passion.

Milnor received this declaration with perfect calmness. It fell like a heavy weight upon his feelings, crushing them into *passiveness*. But it did not weaken his resolution to act from the pure dictates of reason. An instant resolution was taken, from a clear perception that it was *right* — to act henceforth, in

all matters pertaining to his duties as a man of business, from his own rational convictions alone; to go wherever business called him, and in doing so, simply to *declare* that he was going; and yet, in all this, to maintain towards Grace the kindest and gentlest demeanor possible; to consult her wishes and her tastes whenever he could do so without a departure from duty; and never to allow himself to be agitated by her words or manner, under any circumstances whatever.

Although this was an almost instantaneous operation of his mind, yet all the conspiring circumstances were such as to make it clear to him that there was but one true way for him to act, and that the one so vividly presented to him. He did not make any reply to the declaration of Grace, but waited a few moments, and then made some remark on a subject unconnected with the one they had been conversing about, and this in a voice that was calm, kind, and somewhat indifferent.

The strong, unguarded declaration of Grace startled even herself with its indiscretion, and made her pause in a thoughtful review of her own state and the motives from which she was acting. She felt that she was wrong; but her mind was in too excited a state to make any *acknowledgment* of that wrong, even if *pride* would have permitted such a thing. She looked for some cutting retort, or some equally mad declaration from her husband, and was beginning to brace up her mind into opposition and self-determination — when he spoke about something mainly indifferent, in the calm, kind way just referred to. She was at once disarmed, but troubled. The *tone* of her husband's voice indicated a change in his mind, and that a sudden and important one. What that change was, she could not imagine — and yet it had reference to her. She had acted unkindly towards him — of this she now became conscious, and it had wrought in his feelings towards her, and in his intended actions towards her, an important revolution. What were they? What were now his real feelings? She would give anything to know. But *pride* was too strong to permit an overture or a *confession of wrong*. She could bear mental suffering — but *she could not humble her pride*.

CHAPTER 11.

When Milnor returned from his office in the evening, he met Grace with a quiet, cheerful air, his mind apparently unconcerned about anything. After tea, he took up a book and proposed reading, which was assented to by both Aunt Mary and Grace. An hour was spent in reading, and the conversation followed upon the subject treated of in the book, in which Milnor expressed himself in a style of language and thought, which made the heart of Grace warm with a feeling of pride for her husband, at the same time that it throbbed with a more generous, and, therefore, a less selfish affection.

After the evening had passed in this way, and they were about separating for the night, Milnor said, in a quiet, "of course" kind of way, which showed his mind to be fully made up on the subject,

"I shall go to Boston tomorrow, Aunt Mary."

"Will you, indeed? What takes you to Boston, Lewis?"

"Mr. Goodlow has written to me to come there and attend a case for him of some importance, and, of course, I must go."

"Oh, certainly. I'm glad to find that a man like Mr. Goodlow has confidence in your legal abilities. It is a case of some importance, you say?"

"Yes, I believe it is; but I have not been advised of its nature."

"How long do you expect to be absent?"

"That I cannot say. A week or two, perhaps."

"Not so long as that, Lewis?" Grace said, with an involuntary expression of surprise and disappointment, the tears gathering in her eyes as she spoke.

"Perhaps not, Grace; but if it is a case of any consequence, it will require some days to study it thoroughly — and then the trial of it may last as many more."

"I wish you didn't have to go," the young wife said, in a trembling voice.

"*Duty* calls him away, Grace. Let him go, then, with words of strength and encouragement — not with tears to depress his energies."

Grace made no reply, but turned away to hide her tears, and passed quickly to her chamber. Milnor did not follow her for some minutes. He purposely waited to give her time to recover her feelings.

About ten o'clock the next day, he parted with Grace in the tenderest manner, and then set off for Boston.

The hour that was passed alone by the young wife, after her husband had left her, was an hour of close self-examination and bitter self-upbraidings. His words, uttered so plainly the day before, came back upon her stripped of the harshness with which they seemed then to be spoken, and bearing all the force of true sentiments. Keenly did she feel their import.

"Oh, how *unjust* I have been!" she could not help at last exclaiming, as the tears came to her eyes, and she bent down her head, and commenced weeping and sobbing bitterly.

Her feelings had calmed down a good deal when her aunt came into her chamber and said,

"Come, Grace, I want you to make a call with me upon Mrs. Williams — Julia Lawson that was. You know she was married on the same day that your wedding took place. She has been ill for some time. We ought to have called before."

"Excuse me, aunt, if you please. I really do not feel like calling on anybody today."

"No, but that won't do, child. You must shake off such feelings."

"But what has made you think of calling on Mrs. Williams?"

"Her illness, for one thing. But I have often thought of making her more intimate acquaintance. She is a lovely young woman — as sweet tempered, I am told, as she is innocent and beautiful in appearance."

"I had rather not call now, aunt. I didn't call while I was rich, and now I do not wish to subject myself to the remarks about '*coming down*,' and all that, which will be made. I feel myself just as important now, as ever I did."

"And so you are; but your reason for not wishing to call is a very foolish one. You have nothing to do with what people may say. Is it *right* to call upon Mrs. Williams? That is the question to ask."

"It's *right* enough, I suppose; but I feel no *inclination* to go whatever."

"Will you not go to oblige me?"

"Certainly I will, aunt."

"Then get yourself ready." And, so saying, Aunt Mary turned away, and went to her own room to dress.

An exposure during the early part of the winter, had left Mrs. Williams with a severe cold, to which followed fever, and a general prostration of the whole system. She was exceedingly tender and fragile, far better fitted for a genial southern climate, than for the piercing airs and sudden changes of New England. The least exposure affected her. A sudden draught, a damp foot, or exercise that produced the slightest perspiration — would be felt almost instantly. It was this *susceptibility* which had kept her indisposed the greater part of the winter.

"She has not been out of the house for two months, I am told," Mrs. Ellis said, as she stepped from her own door with Grace.

"So long as that? Her days must pass very tediously."

"Perhaps not. *Sickness subdues the temper*, and brings with it the blessing of patience."

"Then Mrs. Williams is very *patient*, no doubt."

"I am told that she is."

"Well, some people have a larger share of this virtue than others. I wish I possessed more of it."

By this time they had gained the little gate to the white fence that enclosed Mrs. Lawson's cottage, and lifting the latch, they passed in. Their knock was answered by Mrs. Lawson herself, who bade them a smiling welcome.

"How is your daughter?" Mrs. Ellis asked, after they had been seated for a few moments.

"She seems better today, though she is still unable to leave her room," Mrs. Lawson replied, while a faint shadow flitted over her face.

"She has been ill for some time, I believe," Grace remarked.

"Yes, ma'am, ever since the winter set in. But will you not walk into my daughter's room — she will be much gratified to see you."

Mrs. Lawson arose, and led the way into an adjoining chamber.

"Mrs. Ellis and Mrs. Milnor, my dear," said the mother, in a tone of peculiar tenderness.

Upon a bed of virgin whiteness lay a pale, thin figure. Her face was partly turned away, and she seemed not to have heard the voice of her mother, or to be conscious of the presence of anyone. And yet her eyes were open, but lifted to the clear blue sky which was visible through the window, from which the curtain had been partly drawn aside. Enough of her features could be seen by Grace to impress her instantly with a feeling of admiration for their chaste beauty; while their calm, holy, elevated expression, so unlike anything of earthly mold she had ever seen, filled her with something like reverence and love.

"Julia, dear!" said her mother again, laying her hand upon her as she spoke, "Mrs. Ellis and Mrs. Milnor have been so kind as to make you a call."

A slight flush came instantly to the cheek of the invalid, as she turned towards the visitors, and offered them her thin, white hand. But her smile was sweet, and her large bright eyes lit up with a sparkling welcome. Grace felt drawn irresistibly towards her in a moment. There was a *charm* about her — the charm of purity, innocence, and love to all — which won her heart, and made her feel an inexpressible tenderness towards her.

"I will not attempt to apologize for not having called upon you before," she said, after the passage of some ten minutes, which had given Mrs. Ellis and Mrs. Lawson time to become engaged in conversation; "but, now that I am here, permit me to say that I shall feel greatly favored if you will number me among your friends. I have many with *summer* hearts; many who are mirthful, and glad, and running over with joyfulness; but none like you, who have learned, amid the privations, and pains, and weariness of sickness, to be cheerful — nay, I may say, even happy. May I, then, claim the privilege I ask?"

"I know not that I can impart anything to you," Julia replied. "But as often as you can spare an hour for my sick chamber, just so often will you bless the loneliness of one who often wishes for the presence of a *friend* to give light wings to the passing moments."

"Then you are sometimes weary?"

"I am but human," said the invalid, with a feeble smile.

"True! you seemed so calm and resigned that I had almost forgotten that," Grace replied, smiling in turn.

"But I am never allowed to forget it. Still, I would not be thought to *murmur* or *repine*. I have little cause for either. But for one thing — I would be happy."

"But for one thing! Ah! yes. That one thing. Who cannot say the same?"

"True. There is ever *something* to make us unhappy."

"But *what*, may I ask, is this *disturber* of your otherwise peaceful bosom?"

"I am not one of those," said Mrs. Williams, calmly, "who cling to life with such an eager anxiety as to be ever cheating themselves into false security. I am willing to die whenever my time shall come. But," and her voice quivered, and the rising moisture dimmed her eyes, "like yourself, but few months have passed since my wedding-day. When I look into my husband's anxious face, and listen to his tender inquiries — I am disturbed; and the thought of *him* disturbs me whenever I am more than usually conscious of weakness, and the gradual sinking of my health."

"But surely, Mrs. Williams, you do not have apprehensions of so serious a nature?"

"They often force themselves upon me — but are painful only on my husband's and my mother's account. It will be hard for them to give me up, if I should really be called to die, and that right early."

"Do not talk so, my dear madam! You pain me!"

"The thought of death to me, has nothing terrible," said Julia, innocently.

"It is a thought that always shocks me dreadfully."

"It has nothing in it painful to my feelings. It is, in reality, only life going from a dusky chamber, through a dark passage — into a brilliantly-lighted palace!"

"How strangely you talk!" Mrs. Milnor said, in surprise.

"Does this, indeed, sound strange to your ears! To me, such thoughts are as familiar as household words. From childhood up, I have been taught to look upon death not only without dread — but really as a *messenger of good*. I have been taught that the *Lord's providence* is over everyone, the evil and the good, and that no one is removed from this world except at the very best moment for him. I have also been taught that when anyone dies, his spirit is received by angels, who guard him with inexpressible tenderness and love, and that they introduce him so gradually into the scenes of another life, that he is not for some time conscious of the change; that when he has entered upon the other life, which is only a *continuation* of the life in this world — he is introduced into a society of like affection with himself; and, if those be good affections — he lives in that society engaged in active spiritual employments, which are *uses* of various kinds, inexpressibly happy forever. Why, then, should I fear to die?"

"Come, Grace, dear!" said Mrs. Ellis, laying her hand upon her niece, who was leaning over towards Julia, and listening with eager attention. "We must make one or two more calls this morning — and then it will be time for us to be at home."

Hastily dashing aside a tear, Grace arose, pressed warmly the hand of Julia, and even bent down and kissed her thin, pale cheek.

"I will see you soon," she said, in a low voice. "I must talk with you again."

"Come as often, Mrs. Milnor, as you feel willing to breathe the not very cheerful atmosphere of a sick room," replied Julia, smiling.

"You seemed interested with Mrs. Williams," Aunt Mary said, as they gained the street.

"Deeply! I have never felt so drawn towards anyone in my life. She is no *common* woman."

"That I have often heard said, by those who know her best."

"I do not mean that she has strong and brilliant points. I mean — "

"I know what you mean, Grace. There is a *loveliness of character* about her — a *sweetness* — a *goodness* that we rarely meet with."

"Even that does not express all I mean, Aunt Mary. She has *truth*, as well as *goodness*. With the *harmlessness of the dove*, there seems to be the *wisdom of the serpent*. There is power and lucidity in her mind — as well as gentleness and goodness in her heart."

“These, in just *proportions* — these, evenly *balanced*, make the *perfect character*, Grace.”
“And such a character is rarely met. This is why I said she was no common woman.”

CHAPTER 12.

During the greater portion of the night that followed Mr. Milnor's departure, Grace sought in vain for rest and sleep; her mind was in too feverish a state. Backward and forward, like rebuking specters, passed continually in her thoughts, the words of her husband; and at each review, her spirits became more and more depressed. It was long after midnight before her eyelids closed, but not even then, in peaceful slumber; troubled dreams haunted her imagination, and more than once startled her into consciousness.

At length morning came, but it found her unrefreshed, her pulse quickened, and her mind in a state of nervous depression. She had said nothing to her husband about *writing* — still she could not help expecting a letter on that day. As the hour for the arrival of the *mail* approached, she became more and more restless in mind; hoping for a letter, yet fearing that it would bring her no token from her husband. These fears were doomed to be realized. When the servant returned from the post-office without anything for her, she could not conceal her disappointment, but gave way to a flood of tears.

The day rolled heavily by, and another night was passed in broken and troubled sleep. As the hour for the arrival of the mail approached on the next day, she became so anxious and restless, that she could not sit still for a moment. The hands upon the clock never seemed to move so slowly. Once or twice her eyes sought, involuntarily, the pendulum, to see if it had not really stopped; but no, there it swung, faithful to its allotted duty. At last the hour arrived, and a messenger was despatched to the post office. Grace did not leave the window which overlooked the street by which he would return, until his form again became visible. In his hand he held a letter! How instantly did her heart grow still, and then bound on again with a heavy throb, which sent the blood rushing through every artery, as the letter caught her eye! It was soon in her hand. She trembled so violently, as she broke the seal, that she could scarcely hold the letter steadily enough to read it after it was opened. But she was soon as calm as a frozen lake. Its, to her, icy contents, instantly congealed her feelings. It ran thus:

"Dear Grace — I arrived here safely yesterday, and at once called upon Mr. Goodlow. The business he wishes me to engage in, involves his interests deeply. It will require my undivided attention, and for a much longer time, I am inclined to think, than I at first supposed. I had no idea that he reposed the degree of confidence in my legal abilities that he does. I must do my best to meet and sustain that confidence. I have but a *moment* in which to drop you these lines. Excuse, therefore, their brevity. Remember me kindly to Aunt Mary. Let me hear from you often. Your affectionate husband, Lewis."

When Mrs. Ellis entered her room, about ten minutes afterward, she found Grace weeping violently. She asked no questions, but lifted the open letter of Milnor, and ran her eye through it hastily.

"Cold enough!" she mentally ejaculated, and then sat for some minutes lost in thought. From this reverie she was aroused by Grace, who said, with bitter emphasis,

"He does not *love* me!"

"In that, you do him injustice. I know that he loves you with great tenderness," Mrs. Ellis instantly replied. "His letter is brief, and seems cold and formal; but you must learn not to *draw hasty conclusions from mere appearances*."

"If he had really loved me, aunt, he never could have written me such a letter!"

"I do not see why."

"It is as cold as an iceberg!"

"It was only intended to convey to you *certain information*, and written under circumstances which would not permit the penning of a mere love-letter. *Duty first*, my child. When a man's mind is in eager pursuit of any important end, the gentler affections retire into purer regions for protection; whence, when duty is done, they flow down again to bless their object. Your husband is a man of *talents* and *ambition*. The sudden reverses which have come upon us have quickened these into vigorous activity. A deep and tender love for you is the strongest of these quickening impulses. And now a spur has been given to this ambition, which has kindled all the energies of his mind, and directed them to a single end. It is for you, then, to *feel* with him — not to idly *murmur* because he does not stop, in his pursuit of a right end — to utter soft things, and make new declarations of undying affection."

To this, Grace made no reply. It did not convince her reason. She felt the *coldness* of her husband's letter; and she felt more — that it was *her conduct* which had made him cold, and that he was a sufferer as well as herself.

After the lapse of an hour, she sat down to reply to it; but, after beginning half a dozen letters, and writing half a page or so in each, she threw them all aside, and, burying her face in her hands, sat for a long time in a state of *gloomy abstraction*. From this, she was compelled to arouse herself by the announcement that three or four young lady-friends were below. It was fully ten minutes, however, before she could venture to meet them. When she did, not one of them could discover that anything weighed upon her spirits. Their presence and their lively conversation helped to bring back a *tone of cheerfulness* to her mind, which Mrs. Ellis perceiving, she insisted, after they had gone away, upon her making a few calls with her. This, Grace reluctantly consented to do. After paying the brief visits which had taken them out, they took their way homeward, and in doing so passed the neat residence of Mrs. Lawson.

"Suppose we call in for a little while upon Mrs. Williams?" Mrs. Ellis said, half pausing.

"Oh no; it was only the day before yesterday that we were there. So early a visit may be felt as an *intrusion*, especially as we have yet only made our first call; and besides, I do not wish to be thought too anxious to make their acquaintance."

Just at this moment Mrs. Lawson, who had stepped out for a few minutes, met them on her way back again.

"Won't you drop in for a little while?" she said, after the first few words were passed. "My daughter seems better this morning, and will be gratified to see you."

"Shall we go in?" Mrs. Ellis asked, turning to Grace.

"It would be a pleasure for me to do so," was Mrs. Milnor's reply.

When they entered the chamber of Mrs. Williams, they found her sitting up in bed, supported by pillows, her cheeks slightly flushed, and her eyes as bright as when they had last seen her.

"I am glad indeed to see you, Mrs. Milnor!" she said, extending her hand as Grace came up to her bedside, while a sweet smile of welcome wreathed about her lips, and then played over her whole countenance. "It is kind in you so soon to remember the weary invalid again."

"My visits to you, Mrs. Williams, will all be *selfish*, I am afraid, for certain am I, that I shall take away far more than I can give."

"Giving or receiving, I shall alike be your debtor," Julia said, smiling, "for I never feel happier than when conscious of having imparted something to another which will live in his mind and bless him. Though far too rarely, do I have this delightful consciousness."

"Never before," returned Mrs. Milnor, with animation, "have I understood the meaning of these words: It is more blessed to *give*, than to receive. They have often passed through my mind, but as a *dark saying*."

"They declare a pure and elevated truth. Happy would it be for mankind if it were more fully received!" Mrs. Williams said, earnestly. "To be ever receiving, and ever willing and desirous to receive from others — is not a right state of mind. Its effect is to reverse the true order of our being, to turn all our thoughts and affections in upon *ourselves* — instead of outwardly upon *others*. Each one in this state seeks to have all around him, as the ministers of his *selfish gratifications* — and is unhappy in the very degree that others whom he meets are as *selfish* as himself, and withhold what he so eagerly desires. But, in our efforts to make others happy, we find less obstruction to our desires; and if we take a real delight in this, we shall prove fully the truth of the words you have quoted: '*It is more blessed to give, than to receive.*' This will be found true in every relation of life — in the common offices of charity, in social life, in friendship, in love."

"In love?"

"Yes, and peculiarly is this principle the soul and center of true happiness, in *wedded love*."

Mrs. Milnor was silent at this declaration, and Julia proceeded.

"True love, when it feels a reciprocation — seeks to bless its object, and to be conjoined with it. It never thinks of *itself*; it never stays at home in its own bosom, waiting for gifts, and homage, and

offerings — but yearns with inexpressible tenderness to make its *object* happy, and finds its best reward in seeing that end attained.”

“There is no true love in this world, then,” Grace said, slowly, and with some bitterness in her tone.

“Perhaps none fully pure and true,” Julia returned, as she looked at Mrs. Milnor steadily, and with an expression of inquiry, in the face. “Perfect love exists only in Heaven. But we may have it here *relatively* pure and true, and in that degree experience the happiness which flows from its activity. And it is only in the degree that our love is *unselfish* — that it is to us a *delight* instead of a *curse*. Think for a moment of the state of a married pair, each of whom thinks only of *his* or *her* own happiness, and not only seeks after it, but expects the other to be ever ministering to this happiness. Contrast this with the state of two whose *genuine* love leads them to seek to bless each other — to look at the same end, and pursue after it with united ardor. Need anything be said by way of illustrating their states?”

“But suppose one is *selfish* — and the other *unselfish*?”

“Let a true principle rule in the bosom of him or her who sees the truth, for only in an obedience to truth, can we find any degree of happiness. If a woman truly loves her husband — she will not be quick to perceive selfishness in him. The *medium* through which we see an object, modifies the *appearance* of that object, and sometimes reverses it. It is from this law, that an *unselfish* wife will see in the selfish acts of a husband a genuine affection; while the *selfish* wife will distrust and reverse the well-meant acts of a truly loving husband into arbitrariousness. I have seen this in many instances. I have myself, in more than one instance, suffered my mind, from this very self-love, to bring accusations against my husband — to oppose him, and render us both, for a time, unhappy.” Mrs. Williams’ voice slightly trembled as she uttered this.

“You!” ejaculated Mrs. Milnor, in a low, surprised tone. “Oh no! *you* could never have done that!”

“I Beg God that I may never be permitted to do it again,” Julia said, earnestly. “But it was well, perhaps, to show me my own *weakness* — and my husband’s self-devoted affection for me.”

More than one question rose to the tongue of Grace as Mrs. Williams made this confession, but she suppressed their utterance. They would have betrayed too plainly her *own* state of mind, and the coldness which then existing between herself and her husband; and *pride*, if not prudence, forbade that. A pause of some moments, therefore, followed Julia’s last remark.

“It takes us young married folks,” she at length resumed, smiling, as she gave utterance to the thoughts that were passing through her mind, “some time to get acquainted with each other — I mean as husband and wife. And not much wonder, I suppose, for we are not always as *honest* towards each other as we *should* be during courtship. As *sweethearts* — our lovers set us up and pretend to worship us as demi-goddesses; but as *wives* — they presume to treat us as equals, and *our little hearts rebel*. During the former period, too, we put on as much of the *angel* as possible — and thus favor the *deception*. No wonder, then, that our too sudden laying of this aside, tends to break the *illusion*, and bring us down upon the earth again.”

This was said in a lively tone, which prevented it from depressing the spirits of Grace, who felt its truth sensibly. At this moment, Mrs. Ellis, who had been listening to Julia attentively, reminded her niece that it was time to go.

“Shall we have the pleasure of seeing you again soon?” Mrs. Williams said, with honest frankness, as she held the hand which Grace had extended towards her.

“Very soon, if I may be permitted to *intrude* upon you; but — ”

“Do not talk of *intrusion*, Mrs. Milnor,” Julia returned, quickly. “I have often felt a desire to meet you, which has now been gratified. Come, then, and let us be *friends indeed*, if you can find anything in me upon which to ground a feeling of friendship.”

The only reply that Grace made to this, was to press earnestly the hand which was still in hers, and then to hurry away to conceal her emotion.

CHAPTER 13.

After dinner Grace retired to her chamber, and resolved to make another effort to answer her husband's letter, but it was in vain that she attempted to write. Because of her *pride*, she was not prepared to make any *confession of errors*. She had no disposition to complain, and she could not write with tender confidence, for her husband had addressed her so coldly, that her heart was chilled. At last she laid her pen and paper aside unable to perform the task, and by way of occupation and relief of mind, took up a new work of *fiction*, and endeavored to lose herself in its pages. In this way she passed the remainder of the day and evening, although the vivid pictures that were presented to her imagination, had not the power wholly to dispel the gloom that had settled upon her spirits.

On the next day, as no further word came from her husband, she took up his letter and succeeded in answering it, but in as formal a tone, as that in which his own was conceived. With this off of her mind, she endeavored to wait as patiently as possible for another letter. None came on the following day, and this troubled her a good deal; but on the day after that she fully calculated to receive one in reply to her own. She was disappointed. Twenty-four hours more rolled around, and yet there was not a word from her husband! What could it mean? Had he been *offended* at the *studied coldness* of her letter? This thought distressed her beyond measure, and under its influence, she sat down and wrote another to him, couched in far tenderer words than those in which she had before written. This relieved her feelings a good deal. On the next day, which was just a week from the time he had left Westbrook, she received one in reply to her first letter. It was, like the former, brief and cold, and written, seemingly, in much haste. It referred mainly to the suit in which he was engaged, and spoke of it as one which required the most vigorous and undivided efforts of his mind. He said nothing, about his return, and did not hint, even remotely, at her *joining* him in Boston.

This made her heart-sick. The little that Aunt Mary could say, fell upon her ear utterly powerless. She was sitting alone, in sad abstraction of mind, when her aunt entered her chamber, some two or three hours after she had received her letter, with a newspaper in her hand.

"See here, Grace!" she said, smiling: "I have fallen accidentally upon a pleasant paragraph. It is in a city paper, received by the last mail;" and she read as follows:

"The Goodlow Suit. — The suit between Mr. Goodlow and the Insurance Company is slowly progressing. Yesterday a young attorney from Westbrook, named *Milnor*, who has been united with the able counsel on the side of Mr. Goodlow, occupied the attention of the court for three hours with one of the most brilliant speeches we remember ever to have heard. But it was not brilliant alone; it was full of sound argument and rational deduction. It produced a powerful effect. Everyone is looking to the result of this trial, with unusual interest. It will probably occupy the attention of the court for a week longer."

"There, Grace, what do you think of that?" Mrs. Ellis said, looking up with a broad smile upon her face. "Are you not proud of your husband?"

"I suppose I ought to be," replied Grace, wiping her eyes, and laughing, in spite of herself, with pride and pleasure.

"You can now understand his long silence, and his brief, cold letters."

"Partly, but not altogether;" and the countenance of Grace became again sad.

"Surely, my child, the new position in which he finds himself placed, and the all-absorbing attention that this suit upon which he is engaged requires — ought to be felt by you as a just reason why he does not write to you differently."

"Though my *judgment* may approve of what you say, my *heart* does not," was the reply of Grace. "Nothing ought to prevent his writing to me with affection, if he writes at all."

Mrs. Ellis felt the force of this remark, and therefore did not attempt to reply, lest her words should only confirm the unhappy state of her niece's mind.

"He does not *love* me — I know he does not; and how can I write to him?" the unhappy young wife said, laying down her pen, about an hour afterward, and leaning back in her chair with an expression of pain upon her countenance. For a long time she sat thus, while her mind was strongly agitated. A violent

struggle was going on in her bosom — a struggle between *pride* and *affection* — between *self-will* and *duty*. Affection and duty urged her to an *open confession of error*, and a declaration of the deep love which she bore her husband; while *pride* and *self-will* held her back, and brought accusations against him. This struggle was undecided when her aunt, who had been casting about in her mind for some expedient whereby to divert Grace from her gloomy state, came in and said,

“I have just learned that Julia Williams has been rather worse for the last two days. Ought we not to call in and see her?”

“Worse did you say, aunt?” asked Grace, in a voice of real concern.

“Yes dear; I really begin to feel alarmed for her. It is really melancholy to see one so young, so pure-minded and lovely, *fading away*. Earth cannot spare such as her. We need their virtue-inspiring presence.”

“And yet, aunt,” returned Grace, whose mind had become interested, “she does not shrink at the thought of death. The grave seems to have no terrors for her.”

“Why should it have terrors for the godly?”

“I don’t know that it should; but to me the thought of death is terrible. It makes my heart icy cold. ‘*Corruption, earth, and worms!*’ Dreadful! And, above all, the *uncertainty* which awaits the departing spirit. But, in regard to this, Julia has a peculiar and a sustaining *faith*. She seems almost as familiar with things *beyond* the grave — as with those that daily meet her natural eyes. To her, death is no more than the passage from a dreary wilderness — to a sun-bright region; upon which she has thought and read until her spirit has become entranced with its loveliness, and she almost *yearns to depart*.”

“Too soon — far too soon for those who love her, will be, I deeply fear, the peaceful departure of her freed spirit,” Mrs. Ellis replied, somewhat sadly. “But come, shall we not make her a visit? It will, I am sure, be *pleasing* to her, and, I doubt not, *profitable* to us.”

Without hesitation, Grace prepared herself to go out with her aunt. On calling upon Mrs. Williams, they found her much weaker than when they last visited her. This time her husband was present for a little while after they came in. Mrs. Milnor could not help observing the expression of *tenderness* which was in his eyes whenever he looked into the pale face of his wife, nor the quickly-dispelled shade of anxiety and fear that would, ever and always, rest upon his countenance. It touched her deeply. After he had gone away, and her aunt had become interested in conversation with Mrs. Lawson — Grace drew closer to the bedside of Mrs. Williams, and, taking her hand, said, with much feeling,

“It really grieves me to find you weaker than when I last saw you. Have you suffered much pain?”

“Not much,” she replied, with a quiet, cheerful smile, “though *weary* at times, and often affected with *loneliness*. Yet I ought not to feel so, for many kind friends cheer my sick chamber with their welcome presence.”

“Still, it must be hard to bear such prolonged confinement.”

“So it seems to those who are well; but we who are sick prove the truth of that sweet promise, ‘As your *days* — so shall your *strength* be.’ There is no condition in life which has not its peculiar blessings, as well as its peculiar trials.”

“Blessings! What blessings can cluster around you? A bride of yesterday, to whom a husband is clinging with trembling hope and fear, laid upon a bed of sickness, and the rose on her cheek already faded, perhaps never again to feel a flush of health! Blessings! How can you talk of blessings?”

Thus, almost involuntarily, did Grace give utterance to her surprise. Its effect was to startle the feelings of Julia for a moment, and fill her eyes with tears; but she quickly regained her calmness and replied,

“Our states and conditions, always modify our *perceptions*. It may be difficult for you, who are in perfect health, to understand or appreciate the kind and quality of those *blessings* which are given to one like me. In health, our good things come mainly by an *external* way — and in sickness, by an *internal* way; or, in other words, *health* gives us the capacity of enjoying the many external blessings that are freely given — but in *sickness*, this capacity is destroyed, and then there flows into the spirit, a sweet peace, with images of holy and heavenly things, and a confidence in the Lord which bears up the soul, and sustains it in a region of thought and affection far above the sensual plane of the mind. Such a state, let me assure you, is one of *peculiar delight*. In it, we are conscious of a nearer approach to the spiritual

world, and of the intimate presence of God, whose greatest happiness it is to sustain all who, while in bodily affliction, look up and pray for a spirit of resignation.”

While Mrs. Williams spoke thus — her eyes slightly elevated, not giving intelligence of external objects, but only corresponding in their position to the elevation of inner vision — Grace looked at her with wonder, and yet with a spirit affected by a new delight.

“Blessed, indeed, has been this affliction to you!” was her deep inward acknowledgment. Then she added aloud,

“But how can you feel all this calmness and elevation of mind, under circumstances of such peculiar trial? A few days ago you spoke of *death* with a degree of composure that fills me with astonishment whenever I think of it. Apart from the mere terrors of death, which seem not to be terrible to you — how can you think of a separation from those you love without the deepest distress? I cannot understand it.”

“Those who are truly united — are united in spirit,” was the reply of Mrs. Williams; “and this union is perfect just in the degree that each can love good and true principles for their own sake. That by which they are conjoined, then, is *moral quality*. They love each other, not for the sake of the mere person, but from a regard to *good affections* and *true thoughts*; that is, they regard the *quality* of each — and not the *person* alone. Death cannot extinguish good and truth. It is not the mere material body which clothes our spiritual form — a machine by which we act in the more ultimate plan of creation — which makes us human, or upon which are based the higher affections which conjoin us. We can love as freely and as purely when that is laid aside as before — yes, freer and purer.”

“But the *separation*, Mrs. Williams! Natural eyes cannot see spiritual bodies. How, then, can such a separation be otherwise than deeply painful?” Grace said, quickly.

“I did not mean to say that a separation would not be painful,” Julia replied, recovering her self-possession, which the remark of Grace had nearly overthrown, with an effort. “It must, and always will be painful, just in the degree that we are *evil*, and *love ourselves* and *our own wills* better than we love the Lord and His will; but the pain will be greater with those who are left behind; for, remaining in the natural world, it will be hard for them so to elevate their minds into the pure regions of spiritual thought and perception, than those who have left them and gone up higher, but who still love them, though with a more unselfish love than before. Still, even those who remain may have much to strengthen and sustain them in bereavement. They have eyes of the *mind* as well as the body, and if they will but use them, may have the blessed consciousness that those they have loved are still near to them — for true nearness, after all, is a nearness of *thoughts* and *affections*, and these exist independent of the natural body. Am I understood?”

“Not clearly.”

“You love your husband?”

The tears sprung instantly to the eyes of Grace as she murmured “Yes.”

“As tenderly now that he is away from you — as when he was by your side?”

“Yes.”

“Is he not distinctly present to your mind now?”

“Oh yes.”

“And can you not perceive and love his good qualities as fully as if he were sitting by your side?”

“Yes; but still to be separated seems as if he were lost to me. This seeing with the *mind* does not satisfy — it is but a poor compensation for his presence.”

“True! very true! While in the natural world of time and space, our spiritual eyes are not really opened. We see spiritual things only through a glass, darkly, and, therefore, absence or death must always prove painful. But, without the light of the sun, as we are, under such circumstances, let us be thankful for the light of the moon, and bless the kind Providence that has given us to know the truth, even if we cannot *fully* receive it into our affections.”

“An *abiding confidence in divine Providence*, seems to be your sheet-anchor under all circumstances,” Mrs. Milnor said.

“You have revealed the secret of all the appearances of *trust and resignation* which you have perceived. But for that sheet-anchor, I should be now upon the stormy ocean.”

But even this could not unravel to Mrs. Milnor, the secret of Julia's state of mind. To her, it seemed impossible that anyone could view death, and under such peculiar circumstances, without starting back appalled.

"I cannot understand it, aunt," she said, as the two walked slowly homeward. "I never met so lovely, yet so *inexplicable* a being, nor one in whom there was so much sound thought, mixed up with truly beautiful — yet what seems fanciful ideas."

"I am really afraid that her days here are numbered," Mrs. Ellis returned, thoughtfully. "Her mother seems to feel this sensibly, and spoke of it today with a degree of composure that surprised me."

"Is it not possible," Grace said, "that both mother and daughter are *void of true feeling*?"

"Can you think so of Julia?"

Grace paused a moment, and then said,

"No, I cannot. That she does feel, and *deeply*, too — I am satisfied. I have seen the tearful eye and quivering lip too often."

"And that Mrs. Lawson can and does feel — I am equally well satisfied," Mrs. Ellis said. "No, no, that will not explain *the secret*. The true reason is to be found in their *unwavering trust in Divine Providence*."

"So Mrs. Williams declared to me just now; but still, I cannot understand how anyone can feel such a confidence. To be taken away in the *bloom of youth and beauty* — to be torn from those who tenderly love us, and whose very lives are wrapped up in ours — is no light affliction, Aunt Mary. I could not bless the hand which held *that rod* for me — I could not feel *resigned* to such a *cruel dispensation*. Hers must, indeed, be a peculiar faith, if, under such circumstances, it can extract the *sting* from death."

"And yet all who receive that peculiar faith, so full of a singular beauty — so strange in many of its assumptions, and yet so profoundly rational in its pure philosophy, like Julia and her mother, look upon death with calmness — nay, even part with each other, no matter how intimate may be the ties which bind them — without any of those feelings of *grief* and *despair*, which almost invariably attend such afflictions. It is not that they do not feel pain at such rending of natural bonds; but to soothe the acuter pangs that attend this pain — is not only a general trust in divine Providence, but a practical and particular assurance that *every event is intended for their spiritual good*; and that even the death of their most beloved ones will, in the end, be blessings — blessings as far above the ordinary good things they receive — as the affliction is deeper; and touches them more nearly than ordinary events."

"Then are they blessed above the common lot," Grace said, as they gained their own door. "But I cannot understand it. I am not yet able to understand how anyone can *kiss the rod which smites him*."

CHAPTER 14.

Several days more passed, but not a line was received during the time from Milnor. Once during that period, had Grace written, but, as before, in a formal and reserved tone, though her heart yearned to unburden itself freely. Another and another, and even another day, passed without a letter, until Grace became so much disturbed in mind as to seriously alarm Mrs. Ellis. At last, after the lapse of a whole week, making two weeks since his departure, a letter was brought for Grace. Eagerly did she tear it open, and take in its contents almost at a single glance. It was as follows:

“My Dear Grace — The trial is just over, and we have been successful! Two weeks of most intense labor and application have been severe upon me. Both body and mind are exhausted. I feel greatly, the need of rest and recreation — and yet I find I am to have neither. Instead of returning to Westbrook, which I greatly desire to do, I am compelled to leave for New York this afternoon, to attend to some very important business there for Mr. Goodlow, which requires my immediate presence. I regret this very much, for I desire ardently to see you. The separation has seemed a long one, even though my mind has been intensely occupied every moment that I have been here. But why have you written so *coldly*? Your letters are before me now — your three letters, written in two weeks. I have read them over and over again, but they do not warm my heart. There is a *smile* in but one of them, and that a *feeble* smile; and I am going still farther from you. Cannot my wife sustain her husband in the path of duty — or must he travel that rugged way, uncheered? Must he press onward alone? Could I have met you every night, as I returned from the hard labors of the day, and felt the warmth of your sunny smile, and the sweet encouragement of your voice, I would have felt myself, during the past two weeks, the happiest of beings; but this could not be — and why should I allude to it? Your letters do not speak of loneliness; I trust, therefore, that you bear this necessary separation calmly and patiently. To know that you can do this is a satisfaction, for I would not have you feel pain on account of my necessary absence.

“I received a long letter yesterday from my friend Williams. He tells me you have been frequently to see his wife since my absence. I am glad of this. You will find her a lovely woman. Her *mind* is well balanced, and her *heart* as warm as unselfish affections can make it. I am sure that you will love her. The tenor of his letter is desponding in regard to her health. This pains me very much. Surely her long sickness does not portend a fatal termination? I earnestly hope not; though, from my knowledge of the fact that she has always been very delicate, I have my fears. Such an event would be sad indeed. I cannot bear to think of it.

“Write to me in New York immediately on receipt of this, and do not study brevity and coldness. Let me see your heart as it really is — warm with a true affection for your husband. Ever faithfully yours, Lewis.”

After Grace had read this letter, she laid it down, and, clasping her hands tightly together, sat for a long time with compressed lips, and fixed, untearful eyes. What were the *thoughts* that passed through her mind, we may vaguely imagine, but cannot throw into the form of *words*. At length her *agitation* became so strong, that she rose to her feet, and commenced slowly moving backward and forward through the room. At this moment Mrs. Ellis came in.

“Oh aunt!” exclaimed Grace, the tears coming instantly to her eyes, and flowing over her cheeks, “Lewis has gone to New York!”

“To New York!” ejaculated Mrs. Ellis, in surprise.

“Oh yes — he went yesterday!” And Grace actually wrung her hands with distress. “But what has taken him to New York?”

“Business. But there is his letter. Oh, how *selfishly*, and *unreasonably*, and *cruelly* I have acted!”

Mrs. Ellis took the letter and read it hurriedly through.

“You have doubtless *both* been to blame,” she then said, “though somewhat unequally. You, I think, to a *greater* extent than your husband; but it is only for you to think and feel right in your position as a wife — and all will be well.”

“I am ready to do anything to *repair the wrong* I have done,” Grace said, weeping bitterly.

“Are you ready to make any *sacrifice* to a sense of duty?” Mrs. Ellis asked, calmly.

“Oh yes! any — any! I will do anything!”

“Still, my dear child — you must be calm. You are not now in a state to make any really good resolutions; for a resolution, to be really good — must flow from a clear perception of some truth. Your feelings are all excited, and your judgment beclouded. Let your heart cease, first, its fluttering pulsations, so that your mind can become clear, and you be able thence to perceive in what course, lies the *way of duty*. Your husband’s prolonged absence is occasioned by unexpected business requirements. To this, then, you must endeavor to be reconciled. If you feel that you would much rather he had returned home, even at the expense of urgent duties — shun that feeling as wrong. The man who will deliberately choose *self-indulgence* over *duty* — can never make a woman truly happy, for he does not possess those moral qualities to which her tender affections can permanently cling. Fix this in your mind as a truth, and then think whether you have not opposed your husband when he urged the *claims of duty* — whether you have not set up *your will* against his deliberate judgment. Is it possible, do you think, for a man to love deeply, and truly, and permanently — the woman who acts thus? Your own reason must answer, *No!*”

“Oh aunt! you distress me beyond measure, by what you say. I see it all clearly. I have been guilty of *deep injustice* to my husband, but I do most sincerely repent of it.”

“Then write to him freely. Make a clear *confession* of all that you see to be wrong. But do not let your feelings betray you into a confession of such things as you are not willing to put away as evil. Bear this in mind; for if you do not guard against this, you will have them rising up hereafter to mar your happiness. You will have *confessed* them to be wrong — and yet not really *seeing* them to be so, and acting them out at some future time — you will weaken your husband’s confidence in your sincerity.”

“Ought I not to go to him at once!”

“I think not, Grace; write to him first, and *ask* him if you should do so. There may be good reasons why he would rather you would not come, or why he would wish to know that you were coming. He has not said where you could find him in New York, nor whether he would be there two days or two weeks. No, no; your first duty is to *write* to him freely.”

“That I will do at once.”

“The sooner the better, of course. Compose your mind as quickly as you can, and then pour out *everything* into the bosom of your husband.”

Grace did so. She wrote a long and tender letter to her husband, making free *confession of her faults* — and begging his forgiveness. When this was finished and despatched, she felt greatly relieved in mind — an almost insupportable weight was taken from her bosom. When she now thought of living in Boston, the idea was not painful. Any place, with her husband by her side — she felt would be a paradise.

This state continued until about the hour at which the mail was to arrive on the next day. Then she began to look for another letter. But recollecting, after she found that no letter had come, that her husband could not have written while on his way to New York, nor possibly have despatched a letter so as to reach her by that mail, she endeavored to feel *patient* for another day, confidently hoping then to hear from him again. But the next day brought no letter, nor the next, nor the next — although full time had passed for him to have received hers and answered it. This was *inexplicable*. Even Aunt Mary felt troubled. She could not understand it. As for Grace, she was distressed beyond measure.

On the morning of the sixth day since her husband’s last letter had been received, a messenger came for Grace from Mrs. Lawson, with the request that she would be kind enough to step in and sit for a little while with her daughter. It had been three days since her last visit to Julia, and then there were apparent too evident indications of a rapidly-progressing decline.

Reluctant as Grace felt to see anyone under existing circumstances, she yet obeyed the request almost immediately. On entering Julia’s chamber, she was startled by the change that had taken place in the invalid — a change not fully perceptible to those who daily and hourly lingered about her bed — but to her eyes as palpable as if *DEATH* had been written in capitals upon her brow. Her lips had lost their delicate tint, the color had faded from her cheek, and her eyes had a glassy appearance. She was supported by pillows in a half-recumbent position. As Grace came up to her bedside, she extended her hand and smiled feebly, saying,

"I felt as if I would like to see you this morning, and therefore you must forgive the liberty I took in sending for you."

"I am glad you took that liberty," Grace returned, "and I shall be still more gratified if I can do or say anything which will give you a moment's pleasure."

"Your company has always been pleasant to me," the invalid said, "and as I felt somehow or other more wearied with myself than usual this morning, I was so selfish as to ask you to drop in, under the hope that in your society I might find relief from thoughts which more than usually oppress me."

"If it is from thoughts that oppress your spirits," Grace said, in a saddened tone, "that you seek relief in my company, I am afraid you will seek in vain. My own feelings are burdened heavily."

"I grieve to hear you say so, my dear madam," replied Julia, her eye brightening, and an expression of tender sympathy pervading her sweet, pale face. "If not presuming too far, may I ask the cause?"

"I have not heard from my husband since he went unexpectedly to New York, and it is now a week since he left Boston."

"A week since you heard from him! Have you written to him in that time?"

"Oh yes — immediately on his going."

"He may be ill."

"Ill?" Grace said, starting and turning pale. "He is — he must be ill! When he wrote from Boston, he complained of being greatly fatigued both in mind and body. Oh, if he should be ill, away from home, and amid strangers! What shall I do?"

"You can go to New York; and you ought to go, without a moment's delay," Julia promptly responded. "No one, like a wife, can minister to her husband in sickness. If you should find him *well* — it will be the happier meeting; if *ill* — your duty is by his side."

"You are right," Grace said, instantly rising. "Why did I not know my duty, without having to be reminded of it?"

Then, stooping down and kissing fervently the broad white forehead, the sunken cheeks, and pale lips of Julia, she embraced her tenderly, and murmuring, "Farewell! may we soon meet again, sweet angel!" turned away, and hurriedly left the house.

"Aunt Mary!" she exclaimed, bounding into the presence of Mrs. Ellis a few minutes afterward, "Lewis is ill, and I must go to him immediately!"

"Who told you?" was Aunt Mary's surprised interrogation, as she rose quickly, holding an open letter in her hand.

"My *heart* tells me so. But that letter! Who? — where is it from?"

"From Mr. Goodlow. He has written me to say that Lewis lies *ill* at the *American Hotel* in New York."

"It is indeed true!" poor Grace exclaimed, her face growing pale, her eyes staring wildly, and her whole frame becoming violently agitated. "Oh! let me go quickly! Let me go to him! Oh, if he were to die before I could get there!"

"But you cannot go alone, Grace," Mrs. Ellis said, her own mind much bewildered.

"Alone? I would go to the end of the world alone for the sake of my husband!" was the firm reply of Grace, who was regaining her self-possession.

"But you cannot go today; the stage left for Boston an hour ago," returned Mrs. Ellis, her mind still confused.

"It matters not — the cars do not leave Boston for New York until five o'clock. I can go there in a private conveyance;" and, so saying, Grace turned away quickly, and went to her own room to make instant preparations for the journey.

CHAPTER 15.

“My dear child! I cannot think of seeing you start for New York alone!” Mrs. Ellis said, coming into the chamber of Grace some ten minutes after her niece had left her, and finding her engaged in hurriedly packing her trunk.

“Don’t say a word, aunt,” replied Grace, half impatiently. “I would be unworthy the name of a wife — if I hesitated for one moment!”

“But, my child — ”

“In pity spare me any opposition, Aunt Mary; my *duty* is clear, and must be performed. I would go mad, if I remained here one moment longer than was required to make preparation for my journey.”

“Then call upon Mr. Goodlow as soon as you reach Boston, and ask him, from me, to send some friend with you.”

“If I have time to spare, I will send for him,” Grace replied, half-abstractedly.

“Oh do, by all means; I cannot bear the thought of your going to New York alone.”

Mrs. Ellis had never traveled a mile in her life, except under the escort of someone, and therefore, like a great many other ladies in the land, had a “dreadful idea” of traveling alone, even upon our great lines of public conveyance, where a lady is as safe from impertinence and insult, as in her own parlor. But Grace had a reason for venturing alone upon her journey, too strong for any vague apprehensions to find an entrance into her mind. In half an hour from the time when she left Mrs. Williams, she was seated alone in a closed carriage, the driver of which was urging his horses to a quick pace, and in the direction of Boston. A lonely ride of three hours gave her imagination full time for activity. But it mainly presented one vivid picture — her husband laid upon a sick bed, pale, emaciated, unconscious, and trembling on the brink of dissolution. Every act of *opposition* to him — every accusing *thought*, every cold *word* — came up from her memory as distinctly as if they had transpired but an hour before, until her very heart was wrung with agony.

“Oh, if he should not be alive!” she would sometimes murmur, sinking back in the carriage from the erect position, the very active intensity of her thoughts and feelings had caused her to assume, and giving herself up to violent fits of weeping. From these, her mind would gradually recover its tone, and then her imagination would again become busy with *fearful images* of pain and death.

Two hours had to be passed in Boston before the departure of the cars for New York. Immediately on her arrival, Grace sent for Mr. Goodlow. He met her with a serious face, although he strove hard to conceal any expression calculated to excite the alarm of the young wife.

“Oh sir! have you heard from my husband since you wrote yesterday?” she asked, eagerly, the moment he came in.

“I have, Mrs. Milnor; but do not unnecessarily permit yourself to become agitated.”

“Was he better or worse?” was the quick interrogation, while her face became blanched.

“He was no worse, I believe; his fever was steadily progressing, but will not reach its climax for a day or two — so the physician writes me. I have ordered for him the best medical attendance, and the most careful and judicious nurse to be obtained in New York. Still, there is no one like a wife by the bedside of her sick husband; I am therefore rejoiced to find you so promptly on your way to take that all-important station. Your reward will, I doubt not, be the happy restoration of your husband to health. But you must not go unattended; I will place you under the care of a friend who goes to New York this afternoon — one who has become much interested in your husband since his brief sojourn here, and who will not leave you until you are at his side.”

“Oh, if I should not find him alive!” Grace said, weeping bitterly.

“Do not, my dear madam,” urged Mr. Goodlow, “thus allow your mind to become paralyzed with fear — or you will unfit yourself for the duties which await you, and on the faithful performance of which rests, perhaps, the life of your husband. Be a true woman and a true wife; these require *self-possession* and *calmness* under circumstances of trial, like the one you are now summoned to pass through. You have

promptly obeyed the call of duty; go on to the end, trusting in that divine Providence which controls every event for good — and you will have your reward.”

Thus, for most of the time that Grace remained in Boston, did old Mr. Goodlow strive to bear up her troubled and desponding mind, though with little apparent success. Five o’clock at length came, and, under charge of the individual Mr. Goodlow had alluded to, the anxious wife took her departure for New York, where, after a sleepless night, she arrived about dawn on the next morning. As the boat touched the wharf, it was with difficulty that she could restrain herself from springing upon the shore, so eager was she to reach her husband. But her kind attendant, upon whose arm her trembling hand was resting, gently urged her to be calm, adding assurances that she would soon be with the *object of her deep solicitude*.

A few minutes after their arrival at the wharf, Grace entered a carriage, and was soon rolling up Broadway at a rapid speed. In a brief space of time, she was at the door of the American Hotel. As she was handed from the carriage, her heart almost ceased to beat, and she felt so faint that she could scarcely stand.

“How is Mr. Milnor?” asked the gentleman who had attended her, as he entered a parlor with Grace upon his arm. What a moment for the eager, anxious, trembling wife!

“The doctor has just left him.”

“He is alive, then, thank Heaven!” ejaculated Grace, sinking upon a chair.

“Oh yes, ma’am,” quickly returned the porter, who understood in a moment, the relation she bore to their sick guest; “but he is quite ill, though the doctor thinks not very dangerously so. He has just left, and said, in going away, that the most perfect *quiet* must be maintained in the portion of the house where he is. I mention this, madam, that you may feel the necessity of being *composed* when you meet him.”

“Oh, I will be very calm,” returned Grace, breathing more freely than she had done for many hours. “He is still alive! that has taken a load from my bosom. But let me go to him at once.”

“Would it be prudent, madam?” the attendant respectfully suggested: “might not your unexpected presence so agitate his mind, as to do him a fatal injury?”

“Oh no! that cannot be,” urged Grace.

“He is right,” the gentleman who had accompanied her said. “First let the physician be sent for, and his advice taken. Be kind enough to despatch a waiter for him immediately.”

This was done, and Grace was compelled to acquiesce, although with a feeling of great reluctance. It was half an hour before the physician came in. He readily gave his consent for Grace to see him at once, and become his constant attendant, but under the strictest injunction to *remain calm*.

“If I find that you do not control yourself while with him, I shall be compelled to forbid your attendance on him,” he said, with professional firmness.

“Oh, I will be calm, sir, very calm! Do not fear for me,” returned Mrs. Milnor, her voice affected with huskiness, and her whole frame trembling with nervous excitement.

“But, my dear madam, you are far from being calm at this very moment. You are losing your self-control rapidly.”

“Oh, but take me to him, and I will be composed!”

The physician paused a moment, and then said,

“Come. But, as you value the life of your husband, force down your excited feelings.”

“I will! I will!” and Grace moved a step in advance of the physician as they took their way to her husband’s chamber.

“Remember!” he whispered, laying his hand upon her arm as they paused at the door.

“Do not fear about me.”

The door was then slowly opened, and both passed in. The room was dark and still — so dark that it was some moments before the eyes of Grace could distinguish clearly any object. But she soon saw her husband lying upon the bed, his face partly turned away, apparently in a sound sleep; but the rays of light which struggled through the darkened window were too feeble to give a distinct view of his features, or to reveal fully the change that disease had wrought upon them.

“Does he sleep?” asked the physician, in a low whisper, as he kept his hand upon the arm of Mrs. Milnor.

The nurse replying in the affirmative, he whispered in the ear of Grace,

"Everything depends upon his being kept *perfectly quiet* now. It is the crisis of his disease."

He then explained to the nurse the relation of the stranger he had introduced to the sick room, and enjoined her to guard the young wife in the strictest way against any acts that might *excite* her husband's mind. He then went away.

By this time, the eyes of Grace had become so accustomed to the feeble light which prevailed in the room, that, as she stood bending over the unconscious body of her husband, she could perceive the fearful ravages which disease had made. His cheeks were sunken, and of a pale yellow hue; his eyes hollow, and his whole form wasted away, until the hot, dry skin clung to his very bones. She could not help *shuddering*, as, after a long, fixed, earnest gaze — she turned away to take off her cloak and bonnet, and prepare to wait and watch unweariedly by his bedside.

After a few hurried inquiries of the nurse in regard to the progress of the disease, and her husband's present state — she seated herself by his side, and laying her hand softly upon his, that burned with fever, watched his quickly-heaving chest, and the expression of suffering in his countenance, for nearly an hour. As he did not awake after the lapse of this time, she got up and walked quietly across the room to get something from her trunk, which a servant had brought in. As she did so, her eye rested upon a *letter* which lay upon a table. Taking it up quickly, she saw that it was her own letter, in which she had breathed out to him every tender thought in her heart, and made a *full confession of her faults*. But the seal was unbroken! It had arrived too late! Her husband did not know that she had seen and felt her error — did not know how tenderly she really loved him, despite her *pride* and *self-will*, nor how fully and freely she had poured out everything to him.

Unable to contain herself at this discovery, she sank into a chair and sobbed aloud.

"My dear madam!" said the nurse, coming instantly to her side, "this must not be! Remember the strict injunction of the doctor. Everything depends upon your remaining *perfectly composed*. Surely no one ought to feel this, more deeply than yourself."

"You are right," Grace replied at once, and in a firm voice, composing herself by a vigorous effort. "No one ought to feel this more deeply than myself. I ought not to require that anyone should remind me of my duty."

From that time, no matter how anxious and troubled, Grace maintained a perfectly calm exterior; but, in doing so, she had to use a degree of rational self-control beyond what she had ever been called upon to exercise.

It was near the middle of the day, before Mr. Milnor roused up from the state of torpor into which he had fallen, but not sufficiently to know his wife, who fixed her eyes intently upon his face, eager to be recognized, and sat thus, minute after minute, expecting each moment to see his countenance brighten, but in vain. Oh, how sick her heart felt as she turned away her eyes from his face with a sigh!

About the middle of the afternoon, the doctor came in again. He examined his patient long and carefully, making, as he did so, the minutest inquiries of the nurse. To the eager questions of Grace, he replied vaguely, yet encouragingly, in general terms.

"The *crisis* will be tonight," she overheard him whisper to the nurse. "You must watch him closely, and observe my directions with the strictest care."

This made her feel awful. "What *if* he should really die, after all!" she said to herself, shuddering; and then a multitude of distressing thoughts came crowding into her mind.

"The doctor thinks him very dangerous?" she said to the nurse, in a whisper, after the physician had gone.

"Not more so, than cases which daily recover," the nurse replied, evasively. "Still, he is very ill, and will require to be carefully treated. By the morning, we expect to find him better."

"Don't you think he will know me before night?"

"It is, perhaps, as well that he should not. Any excitement of mind will be injurious. I would think it far better if you would keep away from him until the morning. You do not look at all well, and I think you ought to endeavor to sleep."

"I cannot sleep. I have not closed my eyes since the night before last."

“Go and lie down, at least. You may fall away into sleep, and then you will be better able to bear the fatigue of watching by your husband’s bedside. I can do all for him now that can possibly be done — far more than you can do.”

“Will you call me if he should become worse?”

“Certainly I will. There is a bed behind that screen; come and lie down there;” and, as the considerate nurse said this, she took her by the arm and almost forced her to the bed, upon which she lay down, but with evident reluctance. In a little while, however, a drowsy feeling stole over her, and soon after she sank into a profound slumber.

CHAPTER 16.

When Mrs. Milnor awoke, it was past the hour of midnight. Some moments elapsed before she could sufficiently collect her thoughts to be truly conscious of where she was. A dim light pervaded the chamber, caused by the rays of a small lamp, which was so placed as to throw the whole room into deep shadow. All was as still as the grave. After resting upon her arm, listening intently for nearly a minute, she got up, and stepped noiselessly across the room to the bed upon which lay her husband. As faint as the light was, it was strong enough to show his face — paler, more sunken, and death-like in its expression. A cry of agony was just rising to her lips, as the *warning look* and *raised finger* of the nurse arrested her attention, and caused her, by a strong effort, to control herself.

“*On your life, be composed!*” whispered the nurse in her ear, as she glided with soundless tread to her side. “The crisis is past! The fever has left him, but he is as weak as an infant. The feeblest shock now would inevitably destroy his life.”

Grace sunk into a chair with a feeling as if a giant hand had crushed her down, and left her powerless in every nerve. After a little while, she rose up and stole quietly to the bedside, where she stood for many minutes looking down into the almost expressionless face of her husband. His breath came quick and shallow, with a gasping effort. As she stood there, she felt fully the force of the attendant’s remark, that he was as weak as an infant, and that the feeblest shock would inevitably destroy his life.

No persuasion could induce her again to lie down. Not once did she remove from a chair, brought close to his side, until daylight; nor for a moment, withdraw her eyes from his face during that period. The solar light of morning revealed more palpably than they had yet appeared, the *ravages* of the disease, which had, while it preyed upon his system, given to it a degree of artificial excitement, which seemed like physical stamina. Now every muscle and fibre was so completely relaxed, that life seemed scarcely to linger in the vital organs, much less to flow down freely into the vitals of the body.

Soon after daylight, the doctor came in. He asked no question, but approached noiselessly, and with evident anxiety. The moment he laid his hand upon the patient’s arm, a thrill passed through his frame. For a long time he sat with his fingers upon his pulse, and his eyes fixed upon the sick man’s face. Poor Grace scarcely breathed. At length a long inspiration, followed by a still longer expiration, gave indication that the physician was satisfied as to the result.

“Doctor,” said Grace, who had instinctively perceived that a conclusion had been made in the physician’s mind, speaking in a husky whisper, “Is there any hope?”

“Everything to hope from *care* and *quiet*,” was the instant response.

Grace clasped her hands together, lifted her eyes upward, and then hiding her face, wept long and silently.

Before the doctor left, he took Mrs. Milnor aside, and fully explained to her the condition of her husband, enforcing again and again the necessity of his being kept perfectly free from all excitement. Thus kept free, and his directions followed as to diet, etc. — all would be well.

Since the recession of the fever at midnight, the patient had lain in a quiet sleep, which seemed almost like death. About ten o’clock, he awoke from this, when a small portion of nourishment, with some wine, was given. In a little while after, he fell off to sleep again, without having taken notice of anything. From this, he awoke towards five in the afternoon, and seemed refreshed. More nourishment was given, and after laying a little while, he again went off to sleep.

At the suggestion of the physician, the nurse, who had slept but little for many days, went to bed at dark, leaving the patient in the charge of Grace, who was directed to wake her up at midnight. Hour after hour, the young wife now sat, a lonely and patient watcher, by the side of her husband. She could not refrain from taking his hand in hers, nor from laying her head down upon the pillow beside his, nor from kissing his pale forehead over and over again. How deep, and yearning, and tender — was the love she bore him! Far deeper, more yearning, and tenderer than anything that had ever pervaded her bosom. It seemed as if she could freely sacrifice her life for his sake; that for him she could be happy in a wilderness or in a palace; that, without him, existence would be a dreary blank.

Midnight came, and still her husband slept; but she could not tear herself from his side; she could not yield up to another, the watcher's station. And thus she sat until the first pale rays of morning stole in at the window. These awakened the nurse, who instantly arose to resume her charge, chiding as she did so, the young wife for not having called her hours before; but it was all in vain that she urged her to retire and take rest. She was too anxious to see the eyes, whose glances had not greeted her in many weeks, open again to the light. Fondly had she cherished the hope, all night long, of seeing those dear eyes unclosed, and receiving from them looks of intelligence and love. She could not, therefore, give up her place, until the sleeper had again aroused himself, but continued seated by his side, holding one of his emaciated hands, upon which every blue vein was distinctly seen, in hers.

Thus she had remained for an hour after daylight, looking earnestly into his face, and hoping every moment to see his eyes open; but still he slept on. Disappointed at his long-continued unconsciousness, she at length let her eyes fall to the floor, as her bosom heaved with a feeble sigh. A *dreamy reverie* stole over her, from which a slight pressure of her hand at length aroused her. Turning quickly towards her husband, she found that his eyes were open, and resting, with a look of affectionate intelligence, upon her. Instantly recollecting herself, she restrained the wild rush of her feelings, and only gave vent to them by returning the pressure of her husband's hand, and stooping down and kissing his with earnest tenderness. Tears were in her eyes, and flowing over her cheeks. Oh, how eagerly did she desire to clasp him to her arms; to lay his head upon her bosom, and pour out to him her whole heart! But a counselor was quickly by her side, and whispered words of caution in her ears, to give weight to her own sense of prudence.

The nourishment which the feeble body of her husband now required, was given by her own hands, and as it touched the quickening nerve of taste with a grateful sensation, her reward was in the glances of pleasure and affection that were feebly cast upon her. When he again composed himself to rest, he did so, weak and helpless as he was both in mind and body, under the sweet consciousness that the heart which was dearest to him in the whole world, beat close beside his, and was full of tenderness.

From that time, his recovery was steady, but very gradual. In a few days, he was able to converse a little, at the end of a week to sit up in bed supported by pillows, and in twelve days to walk across his room.

We will not record the many tender words that passed between the young husband and his wife; they would alone fill a volume. Let *young husbands and wives*, for whose especial benefit this volume is written, imagine these things for themselves — it will require for them no very ardent stretch of imagination.

Nothing, however, had yet been said on the subject of the *differences* which had so cruelly wrung both of their hearts. They had purposely avoided any allusion to them.

It was on the twelfth day of his convalescence, that Grace drew from her bosom the letter she had found unopened on her arrival in New York — her letter of *confession*, so full of tender assurances of love — and handed it to him, saying, in a voice that perceptibly trembled as she did so,

"This was written and sent to New York three weeks ago, as you will see by the postmark. I found it in your room when I came here. Take it as written then — and affirmed now."

While Milnor read over the letter of his wife, which was full of *confessions of error* and *assurances of affection*, Grace sat by his side, her hand shading her face, and concealing the drops that slowly coursed their way down her cheeks; but they were not tears of grief, but of pleasure. Milnor remained in deep thought for some time after he had read the letter, in earnest exploration of his own heart.

"I, too," he at length said, "have my *confessions* to make. My —"

"Nothing of this! Nothing of this!" Grace instantly said, smiling tenderly through her tears, as she placed her hand upon his mouth. "Let the *past* go. You are restored to me, as from the grave. I take the gift from above, with thankfulness, resolved hereafter to do a wife's duty, and love my husband with a wife's pure love. Where you go — I will go; and where you lodge — I will lodge; your people shall be my people — and your God shall be my God."

"But I have one confession to make —"

"I will not hear it!" Grace instantly returned. "If you have acted wrong — then I have been the cause. Let the past sleep. It needed that I should lay my heart bare. That is done, and now let the past suffice."

The future is before us, full of a blessed hope. With my husband, I go into that future, resolved to stand ever by his side.”

With such assurances, Grace strove often to add to the force of her letter; and she was deeply in earnest. She had seen her *errors*, and had commenced a faithful struggle against the *inward evils* which had produced them. The illness, and narrow escape of her husband from death, had tried and proved her affection, developing even to herself, its deeper depths, and showing her how intimately blended with his interests and happiness — was her own; that they were really one, or in the effort to become one; and that anything which divided their ends of action, thus tending to prevent their true union — must inevitably make them both miserable. This was a discovery not dearly bought, even at the price which had been paid for it.

CHAPTER 17.

Three weeks from the day on which Mr. Milnor and his wife returned to Westbrook, and when he had become perfectly restored to health, they were summoned to the sick chamber of Julia Williams.

A few friends were seated around her bed when they entered, and the husband and mother bent tenderly over her, and each clasped one of her white, transparent hands. She was evidently near her death, but conscious of its approach. As Grace and her husband entered, she smiled faintly, but with a heavenly expression, and withdrawing the hand that lay in her husband's, extended it feebly first to one and then to the other.

"I am glad to see you once more," she said to Grace, in a faint whisper, as the latter bent down and kissed her, "and for the last time here. But death cannot really part those who love each other. Think of me, as I shall often think of you — and our thoughts will bring us near together."

Again Grace kissed her fervently, the tears gushing from her eyes, and then sought a chair and wept in silence. The scene touched her deeply from two causes: one, its own intrinsic pathos; and the other, the vivid recollection that it awakened of a somewhat similar scene in which she had been an actor.

Then followed a deep silence, but not an oppressive one to any. A pure, spiritual atmosphere of confiding thoughts, and holy, elevated affections, pervaded the room, and sustained every mind. It was the *parting hour* of one who had loved good and obeyed the truth, from genuine affection for them. A *celestial warmth* pervaded each bosom, and caused them to think only of heavenly beatitudes, and to love only pure and holy things.

Even Grace lost, in this atmosphere, the *terrors* with which death had ever before seemed invested. She soon found, in gazing upon the placid, holy, innocent face of the departing one — a feeling of wonder, and yet heavenly joy, taking possession of her mind. Fully did she appreciate the words which softly fell from the lips of the dying one as she looked into her mother's face, and murmured,

"It is not *death*, dear mother, but life! — a brief journey through a dark passage, in which I shall be borne by celestial attendants, whose love for me, as they draw nearer and nearer on their mission of delight, is even now filling my bosom with a heavenly warmth. To me it will not be painful — oh, do not let it be so to you! In a little while we shall meet again!"

It would be impossible to convey in written words, the *exquisite tenderness* with which this uttered. It was music to every ear, for the low tones of her voice were full of a genuine affection for the truth she uttered.

"Yes, dear, we shall soon meet again," Mrs. Lawson replied, in a low, trembling voice. "Think of us often with love in your blessed home, and then you will be near, very near to us. Thus we shall ever think of you."

Mr. Williams' heart was too full to be able to utter a word. He sat leaning over towards her, intently gazing into her face, as if eager to catch every gleam of thought, every glance of affection which played over it; knowing, as he did too well, that the *exquisite instrument* by which her sweet *spirit* revealed itself, would soon be laid aside, forever tuneless; that to his natural eyes, her dear form would be invisible; that to his natural ears, the music of her voice would never again come. No wonder that his natural affections were deeply pained; no wonder that to him, the affliction seemed at times, more than he could bear; but a deep religious principle formed the basis of his mind, and into this flowed a trust in divine Providence, and a consciousness that this deep affliction was one of the *links* in a *chain of events* intended to prepare him for higher felicities in a never-ending future life — than he could have possibly enjoyed without its influence. It was this which sustained him. It was this which enabled him to look up, and say, "May Your will, not mine, be done; for *Infinite Wisdom* cannot err — nor *Goodness* be unkind."

A silence of nearly half an hour followed a few words spoken by Julia in reply to her mother, during which time she seemed gradually, but very perceptibly, receding from earth. Her eyes were slightly elevated, but fixed; her lips less frequently trembling with smiles, while her breathing had grown shallower and more frequent. At the end of the time named, her body was slightly agitated, her countenance changed rapidly, and she raised herself partly up, as if awaking from a dream. Then she sank

back, and closed her eyes. In this state, she lay for nearly half an hour longer, when she opened her eyes again, but with looks of affection, and turned them upon her husband.

“We shall meet again — ” she murmured, as he drew her towards him, and placed her head upon his bosom.

She did not speak audibly again, but once. As she lay, with her dimming eyes fixed upon his face, her lips moved, and his ear, as he bent lower, caught the words,

“We shall meet — ”

Gently her eyes closed upon earthly things, and softly her bodily senses sank into nature’s last most peaceful sleep; while her spirit, as she had sweetly said, was with the God who had come to sustain and guard her in the hour of dissolution.

“Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his,” said Lewis Milnor, compressing his yet quivering lips, as, ten minutes afterward, he seated himself in Mrs. Ellis’ parlor, with Grace and her aunt by his side.

“It is only the *righteous* who die thus,” Mrs. Ellis returned.

“And only the *righteous* who can allow their friends to depart as Julia Williams has just departed,” added Milnor. “I always had a high regard for the moral character of my friend Williams, but never knew before that it had been based upon Christian principles; that he could so elevate his mind into a profound confidence in Him, who governs all things for our good. While I deeply sympathize with him in his loss, I cannot but feel that, in the possession of principles which can sustain him in such a trial, he is indeed blessed.”

“May the *lesson* we have this day received, never be lost upon us,” Mrs. Ellis said. “If trust in the Lord, growing out of a daily effort to act upon the good and the true principles which flow from Him, and because they are His principles — then He will give sustenance for such an hour. Let us, my children, from henceforth *look up*. Let us, in every act of life, pause and think thus: Am I now acting in obedience to a *heavenly principle* — or from merely *selfish ends*? How will this affect that never-ending life, which I shall soon enter upon? And we may be sure, if we decide these questions aright — that *strength* will be given us to perform every duty, and to bear up under every trial.”

Grace only wept more freely at this, for it brought back the past, with its *selfishness* and *stubborn pride*, to her mind; but her tears were not so much tears of regret and pain — as *tears of tender promise and hope* for the future.

“May He spare us long for each other,” she said, in a low voice, lifting her tearful eyes to her husband’s face.

“And He will spare us, I trust, and spare us long enough to see that the late trials and afflictions through which we have passed — were only *blessings in disguise*,” Milnor said, pressing her tenderly to his side.

“I feel even now that they were such; that worlds of light have been discovered in the *darkness* which gathered around us,” Grace replied, as she shrank close to his side.

CHAPTER 18.

A year has passed since the incidents just detailed. We will again present Milnor and his young wife, but not as residents of Westbrook. We find them living in a modest way in *Boston*. One scene more, and we will leave them to fill up their *allotted space in life*.

It was a clear, cold winter evening, that Grace, after lighting the parlor lamp, drew up the chair before the fire, and sat down to await her husband, who was out rather later than usual. She had remained seated only a few minutes, when a slight rustling noise close by caught her ear. Quickly rising, with a smile of pleasure on her face, she turned to a *cradle*, snugly ensconced in a corner of the room, and lifting therefrom a dear little babe, now but a few months old, drew it to her bosom with an earnest pressure, and then kissed its soft young cheek over and over again, with a delight that only a mother can understand. While thus engaged in fondling her babe, Milnor came in.

"Oh, I'm so glad you have come at last! It has seemed a long time since the evening closed in," Grace said, tenderly leaning her head against her husband's bosom, as he drew his arm around her, and kissed first her pure lips, and then those of his sweet babe.

"I have been detained by business much later than usual," he replied. "One or two important cases which I have on hand, have required more than ordinary attention."

"While *duty* keeps you away — your wife will never complain," Grace said, looking him affectionately in the face.

"And nothing but duty shall ever make me a *truant* from my home," he said, kissing her again. "But I have some good news to tell you."

"Indeed! What is it?"

"Several important suits were decided today in favor of the Bank, which, with an unexpected punctuality in the payment of other large debts due the institution, have made the assets, after paying its whole outstanding issue, something like seventy-five percent, in favor of the stock. This will give you nearly thirty thousand dollars. The Bank will also divide something, I can't tell how much, but enough, at least, to purchase a handsome house for us."

"For *your* sake, I am deeply thankful," Grace said, in a subdued tone, leaning heavily against her husband, and looking up into his face with an earnest, but happy expression.

"And more for *your* sake than my own am I thankful, Grace," Milnor replied, their lips again meeting. "I shall again see you in that *position* and in that *circle* from which you have long been banished."

"If money alone is the passport to that circle — I desire not to step again within it. The loss of money, it seems, made my old friends forget me — made me comparatively a stranger in the city of my birth. Its recovery shall not change my relation to them. I have learned to set a *different estimation* upon friendship — to value it by a new standard. No, no, my husband! Never have I been so *happy* as during the past year. Never have I walked the streets of my native city, with a firmer step or a calmer heart, than since, under the impulse of *love* and *duty* — I returned to its well-known precincts. The neglect of old associates has not wounded me. I felt that the love of a *husband* was strong enough to sustain me. In his growing reputation, I felt an honest pride. In bearing his name, I have had a panoply of defense."

"How good to all is divine Providence," Milnor said, with earnestness. "Even the *darker dispensations* are but *hidings of God's smiling face*. Without the painfully-received lessons which we have learned, all the wealth you possessed would only have made us miserable; but it was taken away for a time, until we could learn truth in a *severe school* — and now it is restored to us at a time when we can be thankful for it, and use it as a means of *usefulness to others*, instead of something to *pamper pride and indolence*."

"And more than all that, have these lessons taught us," Grace added: "they have taught us a *knowledge of ourselves* — and they have taught us truly to know and to love each other. And one sweet lesson have they taught me — yet hard at first to learn —"

"What lesson was that, dear?" Milnor asked, seeing that Grace hesitated.

"To know the difference between a *sweetheart* — and a *wife*," was the blushing reply.

Their lips have nearly met again, but there is too much of this — we must *drop the curtain!*

THE END.